CLOUD SOFTWARE VS. ON PREMISE: 6 REASONS WHY CLOUD IS THE CLEAR WINNER

When choosing a software solution to manage the ancillary revenue streams like spa and amenities for your hospitality business, you want one that is within your budget with the functionality to successfully run your company. To find those things, you're going to have to decide between a cloud solution and an on-premise one.

Which should you go for? The answer is actually simple: The cloud is a better option for almost every business.

CLOUD SOFTWARE VS. ON PREMISE: WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Before we get into comparisons, let's answer the question of what we're talking about when we say "cloud" software vs "on premise." "Cloud computing" means storing, managing and processing your data and programs on a network of remote servers, rather than on a local server or personal computer. Examples of cloud solutions include iCloud, Gmail, Google Drive, Dropbox, and Salesforce. Conversely, "on premise" means storing and accessing data and programs on your computer's hard drive or a central server somewhere on your premises. Examples include, purchasing a Microsoft office license and installing it on your computer.

Now we can talk about comparisons between the two and highlight some key differences.

Six reasons the cloud is a better option for your spa software:

1. ACCESSIBILITY

When it comes to accessibility, there is no competition between cloud and on prem. The cloud is accessible from anywhere in the world where there is internet access. This opens up a whole new world of user access. For example, hotel/resort spa employees can view their schedules, client information, and more, in real time from wherever they are. Even better is that, if your business has multiple locations, cloud software makes it easy to share information across all of them. Yoga instructors or excursion guides can see their schedules and how full a class or excursion is.

On-premise software can't offer this functionality, as its use is limited to the computers and servers on which it has been installed.

This is a guest experience game changer.

A guest can go to the spa at any of your hotels or resorts, for example, without having to share their personal and credit card information more than once. And, if you offer cabana rentals at a resort, the person overseeing cabana reservations for the day can automatically see when someone has added a fruit platter and drinks package onto their reservation and can let the bar and kitchen know, without the guest having to do anything.

2. COST

Cost is one of the biggest advantages of cloud software solutions. On-premise software requires that you pay the full price of the software upfront, and then for any additional licenses, should you wish to add more users at a later time. Cloud software is purchased by subscription, meaning payments are more manageable, and cloud software typically uses a utility pay structure by user and access level, meaning you only pay for what you use, and services can be added or removed as needs change. Cloud software also saves the cost of the IT staff that would be required to maintain an on-premise solution, as well as the cost of the IT infrastructure you would have to put in place if you haven't got one already.

3. EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE

Cloud software is fully accessible online and requires no hardware or installation on your part. The software company takes care of these things for you, and complimentary training documents and videos are typically offered by the company to help get you up and running. Some, like Book4Time, will also come to you and provide on-site training. On-premise software, on the other hand, must be installed on your computer and/or servers and requires in-house IT infrastructure and a team to maintain it and make regular updates. With cloud software, the vendor is responsible for maintaining the data warehouses and any hardware on their end.

Updates are made regularly and are shared with the customer as the product continues to improve.

4. SECURITY

Security is a top priority for any company that stores data – a loss of data or breach can be devastating. You might think your company data is safer in your own hands on your own property, but is it? Cloud storage providers typically have 24/7 security teams, are always updating security measures, and monitoring for threats. A breach would ruin them, so someone is always paying attention. It's their business to notice suspicious activity and to alert you immediately. Can you, with confidence, say the same of anyone running your in-house IT service?

While it's possible for on-prem data security to provide equal, or even better, security than the cloud, the cost of this is too much for most businesses. Moreover, the ability to control access levels lets you limit who has high-level access to data, which can ease concerns about an inside breach (an estimated half of breaches are inside jobs). That being said, not all cloud companies are created equal. It's important to ask pointed questions regarding security before purchasing a software, and choose a company that has the right measures in place.

5. DURABILITY AND AVAILABILITY

Data durability and availability are important concerns for your business. "Durability" refers to protecting your data against events like server failures and "availability" refers to the ability to access your data on demand. Cloud servers back up your data regularly and run frequent checks to ensure that your data is safe. Book4Time uses Amazon Web Services (AWS), which offers 99.999999999% durability, meaning, according to Tom's Guide, that the odds of losing your data is one in 100 billion in any given year. AWS also promises that your data is available on-demand 99.99% of the time. On-premise data storage is very unlikely to be able to offer these levels of durability and availability.

With on-prem solutions, as we noted above, your data is only available on site (or possibly through a VPN). This can limit anyone trying to work remotely from accessing what they need. A cloud solution with a good internet connection makes your data available from anywhere.

6. CUSTOMER SUPPORT

On-premise software often has the advantage with customer support, because users can turn directly to their in-house IT team. Getting customer support from a cloud software company can be a whole other story, and it can sometimes take days to get a response to a request, meaning stretches of downtime interrupting business operations. However, there are companies out there, like Book4Time, that take customer support very seriously, won't leave you waiting, and will work with you until your issue is resolved. Because keeping your business up and running is our business. Always ask about a company's customer support and turnaround time on support requests before making a purchase decision. If they can't give you a satisfactory answer, run.

There is obviously a lot to consider when purchasing software for your hospitality business. Do your research and ask all the important questions. If you want to keep costs down with an easily accessible solution, you'll probably find that a cloud software solution is the right choice.