

A TECHAISLE WHITE PAPER



AGILE CLOUD: MANAGING THE EMPOWERED USER

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AGILE CLOUD: MANAGING THE EMPOWERED USER

Guidance to creation of an Agile Cloud strategy for mobile world is provided through a series of three Techaisle research white papers. This document covers **“Managing the empowered user”**

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Executive Summary

Too often, the debate about IT is dominated by a narrow focus on near-term objectives: shrill cries claim that the business will stop (or fail) if a feature isn’t added to the ecommerce site, if the mobility platform isn’t improved, if the network and compute back end aren’t upgraded, if storage and database performance isn’t accelerated. Often, these changes are truly essential, and demand immediate attention. However, midmarket firms can’t assemble a meaningful strategy from point responses to near-term issues. Increasingly, midmarket enterprises are finding that continued operational success requires an “agile-cloud” – an agility-oriented, cloud-based IT strategy that addresses the three core changes faced by midmarket firms: *the changing nature of business infrastructure, the accelerating pace of change in business, and the expanding scope of IT.*

Each of the three issues presents challenges and opportunities. Changes in business infrastructure require both IT and process evolution, but promise greater responsiveness. The increasingly-rapid shifts in business environment demand greater agility, but open new market opportunities. And the expanding scope of IT strains traditional infrastructure management approaches, but allows the midmarket business to empower customer-facing staff in new and important ways. To navigate these changes, midmarket businesses need to move beyond point requirements and build out the core capabilities that support the business as a whole.

Other white papers in this three-part series are:

- Navigating the transition to managed IT
- Orchestrating Virtual Data Center Services

Hosted/virtual workspaces

As important as the back end technologies of virtual data center operations, application virtualization and orchestration may be, a substantial portion of cloud’s ‘magic’ is its ability to provide new forms of support to line-of-business staff, providing advanced automation options for functions that were previously poorly automated or entirely manual.

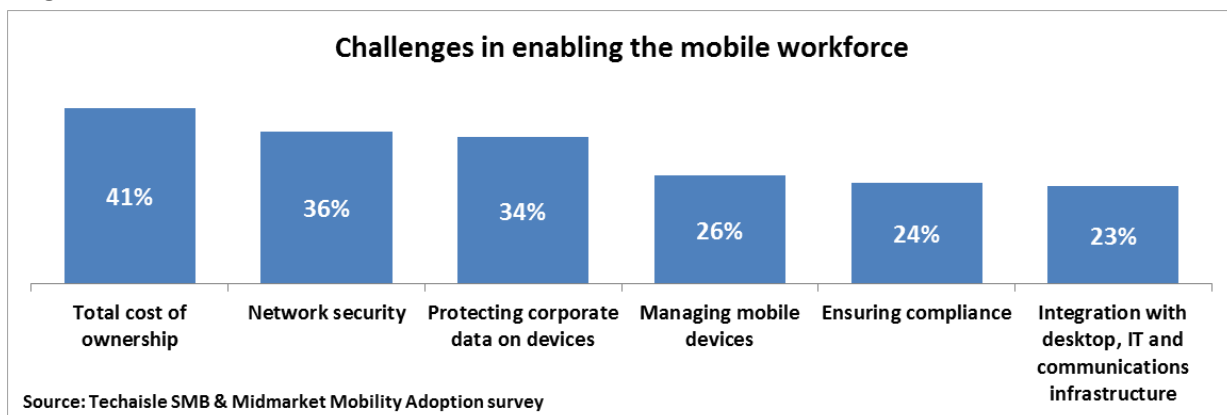
At a platform level, the best example of this is hosted/virtual workspaces. Key factors in understanding the role of *virtual desktop infrastructure* (VDI) and *desktop as a service* (DaaS) – two approaches to providing midmarket employees with virtual/hosted workspaces – include:

- The management issues associated with support for mobility
- The trend towards VDI and DaaS
- The benefits of using hosted/virtual workspaces.

Managing mobility challenges

It’s no secret that the end-user compute environment is vastly more complicated than it was a decade ago. Gone are the days when users relied on a single (PC) device that was used in a single location or a limited number of locations, and which generally housed both, its own applications and its own data, using defined pathways to interact with corporate systems and resources. Today, users have multiple devices – PCs, but also smartphones and tablets; they rely on applications and data which may be local, remote, or a combination of both; and they connect to corporate systems and resources any location offering a WiFi or cellular signal.

Figure 1



This mobile workforce presents a wide variety of challenges for midmarket management. As Figure 1 illustrates, cost, security and related issues, and the management complexities associated with multiple devices (operating systems, suppliers, etc.) are all viewed as significant challenges by 20%-40% of midmarket firms today.

