



AMAZON WEB SERVICES

Grow online customer engagement with the cloud

A guide and assessment for small and medium-sized businesses



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Introduction

About this eBook

This eBook is intended to help business decision-makers in small and medium-sized organizations understand how migrating websites and applications to the cloud unlocks better online experiences and opens up new opportunities.

You'll learn:

- What digital business strategies are and how they help your business
- How cloud solutions level the playing field for small and medium-sized businesses
- How to assess your business readiness for cloud-based website and application solutions
- How to get started





CHAPTER ONE

Engaging customers through better online experiences

No matter what type of business you have, customers increasingly expect to find and communicate with you online—from any device. A basic website is no longer enough to support the level of engagement that most customers anticipate.

Small and medium-sized businesses have a lot to gain from improving online engagement. In fact, research shows that those that implemented a digital strategy were three times more likely to increase revenue than those that didn't.¹

But increasingly sophisticated websites and apps require more storage and more management, and budgets likely won't scale as quickly as your web traffic. Big expenses combined with finite resources often force businesses to compromise on value-added online experiences for their customers.

Many small and medium-sized businesses find the online model they are using is holding them back for the following reasons:

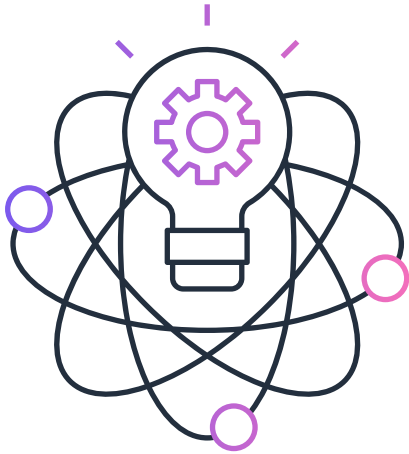
- **Poor customer experience:** Customers expect a high level of service, regardless of company size, and they may abandon businesses after a poor online experience. Giving customers the experience they expect—including the ability to get information on and consume products and services how and when they want, on any device—requires cutting edge tools and skillsets. It also requires the time and resources to keep up with the latest technologies and features.

¹ SMB Group, “SMB Technology Directions for a Changing World,” Published 2021.

- **Lack of scalability and bloated budgets:** Website traffic is unpredictable, and businesses must be able to scale to support its spikes. The traditional method of paying for capacity to support peak usage means those resources sit idle during periods of normal traffic, which translates to wasted capital.
- **Limited resources:** Paying for the infrastructure, tools, and staff to build, support, and secure a digital business architecture can quickly stretch an SMB's limited resources. The costs of integrating and managing new technology and features can overwhelm smaller companies.
- **Downtime and inconsistent performance:** Slow or lost connections, dropped data, and downtime can all add up to lost business. On-premises approaches are often too expensive to reasonably meet the uptime and response time customers expect from an online business. In turn, these unmet expectations can lead to purchase abandonment and lost revenue.

Despite spending valuable resources on websites and applications, many businesses cannot keep up with customer expectations. As a result, they see little to no benefit from improved online engagement.





CHAPTER TWO

Deliver on digital initiatives with the cloud

Cloud-based solutions give you the flexibility, agility, and support you need to create, test, and deliver on your digital initiatives. Cloud services give your business access to the performance and reliability of a global network that offers high availability and the flexibility to use exactly the compute, storage, and networking resources your business needs.

These solutions also ensure you keep up with the competition. With cloud development tools, you can quickly and inexpensively incorporate new features like product videos, always-on-chat, no-contact appointment scheduling, customer newsletters, and integrated social media campaigns.

Taking advantage of the cloud removes the limitations often faced by SMBs, so you can invest in an online presence that delivers:

- **Satisfied customers:** Better performance combined with the ability to regularly enhance user experiences with the latest technologies and features, which can translate to higher revenue.

DELIVER ON DIGITAL INITIATIVES WITH THE CLOUD

- **Scalability:** Websites can be distributed across the cloud, drawing the exact amount of CPU power, bandwidth, and storage needed, so you have the flexibility to easily optimize resources. You pay as you go for what you need and avoid upfront costs for servers that sit idle when traffic is low.
- **Increased productivity:** Digital workflows simplify site maintenance by connecting you with the information you need to make decisions quickly. And by automating tasks such as monitoring, security, and backup, you can free up resources and empower your team to focus on initiatives that support your company's growth.
- **Reliability:** Cloud infrastructure pairs high-availability with ready access to exactly the resources needed, providing a level of reliability not achievable with in-house solutions.

