



PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS & APPLICATIONS FOR THE MODERN WORKPLACE

Discover how businesses can mitigate the risk and lower the cost of making the switch from out-of-the-box software to cloud-based subscriptions for mission-critical productivity apps.



BRENNAN IT

Microsoft

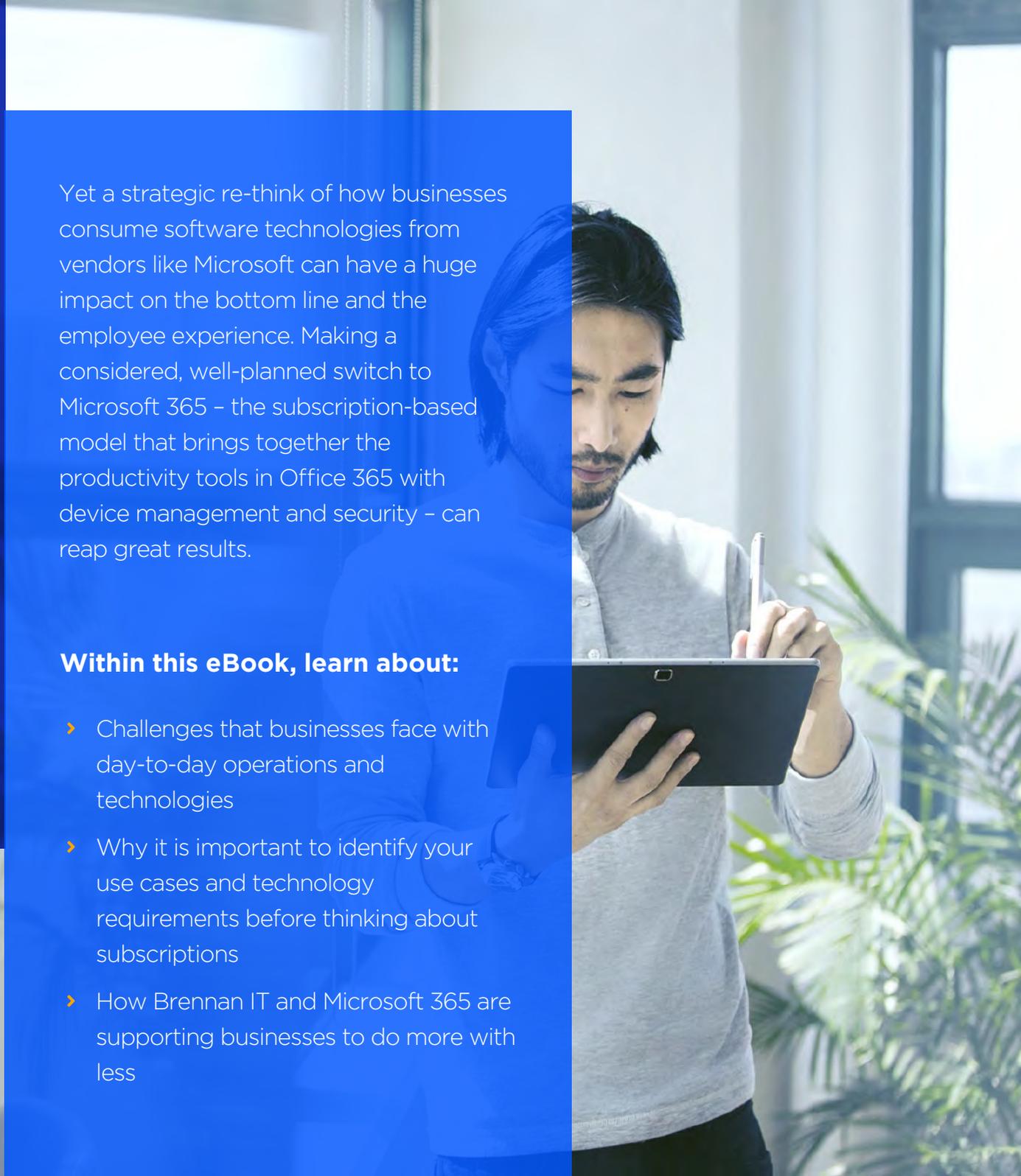
Discover how businesses can mitigate the risk and lower the cost of making the switch from out-of-the-box software to cloud-based subscriptions for mission-critical productivity apps.

