ServMan
by WORKWAVE®

ERP SCALING:
Your Guide to Cloud Computing in Field Service

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems have become integral for larger field service businesses, streamlining processes and enhancing efficiency. As organizations grow and evolve, the need for an ERP system that can scale to match that growth becomes imperative. Fortunately, cloud computing has emerged as a pivotal solution in this journey.

ERP scaling refers to the process of adjusting and expanding an ERP system to accommodate the changing needs and demands of a business. This evolution is crucial as companies experience growth, take on more customers and navigate changes in market dynamics. While scaling can be achieved through various means, the integration of cloud computing has revolutionized the way organizations approach ERP scalability.

CLOUD HOSTING VS. CLOUD COMPUTING

CLOUD HOSTING

This term refers to hosting information remotely, typically on a combination of servers known as a server cloud. This collection of servers can exist in a single physical location or be composed of servers spread across multiple locations. Cloud hosting in this manner allows users to benefit from the pooled resources of multiple servers. Cloud hosting for businesses often refers to hosting their website data, making it available for users to access.

THE BENEFITS OF SCALING WITH CLOUD COMPUTING

The inherent flexibility of cloud computing enables users to adapt to shifts in their needs. While this is always a valuable ability, it's particularly valuable for field service businesses that are eager to grow — and want an ERP solution that will grow with them.

CLOUD COMPUTING

Cloud computing builds on the remote hosting capabilities of cloud hosting. Rather than simply storing and accessing data, cloud computing allows an instance of an application or software to run across the hosting platform.

Traditionally, ERP systems have been hosted on-premises, necessitating significant investments in hardware, infrastructure and maintenance. Cloud computing, however, offers a scalable and flexible environment, allowing businesses to expand their ERP capabilities seamlessly.

COST EFFICIENCY

As we noted earlier, traditional on-premises ERP hosting comes with significant costs. Getting up and running can include investing in hardware, servers and the infrastructure to connect them. While costs will vary depending on the size of your business, it goes without saying that the initial investment to host your own ERP is a significant one. As your business grows, you can expect to expand on that initial investment accordingly.

In addition to initial costs, on-premises hosting also requires your business to pay for required maintenance over time. This can include upgrades as new technology becomes available, regular maintenance for infrastructure and data security, and other ongoing efforts to ensure your ERP solution continues to operate as intended.

With cloud technology, upfront costs are significantly lower and maintenance costs are mitigated since ongoing maintenance is addressed by the ERP provider. Instead, users are able to get up and running with less overhead and without the ongoing expenditure of server maintenance.

SECURITY AND RECOVERY

Regardless of how you store and access data for your ERP solution, one thing is for sure: you're bound to have a lot of data to deal with. As your business expands, that data — from customer information and payment histories, to quotes and service orders, to inventory and material records, to financial records required for tax compliance, and so forth — continues to grow. While we've already touched on the flexibility of cloud-based solutions when it comes to accommodating that growing stockpile of data, it's not enough to store data; that data needs to be protected, as well.

In situations where that information is hosted locally, it is susceptible to various threats — both virtual and physical. In addition to cyberattacks and other deliberate threats, on-premises data storage can be impacted by physical threats such as unexpected damage, natural disasters and other real-world complications.

By hosting data redundantly on servers that are geographically separated, cloud-based ERP solutions minimize the risk of data loss. They also mitigate downtime resulting from regional problems by automatically accessing data from another location when one is compromised. This is particularly true of reliable, well-known hosting platforms, such as Amazon Web Services and other comparable clients.

When using a cloud-based ERP, users also benefit from routine maintenance and regularly scheduled backups that help to eliminate threats before they occur and ensure users have recent backups in the event anything goes wrong. While maintenance and backups can be similarly beneficial for on-premises hosting, the onus is on the user to ensure these procedures are kept up with; with cloud-based solutions, users gain the peace of mind that comes with knowing backups and maintenance are being addressed regularly, effectively and by industry experts.

