



Running Your Business from a Browser

How small businesses can escape from hardware and software by moving to applications in the Cloud (the web).

A Salesforce.com eBook



Who's supporting whom?

Small business and the technology trap

Starting and growing a successful business is a triumph of vision, orchestration and leadership. There's so much that has to go right – and so much that can potentially go wrong.

For many small companies, technology can play a critical role – streamlining and automating the way you win business, satisfy customers and manage financials.

But for too many small companies, technology has become more of a burden than a benefit:

- **Hardware and software has become too expensive** to license, install, support, maintain and scale up.
- **Systems are too rigid to handle change** – compromising the responsiveness and agility that lead to success.
- **Business software is still 'deskbound'** while business itself has become increasingly mobile and distributed.

In short, traditional business 'solutions' aren't really solutions at all – they've become heavy baggage that weighs down your business just when it needs to be light, efficient and nimble.

So instead of focusing entirely on your customers and your business, you end up wasting time, money and effort on non-strategic things like software compatibility, security, upgrades and maintenance. That's not what business technology should be all about.

The Cloud Revolution

This traditional approach to running a business is giving way to a completely new vision that puts the needs of the business first and dramatically changes your relationship to technology.

It's called 'Cloud computing' and it's the biggest thing to hit small business since double-entry bookkeeping.

This eBook is an introduction to Cloud computing and a quick survey of all the different ways that businesses are starting to run their most important processes – from sales and marketing to accounting and HR – from a browser.

We hope it helps you see the value of moving from software to browser-based Cloud apps for your most important business processes.

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Welcome to the Cloud

It gets delivered over the Internet

Cloud applications mean you no longer have to buy hardware and software to get the benefits of a business application – it gets delivered over a network (usually the Internet).

Unlike the applications you have to host yourself, Cloud apps are accessed from any web browser, on any device, anywhere. You no longer need to invest in software, servers and specialists to keep your business growing.

Cloud applications run on a shared, 'multi-tenant' model that spreads the costs. That means they're democratic, serving companies of all sizes – not just the rich ones.

This simple idea has exploded into a massive global market with many of the world's most successful companies embracing the Cloud model.

For small companies, the opportunity is even greater. Because, for the first time, you can afford the exact same leading edge applications that the biggest companies use – while spending less.

Even better, smaller companies can run circles around the larger competitors that are still stuck with expensive, cumbersome legacy technologies. Because moving to the Cloud is so easy, being small is now a significant advantage.



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The benefits of the Cloud

Here's why Cloud computing – running your business applications from a browser – is so compelling for growing businesses:

Agility

Cloud apps can quickly and easily scale up to meet the demands of a growing business. The shared model means the capacity is there when you need it.

No up-front costs

Cloud services are pay-as-you-go, so there's no need for up-front capital investment. It's much faster to deploy and ongoing operating costs are clear and predictable.

Automatic updates

Cloud app vendors handle all server maintenance – including security patches and updates – freeing your team for better things.

Better collaboration

Cloud apps let all employees work on documents and data simultaneously, with updates in real time. Collaboration comes naturally and data is always up-to-date. Teams love that.

Work from anywhere

With Cloud apps, all users need is an Internet connection and a device with a browser. That makes it easy to work from home, or on the road, using a PC, tablet or smartphone.

Improved security

When everything is stored in the Cloud, data is always available even if you lose your laptop (or the whole office burns down).

Smaller carbon footprint

Cloud computing is far more energy efficient than on-premise systems. For small companies, the cut in energy use and carbon emissions can exceed 90%. (Source: Accenture and WSP Environmental)

Ready for the future

With the Cloud, you're never trapped with yesterday's technology – you'll benefit from all the latest innovations as they're introduced.

In short: the business case is overwhelming.

Cloud computing is here to stay and it's great news for every small business.

“In the future, all software will be delivered in the Cloud. Businesses will be freed from buying infrastructure that goes out of date, depreciates in value, and requires a hefty investment to keep running. People will access all the services they need via the Web and have them upgraded without doing a thing.”

