FREE REPORT:

"5 Critical Facts Every Business Owner Must Know Before Moving Their Network To The Cloud"

Discover What Most IT Consultants Don't Know Or Won't Tell You About Moving Your Company's Network To The Cloud

By David B. Lobocki,

Managing Member, Essential Technologies LLC

www.essentialtechnologies.com/5-Critical-Facts-About-Cloud/

Phone: 877-487-9797 x100

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A Letter From The Author:

Why We Created This Report And Who Should Read It

From The Desk of: David B. Lobocki

Managing Member, Essential Technologies LLC

Dear Colleague,

When you decided to look into transitioning your computer network and operations to the cloud, you were probably met with conflicting advice, confusion and no real answers to your questions and concerns over security, cost and whether or not it's appropriate for your organization.

That's why we wrote this report. **We wanted to give owners a simple, straightforward guide that not only answers your questions in plain English, but also provides vital experience-based information that most IT companies don't know (or may not tell you) that could turn your migration into a big, cash-draining nightmare.**

My name is David B. Lobocki. My organization Essential Technologies LLC has worked with many businesses like yours to deliver cloud based IT services like Exchange email and all company data files stored in the Cloud while eliminating old file servers. We have also partnered to deliver Desktop as a Service (DaaS) which is your Windows desktops hosted in the cloud using a private cloud solution to support small (5- 10 users) to large offices with 100+ users. We helped start-up entrepreneurs, Law Offices, Accounting Firms, Country Clubs, Healthcare, Real Estate, Financial Services, Manufacturing and Point of Sale businesses just to name a few to deliver cloud based IT solutions that work, save people time and money and deliver real time anywhere and anytime access to their email and data while integrating with Office 365.

The simple fact is, cloud computing is NOT a good fit for every company, and if you don't get all the facts or fully understand the pros and cons, you can end up making some VERY poor and expensive decisions that you'll deeply regret later. The information in this report will arm you with the critical facts you need to avoid expensive, time-consuming mistakes.

Of course, we are always available as a resource for a second opinion or quick question, so please feel free to contact my office direct if we can clarify any points made in this report or answer any questions you have.

Dedicated to serving you,

David B. Lobocki
Managing Member, Essential Technologies LLC
(877)487-9797 x100

About The Author

- David B. Lobocki has been an IT professional for over 25 years with a degree in Computer Science and Mathematics from the University of Illinois–Champaign/Urbana.
- David has previously worked for a very large IT consulting firm Accenture as well as startup Software Company and several other large companies as an IT Network Architect, IT Consultant, a Network and Operations Infrastructure leader and as a Managed Service Provider.
- David started Essential Technologies LLC to bring Professional IT Consulting to Small Businesses
- Started in 2004, Essential Technologies, LLC is a complete but specialized IT Consulting Service, Solution and Support provider.
- We bring professional IT services to Small Businesses that need our experience in Cloud, Network and Operations but do not have the budget for a full time person.

Our Philosophy

We believe that price points and amenities of small and mid-sized businesses shouldn't affect service levels provided to them.

We believe that costs are reduced by creating a high performance IT infrastructure surrounded by a high performance team of people.

Our approach is to:

- Make decisions from a customer perspective
- Be responsive
- Do what is right and a best fit
- Use IT best practices & quality methodologies
- Focus always on outstanding customer service
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
- Leverage the Cloud to bring efficiencies and cost savings

Here's why so many businesses depend on Essential Technologies:

- We want and value building long term relationships with our clients.

- We are dedicated to keeping your IT systems always running smoothly.

- We understand our clients expect value for the IT services they receive.

- Our responsiveness and expertise to solve issues is what keeps our clients satisfied.

- We seek to educate the client about the IT solutions and options available.

- There is no Fine Print. Our agreements are simple and straightforward.

5 Critical Facts You Must Know
Before Moving To The Cloud

In this report I'm going to talk about **5 very important facts you need to know before you consider cloud computing for your company**. These include:

1. The pros AND cons you need to consider before moving to the cloud.
2. Migration GOTCHAS (and how to avoid them).
3. The various types of cloud computing options you have (there are more than just one).
4. Answers to important, frequently asked questions you need to know the answers to.
5. What questions you need to ask your IT pro before letting them "sell" you on moving all or part of your network and applications to the cloud.

I've also included an actual case study from another business that have moved to cloud computing, along with a sample cost-comparison chart so you can see the impact this new technology can have on your IT budget.