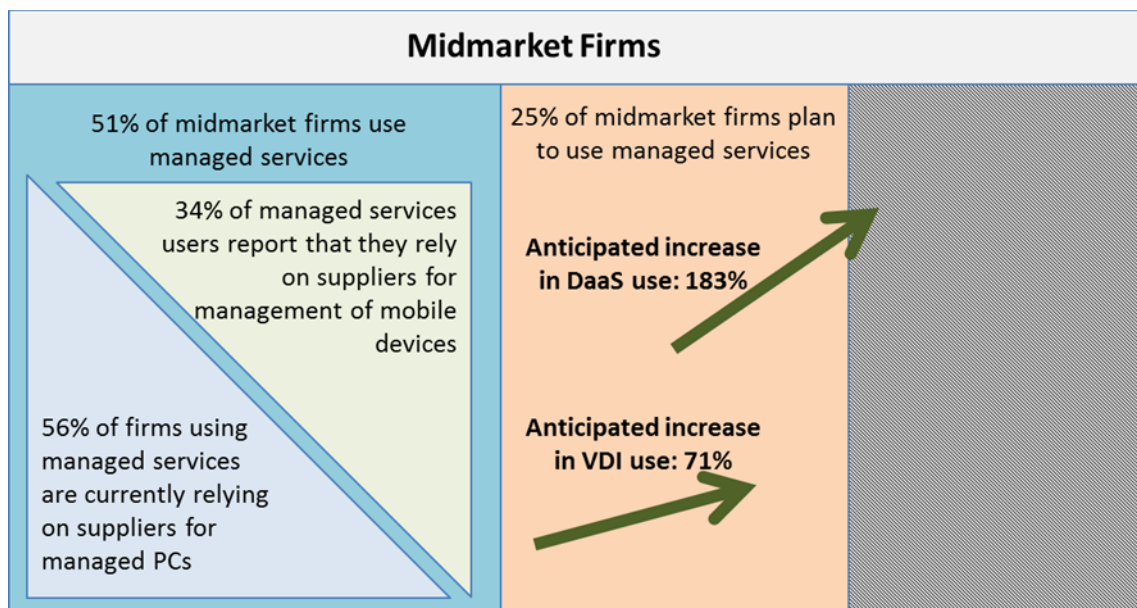
The response: hosted workspaces

Faced with the challenges outlined in Figure 1, midmarket firms are increasingly opting for managed client environments. One approach to provisioning user resources is via VDI, in which a centrally-managed desktop image (generally, Windows-based) is delivered over the Internet to the user. Another approach is DaaS, in which a client environment hosted in the cloud (which may be Windows-based or based on another operating system) is provided to the user’s device.

Techaisle’s research has found strong midmarket interest in these approaches. At a macro level, data shows that slightly more than half of midmarket firms use managed services today. The largest part of this group (56%) relies on third parties to manage their PCs, and one-third use managed services as a means of managing their mobile devices. Growth intentions in both areas are strong, especially in hosted mobility solutions.

These overall market trends are reflected in use of and adoption intentions for VDI and DaaS. As Figure 2 demonstrates, current purchase intentions indicate that DaaS penetration is likely to increase by 183%, and that VDI use is expected to grow by 71%.

Figure 2



Source: Techaisle SMB & Midmarket Managed Services Adoption survey; SMB & Midmarket Virtualization Adoption survey

The use and growth rates shown in Figure 2 reflect the fact that midmarket firms are seeing value in outsourcing client workspace management to a hosted environment. These firms are responding to increased reliance on technology by turning to third parties to help them cope with an ever-expanding portfolio of increasingly-complex applications and platform technologies, and to help rein in IT-related expenditures, including staff-related costs.

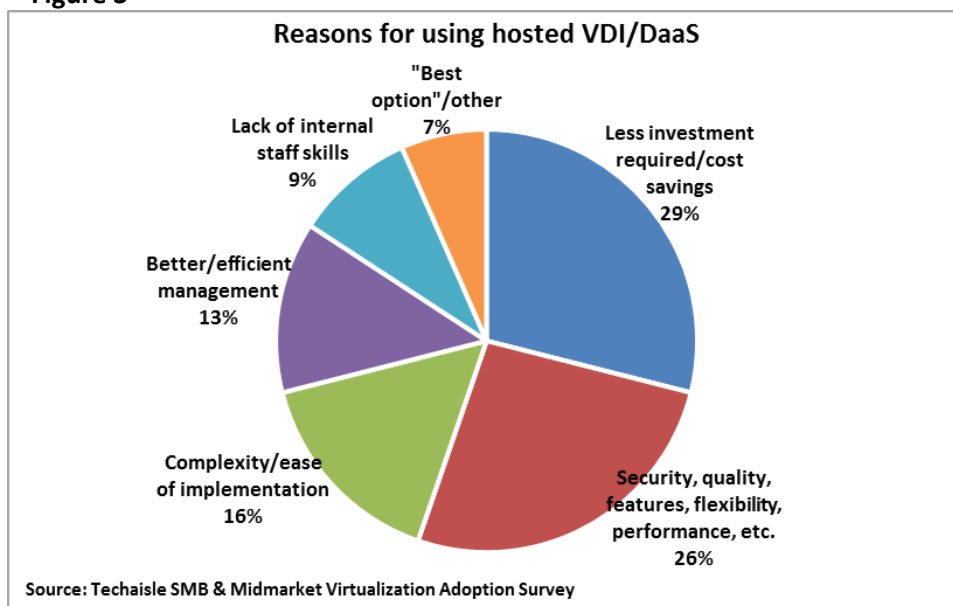
The migration towards agile-cloud and transition to managed IT is accelerating. In fact Techaisle managed services data shows that 81% of midmarket firms have either currently outsourced or planning to outsource three key areas – cloud, mobility and virtualization infrastructure.

