

Cloud: What Do SMBs Want?

Written by Marco Attard
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According to Techaisle SMBs do not merely expect to save money when they turn to the cloud-- they also demand nothing less than a strategic platform boosting their agility and competitiveness.



The survey covers equal numbers on business decision makers (BDMs) and IT decision makers (ITDMs) for what the analyst describes as a "360° perspective".

Reportedly the "middle" SMB market (companies with 50-250 employees) want more productive IT staff, while smaller and larger organisations want to enable business staff. Either way, SMBs use a mix of public, private and hybrid clouds, often with 2-3 simultaneous approaches.

Hybrid appears to be the dominant delivery model, and demand is high for cloud storage, data backup and cloud security at a workload level, and for vertical applications, content publishing, CRM and analytics in SaaS.

The analyst suggests cloud deployments start from business requirements, before moving back to the deployment model-- rather than starting with a platform and expanding across workloads. As a result cloud selection is no "religious matter," and accounts are won or lost only on a workload-by-workload basis.

Who makes the decisions on the choice of cloud? ITDMs are in charge of platform technologies (IaaS, virtualisation, mobile device management), while BDMs share SaaS authority and direct the choice of capabilities (mobility, big data, analytics, collaboration, social media).

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BDMs also lead the solution process steps (need identification, strategic and operational planning, evaluation) leading to a sale. On the other hand ITDMs are responsible for deployment and training.

Techaisle points out an opportunity in helping SMB customers-- most are either not aware of who is in charge for specific security activities or believe they do not require security, all due to over-reliance on cloud suppliers.

However security and data control remain key inhibitors for further cloud growth--but one can convince BDMs on the cloud's contribution to safety.

As for a successful cloud solution, mobility and data access are key across all segments. Small business also demand backup, continuity and disaster recovery, while mid-market customers demand scalable compute and storage resources.

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