



TECHNOLOGIES

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP SERIES

Have You Considered a Hosted Solution?

by Bill Kaegy, Karmak, Inc.

You've done your research, viewed demos, talked with countless product experts and colleagues, and now you're finally ready to invest in a new software solution for your business. You're excited about what the solution will bring to your business, and quite frankly, you're excited to be done with the tough decisions associated with this move.

But you're not quite done yet. It's easy to focus on the software part of the equation and forget all about the hardware. You need somewhere to host the new purchase you just made and all of the data that will come along with it. Sure, you can host it on-site at your location, but are you prepared to do that? Do you have an adequate server? Do you have IT personnel that can manage the server? Do you have backup procedures in place to make sure you don't lose all of your data?

That's a lot to keep in mind, but what if there was another option? With a hosted solution, you can expect the same great performance you would get if you were hosting the software yourself, without many of the headaches.

Peace of Mind

If you are looking for peace of mind about the safety and security of your data, a hosted solution is the way to go.

First things first, it's nice to have the server hardware, and the data within it, stored somewhere off-site. Hopefully it's not a bridge you ever have to cross, but if some sort of catastrophic event were to occur at your location, you would know that the hardware is unharmed.

"We know that this place could burn down tonight and we could be open for business tomorrow. That's huge," says Phil Diebel, Partner of Chester Ave. Brake of Bakersfield, CA.

A hosted solution will also provide backup for the data you have stored. It's nice to know that even if you aren't giving your data a second thought, your data is being backed up regularly to make sure you don't lose any of it.

In many cases, a provider will take that a step further. At Karmak, we send your data off on a nightly basis to a separate location and we move physical tapes of data off-site every day to add another layer of protection.

Beyond just protecting the data from being lost, we also want to make sure that it is secure. We run antivirus and anti-malware programs to protect against any sort of intrusion. It's still important that you have those types of programs running on your computers at your location, but you'll know that when your data is with us, it's safe.

Fewer Operational Headaches

Choosing a hosted solution also means you don't have to devote any time to managing hardware.

If you're a lean operation without a large staff, this speaks right to you. Chances are that your days are pretty busy already and you don't have a lot of time to manage the server yourself, even if you would be comfortable doing so.

"I wear a lot of hats here, including making coffee and sweeping floors. I don't need to add systems manager on top of all that. It's well worth it to me to not have to hassle with it," says Diebel.

Even if you have someone on staff designated as your IT person, they may not have the time either.

"If something goes down, it's on that IT person to be there to fix it, even if that means staying after hours, and you have to hope that everything is back up in time for the open of business the next day," says Chris Schmitz, IT Professional with Cerni Motor Sales of Youngstown, OH.

In addition, all of the upgrades to the server itself are taken care of, and for that matter, so are the upgrades to the software hosted on it. With a hosted solution, both your server and your software will always be up to date.

"It's great that we don't have to concern ourselves too much with release dates when it comes to software updates because we know that we'll automatically be on the newest release," says Schmitz.

At Karmak, we also take great strides to make sure we account for things outside of our building that could potentially affect your data. We have a generator on-site that kicks in any time there is a power outage and we run two internet lines from two separate providers to protect against a service disruption on the part of one of them.

Perhaps most of all, being on a hosted solution means that you don't have to care for the physical server being in your location. You don't have to clear space for it and you don't have to worry about the maintenance and upkeep that goes along with housing it yourself.

A hosted solution isn't necessarily the right answer for everyone. If you have IT staff that can manage hosting or if your company has done similar things before, by all means, continue to do what works for you. Diebel agrees.

"Maybe if we were a giant company and had IT staff, we would do it differently, but for our size, this made the most sense for us. I'm glad we made the decision we did," he says.

For those that don't have the luxury of a dedicated IT staff or space to house hardware, a hosted solution is something to look into. You don't have to scramble to make sure you are ready to handle it on your own.

About Bill Kaegy

Born and raised in Carlinville, Illinois, Bill Kaegy served in the US Army before beginning his career in information technology. Bill first joined Karmak in 1998, working in system installation and support. In 2000, he joined Springfield Clinic as their technical services manager, but in 2012, he returned to Karmak as the director of information technology. Bill loves what he does because it gives him an opportunity to work and play with new technology and “toys” in the world of IT. When he’s not in the office, you can find Bill riding his motorcycle, spending time with his family, singing in church, or taking the stage as part of summer rep theater here in Carlinville.



About Karmak

Karmak, Inc. is a leading provider of business management solutions for the commercial transportation industry. With more than 30 years of heavy-duty experience, we offer a unique approach combining innovative technology, strategic advice and best practices. Our success programs produce measurable results by improving ROI, mitigating risks and achieving operational excellence.

Serving more than 1,800 locations across North America, Karmak is an employee-owned company with headquarters in Carlinville, Illinois.

© 2013 Karmak, Inc. All rights reserved.