



Industry Insights Report 2021

Understanding how the cloud transforms business—and why powerful partnerships are key to a successful journey to cloud.

We've Taken a Closer Look at the Cloud

With cloud-based technology now a business priority, our research reveals how hard-working companies are getting on board.

At Epicor our market-leading industry productivity solutions rely on us knowing our industries better than anyone. We work hand-in-hand with our customers, always keeping a close eye on their evolving needs. This past year has seen a huge increase in interest in cloud. Our Industry Insights Report reveals why.

We asked 1,250 technology decision makers what they really think about the cloud. Whether on cloud, on-premises, or a mix of both, they told us what is important to their business, what accelerates growth, and what they need to make it happen. Along the way, we've uncovered powerful insights into the future of ERP.

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How Cloud is the Solution to Today's Business Challenges

Anyone watching the tech space in recent years knows that cloud has emerged as a crucial element for success. In 2020, 25% of businesses stated cloud as a strategic priority for the year. And numbers have skyrocketed in 2021 with 94% of businesses now declaring an interest in cloud-based solutions over the next twelve months.

So, what happened? In a word, Covid-19. In the space of a few months, mobile solutions became a practical necessity for many businesses, from contactless delivery to robust eCommerce systems. This new reality brought an urgent need for scalability, flexibility, agility, and security. But the good news is that the new generation of cloud-based productivity solutions deliver all of these benefits and more, as revealed in our research.

Businesses now have a better understanding of cloud. Although cloud maturity varies across industries, decision makers feel overwhelmingly optimistic about its capabilities, because it's helped them recover more quickly from Covid-19. And now they're discovering cloud's many other benefits, such as how it increases collaboration, improves flexibility and security, and frees up resources to focus on initiatives that grow the bottom line.

But while moving to cloud is increasingly essential to future success, many companies are cautious about change. One of the most important takeaways from this report is that an expert ERP partner is crucial. In fact, of the decision makers we polled, 47% say a dedicated migration partner is essential. With the right provider, migration becomes easy. And with a supportive relationship going forward, cloud enables hard-working businesses to grow stronger, faster.

We hope you find plenty of interest in this year's report. If there's one central conclusion to take away, it's that now is the time to find the right partner who can accelerate your ambitions with a cloud-based ERP solution. At Epicor, we're proud to be leading the charge, as the essential partner to the world's most essential businesses.

Steve Murphy, Epicor CEO

How Cloud Is Becoming a Business Essential

| 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|--|---|--|
| 84% | 25% | 94% |
| of businesses viewed cloud as an important role in overall growth strategy | set cloud as a strategic priority for 2020 | of businesses are interested in cloud-based solutions in the next year |

What Technology Decision Makers Think About the Cloud: Four Key Points

1. Adaptability

Businesses have unique needs and challenges. Cloud provides the flexibility to keep technology ahead with built-in scalability, simple integration, and easier compliance.

2. Security

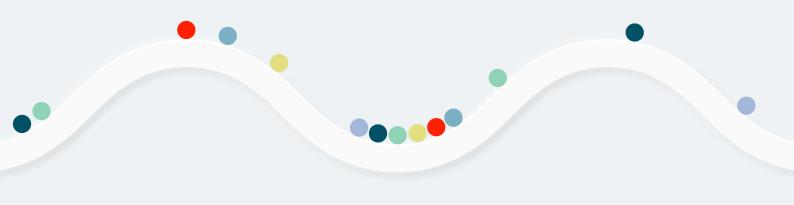
Cyber threats are a major concern for decision makers. Improved security is the topmost recognized benefit of migration to the cloud.

3. Future-proofing

Cloud helped businesses become more agile and resilient over the past year, making them better poised for what comes next.

4. Partnership

Cloud is the best technology to grow a business. And the key to successful migration and implementation relies on working with a dedicated partner.

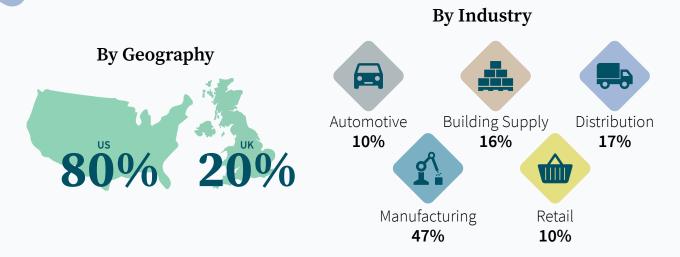


Who we Spoke to

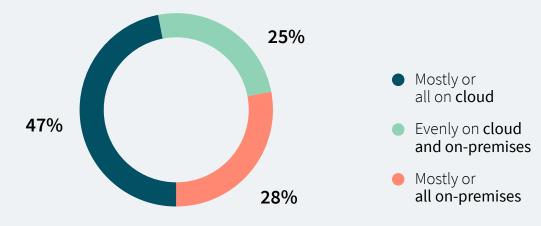


In early 2021, we asked 1,250 technology decision makers what they think about the cloud and how it impacts their business. We polled across industries, geographies, and different levels of cloud adoption to reveal the most comprehensive picture of cloud-based ERP technology in today's world of business.