Software is a great example. As long as it works – and, as long as staff have the tools, they need to do their job – then businesses are reluctant to make changes to the way they consume that software. Take Microsoft. While over two-thirds (69%) of SMBs rate Microsoft apps like Office as extremely or very critical to running their business, many just use it in set-and-forget mode – often because they are too busy with day-to-day work to make it a priority.

Yet a strategic re-think of how businesses consume software technologies from vendors like Microsoft can have a huge impact on the bottom line and the employee experience. Making a considered, well-planned switch to Microsoft 365 – the subscription-based model that brings together the productivity tools in Office 365 with device management and security – can reap great results.

Within this eBook, learn about:

- Challenges that businesses face with day-to-day operations and technologies
- Why it is important to identify your use cases and technology requirements before thinking about subscriptions
- How Brennan IT and Microsoft 365 are supporting businesses to do more with less



The state of play in business today

Is cloud creating a more level playing field in business? Or is the pace of IT change simply proving too overwhelming for resource-stretched businesses that are struggling to keep the lights on? How do you make sure that the technology you pay for and consume is right-sized for your needs, today and tomorrow?

There's no doubt that IT is a moving beast. And that it can be hard for smaller businesses to keep up – particularly if they are relying on a dedicated internal IT resource to stay on top of the continual changes. At Brennan IT, we regularly speak to clients about the technology challenges they face day-to-day. The issues that we hear about – issues which can significantly impact the bottom line and employee productivity – are reflected in broader research recently released by Microsoft.

Here, we share the findings from the Microsoft research, along with insights from the Brennan IT team.

About the research

To learn more about the current challenges and priorities faced in business, Microsoft recently engaged Capitalis Research to speak to nearly 300 SMBs about how they are approaching technology now and into the future.



Insight 1

Businesses face common challenges

According to the Microsoft research, the top challenges impacting businesses today include:

- › **Increasing costs (34%)**
- › **Increased competition (30%)**
- › **Cost of technology deployment and TCO (20%)**
- › **Cybersecurity risks (20%)**
- › **Trying to keep up with new technologies (20%)**

In a bid to address these challenges, many businesses are choosing to invest in technology. Indeed, the top reasons businesses use technology (including cloud solutions) include:

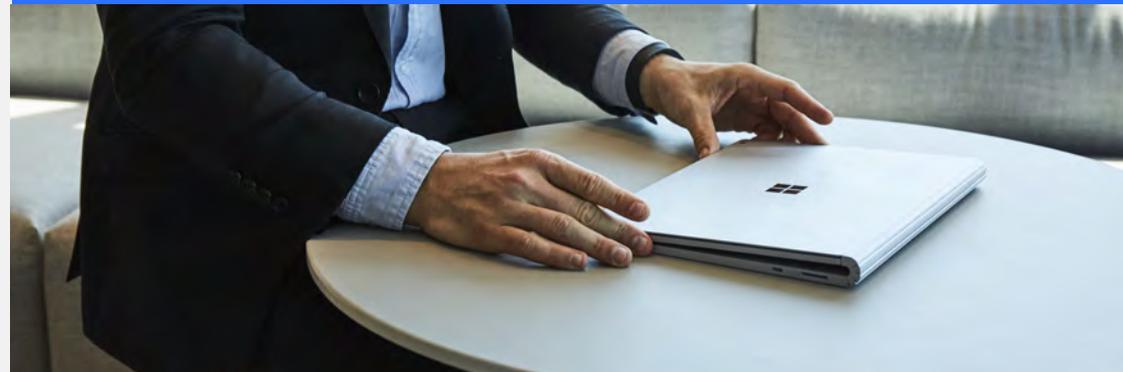
- › **IT is a necessity to doing business (34%)**
- › **Communicating with customers and suppliers (29%)**
- › **To increase employee productivity (25%)**
- › **To enable business growth (25%)**
- › **To ensure privacy and data security (23%)**

Brennan IT insight

As the research clearly shows, businesses today are tasked with trying to do more with less. It's a big ask; and it puts a lot of pressure on IT teams who face daily requests for new cloud-based productivity tools and services. Yet if they respond too quickly – and without proper planning – then more complex issues around integration and usability arise.

For example, in the race to get to cloud, a business might add an application without removing others or properly integrating it with other business systems. This can lead to cost blow-outs and extra pressure on IT resources to fix the issue.

