

Experts at NetEffect Offer 5 Tips for Businesses to Evaluate Cloud Services

June 20, 2011 – Small and medium sized businesses are struggling to get the information they need to help them determine if cloud computing will benefit their organization. Executives and managers have heard the cloud provides advantages, but since it's clearly the "movement du jour," many offerings are being branded as "cloud" to try and capitalize on the term's popularity.

NetEffect is a well established IT service provider and the only Las Vegas-based company to offer MyGrid, a fully hosted cloud platform. The experts at NetEffect suggest small businesses follow these five guidelines to effectively evaluate cloud services.

1. Evaluate the Security of Cloud Offerings:

When a cloud platform is properly managed, it provides far superior security than can be obtained with equipment housed at your location. With today's high profile threats, you can significantly reduce your risk by moving your technology to the cloud. A top tier cloud provider will clearly articulate in terms you can understand how their cloud offering is more secure than on-premise equipment. Ask for a list of measures taken to physically secure the data center, as well as steps taken to secure the network, servers, and other systems. If your organization is subject to compliance regulations, a cloud provider will be able to meet these regulations for you. A brief look into a cloud provider's security practices should leave you with a clear understanding and a level of confidence.

2. Evaluate Your Cost Savings in the Cloud:

If the cloud is right for your organization, you should be able to calculate tangible cost savings that are long-term, immediate, or (ideally) both. With a properly designed cloud platform, the computing power comes from the servers in the data center, so there is no need to purchase oversized servers designed for later expansion or high-powered desktop computers that will be obsolete in a few years. A modestly priced computer (or other device) and an Internet connection is all you need to access your data when it's in the cloud. Cloud computing should eliminate nearly all of your technology-related capital expenditures. And because performance and reliability are superior in the cloud, you'll significantly reduce the risk of productivity losses due to technology problems.

3. Evaluate Cloud Provider Guarantees:

Businesses of all sizes have become dependent on their technology to perform most daily activities. As a result, businesses desire enterprise-level performance and availability for their applications, and while this is difficult to obtain with onsite server

equipment, it can be achieved by adopting cloud technology. Top tier cloud providers will offer a clear guarantee of network and application availability that includes a monetary credit for downtime. Effective cloud providers will offer business continuity options for mission critical applications and data. Ask for a simple explanation of the fault tolerance measures of the cloud platform, and evaluate the level support you'll receive when problems arise.

4. Evaluate a Cloud Platform's Ease of Use:

While it may be tempting to move pieces of an organization's technology to disparate cloud providers, the most effective cloud platforms allow an organization to combine all of their IT resources on a single platform. Using a single cloud platform allows applications and data to be accessed through a single interface, and permits the exchange of information from one application to another. The interface should be intuitive and easy to use so even the most inexperienced computer user can get up to speed quickly. All applications and data should be available on a single screen from any Internet connected device.

5. Evaluate a Cloud Platform's Mobility:

Increasingly, business users are looking for mobile computing solutions that will allow them to access all of their IT assets from anywhere in the world without having to take extraordinary measures. The most noticeable benefit to users of a true cloud platform is the level of mobility. The most effective cloud-based platforms will allow you to access all data and applications from any Internet connected device (including tablets, PDAs, and smartphones), regardless of the operating system.

"While many SMBs have heard of cloud computing, the lack of good, clear information means many organizations that would benefit greatly from cloud technology are hesitating to adopt it," says Jeff Grace, President & CEO of NetEffect. "It's critical for organizations to have the right information so they can make an informed decision. They should partner with a top-tier cloud provider that has best of breed technology, and offers Service Level Agreements and guarantees. With the right platform, businesses can make the move to the cloud with the confidence they will realize the benefits. The cloud should enable any small business to receive all the benefits that historically have only been available to larger enterprises."

MyGrid is a fully scalable, totally secure cloud-based platform developed and managed by NetEffect. By using state of the art, enterprise-class hardware and software, along with the Webtop interface, MyGrid cost effectively provides small and medium sized organizations with the same class of service in use by enterprise class businesses.