Why pursue a hosted workspace strategy?

As part of the 2015 Techaisle survey of midmarket businesses, firms using or planning to use hosted VDI or DaaS were asked an open-ended question exploring why hosted was preferred to on-premise as a deployment approach for client virtualization. Valid responses to the question were assigned to one of six categories:

- Less investment required/cost savings
- Lack of internal staff skills
- Better/efficient management
- Security, quality, features, flexibility, performance, etc.
- Complexity/ease of implementation
- "Best option"/other

Figure 3



These responses, captured in Figure 3, show that a majority of VDI adopters are motivated either by savings/CAPEX avoidance (29%) or by the ability to obtain access to features – ranging from security to performance – that they can't obtain with via a strategy that is constrained by their physical devices (26%). There are also important management benefits to use of VDI/DaaS: a combined total of nearly 30% of midmarket firms using or planning to use VDI/DaaS today report that they are motivated by the ability to reduce the complexity of deploying clients or by the fact that VDI/DaaS offers a means of attaining better, more efficient management of the swelling portfolio of client devices.

Concluding observations

Despite the clear opportunity for more effective deployment of IT capability and more efficient IT management offered by cloud, most midmarket workloads are still hosted and managed on site. There is a clear trend towards greater use of managed services, and clear business benefit to embracing this hybrid IT model. The question isn't really "will we move our midmarket business to cloud/hybrid infrastructure?" but rather, "how quickly will we effect this transition, and how will we prioritize workloads and capabilities along the way?"

Techaisle believes that the different technologies covered in this report series – hosted/virtual workspaces in this document, and virtual data center services, application virtualization, and cloud orchestration in the companion reports – are poised for strong growth in the US midmarket because they address specific high-priority IT and business issues. It is important to remember, though, that different technologies are aligned with different requirements. VDI and DaaS are oriented towards greater flexibility in automating customer-facing staff, and provide control options for mobility solutions. From a management perspective, VDI and DaaS should not be seen simply as "next steps in virtualization" – they play a different role in business and IT strategy, and as a result, will respond to their own logic.

To keep pace with accelerating business cycles and capitalize on new IT/business infrastructure opportunities for improved business efficiency and customer engagement, midmarket companies today need to be working with VDI, DaaS and related technology services as they plot their own "agile-cloud" strategies. There is no one-size-fits-all template that can be used to create an action plan for development of a robust cloud approach. By combining hosted/virtual workspaces supporting 'front line' staff with virtual data center services, application virtualization, and cloud orchestration, midmarket businesses can build a framework that can align their activities and investments with an agile-cloud strategy – one that will deliver an approach to IT that truly contributes to the success and viability of the enterprise.

About dinCloud

dinCloud is a Cloud Service Provider that helps organizations rapidly migrate their entire IT infrastructure to the cloud. Our Business Provisioning includes migration of desktops, servers, storage, networking and applications to a Virtual Private Data Center. dinCloud provides subscription-based services tailored to fit a range of business models resulting in reduced cost, enhanced security, control, and productivity.

For more information, see our [case studies \(https://www.dincloud.com/cloud-case-studies\)](https://www.dincloud.com/cloud-case-studies).

Related articles and content on **Managing the Empowered User** from dinCloud, a leader in hosted workspaces, and a cloud services provider who helps ease migration to the cloud with turn-key services and support.

[About Hosted Workspaces](#)

[Benefits of Hosted Workspaces](#)

About Techaisle

Techaisle is a global SMB IT Market Research and Industry Analyst organization. Techaisle was founded on the premise that Go-to-Market strategies require insightful research, flexible data, and deeper analysis. Understanding the value of data consistency across markets to inform strategic planning, Techaisle has remained holistic in its approach to Insights and provides globally consistent SMB and Channels analysis across geographies. To achieve its objectives Techaisle conducts surveys with SMBs and channels to understand market trends, opportunities, buying behavior, purchase intent, and IT priorities. Besides covering emerging technologies such as SMB cloud computing, managed services, mobility, social media usage, virtualization, business intelligence, big data, collaboration, networking its channel research coverage provides in-depth understanding of resellers and channel partners globally. Techaisle's insights are built on a strong data-driven foundation and its analysts are conversant with both primary research and industry knowledge, which is a rare combination. Techaisle offers its clients: Syndicated Research, Custom Primary Research, Consulting Engagement, Competitive Intelligence, Segmentation and Predictive Analytics services. For more information, visit www.techaisle.com

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