Marc Benioff, Salesforce.com CEO in the MIT Technology Review, Oct 2011

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Running your business from a browser

The impact of Cloud apps across your entire business

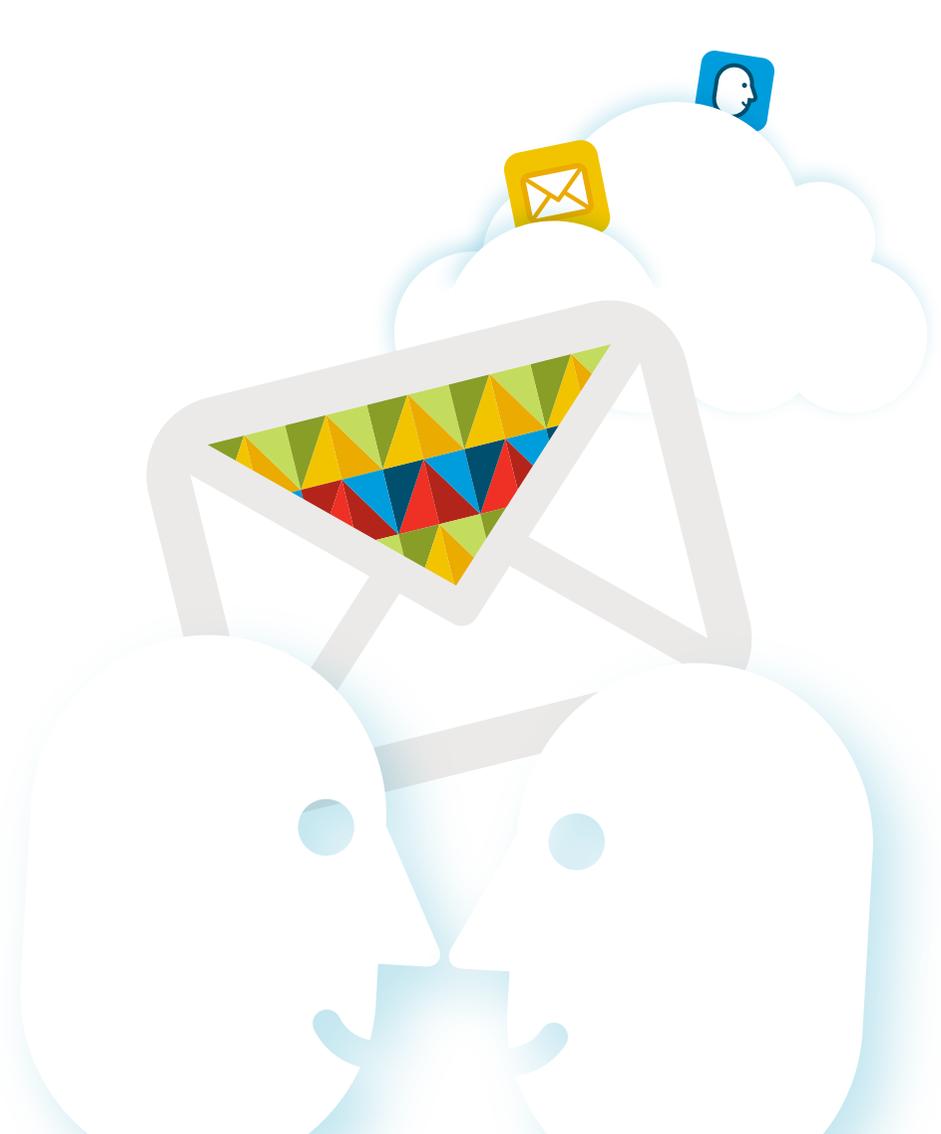
Ten to twelve years ago, Cloud computing (or 'Software-as-a-Service' as it was then called) was limited to a few applications.

Email was first, with hosted services making major inroads (from Hotmail to Google Mail). CRM was close behind (thanks to a tiny start-up called Salesforce.com).

Then the floodgates opened up. Having proven the model with two of the most business-critical services, Cloud computing swept through the business world, touching virtually every discipline.

Let's take a quick look at the Cloud computing options in some of the most important disciplines and departments in your business.

And remember: it's not about technology. It's about improving the way you do business.



Is this just a veiled sales pitch?