Our Research Participants

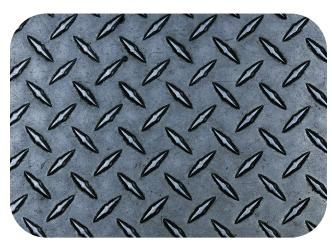






Businesses using cloud ERP have higher average revenue than those mostly or all on-premises

Our research revealed that the types of ERP deployment models vary by industry and market. In 2020 and 2021 cloud was a top technology for the retail, distribution, and manufacturing industries. Many manufacturing companies use majority cloud solutions, while automotive businesses tend to use mostly or all on-premises. There is also a correlation between a high number of locations and a tendency to use all or mostly on-premises—even though consolidating locations under one central cloud-based system can often lead to an increase in revenue.



| | Company Locations | Average Revenue |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|
| All or mostly on cloud | Fewer (6-10) | \$145 million |
| Evenly on cloud and on-premises | More (16-20) | \$149 million |
| Mostly or all on-premises | The Most (21+) | \$141 million |

Challenging the Myths

Change is often a challenge. Despite the buzz about cloud, many businesses still feel more comfortable with an on-premises solution and are hesitant to make a switch. Often what's holding them back are common misconceptions about cloud. We've taken a closer look at cloud concerns and compared them with actual realities.

| Cloud Concerns | Participant Reality |
|--|--|
| It's difficult to migrate into existing systems. | 77% of those mostly on cloud say cloud is easy to integrate, with the right partner. |
| It's not as secure as an on-premises solution. | Almost 9 in 10 businesses believe data is safer in cloud-based solutions. |
| It's not always flexible and may not meet my business needs. | 93% of those mostly on cloud say it's flexible enough to meet their business needs. |
| It can't help my company comply with data regulations. | 86% of those mostly on cloud say cloud solutions help them adhere to government data regulations. |

"Our business eats, breathes, sleeps, and moves on it."

Industry Decision Maker



Cloud Increases Flexibility to Unlock Business Capabilities

Migrating to the cloud builds flexibility and adaptability into industry productivity solutions. Cloud enables businesses to go beyond meeting the minimum standard they require to run their business. It moves them towards unlocking further capabilities that can boost their bottom line. Business owners agree—93% of businesses mostly on cloud said that it's flexible enough to meet their business needs.

With this flexibility comes growth and confidence. In 2019, businesses who reported improvement over the past six months listed cloud as the number one technology they expected to make a positive impact on industry growth. And half of them chose cloud applications as the most important element for success in a connected enterprise strategy. All of which points to a solution that flexes to help accelerate growth ambitions.

"The cloud ERP solution was a game changer for our business model. We were on-premises at multiple locations and it empowered us to move all our sites to one system and build a unified model and collaboration of our sites. This has given us a go forward path for our future acquisitions."

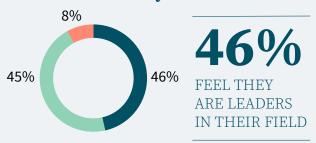


Cloud Delivers Business Confidence

92% of all cloud businesses feel they are leaders or on par with the competition, while those mostly on-premises feel left behind.

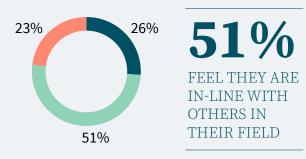
Digital transformation is one of the biggest commitments any business will ever need to undertake. As <u>Forbes</u> explains, "the decision to foray into digital transformation is primarily driven by increased competitive pressures or growth opportunities." The move to cloud is often a key aspect of this transformation. In 2020, a quarter of our respondents set cloud as their strategic priority for the year. The impact of these strategies is now being revealed, with those who have taken the step feeling confident in their cloud-based solutions. They operate as leaders, associating cloud with growth and success, while those mostly on-premises largely feel they are behind others in their field.