By switching to cloud-based development, your team can spend more time working on what matters most: delivering the best possible experience for your customers.

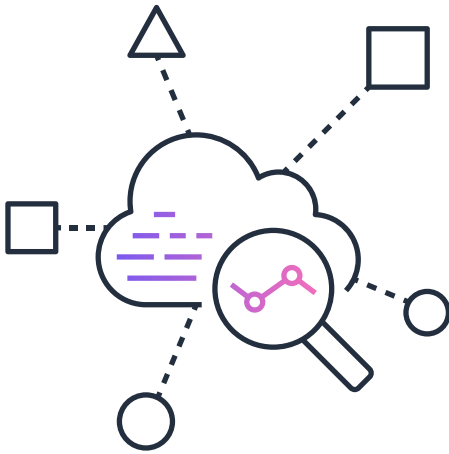


Assessment: Will the Cloud Improve Your Website and Apps?

Each organization is different, and your digital journey should reflect the specific business outcomes important to your success. Review the statements below and mark “yes” for those that apply to your business.

- My current or prospective customers rely on my website to purchase, track, or get support for our products or services.
- My customers and partners expect to easily access account and order information from any device.
- Users abandon purchases or other activities on our site before completion due to performance issues.
- Part of our growth strategy is to engage more customers while also reducing administrative costs.
- Basic processes from onboarding to expense reports and PO approvals are not well integrated and create administrative overhead.
- We too frequently have unplanned downtime and key content loads slowly on our site.
- It is time consuming and resource intensive to properly secure customer data and meet regulatory requirements.
- My development team is busy maintaining existing applications and doesn't have time to add new features or capabilities that would improve the customer experience.
- My development team is busy maintaining existing applications, not developing apps to respond to the needs of internal or external customers.
- My competitors often have a website that is easier to use, has more capability, and is mobile friendly.

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, your business could benefit from moving your online presence to the cloud.



CHAPTER FOUR

A cloud solution customized for your business

The cloud gives you endless possibilities for connecting employees, customers, and data, all without requiring a team of IT developers or a big budget. You'll gain the power to attract new customers and engage with them more often.

With the cloud, you'll have access to a complete set of capabilities to help you move and maintain your website and applications.

- **Build and host websites:** Engaging websites provide interactive and relevant content. Ready-to-run, budget-friendly solutions give you everything you need to jumpstart your website. Predefined configurations for popular content management solutions make it easy to create and maintain websites. Hosting accounts are available to meet the needs of any size business, with predictable pricing to match any budget.
- **Create web and mobile applications:** Use the cloud to manage work more easily inside and outside of the organization. You can create simple, custom apps for employee onboarding, travel and expense reporting, procurement management, and everything in between—no programming expertise required. Prebuilt templates for common applications—such as task tracking, event management, purchase order approval, and inventory management—are available for quick starts. Cloud solutions also offer flexible, secure, integration-ready, and low-cost database solutions for online sales and retailing to help small and medium-sized business meet Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance.

Deliver a secure and high-performance online experience. When you leverage the cloud, edge networking services transmit your user-facing data securely and with lower latency. The cloud can enable you to defend traffic from malicious web attacks while also efficiently routing and managing network traffic to improve performance. Content delivery is enhanced through a fast content delivery network (CDN) that supports website, video, API, and file caching.

Choosing the right cloud provider can also enable you to easily develop, test, and deploy. Ready-to-run, budget-friendly solutions can make it easy to explore and implement the right solutions when you need them.

Your cloud provider should be able to make your website and application management easier through:

- **Predefined configurations** available for WordPress and other popular content management solutions, taking the guesswork out of creating your site.
- **Prebuilt templates** that require no programming experience.
- **Flexible, secure, integration-ready, and low-cost database solutions** that are easily accessible for online sales and retailing and enable PCI compliance.
- **Easy to create and delete development sandboxes** and test environments that enable you to move from idea to development and test quickly, without large upfront investments.
- **Integration with a wide range of partner products** and a rich partner ecosystem that speed your time to deployment.
- **High availability networks** that ensure you can rapidly respond and scale when demand is high. The cloud provides a way for businesses of your size to offer customers a rich online experience with features that specifically meet your needs and budget.