Okay, full disclosure: we make Cloud applications that you access from a browser. So we do have a not-so-hidden agenda here.

But we really are passionate about this new paradigm – we built our own business on it and we live and breathe it ourselves, every day.

So, forgive us for referring a bit to some of our own products. But we promise to try to keep the sales pitch in check – and we'll talk about lots of other apps, too!

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Getting stuff done

The primary processes in any small business tend to involve simply getting things done: creating and reviewing emails, documents, spreadsheets and presentations.

For decades, these office productivity applications meant only one option: Microsoft and its Office™ suite.

The good news: the applications all work well (and work well together).

The not-so-good news: they're expensive, need to be bought and installed on each PC and documents can only be shared via email.

Now, the Cloud offers some real alternatives. Chief among them is the Google Docs suite of applications.

Take a look at Google Docs

Google Docs is like Microsoft Office in the Cloud. You can use it to create documents (as with Word), presentations (as with Powerpoint) and spreadsheets (as with Excel). Plus cool apps like Google Drawings and Google Drive.

You can create these documents from any browser – there's no software to install – and share them with anyone else, on any device. Your documents are backed up in the Cloud, so you're protected.

Google Docs is a completely free service. We like it because it embodies a lot of what's great about the Cloud.



'Business-from-a-Browser' Action Points

- Review what you're spending now on word processing, spreadsheets and presentation software.
- See if any instances of Microsoft Office are installed on your people's PCs without a license. (That's risky.)
- Ask if your knowledge workers would also like to work from home, on the road without their PCs or using tablets and smartphones.
- Consider moving your productivity apps to the Cloud for at least some of your users.



Running the whole business

Financial processes are the lifeblood of any small business. You always need to know how much money is coming in, how much is going out and what these numbers will look like in the near future.

For most companies, this means software for accounting, forecasting and managing expense – plus a lot of spreadsheets for analyzing all this data.

All this is essential, but it's also expensive, difficult to share and lives on only a few computers. So you might find different versions of your company's finances on different PCs at any one time. Not a great idea.

A lot of small businesses are moving from packaged software to Cloud-based packages like JCurve, MYOB Live, Cashbook Online and FreshBooks. And the [AppExchange](#) also provides a listing of Finance solutions built on, and integrated with the Salesforce Platform.

They get all the benefits of a browser-based solution (cost, agility, etc) plus a 'single view of the truth' for everyone in the business at any time.



'Business-from-a-Browser' Action Points

- Think about how many people need to work with your financials (including any outside accountants or bookkeepers). If only one person uses these, traditional software might be okay. If it's a bigger team, the Cloud could be the way to go.
- Think about where you need access to your financial data. If it's 100% of the time at your desk, a software package may work. If you sometimes need access when you're out and about (or working away from your PC), think Cloud.

Closing more business faster and managing customer relationships.

Managing your relationships with customers and prospects is a business-critical process. That's why Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions have become so popular with every size of business.

You won't be surprised to hear this from Salesforce (the people who pioneered Cloud-based CRM) but we're totally convinced that CRM belongs in the Cloud – and over one hundred thousand businesses seem to agree.

Here are a few important things you can do with Cloud CRM – without ever buying software:

- **Manage all your accounts** – keep track of all your interactions with customers and prospects in one place – including their social media activities (it's called Social CRM and it's very, very powerful).

- **Track opportunities and quotes** – get details on the deals your team is working on – and assign tasks and approval flows so nothing falls through the cracks.
- **Forecast better** – with reporting and analytics so anyone can get an up-to-date snapshot of the company's fortunes.

This is huge

More than any other application, Cloud CRM can transform the way your business does business. Don't believe us? Check out some [video case studies here](#).