Businesses mostly or all on cloud

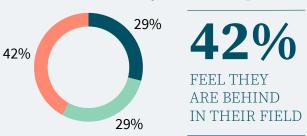


- My company is a leader in its field
- My company is in line with others in its field
- My company is behind others in its field

Businesses evenly on cloud and on-premises



Businesses mostly or all on-premises



"Epicor's cloud-based ERP software delivers the modern, cloudbased platform that we need to support our business and drive our digital transformation."

Distribution Decision Maker

Cloud Helps Businesses Adapt

87% believe cloud solutions have the flexibility to meet their business needs.

Business needs always change. Running a solution with built-in flexibility and scalability enables leaders to customize IT resources to suit these changing requirements. Whether adding users, increasing bandwidth, or boosting storage capacity, cloud enables businesses to flex in whichever way is necessary.

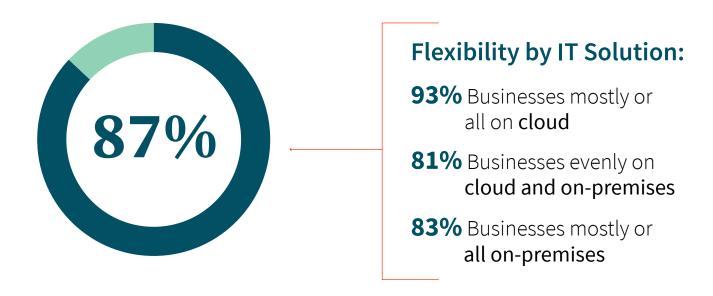
Telecommunications equipment manufacturer Metal-Tech uses a modular system that offers end-to-end scalability to meet the demands

of the manufacturing industry. As IT and plant manager, Caleb Wolf, says "We don't even have to think about it. We just know it's going to do its job."

It's clear that the myth of "losing control" with cloud is just another unhelpful misconception. In fact, 93% of businesses who are all or mostly on cloud report that their IT solution has the flexibility to meet their needs—more than those who still use some or all on-premises solutions.

Cloud IT solution flexibility to meet business needs

87% say cloud is very flexible



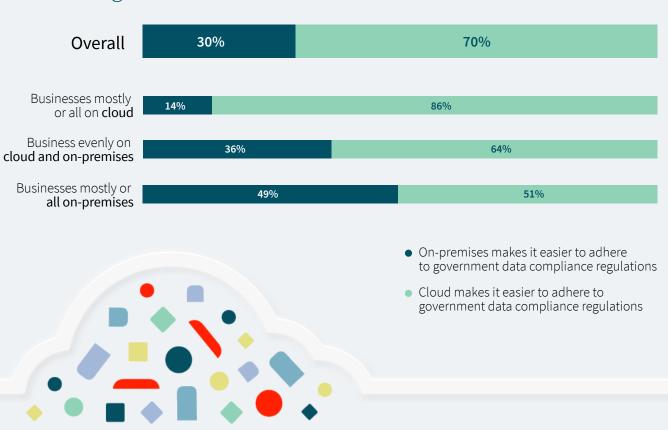
Cloud Makes Regulatory Compliance Simpler

86% of businesses all or mostly on cloud say it's easier to adhere to government regulations.

For today's businesses, the need for regulatory compliance is a fact of life. From government rules to industry standards, companies work hard to achieve compliance. Having done so with an on-premises solution, it's understandable why some are cautious to migrate to cloud. That's why choosing an expert technology partner is so important. One that knows the industry will be able to guide the migration process in a way that avoids running into any regulatory issues.

Our research reveals that once businesses migrate to cloud they overwhelmingly report that compliance becomes easier. Having instant access to the latest technology, security patches, and updates, means that they're unlikely to ever lag behind regulatory changes again.

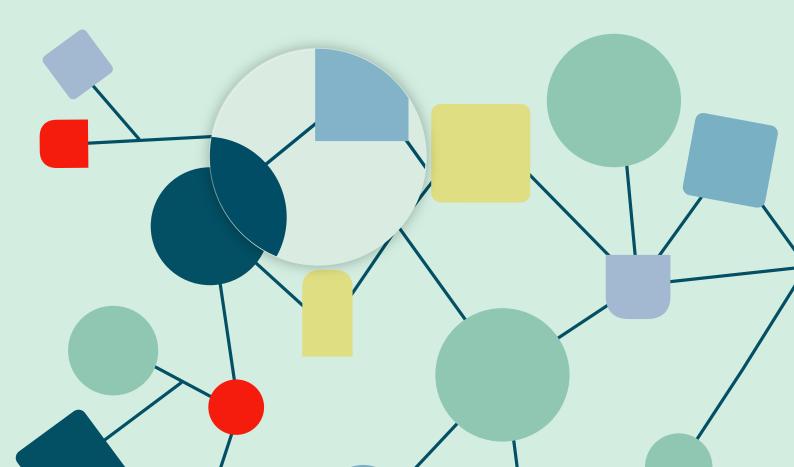
Ability of cloud and on-premises to help with compliance of data regulations



