

IT's changing of the guard

 By [Brian Timperley](#)

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Thanks to the evolution of technology, small to medium enterprises (SMEs) no longer need to be responsible for IT in the traditional sense. With these companies under pressure to deliver more on smaller budgets, the likes of cloud computing, accessible high-speed connectivity and hosted solutions have become game-changers.



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One of the biggest pain points in any SME is the amount of time managing technology takes up. And when one factors in the cost considerations of software licensing and hardware upgrades, the frustration becomes evident.

Keeping an open mind

For years, decision-makers have been looking for ways to remove themselves from the need to manage IT. Fortunately, those SMEs who do not focus on providing ICT services and solutions are finally in a position to do just that.

By nature, an SME is more open-minded to embracing progressive ideas that might not necessarily fit conventional wisdom. They are continually looking for ways to remove superfluous business elements and concentrate on fulfilling the core strategy of the company. Unlike larger organisations, the SME is not encumbered with a panel or a risk assessment division that slows down the decision-making process. The SME is much more

agile and can quickly embrace new solutions.

The hosted environment

When it comes to IT, the requirement is simple. The SME wants to compute, connect, email, and backup their business documents. The hosted environment provides the perfect way to do this. The cloud approach presents the decision-maker with a completely modular route. It is simply a case of ticking the boxes of the solutions required and the services provider taking care of the rest.

What is more, this presents them with a way to quickly change solutions as their requirements shift. There is no reason to be worried about being stuck with fixed infrastructure. No, the cloud takes much of those concerns away and gives scalability, redundancy, and security, all at a fraction of the cost. More importantly, it happens so much faster. An SME cannot afford to wait six months for a consultancy to roll out a new accounting package or upgrade its internet connectivity to a faster line. Once a solution has been identified, it needs to be implemented as quickly as possible while keeping the impact on daily operations to a minimum.



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Traditional IT strategy is out

Just think about connectivity as an example. There are so many preconceived ideas around having to get an ADSL line. Wireless and fibre, as conventional wisdom goes, are too expensive for SMEs. And then there is the humble computer. The status quo dictates you going down to your closest mass retailer and buying an off-the-shelf desktop.

Yet, both fibre and wireless solutions are available that not only provide much faster and more stable speeds, but are priced equitably to business ADSL solutions. The same goes for computers. Why spend R10,000 on a desktop with features that are not needed, when a hybrid computer offering the same functionality can be purchased for less than R3,000?

All told, the days of relying on a traditional IT strategy are over. Technology has become a means to an end. Those SMEs who are willing to embrace this new order, will likely leave their more traditional competitors in their wake.

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