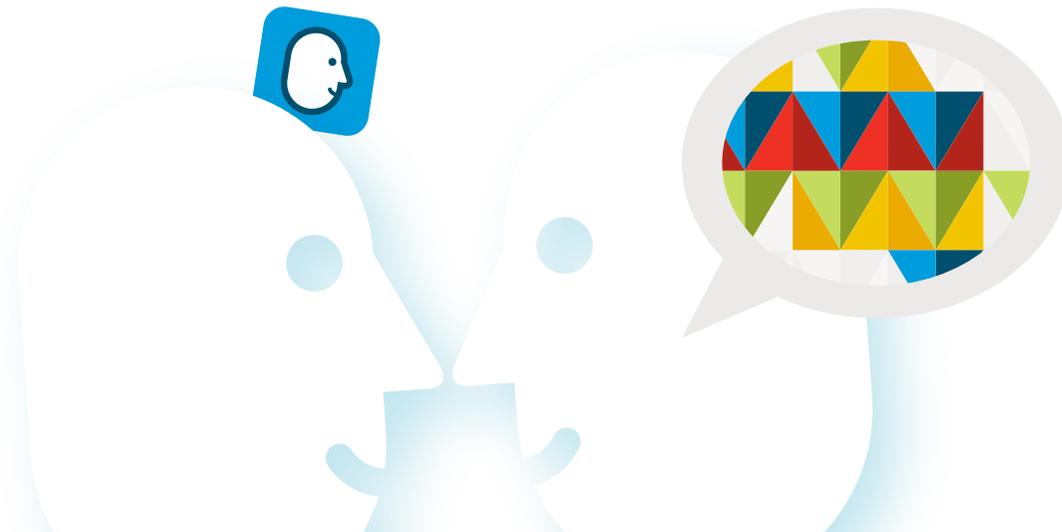


Extend your world.

Another great thing about the Cloud is that other developers can extend the main solution and share their modules with everybody. For instance, our Sales Cloud has hundreds of extension apps in the [App Exchange](#). They're all Cloud-delivered and pre-integrated with Salesforce!



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Generating more opportunities

The Cloud is changing the marketing department, too, making it easier and faster to generate real leads.

When you think about it, the marketing department is ripe for the kinds of benefits that Cloud apps deliver, because:

- **Marketing crosses silos** – with teams distributed across your internal sales and marketing people, plus external agencies, vendors and media partners. (The Cloud is perfect for these extended, distributed teams.)
- **Marketing drives multi-stage sales cycles** – sales rarely just fall into your lap. You need a way to track the progress of every opportunity, from a completely unknown prospect to a sales-ready lead. (Cloud apps keep everyone up to date.)
- **Marketing happens across lots of channels** – today's marketing involves activities in lots of different places, from email and your website to social channels

like Facebook or Twitter. (Follow all of these together in the Cloud and you get one view of all your prospects.)

Marketing Automation in a browser

The most sophisticated Cloud marketing tools come under the banner Revenue Performance Management (you'll also see terms like Marketing Automation and Lead Nurturing).

It sounds daunting but it's really all about tracking prospects as they move through your sales and marketing funnel – and it's the ideal process for moving to the Cloud.

Check out vendors like Eloqua, Marketo, HubSpot, Silverpop and others. And make sure that whichever you consider integrates with your CRM system – that's how you hand over leads from marketing to sales.

Don't forget social media

Social media has become a hugely important way to interact with prospects – and every social media site is itself a Cloud service.

Not surprisingly, a whole raft of Cloud apps have sprung up to help businesses like yours manage all their social media relationships, including things like HootSuite and SocialBro (for managing Twitter) or Sprout Social and Seesmic (for looking across different social channels).

Our own [Marketing Cloud](#) brings together a whole range of social marketing activities into one suite – from social listening, analysis and engagement, to content, advertising, workflow, automation and measurement.



A word on Content Marketing

Content Marketing means sharing your expertise to help your prospects do their jobs. And you do that by capturing that expertise in the form of content (white papers, videos, slide presentations, images, eBooks like this one...).

Content marketing is also a Cloud-centered activity thanks to popular content sharing sites like YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr, Slideshare and DocStoc.



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Delighting customers

In a world where your customers are out there talking about you on Facebook and Twitter, the whole discipline of customer service is changing fast (for the better).

If your customers aren't always picking up the phone to talk to you, an expensive, inflexible call-center system may not be what you need at all.

That's where the Cloud comes in, with a whole new generation of customer service platforms that bring together the traditional contact center activities (phone, email, customer portals) with the new social channels (Twitter, Facebook, communities sites, etc.).