At the end of this report there is an invitation for you to request a **Free Cloud Readiness Assessment** to determine if cloud computing is right for your particular business. I encourage you to take advantage of this before making any decisions since we've designed it to take a hard look at the functionality and costs for you as a business and provide you with the specific information you need (not hype) to make a good decision about this new technology.

What Is Cloud Computing?

Wikipedia defines cloud computing as "the use and access of multiple server-based computational resources via a digital network (WAN, Internet connection using the World Wide Web, etc.)."

But what the heck does *that* mean?

The easiest way to not only understand what cloud computing is but also gain insight into why it's gaining in popularity is to compare it to the evolution of public utilities. For example, let's look at the evolution of electricity.

Back in the industrial age, factories had to produce their own power in order to run machines that produced the hard goods they manufactured. Be it textiles or railroad spikes, using machines gave these companies enormous competitive advantages by producing more goods with fewer workers and in less time. For many years, the production of power was every bit as important to their company's success as the skill of their workers and quality of their products.

Unfortunately, this put factories into TWO businesses: the business of producing their goods and the business of producing power. Then the concept of delivering power (electricity) as a utility was introduced by Thomas Edison when he developed a commercial-grade replacement for gas lighting and heating using centrally generated and distributed electricity. From there, as they say, the rest was history.

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The concept of electric current being generated in central power plants and delivered to factories as a utility caught on fast. This meant manufacturers no longer had to be in the business of producing their own power with enormous and expensive water wheels. **In fact, in a very short period of time, it became a competitive necessity for factories to take advantage of the lower-cost option being offered by public utilities.** Almost overnight, thousands of steam engines and electric generators were rendered obsolete and left to rust next to the factories they used to power.

What made this possible was a series of inventions and scientific breakthroughs – but what drove the demand was pure economics. Utility companies were able to leverage economies of scale that single manufacturing plants simply couldn't match in output or in price. In fact, the price of power dropped so significantly that it quickly became affordable for not only factories but every single household in the country.

Today, we are in a similar transformation following a similar course. The only difference is that instead of cheap and plentiful electricity, advancements in technology and Internet connectivity are driving down the costs of computing power. With cloud computing, businesses can pay for "computing power" like a utility without having the exorbitant costs of installing, hosting and supporting it on premise.

In fact, you are probably already experiencing the benefits of cloud computing in some way but hadn't realized it. Below are a number of cloud computing applications, also called SaaS or "software as a service," you might be using:

- MS Office 365
- Desktop as a Service (DaaS) – Desktop hosted in the cloud
- Gmail, Hotmail or other free e-mail accounts
- Facebook, Twitter
- NetSuite, Salesforce
- Constant Contact, Exact Target, AWeber or other e-mail broadcasting services
- Zoomerang, SurveyMonkey and other survey tools
- LinkedIn
- All things Google (search, AdWords, maps, etc.)

If you think about it, almost every single application you use today can be (or already is) being put "in the cloud" where you can access it and pay for it via your browser for a monthly fee or utility pricing. You don't purchase and install software but instead access it via an Internet browser.

What About Office 365 And Google Apps?

Office 365 and Google Apps are perfect examples of the cloud computing trend; for an inexpensive monthly fee, you can get full access and use of Office applications that used to cost a few hundred dollars to purchase. And, since these apps are being powered by the cloud provider, you don't need an expensive desktop with lots of power to use them – just a simple Internet connection will do on a laptop, desktop or tablet.

Pros And Cons Of Moving To The Cloud

As you read this section, keep in mind there is no "perfect" solution. All options – be it an in-house, on-premise server or a cloud solution – have upsides and downsides that need to be evaluated on a case-by-case scenario. (Warning: Do NOT let a cloud expert tell you there is only "one way" of doing something!)

Keep in mind the best option for you may be a **hybrid solution** where some of your applications and functionality are in the cloud and some are still hosted and maintained from an in-house server. We'll discuss more of this in a later section; however, here are the general pros and cons of cloud computing:

Pros Of Cloud Computing:

- **Lowered IT costs.** This is probably the single most compelling reason why companies choose to move their network (all or in part) to the cloud. Not only do you save money on software licenses, but on hardware (servers and workstations) as well as on IT support and upgrades. In fact, we save our clients an average of 15% to 20% when we move some or part of their network functionality to the cloud. So if you hate constantly writing cash-flow-draining checks for IT upgrades, you'll really want to look into cloud computing. Included in this report are examples of how we've done this for other clients and what the savings have been.