Cloud Enables Optimum Data Security

Powerful security is crucial to the successful and seamless operation of every hard-working business. As might be expected, the majority of business leaders consider it a top priority. Security is also a major sticking point for businesses contemplating the move to cloud solutions—after all, hosting a system in the cloud might feel like placing precious data into unknown territory.

The fact is cloud offers unparalleled security. Decision makers across industries agree that improved security is the primary benefit of the cloud. From keeping files safely encrypted, to installing firewalls and gatekeepers around the system, cloud enables businesses to stay a few steps ahead of any security issues. As well as delivering real peace of mind, it also enables them to focus more on growing their bottom line.



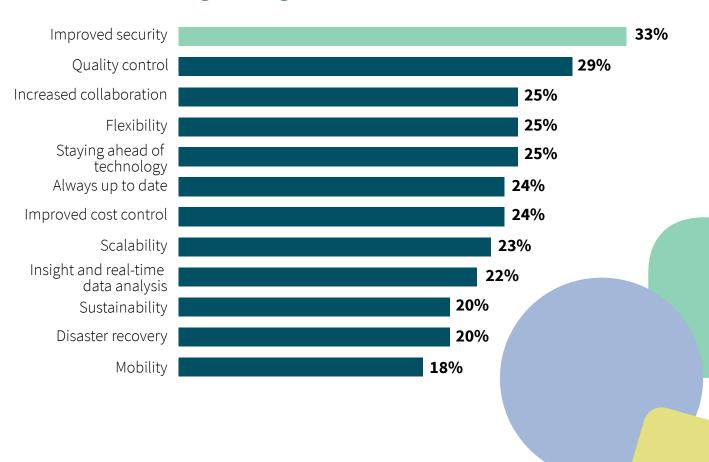
Businesses Feel More Secure in the Cloud

Almost 9 in 10 businesses believe their data is safer in cloud-based solutions.

Businesses who leverage the cloud sleep easier knowing that their information is backed up, protected, and that their legacy data is easily accessible to the right people. With a cloud-based solution, data is consistently backed up in separate servers often thousands of miles apart. This redundancy helps ensure that the files are safe, regardless of what might be happening in a specific location. And because cloud providers continuously update their servers to combat the newest cyberthreats, they're able to stay two steps ahead of hackers.

By contrast, on-premises solutions can be harder to protect. The expert resources required to safeguard servers can put a financial strain on smaller organizations. The reduced speed of responsiveness to cyberattack means that data is often more vulnerable. What's more, placing servers physically on the property can leave them more prone to break-ins or natural disasters. From this perspective, moving to cloud for increased security is an easy win.

Benefits of migrating business solutions to cloud



Cloud Comes with the Latest Security Technology Built-In

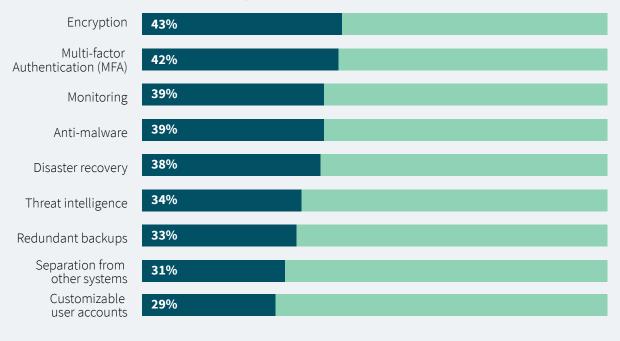
Encryption and multi-factor identification are crucial cloud security features.

Our research revealed businesses highly value cloud's many security features. The two most useful tools were considered to be encryption and multi-factor authentication. Overall, we saw a relatively even spread of popularity for cloud's security features, reflecting the fact that every business is different and values those features which suit their needs.

Cloud's focus on innovation keeps it ahead of the hackers. Public cloud hosting only became available in the last decade, so the state-of-theart data centers built by cloud providers offer more modern technology than the average on-premises server room. What's more, cloud's security patches and management tools are constantly updated to help ensure cutting-edge security at every step.