The great news: you no longer need an expensive infrastructure to deliver fantastic customer service. You just need the right Cloud apps, including things like:

The Service Cloud – the Daddy of Cloud-based customer service platforms. All singin', all dancin', all customer-pleasin'.

Desk.com – the simple, mobile, affordable customer support help desk for smaller companies. (We liked it so much we bought the company.)

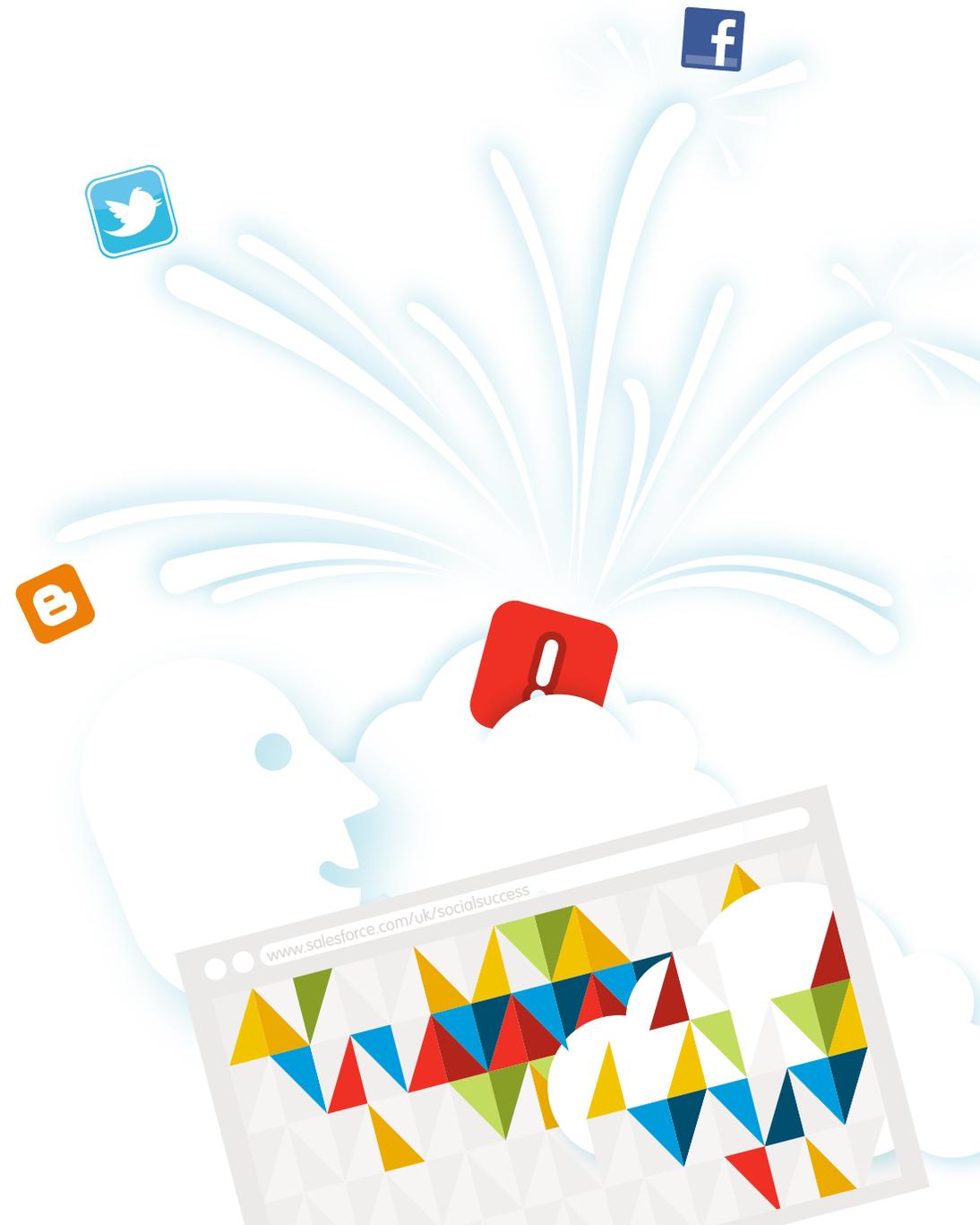
Community tools – like Get Satisfaction or Ning.com, for creating a customer support community. **Salesforce Chatter Communities** also allows customers to be empowered through collaboration.