Likewise, businesses often fail to consider the effect of cloud-based software on devices – for example, the new app may slow the device down, leading to a poor employee experience. Plus, there is often not enough onboarding and training support provided to employees – so they don't know how to get the most out of the new tool.



Insight 2

Moving towards subscription-based licensing

When it comes to the way that SMBs consume software right now, the majority are still on-premise. This applies across all software categories – from email to document creation to project management software, and everything else in between.

Yet, over the next six to eighteen months, every category of software (except for server infrastructure/data centre software) is predicted to shift towards a subscription-based cloud model. For example, while 66% of SMBs currently have on-premise licences for their document creation and editing software, a 13% shift to subscription-based licensing is predicted.

Other categories that are predicted to experience a big shift to a subscription-based model include productivity, engagement and collaboration tools (10% shift), enterprise resource planning tools (10% shift), and data back-up and disaster recovery (9% shift).

Which software categories are most likely to switch to cloud in the next 18 months?

- 13% Document creation and editing software (including presentations)
- 10% Productivity, engagement and collaboration software
- 10% Enterprise resource planning software
- 9% Data back-up and disaster recovery software

Brennan IT insight

As more SMBs make the shift towards subscription-based cloud apps, the potential for financial risk, IT complexity and a poor user experience can grow. If the wrong approach is taken, or the full benefits of the cloud-based apps are not unlocked, then SMBs may face negative outcomes.

There are two common scenarios which mean that businesses end up paying too much for their cloud applications. The first involves a mismatch between what each user actually needs, and what the business subscribes to. Different groups of users in your business need different features – rarely does a one-size-fits-all subscription apply. For example, frontline workers might just need basic browser features and productivity tools. If you take out a full-featured subscription, you could be overspending by up to 400%.

Another issue is the path to subscription. Many businesses subscribe directly on a vendor site, which means they don't have any managed services around the licences. They use a quick and easy method of payment, for example a company credit card, which ends up being more expensive in the long term.



Insight 3

Cloud proves popular

Of all the businesses surveyed, 76% are using some form of cloud technology. The larger the business, the greater their propensity to have cloud solutions in place. Further, over the next six to eighteen months, businesses are planning to increase their investment in cloud technology by an average of 7%.

With cloud a key focus area, SMBs are clearly keen to keep on top of the changing trends in technology. Two-thirds of SMBs believe that it is extremely or very critical to keep themselves well-informed of technology trends (including cloud) and how these trends impact upon business operations.

Yet, given the business challenges they face – many of which revolve around keeping the lights on – keeping up with the trends when resources are already stretched can be hard. It's why almost half (42%) of SMBs turn to partners or IT service providers for support, advice and guidance when identifying and purchasing new technologies. Other valued sources of support include suppliers and customers (28%) and industry associations (27%).

Brennan IT insight

In the face of today's fast-changing technology landscape, businesses are poorly equipped to tackle transformation alone. This is not an indictment on their internal systems, but more a reflection of both the complexities of running a business and the challenge of keeping up with new trends.

It makes complete sense for businesses to turn to managed service providers (MSPs) for support when considering new technologies. A key strength of MSPs – as well as the obvious tech expertise – is their vast experience in helping similar businesses to solve similar problems.

Who do SMBs turn to for support, advice and guidance when choosing new technologies?

- 42% Partners or IT service providers
- 28% Suppliers and customers
- 27% Industry associations



A proven path forward for technology adoption

In light of the challenges and insights discussed above, what can businesses do to unlock the full potential of new technologies? How can they ensure that the transition to a new technology is smooth and risk-free? How can they reduce the cost and risk of transitioning, while ensuring that employees get the support and tools they need to do their best work?

Using productivity apps as an example (because, after all, according to the research above, 10% of businesses plan to shift their productivity apps from on-premise licenses to cloud in the next 18 months), we now explore how businesses can turn challenges into opportunities. We show how it is possible to realise significant business benefits – from much-needed cost savings to vastly improved and more secure user experiences – by thinking strategically and aligning with the right support.

The right service at the right time

Navigating the complex world of cloud-based subscriptions can be confusing. Indeed, many Brennan IT clients express a lack of confidence and knowledge about what types of licences they need for different groups of users, how to roll them out, and how to support internal uptake beyond the roll out.