SCALABILITY

In addition to being more affordable, cloud-based ERP solutions also provide users with superior agility to adapt to changes. While this added flexibility can be beneficial in overcoming a wide range of variables, one of the most common — and arguably the most desirable — is adapting to business growth.

As your business grows, choosing a cloud-based ERP system can ensure that the software you depend on for operational efficiency grows along with you. While significant growth would necessitate the purchase of additional hardware for an on-premises ERP application, cloud-based ERP solutions can allow users to grow more seamlessly — and more affordably — by simply expanding as needed.

For users, the flexibility of cloud-based computing means their ERP solution can accommodate growth with ease. Adding additional users is a simple process, allowing field service businesses to expand their user count easily. This can be particularly valuable when expanding quickly, as is the case when acquiring or opening an additional branch of your business, for instance.

When growth necessitates other changes, such as additional data volume or new application functionality, cloud-based ERP solutions maintain the same flexibility that allows your business to expand with fewer growing pains.
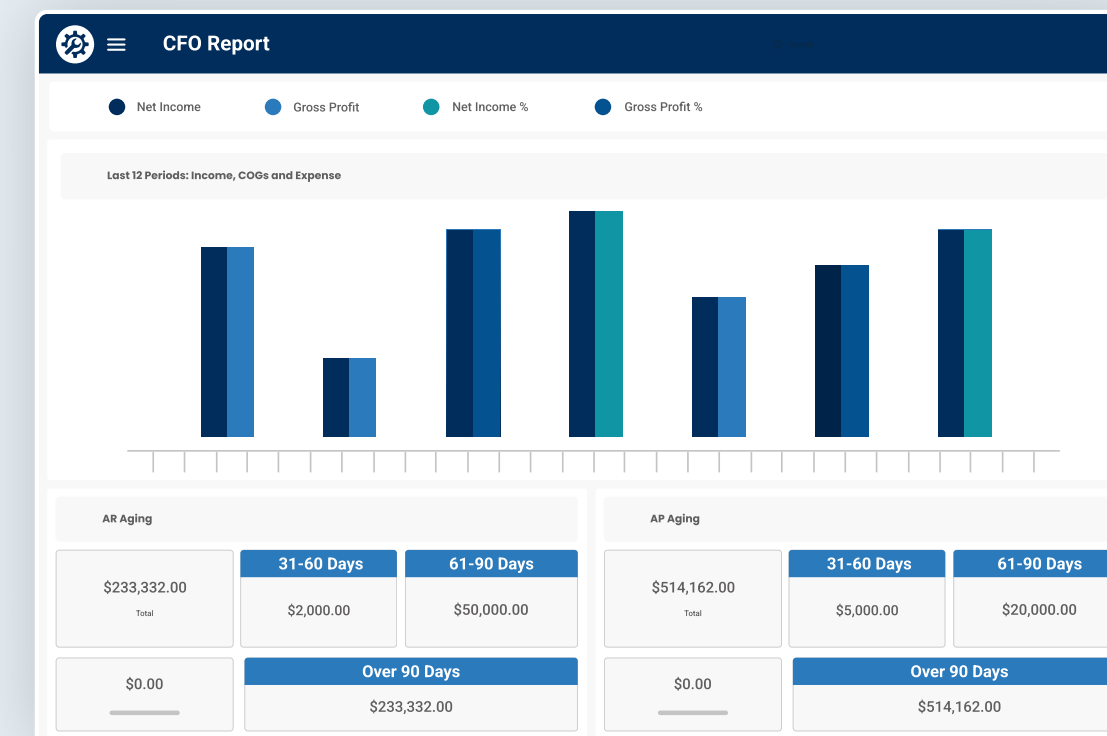
Cloud-based ERP solutions are designed to provide users with a range of benefits that provide enhanced efficiency, flexibility and scalability when compared to traditional on-premises options. As your field service business and its needs continue to grow, the gap between traditional and cloud-based options grows larger, as well.

To learn more about scaling your business and your ERP software hand-in-hand and how you can find the right ERP solution to fit your tried and true processes,