Social monitoring tools – did we mention **Radian6**? (Thought so.)

The bottom line

As a small business, the Cloud gives you a massive opportunity to punch far above your weight, treating customers way better than the big boys – and spending far less doing it.

It really is better in a browser.



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Working better together

Smaller companies usually communicate and collaborate better than massive multi-nationals because the whole team is often in one room (or at least on speed dial).

But business today is much more mobile than it used to be. And even the smallest teams may be distributed all over the place.

Fortunately, there are dozens of really powerful Cloud apps that help growing businesses work better together.

For email – you’ve got hosted services like Gmail (no servers or software to own).

For chat, audio and video calls – you’ve got things like Skype, Jabber or Google Talk.

For conferencing – you’ve got things like WebEx and Go To Meeting

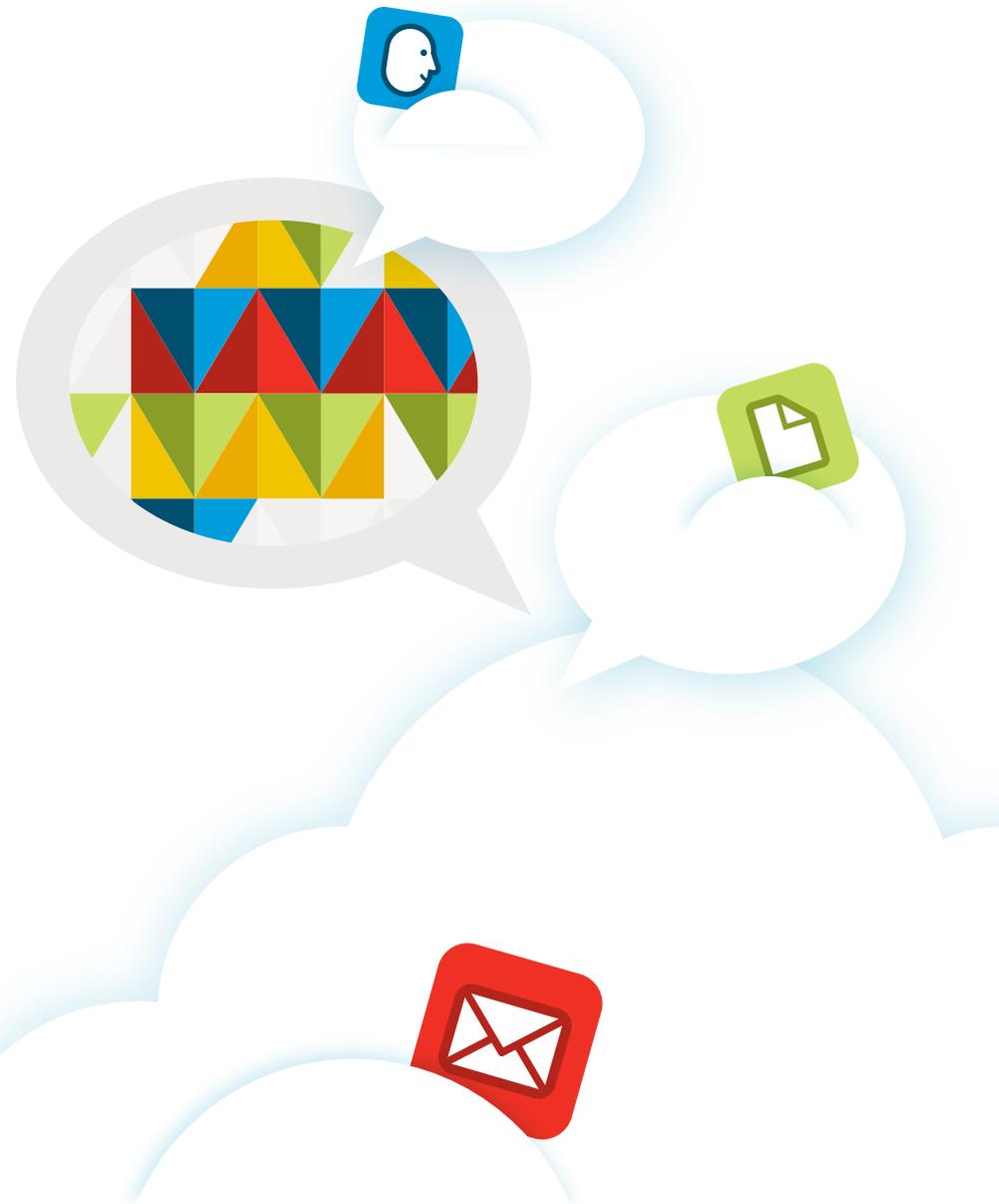
For screen-sharing – try Join.me.

