SME TECH

Aid SME competitiveness

Managed Hosting services provide flexibility, increase productivity and strengthen security with overall cost reduction says Sachin Bhardwaj.

The number of Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs) is growing across the Middle East and bringing with them increased competition. Forward thinking SMB owners and managements are strategically embracing technology to streamline processes and restructuring their business models for greater profitability. However, continuous changes in the technology landscape, from software to hardware, cyber security to data recovery solutions are making it extremely difficult for them to manage and maintain their IT infrastructure in-house.

According to IDC's Worldwide Small and Medium-Sized Business Forecast, SMBs are spending more on software and IT services and this will continue to rise to $700 billion in 2019. The main reason for increasing investments in IT is that they are looking at alternate technology that will help them gain a competitive advantage.

Many SMBs find it difficult to invest in hardware, run business applications, secure critical data, and more importantly, they do not have the capability of managing all this in-house. Managed Hosting eliminates these tasks and frees up their time to drive revenues.

SMBs are looking to simplify IT and need robust systems that will help them grow their business. Managed Hosting providers can help them with state-of-the-art options that have a positive impact on cost, help them in

scaling their IT needs and downsizing operations, and also provide them the flexibility to choose services to suit their needs. The cost for an in-house data centre and maintaining it implies server maintenance, software applications and updates, remaining up-to-date with technology, security, etc., and the cost for hiring and training in-house staff.

Some of the reasons SMBs must consider Managed Hosting services include:

EXPERTISE
Managed Hosting services provide qualified and experienced staff and technicians who support maintenance, trouble shooting, risk management, etc.

REDUCED DOWNTIME
A service provider's data centre infrastructure is built for high availability, complying with the stringent requirements of business applications. This ensures that the SMB experiences near-zero downtime.

DISASTER RECOVERY AND BACKUP
All servers and hardware within the premises of the provider are protected against physical threats such as environmental damage or natural calamities. Managed Hosting providers perform automated regular backups of all data which is a fundamental deliverable and one of the most critical responsibilities of the provider.

MONITORING
To ensure reduced downtime, providers monitor the servers and the cloud, as well as resource availability and capacity usage.

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REDUCED COSTS
With Managed Hosting, investment is minimized and the SMB gets access to the latest technologies without upfront capital investments and without having to worry about replacing obsolete hardware or compromising on efficiency by using outdated hardware.

SECURITY
The service provider tackles security risks with adequate firewalls, protecting against hackers and spammers. Conducting vulnerability scans and updating the required software ensures that the data is always safe.

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE UPDATES
The IT environment is continuously innovating and updating. Managed Hosting providers guarantee they provide up-to-date technology facilities, software upgrades and security patches.

24X7 AVAILABILITY
Service providers guarantee 24x7 technical assistance and they are available for any unexpected problems or for routine queries.

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (SLAs)
They are clearly defined services to be delivered with accountability and responsibilities. Clear pricing and measurable services are provided by the Managed Hosting provider.

SMBs are now more dependent on technology than ever before and they have much to gain by availing of Managed Hosting services which provides flexibility, increases productivity and strengthens security with overall cost reduction. Their services cut across industry verticals including retail, healthcare, e-commerce, finance, legal, education and government.

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