- **Ability to access your desktop and/or applications from anywhere and any device.** If you travel a lot, have remote workers or prefer to use an iPad while traveling and a laptop at your house, cloud computing will give you the ability to work from any of these devices. Cloud computing means it's hardware agnostic so you can use your Phone, iPad, Tablet, Mac book or Windows computer to access your company data and email.

- **Disaster recovery and backup are automated.** The server in your office is extremely vulnerable to a number of threats, including malware and viruses, human error, hardware failure, software corruption and, of course, physical damage due to a fire, flood or other natural disaster. If your server were in the cloud and (God forbid) your office was reduced to a pile of rubble, you could purchase a new laptop and be back up and running within the same day. This would NOT be the case if you had a traditional network and were using tape drives, USB drives or other physical storage devices like NAS (Network Attached Storage) to back up your system.

  Plus, like a public utility, cloud platforms are far more robust and secure than your average business network because they can utilize economies of scale to invest heavily into security, redundancy and failover, making them less likely to go down.

- **It's faster, cheaper and easier to set up new employees.** If you have a seasonal workforce or a lot of turnover, cloud computing will not only lower your costs of setting up new accounts, but it will make it infinitely faster. A new desktop hosted in the Cloud can be configured and ready to go in just a couple of minutes. Access to

company data stored in the cloud is a simple as an email address and password with the appropriate access. "We moved IT systems and support for a local accounting firm to a private DaaS Cloud that brings on an average of 5 extra CPAs in January through April to help process audit and tax returns. If they had a traditional network setup, they would have to purchase expensive PCs and software licenses for these temporary workers and then pay to maintain and upgrade them throughout the year. Using cloud computing, these workers use their home PCs, thin clients or other older company asset and log in to the network securely. The CPA firm ONLY pays for those workers' licenses during the time they are using them, just like a utility. When the end of April comes around, they no longer pay for those licenses and support. Using this model saves them approximately thousands of dollars a year in hardware, software and IT services."

- **You use it without having to "own" it.** More specifically, you don't own the *responsibility* of having to install, update and maintain the infrastructure. Think of it as similar to living in a condo where someone else takes care of the building maintenance, repairing the roof and mowing the lawn, but you still have the only key to your section of the building and use of all the facilities. This is particularly attractive for companies that are new or expanding, but don't want the heavy outlay of cash for purchasing and supporting an expensive computer network.

- **It's a "greener" technology that will save on power and your electric bill.** For some smaller companies, the power savings will be too small to measure. However, for larger companies with multiple servers that are cooling a hot server room and keep their servers running 24/7/365, the savings are considerable.

- **No longer need client VPN (Virtual Private Network) to access company data.** With these new cloud based solutions you no longer require a using a client Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection to get to your data. Just an email name and password will provide you immediate access.

Cons of Cloud Computing:

- **The Internet going down.** While you can mitigate this risk by using a commercial-grade Internet connection and maintaining a second backup connection, there is a chance you'll lose Internet connectivity, making it impossible to work. For our clients we implement a dual WAN router than can automatically failover between two different service providers that will continue to give access to your cloud resources. We also recommend the use of Hot-Spot and Wi-Fi backup devices as well to provide access during a primary outage.

- **Data security.** Many people don't feel comfortable having their data in some off-site location. This is a valid concern, and before you choose any cloud provider, you need to find out more information about where they are storing your data, how it's encrypted, who has access and how you can get it back. You'll find more information on this under "What to Look for When Hiring a Cloud Integrator" later on in this document.

- **Certain line-of-business applications won't work in the cloud.** For example, if you have a SQL server based application then it may require you to still have a dedicated server on premise. Talk to us first before making this decision not to leverage the cloud as many new Cloud based software applications and services are now available to help address these situations.

- **Compliance Issues.** There are a number of laws and regulations, such as Gramm-Leach-Bliley, Sarbanes-Oxley and HIPAA, that require companies to control and protect their data and certify that they have knowledge and control over who can access the data, who sees it and how and where it is stored. In a public cloud environment, this can be a problem. Many cloud providers won't tell you specifically where your data is stored.

