

# How migrating Microsoft workloads to AWS enables SMB customers to optimise costs



During a time of economic uncertainty and rapid change, many small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) face the challenge of rationalising unnecessary business costs while increasing the performance, availability, and security of their Microsoft workloads to remain competitive.

By adopting a cloud-based approach to running Microsoft workloads, SMB customers can enjoy the benefits of a more modern and flexible IT environment, including reduced costs, improved innovation, and enhanced capabilities for digital transformation.

This article examines the reasons why many SMB customers are migrating Microsoft workloads to the cloud and the benefits of running Microsoft workloads on AWS.

## WHY ARE ORGANISATIONS MOVING MICROSOFT WORKLOADS TO THE CLOUD?

With rising costs and economic instability, SMB customers are under great pressure to optimise operations and reduce unnecessary business expenses. This is especially true as SMB customers look to navigate the uncertainty of the post-pandemic world. One study has found that over 61% of mid-sized business leaders cite uncertain economic conditions as their top challenge for 2021.<sup>1</sup> With the rising cost of Microsoft licenses and the significant cost burden of running legacy IT infrastructure, migrating workloads to the cloud has provided organisations with a more cost-effective way to run their Windows-based applications.

While organisations continue to focus on reducing costs, this must be done without undermining businesses' ability to continue to grow and remain responsive to competitors and changing customer demands. As digital transformation accelerates across nearly every industry, customers are increasingly demanding new digital interactions, services, and products. If organisations are unable to provide this, they risk losing customers to more digitally advanced competitors. Being able to remain competitive, drive innovation, and accelerate digital transformation have been key drivers for many SMB customers that have migrated their Microsoft workloads to the cloud.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MIGRATING MICROSOFT WORKLOADS TO AWS?

There are many advantages to cloud migration for SMB customers. A recent whitepaper by IDC shows that migrating your workloads to AWS can lead to 51% reduced operational costs, 62% increased IT staff productivity, and 94% reductions in downtime.<sup>2</sup> The benefits of migrating Microsoft workloads to AWS include:

<sup>1</sup> 2021 Business Leaders Outlook, J.P. Morgan

<sup>2</sup> The Business Value of Efficiently Running High-Performing Windows Workloads in the AWS Cloud, IDC, 2019

## REDUCED OPERATIONAL COSTS

The cost of purchasing and maintaining on-premises equipment to run Windows workloads and Windows-based applications is expensive and provides less flexibility over license fees and usage. Which is why many SMB customers have already made the decision to migrate Microsoft workloads to the cloud.

By migrating Microsoft workloads to AWS, you can lower the overall costs of running Windows-based applications in the cloud. AWS offers a comprehensive family of Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (Amazon EC2) instances, and unique pricing models, like Spot Instances, that enable customers to save up to 90% on their Windows computing costs.

SMB customers can also reduce costs through reducing TCO and infrastructure overheads needed to purchase and run on-premises equipment. Instead, with flexible pay-as-you-go payment options and bring-your-own licenses to AWS, SMB customers can enjoy more flexibility, control, and visibility over their license usage and costs.

By taking advantage of the cost-saving opportunities of running Microsoft workloads in the cloud, SMB customers are able to free up capital for reinvesting back into the business so that they can continue to modernize their infrastructure and improve competitiveness for the longer term.

## ENHANCED SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE

The internet security landscape and cybersecurity threats are continually evolving, with outside parties looking to gain unauthorised access to data. SMB customers, therefore, need to remain resilient and improve their capacity to protect, detect, respond, and recover from data breaches.

Unfortunately, on-premises infrastructure provides weaker protection for customer data used in business-critical Microsoft workloads like SQL Server, Windows Server, .NET solutions, and Active Directory.

Adding to the security challenges that customers face, Microsoft has critically ended its support for Windows Server (WS) 2008 and WS 2008 R2. SMB customers still running these Microsoft workloads will be susceptible to increased security vulnerabilities and compliance issues. AWS offers 230 security, compliance, and governance services, so by migrating their Microsoft workloads to AWS, SMB customers can gain control over their applications to help secure their Microsoft workloads. AWS also helps customers overcome their end-of-support security risks through the AWS End-of-Support Migration Program (EMP), assisting businesses to migrate legacy applications from outdated Windows Server versions to newer supported versions.

## IMPROVED FLEXIBILITY

Windows-based applications are the bedrock for most organisations, with applications and data being accessed frequently by a large number of users across the business. However, for many organisations that still run their Windows-based applications on on-premises infrastructure, they are restricted by its centralised, inflexible nature. One of the implications of running Microsoft workloads on-premises includes a reduced agility for the business to scale quickly in response to changing business and customer needs. For Microsoft workloads that are run on centralised infrastructure, this impacts responsiveness and user productivity, as networks don't have the capability to support users across the business all trying to access centralised applications and Microsoft workloads during peak times.

By migrating Windows-based applications to AWS, SMB customers can increase their flexibility by adding computer, storage, or database resources at a moment's notice, so that users have access to data and applications whenever they need them. One study has found that 37% of businesses that move to the cloud state that they do so to increase flexibility.<sup>3</sup>

## BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION

With customer demand for new innovative products and online services and interactions growing –with 67% of customers expecting companies to provide new products and services more frequently than before<sup>4</sup>— SMB customers must improve their ability to support new online capabilities, products, and services.

For organisations that decide to run their Microsoft workloads in the cloud, they can gain immediate access to a range of digital technologies, smarter data, and analytical capabilities to drive innovation and support new product and application development.

By migrating Microsoft workloads to AWS, SMB customers are supported to innovate by building and modernising their .NET applications. AWS App2Container helps customers transform their applications from virtual machines into containers and deploy them to Amazon ECS. Doing so helps organisations transform their legacy applications and enjoy the flexibility and agility that cloud-native technologies provide.

## HOW TO REALISE THE COST-SAVING OPPORTUNITIES OF MIGRATING WORKLOADS

For organisations that make the decision to migrate workloads to the cloud, this requires detailed planning, an awareness of the current environment, and strategic alignment of the business's future goals. As SMB customers are evaluating their options for migrating to the cloud or reducing licensing costs, they can take advantage of an AWS Optimisation and Licensing Assessment (AWS OLA). The AWS OLA is a free program for new and existing customers to assess and optimise current on-premises and cloud environments, based on actual resource utilisation, third-party licensing, and application dependencies. SMB customers can use the AWS OLA to help build their migration and licensing strategy on AWS and explore the potential savings and agility of the AWS Cloud.

## CONCLUSION

While some businesses have already embraced the need for change and made big strides, others are just starting their journey. For SMB customers that want to remain competitive, they need a modern and flexible IT environment for running their Microsoft workloads so that they can reduce costs, respond quickly to changing customer demands, drive innovation, and enhance their security capabilities. By running Microsoft workloads on AWS, SMB customers can optimize costs and improve the performance, availability, and security of their workloads. Once migrated, AWS provides a platform for SMB customers to unlock greater innovation and further modernise their infrastructure and applications to realise continued cost-saving opportunities. To discover how First Distribution can enable SMB customers to optimise costs by migrating their Microsoft workloads to AWS, download our eBook today.

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<sup>3</sup> The 2021 State of IT Report, SWZD

<sup>4</sup> State of the Connected Customer, Salesforce, 2019