



**Optimize costs and improve competitiveness  
with cloud communications and collaboration**



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## Overview

### **The world we live in is an unpredictable place.**

One day, you could be going to work as normal, chatting with colleagues around the water cooler, and planning your weekend. The next day, everything could suddenly turn upside down.

The global health crisis is a perfect example of how quickly things can change. This pandemic was so world-altering that it practically brought the human race to a halt overnight. Businesses shut down; people stopped going outside. Everything changed.

As we move ahead, looking to rebuild after a confusing and stressful couple of months, it's important to learn from what we've experienced at the beginning of 2020. The pandemic has pushed businesses to their limits like never before. However, it has also opened the door to new opportunities that many companies hadn't considered until now.

**More than ever we're recognizing that cloud-based communications and collaboration solutions may be the answer to business evolution and continuity.**





## Explore the value of cloud

There's been a lot of talk about adopting cloud infrastructure for a while now. **Approximately 94% of enterprises use cloud for at least one part of their strategy.**<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, many businesses have struggled to become truly cloud native.

The health crisis showed that when the world shuts down, the only way that businesses can continue to operate is from a flexible, cloud-based communications environment. It's not just continuity that the cloud serves either. Cloud technology could also be the answer to serious budgetary issues. During the pandemic, companies faced a sudden onslaught of new expenses, including:

- Costs to put new IT and communications strategies in place
- Expenses for securing and redesigning business premises
- New costs to ensure that people (customers and employees) remain safe

There's now an unprecedented degree of pressure on business budgets. What's more, because the lockdown period led to a state of uncertainty in the economy, many organizations are also dealing with reduced revenues. The norm for leaders now will be to learn how to do more with less.

**Business leaders will need to find solutions to reduce expenditures. However, at the same time, it will be essential to continue increasing competitiveness to gain market share and revenue.**

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<sup>1</sup> RightScale® State of the Cloud Report from Flexera, 2019

# Leverage the cloud to optimize expenditures

Approximately four years ago, public cloud computing strategies made up less than 5% of the spending in the IT infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> Since then, cloud computing has grown at an incredible rate. In the next few years, the demand for cloud will increase, driven heavily by the experiences we had during the global pandemic.

While large organizations often worry about the cost of replacing legacy technology and moving to the cloud initially, it's unlikely that any company will be able to hold back in this new environment.

We've learned first-hand that if we want to be prepared for anything, **we need the flexibility of the cloud**. The good news is that **the cloud offers more opportunities for cost saving than you might think**.

Firstly, switching to a cloud environment minimizes on-site costs for maintenance. With as-a-service solutions, you can offload low-value and time-consuming tasks that overwhelm your team, such as provisioning, upgrading, and patching. Instead, everything will operate from a single location in the cloud.

Secondly, companies can control their journey into the cloud according to individual needs. For instance, if you're not ready to jump straight into a full cloud model, then accessing a hybrid solution ensures that you can unlock some cloud benefits, without ripping and replacing legacy investments. **There are various ways to transform in the cloud, such as:**

- **Private cloud solutions** operated in a private data center for heavily regulated companies

- **Private multi-instance clouds** operating in a mutualized data center. That data center would be owned, operated, and hosted by a cloud service provider.
- **Public multi-tenant solution** operated in the cloud and accessible for anyone
- **Hybrid cloud** which combines multiple solutions. You could create a hybrid cloud with on-premises telephony and Unified Communications (UC) from a multi-tenant cloud, also known as Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS). Alternatively, there's the option to access telephony in a private multi-instance cloud, and UCaaS in a public solution.



## Find the right path to cloud

Moving servers from on-premises environments into the cloud without proper planning won't automatically yield all the benefits of a cloud environment. Businesses that are now aware of the limitations they face after the health crisis will need to carefully consider the route that they take to cloud.

Many choices will come from a consideration of privacy. While private cloud technology offers guarantees, some organizations will still prefer public services provided by a given geography. This would allow for cloud sovereignty. You could also build your cloud strategy specifically around your industry regulations. This is often the choice for those in healthcare and finance.

