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Data Center Services

How to Choose the Best Server for Small Businesses in 2022

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1 Introduction

Running a small business comes with its trials and tribulations, and the COVID-19 pandemic has not only intensified these challenges, it's also created new obstacles for small business owners. Whilst some industries have accelerated over the last two years, others have become stagnant as the business landscape has continued to transform.

For small-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to succeed, it's essential for owners to implement resources that will not only allow their business to run efficiently, but also support future growth and long-term goals. Servers play a substantial role in achieving these objectives, but, like any other business decision, choosing the right server is one that requires significant consideration.

As the core of any company's IT infrastructure, a dependable server is key to building a strong foundation for all businesses. Overall business performance and the successful execution of crucial tasks heavily rely on servers, making it essential for SMEs to choose one that is capable of supporting their business operations.

The purpose of this whitepaper is to provide a complete guide for small business owners and their IT counterparts to successfully assess their business needs in order to determine the best server to align with them, taking into consideration software and hardware requirements as well as budget and location.

2 The impact & effect of COVID-19 for SMEs

The COVID-19 outbreak, subsequent lockdowns and constantly varying restrictions have taken a heavy toll on the economy as a whole, but specifically so on small-medium-sized enterprises. Whilst physical establishments were forced to close their doors, those able quickly adopted a work-from-home strategy in order to survive the unprecedented situation being faced globally.

The extraordinary and unpredictable circumstances saw even the biggest of corporations unprepared for the challenges they were confronted with, which further impacted SMEs on a disproportionate scale. Lack of resources, cash flow and logistical difficulties were all issues that a huge amount of SMEs were unable to withstand, but with that being said, many thrived as they were forced to adapt to the altering business landscape.

With SMEs accounting for 99% of all businesses in the EU, business owners had no choice but to move their operations online or seek out other prospects in order to keep themselves afloat. Potentially the biggest struggle encountered by SMEs was adapting to remote working or e-commerce without having any prior strategy or the correct tools in place to do so. In order to create a viable remote working environment, small businesses were forced to invest in the correct technology to allow them to continue functioning.

Suitable infrastructure and resources were required in order for employees to work effectively from home, operate a successful communication network, and securely access critical data, as well as the implementation of alternative online sales channels and so forth. For all of which technology is key and whilst many found themselves technologically unprepared, with a significant decrease in revenue and uncertainty for the future.

3   Top Business Software for Small Business in 2022

It is clear that a company's success has become driven by their ability to acclimatise and incorporate the technologies required to maintain functionality under even the most volatile circumstances. Those SaaS-based technologies include online collaboration tools, project management and remote access software, as well as cloud storage.

Whilst restrictions have changed, loosened and been lifted in some places around the world, some businesses have adapted well to working from home, and intend on continuing remote working arrangements. Business owners have reported an increase in employee productivity and overall well-being, and have now become familiarised with solutions that make home working sustainable. Below are the top business software for SMEs in 2022.

3.1   Online collaboration tools

Investing in the right collaboration tool can improve teamwork and communication even in a traditional office environment, and of course even more so when a workforce is distributed. Maintaining effective collaboration via an online tool saves time and resources, as well as an increase in organisation and output. Popular online collaboration tools include OwnCloud, for the simple and secure exchange of information, as well as DropBox Business, amongst others.

3.2 Real-time Communication

With in-person meetings being restricted for quite some time, communication tools like Slack, Zoom and Microsoft Teams have become effective channels for both peer-to-peer and client conferences. With travel restrictions and isolation periods still being prominent, these tools allow SMEs to continue to expand beyond geographical boundaries. These platforms are now an integral part of any successful cooperation but require minimal latency and delays to achieve seamless communication.

3.3 Security

Possibly the biggest concern for SMEs are the cyber security risks associated with remote working. With the majority of tasks being conducted online, employees may find themselves more vulnerable to threats without the necessary security systems that would be in place in an office environment. A security breach for any company could be catastrophic, but securing remote access to internal systems like a company's intranet can be done with a VPN. A VPN and static IP address not only make remote access more secure, but also more convenient.

3.4 Storage and Backup

Cloud storage and backup is a secure platform for SMEs to store their data whilst also making it easily accessible for their employees. Not to mention, disaster recovery and protection against data loss can potentially save a company a fortune if the worst was to occur. Cloud-based storage solutions are flexible and can accommodate the growth of SMEs as their requirements change.

4 Benefits of hosting on Cloud vs. On-premise

Cloud computing has increased in popularity drastically in recent years, with many companies opting to migrate their data and business operations to the cloud. With that being said, on-premise hosting, or on-prem, has been a tried-and-true approach for many years, leaving many small business owners sceptical as to whether the change would be worthwhile. There are numerous reasons as to why many SMEs could benefit from cloud hosting over on-premise.