  Most cloud providers have SAS 70 certifications, HIPPA and FINRA compliance which require them to be able to describe exactly what is happening in their environment, how and where the data comes in, what the provider does with it and what controls are in place over the access to and processing of the data; but as the business owner, it's YOUR neck on the line if the data is compromised, so it's important that you ask for some type of validation that they are meeting the various compliance regulations on an ongoing basis.

Migration Gotchas! What You Need To Know About Transitioning To A Cloud-Based Network

When done right, a migration to Office 365 or another cloud solution should be like any other migration. There's planning that needs to be done, prerequisites that have to be determined and the inevitable "quirks" that need to be ironed out once you make the move.

Every company has its own unique environment, so it's practically impossible to try and plan for every potential pitfall; however, here are some BIG things you want to ask your IT consultant about BEFORE making the leap.

Downtime. Some organizations cannot afford ANY downtime, while others can do without their network for a day or two. Make sure you communicate YOUR specific needs regarding downtime and make sure your IT provider has a solid plan to prevent extended downtime.

Painfully Slow Performance. Ask your IT consultant if there's any way you can run your network in a test environment before making the full migration. Imagine how frustrated you would be if you migrate your network and discover everything is running so slow you can barely work! Again, every environment is slightly different, so it's best to test before you transition.

3rd-Party Applications. If your organization has plug-ins to Exchange for faxing, voice mail or integration into another application, make sure you test to see if it will still work in the new environment.

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Infrastructure and Bandwidth considerations. To take advantage of Cloud based technology solutions it will require some new or upgraded infrastructure like a Dual WAN, Router, faster switches, wiring upgrade or increased office bandwidth from your Internet provider to support the number of users you will have on the Cloud. Again talk to us first before you make a decision to move to the Cloud.

Cloud Versus A Traditional Network:
A Comparison Of Costs

As we said earlier, each client has a unique set of circumstances and needs that will factor into the cost savings and benefits. But in order to give you an idea of what you can save when moving your network to the cloud, we've put together a sample business scenario we commonly find, and the savings obtained with cloud computing.

Please note we've shown this over a three-year period since that is the normal span of time when all workstations and servers need to be replaced and software upgraded; and to account for the fact that you don't have to purchase new hardware as often (which is a huge cost savings when moving to the cloud), we need to show this over a three-year period to show the true and full cost savings.

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Cloud Versus A Traditional Network

ACME Company

This is a financial services company that has 20 employees all using Microsoft Office. Other applications being used include Microsoft Exchange, Yardi, and all company data stored in the Cloud. This is an example for illustration purposes only and actual client pricing and saving will vary depending on actual services utilized, vendors selected and number of features chosen.

Item	Traditional Network Cost Over 3 Years	Cloud Network Cost Over 3 Years
Hardware		
Server 1 – Active Directory / Data storage	$25,000	$500/month x 36 = $18,000
Server 2 – Exchange	$25,000	Included in Email Hosting
Network Switches		
Workstations (20) – Refresh 1/3 of them every year	7 x $1,000 = $7,000	7 x $1,000 = $7,000
Other Devices – iPads, Mac Books,		
Software		
Microsoft Operating System	$1,500	Included
Microsoft Office Box Licenses	$365 license x 7 users/year = $2,555 for Upgrade	Included
Exchange Server	$5,000	Included
Exchange User Licenses	20 x $200 = $400	Included
Exchange Email Hosting		$7 x 20 x 36 = $5,040
MS Office 365		$8 x 20 x 36 = $5,760
SQL Server / SQL User		
Malware Protection	20 x $50 = $1,000/year x 3 = $3,000	
Antivirus	20 x $50 = $1,000 / year x 3 = $3,000	
Spam Filtering	$500/ year x 3 = $1,500	Included
Other Costs		
Internet Connection (High Speed Broadband) 150MB	$250/month x 36 = $9,000	$250/month x 36 = $9,000
Firewall		
Backup (on-site and off-site)	$500/year x 3 = $1,500	Included
Storage		Included
Labor		
Outsourced IT Support for Maintenance	$15,000 / year x 3 = $45,000	$15,000 / year x 3 = $45,000
Project or Migration IT Costs	$10,000 / year x 3 = $30,000	Most Software Upgrades Included - $5,000
Total Costs	$$ 154,455	$$94,800
Savings:	$$$ 59,655	

As you can see, the cost savings are often compelling enough for business owners to overlook the risks of cloud computing; and if carefully planned, those risks of downtime and security are greatly minimized. In fact, our average client of this size saves around $20,000 a year when they move to the cloud and experience LESS downtime, problems and system crashes than they did with their in-house network.