**A hybrid cloud architecture is typically the option with the most flexibility.** With this pathway, you can reduce the risk of moving to cloud, and you can transform at your own pace. Remember, studies show that 94% of businesses saw an improvement in their security following a move to the cloud.<sup>3</sup>

Figuring out which route works for you begins with defining the digital workplace and the goals that you want to achieve. What are the communications and collaboration services that your employees need to be able to access from the cloud? **If you want to ensure business continuity in any crisis, you need to make sure your level of service remains the same no matter what happens.**

One option could be to keep corporate telephony services on-premises to reduce risk and costs. You can do this to lower disruption, and place UCaaS on top of your on-premises solutions to increase functionality. **The good news is that most cloud-based services come in a pay-as-you-go format. This makes it easier to get the technology that suits you within your budget.**

3 RightScale® State of the Cloud Report from Flexera, 2019

## Leverage the cloud to improve competitiveness

The savings associated with switching to cloud computing are some of the biggest factors encouraging today's companies to act. In a time when the economy will be struggling, it's essential to cut costs wherever you can. Once you're on the cloud, the pay-as-you-go system and flexible environment will make it much easier to evolve at a pace that suits you.

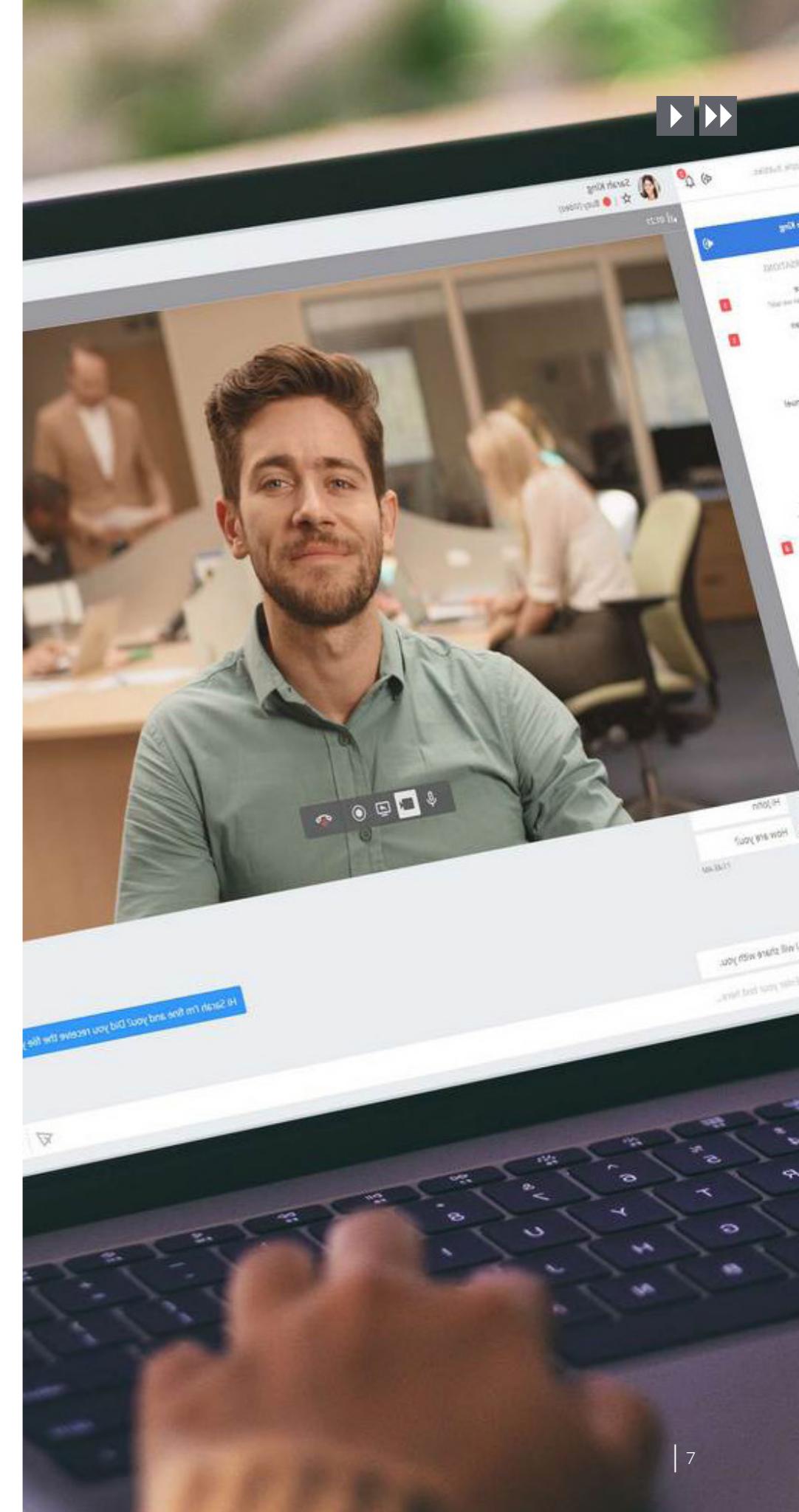
However, there are other benefits to embracing cloud after the pandemic as well. For instance, **cloud-based services can also help you to get ahead of the competition. The cloud enables new work styles and service options which are massively beneficial to any organization.**

One large trend in the cloud environment recently has been the demand for collaboration tools. All the burden of on-premises solutions for UC services can disappear when UCaaS is available. **Cloud-based technology provides the solutions you need from the cloud. This includes support to video and audio conferencing, file and desktop sharing, and more.**

Businesses can create immersive discussion rooms for their teams that make them feel as though they're in the office. This will become particularly essential as the demand for remote working continues to increase. With the pandemic forcing many companies to allow their employees to work from home, we've discovered just how productive this strategy can be.