For collaboration – you’ve got Chatter – think of it as Facebook for your company (or a really, really social Intranet). (We live in it.) (We also own it.) And Chatter Messenger brings instant messaging to your collaboration space.

For sharing tasks – you’ve got Do.com (yes, another of ours).

If you think about, it, that’s a pretty amazing array of collaboration and communication tools – and most of them are free (except the conferencing apps).

Never before have small businesses had so many powerful collaboration tools at their disposal – without a single piece of hardware or software in sight. That really is a revolution.



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Managing employee performance

Most fast-growing companies face a dilemma: they can spend an enormous amount of time and energy managing people and performances; or they can under-invest in this critical area and risk going badly off course.

A new generation of Cloud apps can help here too, by helping keep all your people aligned with their goals – and making performance reviews easy.

The result is win-win: your people get the management they deserve and your business gets a great view of everyone's performance (without spending 90% of your time on it).

Here we'd be remiss if we didn't mention our own solution, Work.com. It makes things like feedback, coaching and recognition really simple, as well as goal setting and alignment for line of business apps. And it lets the entire team contribute. It's a really simple idea and we love it.



The boring (but important) bit

Sometimes the basics are enough: if you depend on accurate time-keeping in your business (for consultants, service people, etc), then you might like Harvest, a simple online time-tracking system. Nice interface. Clear reporting.



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Conclusion

If you've even skimmed this eBook, one thing has probably become crystal clear: there's an entire world of Cloud-based applications out there that can help you run your business better.

Even just five years ago, most small businesses needed to make a significant investment in hardware, software and the people to make it all run. And even with all that investment, these solutions tended to actually constrain your business just when you needed to respond to change.

Today, tens of thousands small businesses have discovered a better way – by running their most important processes from their browsers.

The result is not just a dramatic reduction in cost and u-front investment. It's also a dramatic improvement in the way you can sell, market, serve customers, collaborate and manage your people.

The Cloud makes almost everything more efficient, effective, transparent and mobile. For any company with limited resources but unlimited ambitions, that's a hugely powerful combination.

Dive in.

“With the Cloud, individuals and small businesses can snap their fingers and instantly set up enterprise-class services.”

Roy Stephan, Intelligent Decisions



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About Salesforce.com

Salesforce.com is the Cloud computing company that helps every size company connect to customers and employees like never before. Our trusted Cloud apps and platform include:



Super-charge your sales

- [Sales Cloud](#), for social-powered sales force automation and contact management
- [Data.com](#), B2B sales and marketing account and contact data



Deliver amazing service

- [Service Cloud](#), for social customer service and support solutions
- [Desk.com](#), the social help desk for small businesses



Join the conversation

- [Chatter](#), a secure, private social network for your business



Engage customers everywhere

- [Radian6](#), social media monitoring and engagement



Build killer apps

- [Force.com](#), the Cloud platform for custom app development
- [Database.com](#), the trusted Cloud database
- [Heroku](#), the platform to build social and mobile apps in Ruby and Java



Extend your business

- [AppExchange](#), the leading marketplace for enterprise Cloud computing applications



Improve your performance

- [Work.com](#), the web-based social performance management platform

“The Cloud serves companies of all sizes; the Cloud is for everyone. The Cloud is a democracy.”

Marc Benioff, Founder of Salesforce.com

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