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Different Types Of Cloud Solutions Explained:

Pure Cloud: This is where all your applications and data are put on the other side of the firewall (in the Cloud) and accessed through various devices (laptops, desktops, iPads, phones) via the Internet.

Hybrid Cloud: Although "pure" cloud computing has valid applications, for many it's a little scary. And in some cases it is NOT the smartest move, due to compliance issues, security restrictions, speed and performance. A hybrid cloud enables you to put certain pieces of existing IT infrastructure (say, storage and e-mail) in the cloud, and the remainder of the IT infrastructure stays on-premises. This gives you the ability to enjoy the cost savings and benefits of cloud computing where it makes the most sense without risking your entire environment.

Single Point Solutions: Another option would be to simply put certain applications, like SharePoint or Microsoft Exchange, in the cloud while keeping everything else on-site. Since e-mail is usually a critical application that everyone needs and wants access to on the road and on various devices (iPad, smartphone, etc.), often this is a great way to get advanced features of Microsoft Exchange without the cost of installing and supporting your own in-house Exchange server. The other option is to also put your data storage in the Cloud as it allows for automated backups, better security, audit trail and very fast recovery from ransomware.

Public Cloud vs. Private Cloud: A public cloud is a service that anyone can tap into with a network connection and a credit card. They are shared infrastructures that allow you to pay-as-you-go and are managed through a self-service web portal (like MS Azure). Private clouds are essentially self-built infrastructures that mimic public cloud services, but are created in the Cloud in private spaces and connections with no public access. Private clouds are often the choice of companies who want the benefits of cloud computing, but don't want their data held in a public environment.

FAQs about Security, Where Your Data Is Held and Internet Connectivity

Question: How long will it take to transition my on-premises server to the cloud, and what's the process?

Answer: Of course this depends on what needs to be migrated but a typical Exchange migration can happen in a week to few weeks and a data migration might take slightly longer depending on the amount of data to synchronize to the cloud, number of users, etc.

Question: What if my Internet connection goes down? How will we be able to work?

Answer: While this is a valid concern, we overcome it in the following way for our clients in the cloud. As part of our Cloud migration strategy we would investigate bandwidth speeds to handle the user load along with setting up redundant failover WAN connections.

Question: What happens if the Internet slows to the point where it's difficult to work productively?

Answer: We resolve this by keeping a synchronized copy of your data on your on-site server or client desktops as well as in the cloud. Here's how this works: A full Cloud data client is installed on each computer which automatically synchronizes any folder or data from the local computer to the Cloud seamlessly in the background. It also acts as a backup utility that can backup your desktop and My Documents folder automatically which is a great benefit! Another option is that the same tool can be installed on a local file server and this technology will also synchronize documents between cloud servers and local servers in your office. So you have two options to either keep you existing file server or eliminate it all together. If the Internet goes down or slows to a grind, you simply open a local folder on your PC and the system will automatically know to pull the documents from desktop location. Once a file is modified, it syncs it in seconds so you don't have to worry about having multiple versions of the same document. Using this process, you get the benefits of cloud with a backup solution to keep you up and running during slow periods or complete Internet outages.

Question: What about security? Isn't there a big risk of someone accessing my data if it's in the cloud?

Answer: In many cases, cloud computing is a MORE secure way of accessing and storing data. Just because your server is on-site doesn't make it more secure; in fact, most small to medium businesses can't justify the cost of securing their network the way a cloud provider can. And most security breaches occur due to human error – one of your employees downloads a file that contains a virus, they don't use secure passwords or they simply e-mail confidential information out to people who shouldn't see it. Other security breaches occur in on-site networks because the company didn't properly maintain their own in-house network with security updates, software patches and up-to-date antivirus software. That's a FAR more common way networks get compromised versus a cloud provider getting hacked. This Cloud data service offers a full audit trail, folder level security, automated backups and ransomware recovery and can be secured by changing a user password. No user has permanent deletion rights so any file or files can be immediately restored. Everything is held in a recycle bin that can be used to retrieve user deleted data.

Question: What if this Vendor goes out of business? How do I get my data back?

Answer: We give every client full documentation that clearly outlines where their data is and how they could get it back in the event of an emergency. This includes emergency contact numbers, detailed information on how to access your data and infrastructure without needing our assistance (although our plan is to always be there to support you).