CHAPTER FIVE

Elevate your customer experience with Amazon Web Services (AWS)

With more than a million active customers and a global cloud presence since 2006, AWS has the most experience helping organizations of all ages, industries, and geographies benefit from the cloud.

We offer tools to assess, plan, and support your website and apps, including skillset training and a complete software, services, support, and partner ecosystem. Scale and pay as you grow, reduce risk, and accelerate innovation with the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud platform.

AWS offers organizations of your size the following benefits:

- **Real savings you can see and measure:** AWS helps customers better utilize resources, leading to an average cost savings of 31 percent.² We've reduced costs more than one hundred times over the last decade, returning more than half a billion dollars to our customers.
- **Built-in reliability and resiliency:** AWS provides the most reliable cloud with the least outages, resulting in customers achieving a 69 percent reduction in unplanned downtime.³ We have a track record for being the highest-availability cloud, a status built on our extensive investment in global availability zones and redundant networks, storage, and compute. In addition, AWS security infrastructure is built

² AWS, "Accelerating your AWS Journey," Published 2021.

³ AWS, "Accelerating your AWS Journey," Published 2021.

to satisfy the requirements of the world's leading financial, educational, and governmental institutions—ensuring you have the same level of security they do. AWS customers report 43 percent fewer monthly security incidents on average.⁴

- **A broad, deep, and constantly growing set of capabilities:** AWS provides the largest, most comprehensive set of services of any cloud provider. When you partner with us, you continuously gain new, simple, trusted, and accessible solutions that enable you to build websites and applications that better engage customers—without having to make your own investments in capital and talent.

Get started delivering a better customer experience

AWS infrastructure, services, and support are specifically designed to enable you to deliver a rich customer experience without needing deep web or application development expertise. With the AWS “no-code” application builder, you can create simple, custom apps.

An extensive partner network gives you access to a wide range of products and services optimized for AWS cloud infrastructure. AWS content delivery solutions enable consistent, fast, and secure delivery of rich content.

And you gain access to the performance and reliability of a global network that offers high availability and the flexibility to use exactly the compute, storage, and networking resources your business needs. Whether you're developing a marketing, rich-media, or ecommerce website, AWS uniquely supports businesses of your size through:

- **Broad platform support:** AWS supports popular content management systems, including WordPress, Drupal, Joomla, and more. AWS also supports popular platforms like Java, Ruby, PHP, Node.js, and .Net. This flexibility reduces the burden on your resources, making it easier to migrate and manage.
- **A foundation for growth:** AWS helps you scale as your business grows and your needs change with additional capacity, new services, and functionality that is literally a click away, so you can better engage your customers.
- **Unmatched global access:** AWS has the industry's most reliable global network that allows you to maximize uptime, performance, and reliability. You can host your website in any geography with just a few clicks.

⁴ Nucleus Research & AWS, “[Guidebook: Understanding the Value of Migrating from On-Premises to AWS for Application Security and Performance](#),” Published June 2020.

If you are ready for a more cost effective, manageable, and differentiated online presence, it's easy to get started. Here's how:

- **Set up your free account:** Start by creating an AWS account and use the predefined configurations for common web server (hosting) setup. Simple sites can be set up in minutes. Hosting accounts are available to meet the needs of any size site. You can start a free trial to test ideas before deploying them. Build or transfer a site with web tools you already use or investigate new best-in-class options.
- **Start growing traffic and increasing customer engagement:** Once you've seen how the AWS platform can enable your website and applications, launching your site is simple. Then, you can focus on building traffic and customer engagement.
- **Simplify managing your site with digital workflows:** Use the cloud to manage work more easily. Simple web interfaces connect you with the information you need to make decisions quickly and stay productive.
- **Get access to the support you need:** You are never on your own with AWS. AWS Support provides a mix of tools and technology, people, and programs designed to proactively help you optimize performance, lower costs, and innovate faster. You can complete projects with the help of AWS Certified freelancers and consulting firms.

Delivering a customer experience that allows you to grow your business does not have to wait.

By leveraging the cloud to enhance your website and applications, you get access to the features and capabilities your customers are demanding without the complexity or the cost of trying to build from the ground up.

Give your business the advantage of a digital presence powered by AWS, the most experienced cloud provider.



**Get started today
and take advantage
of our free trial.**