Most useful security features on cloud



Security is Top Priority When Considering Moving to Cloud

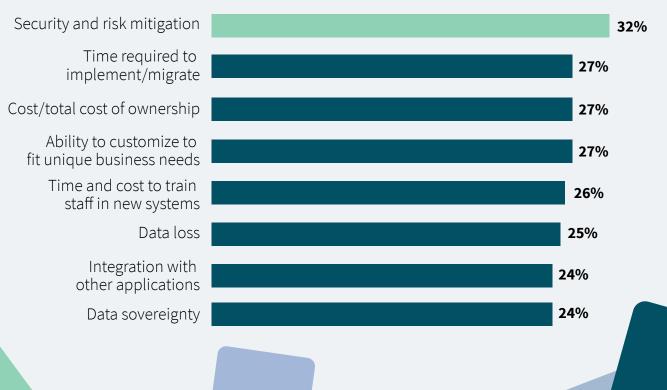
32% of businesses agree that security and risk mitigation is their major concern.

Security is top of mind for businesses. In the period of economic and business uncertainty created by Covid-19, cybercriminals took advantage of security weakened by work-fromhome policies. As Reuters reported in April 2020, hacking activity against corporations swiftly experienced a huge increase, more than doubling by some measures. Without proper security measures in place, every business is vulnerable to cyberattack.

One of the most common methods used by cybercriminals to infiltrate an organization is phishing. When companies run their email on the same servers or network as their business applications, hackers can more easily and swiftly gain access—potentially bringing down the business. Thankfully, cloud provides the ideal solution with a smart isolation strategy that separates email from business applications such as ERP.

Top Considerations When Migrating to Cloud





Internet Outages are a Challenge for Many Businesses



91% of businesses have stable internet, but more than half have experienced outages.

While the vast majority of businesses can rely on their internet, outages are still a problem for some companies—particularly those in more rural areas. When unreliable internet coverage is an issue, how can businesses help ensure they can enjoy the many benefits of cloud? To get an expert opinion, we asked Epicor CIO, Rich Murr.

Q: What can businesses do to protect themselves from an outage?

A: With high-speed internet more affordable than ever, they should look to add a second internet connection from a separate provider. It's important to help ensure that this second provider doesn't share any of the primary provider's infrastructure such as fiber, telephone lines, etc. That way, if one provider fails, the other is unaffected and can still provide connectivity.

Q: In a more rural area with less than reliable internet, is there anything an IT department can do to improve service?

A: Cellular hotspots are a great way to provide backup connectivity in areas where the internet isn't highly reliable. Coverage is widespread, typically affordable and reliable, and the solution is easy to configure.

Q: When looking into hybrid cloud solutions, what should a business consider when it comes to tricky internet?

A: First look to add a secondary internet connection. If that's not available, companies with multiple sites can run dedicated lines to another site with a more reliable internet connection, and "piggyback" off that site. Businesses should also demand reliable service from their provider—there are few technical issues that can't be resolved with a little attention.

Cloud Helps Businesses Adapt to a Rapidly Changing World

In early 2020, 20% of the businesses we spoke to believed that cloud would likely have a positive and direct impact on growth over the next year. At that point, nobody could predict how Covid-19 would transform business over the following year, or how the cloud would soon become so heavily relied upon. Our research revealed that the events of the past year inspired 82% of the businesses we polled to migrate some functions to the cloud.

This represents a huge transformation, but it's also a logical one. After all, cloud has helped enable the shift to remote and hybrid working, which many businesses expect to increase in the next five years. In addition to helping alleviate the business impact of Covid-19, cloud builds new resilience into companies going forward. Its strength, flexibility, and ability to share tools and technologies that adapt quickly to the global situation, helps prepare hard-working businesses to meet their fast-changing challenges.

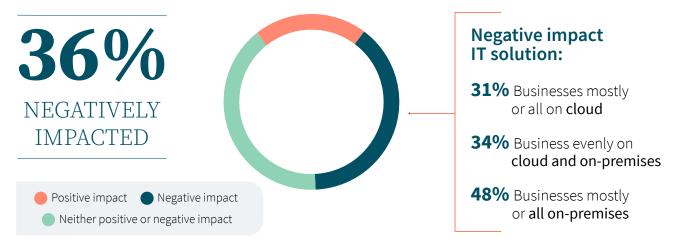


Cloud Solutions Help Businesses Become More Resilient

Of those businesses negatively impacted by the pandemic, the least affected were mostly or all on cloud.