Question: Do I have to purchase new hardware (servers, workstations) to move to the cloud?

Answer: No! That's one of the selling points of cloud computing. It allows you to use slightly older workstations, laptops and servers because the computing power is in the cloud. Not only does that allow you to keep and use hardware longer, but it allows you to buy cheaper workstations and laptops because you don't need the expensive computing power required in the past. You can also leverage devices like iPads and Tablets that are less expensive than a high end workstation.

What To Look For When Hiring An IT Consultant To Move Your Network To The Cloud

Unfortunately, the IT consulting industry (along with many others) has its own share of incompetent or unethical people who will try to take advantage of trusting business owners who simply do not have the ability to determine whether or not they know what they are doing. Sometimes this is out of greed for your money; more often it's simply because they don't have the skills and competency to do the job right <u>but won't tell you that up front because they want to make the sale</u>.

From misleading information, unqualified technicians and poor management, to terrible customer service, we've seen it all, and we know they exist in abundance because we have had a number of customers come to us to clean up the disasters they have caused.

Automotive repair shops, electricians, plumbers, lawyers, realtors, dentists, doctors, accountants, etc., are heavily regulated to protect the consumer from receiving substandard work or getting ripped off. However, the computer industry is still highly unregulated and there are few laws in existence to protect the consumer – **which is why it's so important for you to really research the company or person you are considering, to make sure they have the experience to set up, migrate and support your network to the cloud.**

Anyone who can hang out a shingle can promote themselves as a "cloud expert." Even if they are honestly *trying* to do a good job for you, their inexperience can cost you dearly in your network's speed and performance or in lost or corrupt data files. To that end, here are some key questions you should ask your IT person before letting them migrate your network to the cloud:

Critical Questions To Ask Your IT Company Or Computer Consultant BEFORE Letting Them Move Your Network To The Cloud (Or Touch Your Network!)

Question: How many clients have you provided cloud services for to date and how long have you been in business?

Answer: You don't want someone practicing on your network. At a minimum, make sure they have been in business for at least 5+ years or much longer and are current on the new Cloud technologies including Public, Private and Hybrid cloud solutions, data storage in the Cloud and MS-Office 365.

Question: How quickly do they guarantee to have a technician working on an outage or other problem?

Answer: Anyone you pay to support your network should give you a written SLA (service level agreement) that outlines exactly how IT issues get resolved and in what time frame.

They should also answer their phones live from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and provide you with an emergency after-hours number you may call if a problem arises, including on weekends.

If you cannot access your network because the Internet is down or due to some other problem, you can't be waiting around for hours for someone to call you back OR (more importantly) start working on resolving the issue.

Question: What's your plan for transitioning our network to the cloud to minimize problems and downtime?

Answer: We run a simultaneous cloud environment during the transition and don't "turn off" the old network until everyone is 100% confident that everything has been transitioned and is working effortlessly. You don't want someone to switch overnight without setting up a test environment first.

Question: Do you provide a no-risk trial of our network in the cloud to test the proof of concept BEFORE we commit to a long-term contract?

Answer: We provide all of our clients a free 15 or 30-day cloud "test drive" of the applications and data so you can see, first-hand, what it will be like for you and your staff to move your servers to the cloud. While this isn't a full migration, it will give you a true feel for what cloud computing will be like BEFORE committing to a long-term contract. There is no charge for this and no obligation to buy anything. At the end of the 30 days, you'll know whether or not this is a right fit for you, or if you would prefer to keep your current on-site network.

Question: Do they take the time to explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand (not geek-speak), or do they come across as arrogant and make you feel stupid for asking simple questions?

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Answer: Our technicians are trained to have the patience and "heart of a teacher" and will take time to answer your questions and explain everything in simple terms. Our goal is to make sure you have a clear understanding of the options and solutions being recommended in advance.

Question: How will your data be stored?

Answer: You should receive full documentation about where your data is, how it's being secured and backed up and how you could get access to it if necessary.

Question: How will your data be secured and backed up?

Answer: If they tell you that your data will be stored in their own co-lo in the back of their office, what happens if THEY get destroyed by a fire, flood or other disaster? What are they doing to secure the office and access? Are they backing it up somewhere else? Make sure they are SAS 70 certified HIPPA compliant or FISNA compliant and have a failover plan in place to ensure continuous service in the event that their location goes down. If they are building on another platform, you still want to find out where your data is and how it's being backed up.