**Thanks to cloud technology and collaboration tools, business leaders can ensure that teams have access to everything they need with the touch of a finger.** What's more, you know that all of your technology will be available in the latest version, from anywhere.

Another point worth noting is that the cloud will also give businesses the freedom to find the right talent to expand their team. No matter where you might be located, **cloud technology ensures that you can reach out to dedicated potential employees around the world and bring them into your workforce.** This means that every business can have the staff it needs to generate higher levels of success.



# Accelerate new opportunities with the cloud

Cloud opportunities also allow companies to leverage their existing voice-based communication servers to redefine the way they engage with customers. For instance, you can add multi-channel capabilities on top of the tools that you already have. This is an excellent opportunity to go above and beyond with the service experiences provided to customers (as well as to employees). What's more, you can strengthen Interactive Voice Response (IVR) capabilities with artificial intelligence (AI) and other enhancements, giving your customer service reps more time to manage personalized interactions.

With the cloud offering unlimited access to disruptive technology and data, there's no limit to what you can do. You can implement chatbots in your websites to help drive conversions and answer

questions. What's more, you'll be able to use collective intelligence as a more significant weapon in your arsenal.

Imagine being able to link your customer reps with back-office experts in your field through collaborative UCaaS tools. You can also integrate historical records from customer profiles by integrating with your business applications. Cloud-based

**Communications Platform as a Service (CPaaS)** are now offering more off-the-shelf connectors than ever to integrate with customer relationship management tools like Salesforce.

Having access to all the information and support they need on the back-end will make your workforce more efficient and productive. Businesses will be able to connect with their customers in context, providing the right information for superior service. Additionally, thanks to

big data and artificial intelligence, it's possible to identify new buying intentions.

**The cloud gives you the tools you need to delight your customers.** However, it also leads to happier and more productive employees. Organizations that put employee satisfaction high on their list of priorities are more likely to expand their use of cloud.

As we move further into the future, it's becoming increasingly obvious that the focus on "experience" isn't going anywhere. The health crisis has forced companies to re-evaluate how they can provide the experiences that both their customers and employees need at the same time. **If you can give your representatives the right information and tools to do a better job in customer conversations, then both sides will be happy.**



## Look to the future with the cloud

Ultimately, the cloud is all about unlocking new opportunities with flexibility and affordability. No matter which industry you're in, or who you're trying to serve, adapting to the new world post-pandemic will demand agility, and elasticity.

Companies are going to need to figure out how they can adapt and pivot quickly to suit the changing needs of both their customers and their employees. The cloud is the tool that business leaders can use to increase speed and agility, by keeping their team truly connected. With new capabilities constantly emerging through things like application programming interfaces (APIs) and CPaaS, there's no limit to what's available.

CPaaS connects people to people, people to applications, and applications to objects. This means that you can have a completely connected environment from start to finish. On top of that, the cloud also opens up new opportunities in multiple domains. With the right cloud communications solutions, you can explore things like the internet of things, and asset tracking.

Some market leaders in their field are experimenting with things like smart cities and telemedicine – things that change the world as we know it. Not only does the cloud give you more ways to deliver unprecedented levels of service, it could also mean that we can provide new kinds of service.



## Get your competitive advantage

For those in search of a competitive advantage in this complex new space, the cloud will be a must-have tool for success.

While it's tempting to try and stick with the technology that you already have in your business when you're trying to keep expenses low, the move to cloud is likely to be an option for most companies. We've seen for ourselves that in extreme circumstances, the cloud is the only environment that can provide true business continuity for companies struggling to keep the lights on.

However, the cloud also has amazing benefits to offer when it comes to things like cost-savings and competitiveness. According to studies a lot of companies believe that being involved with the cloud gives them a more significant competitive advantage than their peers.<sup>4</sup>

Now is the perfect time for companies to re-assess their needs based on what they've learned in the last couple of months. If you haven't initiated the shift to cloud yet, this is your chance.



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