The past year has been a time of rapid change and unexpected challenges. Thankfully not all businesses were negatively impacted by Covid-19. Some were even able to seek out new opportunities to boost their bottom line. But of those businesses who did experience a negative impact, those mostly or all on cloud struggled the least.

Impact of Covid-19 on Business



The cloud is an essential component for business future-proofing. In 2019, 31% of the leaders we polled claimed to make significant use of cloud applications. Of course, the events of 2020 rapidly increased application uses. The cloud enables video conferencing and delivers collaborative tools that help bring employees together, no matter where they're located. Those same solutions work from office to warehouse to sales visits, because the cloud puts data in the hands of whoever needs it, when they need it. It's also hugely flexible and scalable. An expert partner will help navigate changing business conditions and unexpected challenges, so IT decision makers can prepare for what might be just over the horizon.

"We had to accelerate our planning to move to the cloud. We hadn't seen all this coming so quickly, but with Covid-19 things changed. So we've moved that up, and we're going to be much quicker."

Distribution Decision Maker

Cloud Helps Industries Deal with the Unexpected

9 out of 10 distributors agree cloud would help them deal with Covid-19.

The distribution industry has been quick to see the benefits of cloud, becoming an early adopter of cloud-based applications such as warehouse management and supply chain management. In 2020, alongside retail and manufacturing, they were one of the top three industries that considered cloud a top technology.

Covid-19 further highlighted the benefits of cloud. Facing the twin challenges of increased global demand and massive supply chain disruption, distribution companies leaned on cloud technologies to help them adapt. Across all our industries, 85% of the businesses we polled this year believe that cloud would have helped them deal better with Covid-19 – and a huge 92% of distributors agreed.

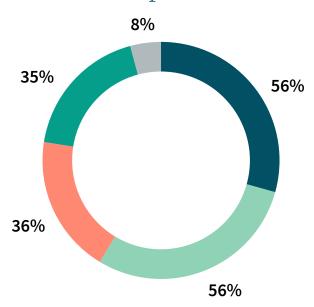
Businesses agree cloud would help them deal with the impact of Covid-19





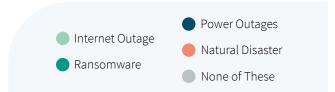
When Disaster Strikes, On-Premises Businesses are Hardest Hit

Disasters experienced



In the event of a disaster, all or mostly on-premises businesses lose 30% more customers than cloud.

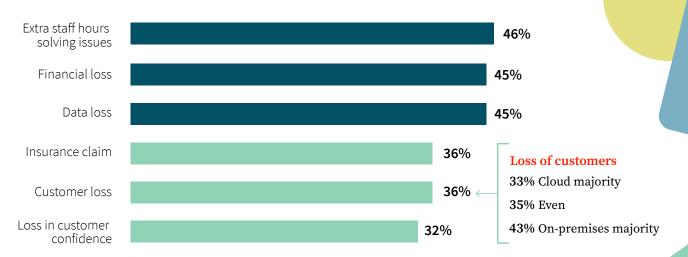
Everyone hopes that something like Covid-19 is a once in a lifetime event. But other business disasters are much more common, as everything from power or internet outages to floods and fires can threaten key technology. While two inches of water can't affect data if it's hosted on the cloud, it could bring an on-premises solution to a swift halt.



All such disasters have implications for the bottom line, and 45% of businesses report financial loss after experiencing such issues. The major impact is extra staff hours, as employees rush to fix problems. But customer relationships can also suffer. 32% noted a loss in customer confidence, which can lead to challenges down the line. Of the 36% of companies that reported losing customers, the majority are on-premises businesses.

Implications of disasters

Shown among those who have experienced issues



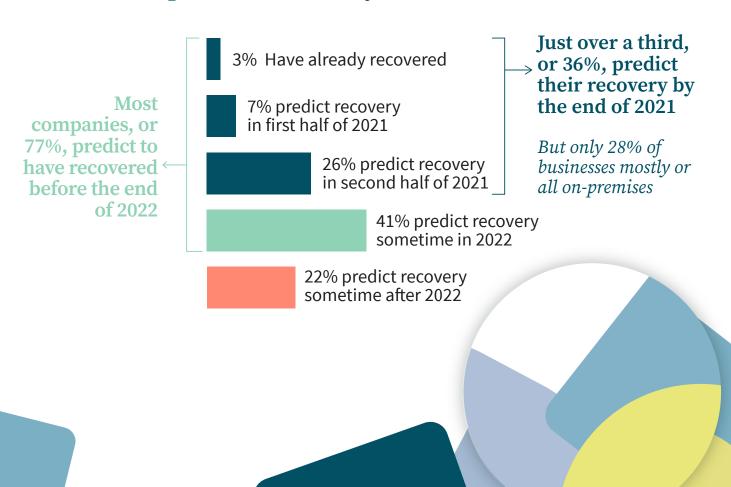
Cloud Helps Companies Recover Faster

36% of businesses on cloud expect to recover by the end of 2021, compared to only 28% mostly or all on-premises.