Question: What is THEIR disaster recovery plan? What happens if they go out of business?

Answer: You should know the redundancy being provided by the vendor delivering service and how you could recover your data if there were a disaster situation. Also, if they DID go Out of Business how could you receive a copy of your data.

Question: Do they have adequate errors-and-omissions insurance as well as workers' compensation insurance to protect YOU?

Answer: Here's something to consider: if THEY cause a problem with your network that causes you to be down for hours or days or to lose data, who's responsible? Here's another question to consider: if one of their technicians gets hurt at your office, who's paying? In this litigious society we live in, you better make darn sure that whomever you hire is adequately insured with both errors-and-omissions insurance AND workers' compensation – and don't be shy about asking to see their latest insurance policies!

True Story: A few years ago Geek Squad was slapped with multimillion-dollar lawsuits from customers for the bad behavior of their technicians. In some cases, their techs were accessing, copying and distributing personal information they gained access to on customers' PCs and laptops brought in for repairs. In other cases, they lost clients' laptops (and subsequently all the data on them) and tried to cover it up. Bottom line: Make sure the company you are hiring has proper insurance to protect YOU.

Question: Is it standard procedure for them to provide you with written network documentation detailing what software licenses you own, your critical passwords, user information, hardware inventory, etc., or are they the only person with the "keys to the kingdom"?

Answer: All clients receive this in written and electronic form at no additional cost.

Side Note: You should NEVER allow an IT person to have that much control over you and your company. If you get the sneaking suspicion that your current IT person is keeping this under their

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control as a means of job security, get rid of them (and we can help to make sure you don't suffer ANY ill effects). This is downright unethical and dangerous to your organization, so don't tolerate it!

Question: Do they have other technicians on staff who are familiar with your network in case your regular technician goes on vacation or gets sick?

Answer: Yes, and since we keep detailed network documentation (basically a blueprint of your computer network) and updates on every client's account, any of our technicians can pick up where another left off.

Question: Is their help desk US-based or outsourced to an overseas company or third party?

Answer: We provide our own in-house help desk and make sure the folks helping you are friendly and helpful. We consider this one of the most important aspects of customer service, plus we feel it's an important step in keeping your data secure.

Question: Are they familiar with (and can they support) your unique line-of-business applications?

Answer: We own the problems with all line-of-business applications for our clients. That doesn't mean we can fix faulty software – but we WILL be the liaison between you and your vendor to resolve problems you are having and make sure these applications work smoothly for you instead of pointing fingers and putting you in the middle.

Question: When something goes wrong with your Internet service, phone systems, printers or other IT services, do they own the problem or do they say, "That's not our problem to fix"?

Answer: We feel WE should own the problem for our clients so they don't have to try and resolve any of these issues on their own – that's just plain old good service and something many computer guys won't do.

Case Studies: What Our Clients Have To Say About Moving To The Cloud

"We move to Data Stored in the Cloud and <u>Eliminated</u> our on Premise <u>File Server</u>…Amazing!"

"After reviewing many different options of on premise File Server, File Server hosted in the Cloud and just data hosted in the cloud this Financial Services Firm with 20 employees decided to move to cloud computing instead of spending a lot of money purchasing another File Server. At first they were a bit overwhelmed on which option to pursue – but when they saw how much money we were going to save, and did a 30 day trial they decided to go for it. They are now very happy they did. Not only did they not have to purchase a new File Server but our overall costs are down and employees are able to work remotely much easier with anytime, anywhere access to our company data even on their phones. Now they wish they had done this sooner." – *Financial Services Firm*

"We move to Data Stored in the Cloud and <u>Eliminated</u> our on Premise <u>Peer-to-Peer Windows XP computer</u>…Amazing!"

"After reviewing the security situation of using a Windows XP Peer-to-Peer computer as a network this Attorney started to investigate other options including the Cloud. They decided to move their entire data to the Cloud instead of spending a lot of money purchasing a true on premise File Server. When they saw how inexpensive it was to move their data they decided to upgrade and take advantage of the automated backups, point in time disaster recovery solution from Malware or Ransomware along with the Security, Audit Trail, Sharing Links and ease of use and access while maintaining a higher level of security." – *Real Estate Attorney Firm*

Essential Technologies LLC

Free Assessment Shows You How To Migrate To The Cloud And
Avoid Overpaying For Your Next IT Project Or Upgrade

If you're like a number of CEOs we've helped, you've already been burned, disappointed and frustrated by the questionable advice and **complete lack of service** you've gotten from other IT companies. In fact, you might be so fed up and disgusted from being "sold" that you don't trust anyone. *I don't blame you.*

That's why I'd like to offer you a **FREE Cloud Readiness Assessment** to show you there IS a better way to upgrade your computer network AND to demonstrate how a truly competent IT consultant (not just a computer "mechanic") can guide your company to greater profits and efficiencies, help you be more strategic and give you the tools and systems to fuel growth.

