

You *can* have your cake and eat it too!

Or how moving your office infrastructure to the cloud can save money and increase productivity

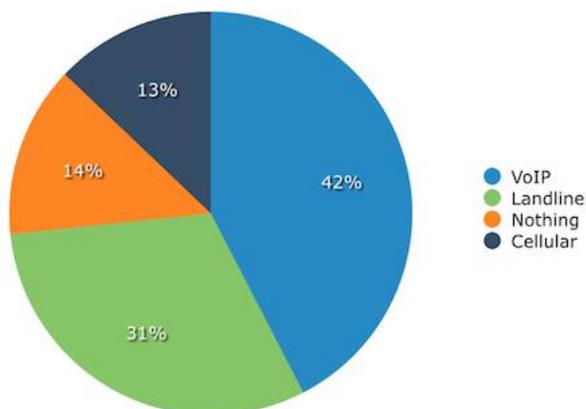
Dom Pernai, President, Cornerstone Solutions

As I write this article, I think back to the Ground Hog Day blizzard of 2011. Not because it is another hot summer day and I am looking for relief. No, I think of that day because like most Chicagoans I was stuck in my home, however, I was able to be as productive as ever. I had my office phone by my side and my computer hooked up to a docking station and I could complete anything that I would complete if I had been in the office. All of the data that I would access in my office from email to our customer database to our accounting system was all available to me. How is that possible you ask? It was possible because of a cost saving decision I made a year earlier.

It was during the recession and our business like most in construction was experiencing some tough times. We had your typical office infrastructure including our phone system and five servers in a rack. Each of those servers were mission critical to what we needed to every day. We paid an IT firm a monthly fee to monitor our servers. They made sure they were backed up and virus free. Those were very important but costly tasks. Our workforce is very mobile going from office to office (our jobsites) on any given day. We had remote access to our servers, but that wasn't cheap either. One of those servers was a dedicated terminal server. This allowed our employees to have access to our systems while out of the office.

Between the cost of the IT firm and the continual obsolescence of our server hardware, we invested a significant sum of money annually. So as I went searching for ways to save money during those tough times, I happened upon an article about taking your office phone everywhere you went. In that article it stated, not only could you use your phone from anywhere in the world with an Internet connection, but you would save money while doing it. I did some research and found a number of companies that were offering these solutions. We moved away from our old landlines and saved over **\$6,000** annually. The service has been extremely reliable and we have better features than our old system ever had. We are far from alone. Just take a look at the percentage of businesses using this type of service:

CURRENT METHODS OF BUSINESS PHONE USE



Source: VoIP Software Small Business BuyerView | 2014 Software Advice

Armed with this cost savings I took aim at the next target where money seemed to be going to waste. As I began to research the ways to have your servers hosted I discovered not only could I have them hosted but it would be less expensive than paying my IT firm the monthly contract fee we had been paying. Also, because of the gains in hardware we are able to get much better performance from our hosted servers than we did from the on premise servers.

Some people think they have to change or update their applications to take advantage of cloud servers. That simply isn't true. You can continue to run the same programs and applications you do today, but you are choosing to not have the server in a closet down the hall, but in an extremely secure datacenter. Security is always something that makes people get very nervous about using cloud technology. The reality is that the right data center provider has much better security than any of us could afford.

On-Premise vs. Software as a Service

On-Premise Server vs Azure (L) Cloud Server Generic Line of Business app sample case



Source: Comparing cloud vs on-premise? BetaNews | Forbes Small Business

And let's not forget the cost savings! We saved about \$800 per month! So we saved money, provided our people better access to relevant data and were more productive than ever! Just two days ago one of our customers received an error message from their accounting program on their hosted server. They alerted us at the end of the business day when the error occurred. Because of the hosted environment one of our consultants was able to logon and resolve the issue that evening. Our customer experiences no downtime and no one has to spend the unproductive time in the car to travel to that office and diagnose the problem.

One of the only problems I experience is now you can work from anywhere at any time, so you need to make sure you find that power switch on your phone and laptop and turn them off from time to time.

Over the span of his 30-year career in the real estate and construction project management fields, Dominic P. Pernai has proven to be an invaluable leader within an exclusive niche industry. As the President of Cornerstone Solutions, Dominic remains steadfastly at the forefront of technological innovation and advancement, a testament to his dedication to provide high-level, tailored software solutions and outstanding customer service to a far-reaching client base.