Why small contact centres need cloud

Cloud technology holds just as much, if not more, power for small businesses and their call centres as it does for large ones, says Jed Hewson, Director at cloud contact centre technology provider, 1Stream.

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"A lot of people think that cloud technology is best suited to large contact centre operations but it's just as powerful for smaller operations. The fact that it requires very little upfront investment, and that you are only billed for what you use are the most obvious benefits. Then there's the fact that, as a managed service, cloud technology comes with round-the-clock support from the technology provider itself - which negates the need for costly internal IT resources", says Hewson.

Summit Financial Partners is a financial well-being business that works with large companies and government to help restore employees to financial wellness through financial education, protection and mentoring. Summit runs a small contact centre and recently embraced cloud technology for the first time, with 1Stream.

"We moved our customer care agents to the cloud in October 2014 - primarily for future cost-savings. Although it's still early days, I'm looking forward to the savings it will offer as the company grows and the cost per call keeps coming down," says Barry van Blerk, Regional Manager (Western Cape) at Summit.

It is this ability to scale up or down at a moment's notice that makes cloud so valuable for smaller businesses. Hewson explains: "When we get a new customer on board, we simply add them to our existing network of seats - so the solutions they use are tried and tested and already in use by call centre agents around the country. And if they need to scale up during the busy season, or down during quiet times, we simply 'switch' extra seats on or off, and bill accordingly. It offers the kind of flexibility a small business could really benefit from, without the risk of being tied into an expensive, long-term IT contract.

"The cost and upheaval of replacing legacy hardware are also removed, and there's no need to employ dedicated IT resources to look after call centre technology. With cloud solutions you can outsource the entire IT headache to an external IT department, while retaining the ability to scale up or down or to cancel your contract at any time."