At no cost or obligation, one of my lead consultants and I will come to your office and conduct a thorough review and inventory of your current computer network, backups and technologies to give you straightforward answers to the following:

- ✓ How using cloud technologies may be able to <u>eliminate the cost, complexity and problems</u> of managing your own in-house server while giving you <u>more freedom, lowered costs, tighter security and instant disaster recovery</u>. I say "may" because it might NOT be the best choice for you. I'll give you honest answers to your questions and detail – in plain English – the pros AND cons of moving your specific operations to the cloud.

- ✓ Are your IT systems <u>truly safe and secured</u> from hackers, viruses and rogue employees? (FACT: 99% of the computer networks we review are NOT, much to the surprise of the CEOs who are paying some other "so-called" expert to manage that aspect of their IT.)

- ✓ Are your backups configured properly to ensure that you could be back up and running again <u>fast</u> in a disaster? From our experience, most companies' backups are an epic waste of money and only deliver a false sense of security.

- ✓ If you are ALREADY using "cloud" technologies, are you adequately protecting your organization from the dozens of ways you and your organization can be harmed, sued or financially devastated due to security leaks, theft, data loss, hacks and violating ever-expanding data privacy laws?

Even if you decide not to move your network to the cloud or engage with us as a client, you'll find the information we share with you to be extremely valuable and eye-opening when you make future decisions about IT. After all, it NEVER hurts to get a third-party "checkup" of your IT systems' security, backups and stability, as well as a competitive cost analysis.

Essential Technologies LLC

There Is One Small "Catch"

Because our Cloud Readiness Assessments take anywhere between two to eight hours to complete (with a lot of additional "behind-the-scenes" research we conduct), I can only extend this offer to the first 10 people who respond. After that, we'll have to withdraw this offer or ask that you pay our customary consulting flat fee of $750 for this Assessment (sorry, no exceptions).

To respond, please call our office at 877-487-9797 x100 and ask for me, David B. Lobocki. I personally want to take your call to answer any questions about this letter, my company and how we might be able to help you. You can also e-mail me direct at info@essentialtechnologies.com.

Awaiting your response,

David B. Lobocki

www.essentialtechnologies.com/5-Critical-Facts-About-Cloud/

Call us direct: 877-487-9797 x100

Essential Technologies LLC

The Top 5 Reasons Why You'll Want To Outsource Your IT Support To Us:

1. **No Geek-Speak.** You deserve to get answers to your questions in PLAIN ENGLISH, not in confusing technical terms. Our technicians will also not talk down to you or make you feel stupid because you don't understand how all this "technology" works. That's our job!

2. **100% No-Small-Print Satisfaction Guarantee.** Quite simply, if you are not happy with our service and support, we'll do whatever it takes to make it right. And if we can't make it right, that service item is free.

3. **All Projects Are Completed On Time And On Budget.** When you hire us to complete a project for you, we won't nickel-and-dime you with unforeseen or unexpected charges or delays. We guarantee to deliver precisely what we promised to deliver, on time and on budget, with no excuses.

4. **Lower Costs, Waste And Complexity With Cloud Solutions.** By utilizing cloud computing and other advanced technologies, we can eliminate the cost, complexity and problems of managing your own in-house server while giving you more freedom, lowered costs, tighter security and instant disaster recovery.

5. **We Won't Hold You Hostage.** Many IT companies do NOT provide their clients with simple and easy-to-understand documentation that outlines key network resources, passwords, licenses, etc. By keeping that to themselves, IT companies hold their clients "hostage" to scare them away from hiring someone else. This is both unethical and unprofessional. As a client of ours, we'll provide you with full, written documentation of your network and all the resources, software licenses, passwords, hardware, etc., in simple terms so YOU can understand it. We keep our clients by delivering exceptional service – not by keeping them in the dark.