4.1 Cost-effective

The initial expenses of setting up an on-premise hosting environment are significant, with business owners being responsible for not only server hardware, but also ongoing maintenance, electricity costs and other overheads that quickly add up. Cloud hosting and resources are packaged as a single comprehensive solution that is affordable through either a subscription or usage-based model, ensuring major savings long-term.

4.2 Remote Accessibility

Cloud hosting provides ease of access for employees working from any location, on any device connected to the internet. This feature allows business operations to run significantly smoother, offers employees flexibility whilst also increasing engagement and convenience for clients.

4.3 Maintenance

With on-premise hosting a certain degree of IT expertise is required for the management and upkeep of servers and hardware. Meaning business owners without this knowledge must hire an IT specialist to do so, which not only adds additional responsibility, but also increases monthly outgoings. When utilising any IaaS or SaaS, all necessary maintenance and update costs and duties are absorbed by the provider.

5 How to Choose the Right Server for Business Software

Determining the right server for any business can be a daunting task, however by carefully assessing a company's needs and future objectives, the process becomes relatively clearer. The following four steps can be used as an effective guideline in making this decision.

5.1 Research: Software Used & Hardware Requirements

SMEs use servers for a multitude of reasons, some of which include:

- Website and e-commerce hosting

- Storing and sharing files

- Data backup

- Secure email hosting

- Creating virtual desktops

- Hosting collaboration, accounting or CRM software

It is important to consider which of these, or more, you expect to run on your server, whilst also evaluating how many users each application intends to support, and how resource-intensive each application is. If, for example, a largely utilised application uses a huge amount of CPU and RAM, this must be mirrored in your choice of server.

Whilst analysing, it is also crucial to contemplate any future expansion and make a decision that reflects that probability. The right server is one powerful enough to support everything you need as efficiently as possible, without affecting performance or hindering growth.

5.2 Determine the right location of your server

When choosing the location of your server, there are two main options; on-premises or hosting a server in the cloud, the benefits of which have been outlined above. Opting for on-premise hosting generally requires a lot more planning than cloud hosting, in all aspects.

Sufficient physical space is required within your premises to store the server and hardware, as well as adequate cooling systems and a redundant power supply. The burden of maintaining or replacing hardware is also something that needs to be considered, as well as the cost of IT staff if you are unable to manage your server by yourself.

Generally speaking, opting for cloud hosting is a wise choice for SMEs not only due to the cost-effective payment model but also in terms of 24/7 support and unimpeded scalability.

5.3   Define your budget

Cost is undoubtedly a huge factor when setting up a server. If you decide to opt for cloud hosting, you need to factor in an additional monthly expense that aligns with your budget. Although no large initial investment or long-term commitment is required, it is important to choose a cloud server based on a cost that is sustainable.

When investing in an on-premise server, the entire setup needs to be calculated as well as the ongoing monthly upkeep costs. Having an approximate budget in mind is essential when you begin to examine and evaluate your options.

5.4   Choose between Cloud or Dedicated Server

After weighing up the above factors, choosing between cloud hosting and a dedicated server is the underlying decision. Whilst a dedicated server can be run both on and off-premise, you may want to consider the level of control you require as well as your capabilities of maintaining a server in house. If you are considering running a dedicated server off-site, it is fundamental to choose a secure location close to your client-base.

Popular Small Business Servers by NetShop ISP

Launched in 2004, NetShop ISP is a multi-award winning Data Center Services & Server Hosting Provider with years of experience helping small businesses deploy the right server to support their business needs. Listed below are our most popular small business servers.
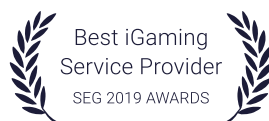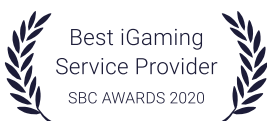
DX-R43 / DELL PowerEdge R430
2 x Intel Xeon E5-2637 v3 3.50GHz
4 Cores / 8 Threads
32GB RAM [expandable]
2 x 480GB SSD [expandable]

SX-R34 / DELL PowerEdge R340
1 x Intel Xeon E-2224 3.40GHz
4 Cores / 4 Threads
32GB RAM [expandable]
2 x 480GB SSD [expandable]

To arrange a free consultation with one of our Specialists, visit our website here
www.netshop-isp.com.cy/contact-us

Best iGaming
Service Provider
SBC AWARDS 2020

Best iGaming
Service Provider
SEG 2019 AWARDS

Best iGaming
Service Provider
CEEGC 2019 AWARDS

ISO 9001

Web Hosting, Data Center Services, Information and Communication Technoloies (ICT)