When it comes to getting support from an MSP to solve these issues, Brennan IT recommends a tiered approach that looks beyond the productivity tool itself to help businesses identify how they can use the tool to realise true business value – now and into the future. It recognises that every business is unique and at a different stage of their digital transformation journey.

For example, if Microsoft 365 is identified as the right productivity solution for your business (see highlight box for why we recommend Microsoft 365), we look at exactly what your business needs from the application right now. It might be that you simply need licences. Or, you might need strategic advice about how the productivity platform integrates with your other business systems.



A proven path forward for technology adoption

Supporting businesses at every stage of application deployment

The type of support you receive from your MSP can depend on your concerns and specific needs. As the table below shows, different levels of support are recommended depending on where your business is at.

Your concern	“I don’t know what licences we need”	“I don’t know how to roll them out”	“How do we provide training to help employees use the new software?”	“We need devices that come with Microsoft 365 loaded and ready to go”	“We think this software is just one part of a bigger cloud strategy for us – but we’re not sure where to start”
How Brennan IT can help	We work with you to match the right employees to the right licences. By setting up a multitenant subscription, you only pay for what you need.	Our dedicated software team – including a dedicated service manager – support the smooth implementation across the business.	We can deliver a Customer Immersion Experience to ensure all employees become familiar with the platform from the get-go.	We can provide full device lifecycle management – including procurement, finance, security, back-up and recycling of old devices.	We deliver a strategic and connected IT plan with all the expertise and managed services to support it.
Key benefit	Lower costs	Get it right first time	Faster, seamless adoption and a positive employee experience	Less pressure on IT, and the confidence that your team gets the right tools to do their best work	Trusted and deeply experienced expertise to guide you through bigger decisions that can significantly impact business outcomes

A proven path forward for technology adoption

Why Microsoft 365 Business?

Microsoft 365 Business is an integrated, cloud-based solution that simplifies IT, boosts data security, and keeps employees' devices up to date with the latest from Windows 10 and Office 365. It solves a range of issues that SMBs face daily.

Collaboration

83% of knowledge workers depend on technology to collaborate¹, yet email is slow and inefficient. Microsoft 365 Business comes with Teams, a powerful tool to communicate, view files and work together.

Mobility

More than ever, SMB employees need access to tools that help them be productive from wherever they are. Microsoft 365 integrates Office 365 apps, OneDrive for Business file storage, Outlook and more to help your people work wherever they are.

Security

28% of employees use at least one unsanctioned tool at work², and the average cost to fix a breach on an employee's device is \$21,042³. Powered by Windows 10, Microsoft 365 Business reduces your risk of data breach with automatic and universal enforcement of security policies.

¹Dimensional Research, Collaboration Trends and Technology, August 2015

²Forrester Research, The Way We Work: A Mobile, Collaborative Workforce Needs an Accessible and Flexible Toolkit, January 2017.

³Ponemon Institute, The Economic Risk of Confidential Data on Mobile Devices in the Workplace, February 2016.



Taking the next step

Transitioning from an on-premise application to a cloud-based subscription service is a big step – particularly for the applications you rely on day-to-day to keep business running without interruption. You can trust Brennan IT and our specialist software team to ensure that the process is smooth and seamless for your IT team and your employees.

A tailored software plan

Brennan IT Product follows a robust process that starts with asking the right questions to map out a clear project scope that directly meets the needs of your business. At all times, we have your financial, operational and user goals in mind.

Depending on your needs, our specialist software team can help you with:

> Licencing

We make sure your employees have the right licences to suit their needs now, and provide ongoing licencing support

> Value

We optimise your investment by negotiating the best price and terms

> Deployment

We support your IT operations team with simple invoicing, removal of old apps, and mobile management

> User experience

We optimise the employee experience with training, onboarding and support

> Broader goals

Beyond the application deployment, we can support your broader business goals around cloud migration, devices and more

Brennan IT and Microsoft 365

Brennan IT is a trusted Microsoft partner, with five Microsoft Gold certifications and 20 years of experience in supporting customers to implement Microsoft solutions.

Our dedicated SMB software team works hard to help businesses to extract the most value from Microsoft 365 – the trusted, market leading productivity app that has all the familiar Office apps, plus options for enterprise grade security, mobility, and communication and collaboration tools.

So if you are considering switching to Microsoft 365, talk to Brennan IT Product today about how we can support your goals today and into the future.



Speak to us today

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