77% of the businesses we polled expect to have recovered from the fallout from Covid by the end of 2022. But those businesses mostly or all on-premises think they will need longer than those on the cloud. Without instant access to the cloud-based tools that allow their business to utilize a mobile workforce, scale as required, and respond to real-time-data, they find themselves reworking on-premises solutions to keep up with fast-changing business conditions. This takes time. The longer it takes, the more they risk falling behind their cloud-based competitors.



Expected recovery from Covid-19



An Expert Partner is at the Heart of Successful Migration

After the events of the past year, businesses are increasingly realizing that cloud is about more than future-proofing their technology– it's also about fueling their growth. In 2019, we found that businesses with improved growth were more likely to believe that cloud would play a key role in their future expansion. This connection between cloud and growth is increasing, with 68% of all or mostly on cloud businesses planning on expansion in the next year.

Of course, successful migration requires dedicated support to negotiate the myriad options. Businesses need a partner with deep industry experience that understands their business needs, offers customer-driven products and innovation, and can direct them towards the right solution. Each business has nuance and specialties, and so should its technology. Choosing the right partner is a critical decision.

"Wherever you're at on your journey to cloud, you need a technology partner who understands what makes you different and offers tailored technology solutions to help make you more successful. Due to the dynamic times we're in, you want a solutions provider who is

committed to continually adding value to your partnership—one that adopts the approach of always-improving to stay in front of industry innovation, and one that brings tailored solutions to you quickly, affordably, and in a way that can be easily consumed by users."

Himanshu Palsule | Epicor President

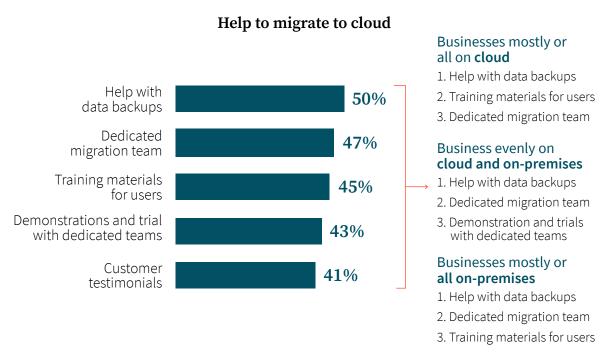
Cloud Migration Requires a Partner, Not Just a Provider

47% of businesses said a dedicated migration team is a must-have.

The migration to cloud is a journey that needs support from an expert partner. Our research revealed "help with data back-ups" and a "dedicated migration team" as the most valuable support for cloud migration. Many businesses also valued training materials that can help them get the most out of their technology. It's clear that the best partners to choose are those with deep industry expertise, a highly personalized approach, and complete dedication to the customer success.

Decision makers value help in the migration process as the most useful things when migrating to cloud

There is also interest in personalized help through dedicated migration teams to aid in the process of migrating to the cloud



"Any professional services or support team worth their salt will function as your partner, will be accessible, will welcome open dialogue, and will take care of you by taking care of the product. This level of support helps you focus on running your business instead of the IT department."

Businesses Require a Migration Roadmap Built to Their Needs

94% of businesses are planning to migrate some or all their solutions to cloud in the next year.

For several years, cloud has been a tech priority for businesses planning future growth. In 2019, cloud was the top technology expected to make a positive impact on industry growth, with 92% of businesses planning to invest in cloud that year. As we expected, those numbers have grown in 2021 and are consistent across all the industries we serve.

How businesses plan to migrate to cloud is also changing. Hybrid cloud solutions enable them to prioritize the migration of different business areas. Over the past three years the focus has shifted slightly as priorities have changed. As a result of the challenges presented by the pandemic, supply chain management and security monitoring are becoming more crucial. Also, with businesses requiring a web presence that delivers a satisfying customer experience, the cloud is helping leverage their eCommerce, data, and customer relationship management (CRM) capabilities.

Areas that businesses are most interested in migrating to cloud:

Interest in cloud-based solutions in the next year

94% are very interested



Interest by Industry

94% Distribution

94% Manufacturing

93% Automotive

93% Retail

92% Building Supply

| 2019 | 2021 |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 35% Big Data & Analytics | 44% Supply Chain Management |
| 33% Warehouse Management Solutions | 43% Security Monitoring |
| 30% IoT Technology | 42% Manufacturing Operations |
| 29% Financial Systems | 41% CRM |
| 29% Mobile Technology | 40% eCommerce |
| 27% Supply Chain Management | 38% Big Data & Analytics |

With the Right Partner, Cloud Migration Comes Easy

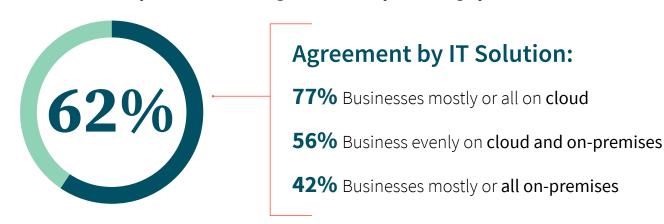
62% of businesses say cloud integrates easily into their existing systems.

IT leaders are often concerned about the difficulty of migration to cloud, but they can relax. Of the businesses we researched, a clear majority said integration was easy, whatever level of cloud they employ. Additionally, 81% of them say data is easy to migrate across IT solutions. So, our research reveals that the "difficulty of integration" is just another cloud concern proven otherwise.

Once again, it comes down to successful partnerships. When a company's specific needs are met by a knowledgeable provider with the right system, migration becomes easy and seamless. With their essential business continuity maintained, the company can then begin making the most of the new capabilities offered by cloud.

Ease of Integration of Cloud Systems

62% say cloud will integrate with my existing systems



"Being in the cloud has drastically reduced our management of the software, and we're always current on updates."

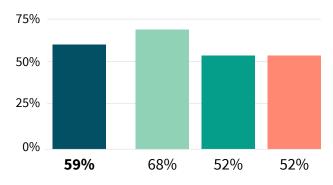
Industry Decision Maker

Cloud is Key to Growth Ambitions

94% of industry decision makers believe technology is critical for expansion.

Expectation of expansion of business

Percentage of businesses that expect to expand in size and scale.



- Overall
- Businesses mostly or all on cloud
- Business evenly on cloud and on-premises
- Businesses mostly or all on-premises

"The cloud ERP solution was a game changer for our business model. We had onprem at multiple locations and cloud empowered us to move all our sites to one system to build a collaborative, unified model. This has given us a go-forward path for our future acquisitions."

Industry Decision Maker

Our research revealed that the vast majority of businesses agree technology is key to their growth. There's a fresh sense of optimism among business decision makers, and cloud is helping fuel that confidence. Businesses who are all or mostly on cloud predict greater growth than those mostly or all on-premises. That's because with the right cloud partner in place, businesses know their technological solution is perfectly curated for them for them and primed to support and accelerate their ambitions.

Technology critical for expansion

94% say technology is critical



Critical by Cloud Maturity

93% Businesses mostly or all on cloud

93% Business evenly on cloud and on-premises

95% Businesses mostly or all on-premises

About Epicor

Now is the time to move your industry productivity solution to the cloud, with an expert partner to support you every step of the way.

As the leader in industry productivity solutions for medium-sized businesses, Epicor is already the trusted partner of 120,000 cloud users worldwide. Our solutions are powered by our unique and deep knowledge of the industries we serve. We know them better than anyone, and our expertise enables us to provide solutions that are built for each customer's specific needs.

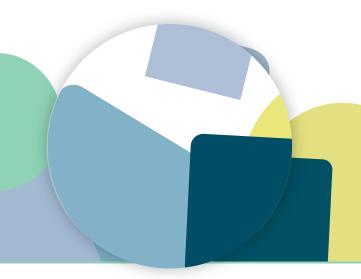
At Epicor we encourage everyone to experience the flexibility, security, simplicity, and future-proof benefits of cloud. Whether you're ready to move your entire system to the cloud, or are looking for a hybrid solution for EDI, payments, document management or similar, we'll help you at every step. Working closely with you, our dedicated migration teams will develop a solution carefully curated for your needs. Our deep industry expertise spans the supply chain, delivering curated cloud solutions to the makers, movers, and sellers who keep the world turning.

As the 2021 Industry Insights Report reveals, the future of business is in the cloud. At Epicor we're leading the way on the journey to cloud and empowering a world of better business.

To dive deeper into findings for your industry and see what the cloud can do for you, get in touch with sales@epicor.com.

"Epicor is foundational to our business."

Epicor Customer



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