

Converged Infrastructure Adoption Rising Among Smaller Businesses

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While small and midsize businesses may evaluate converged infrastructure on similar criteria, their experiences with deployment can be very different.

Slowly but surely, small and midsize businesses are beginning to adopt converged infrastructure solutions in larger numbers. A recent survey from Techaisle, a global SMB IT market research firm, found that 10 percent of small businesses and 27 percent of midmarket businesses—higher numbers than in the past—plan to incorporate some degree of converged infrastructure into their environments. As the market matures, Techaisle expects these numbers to grow even more.



In general, smaller companies take longer to adopt new technologies, but once they realize the value of new technology, their adoption rates grow faster than larger enterprises, according to Techaisle lead analyst Anurag Agrawal. At this point, Agrawal said, most small companies still use a lot of traditional infrastructure, such as dedicated physical servers for workload support.

But as these companies begin to adopt more server virtualization and want a more cloud-ready infrastructure, they are realizing the value of converged infrastructure.

“The ongoing migration to server virtualization--both for small businesses that have not yet adopted virtualization at all and for midmarket enterprises that are consolidating workloads on new, virtualization-ready infrastructure—are the main drivers for the growth of converged infrastructure in the SMB space,” Agrawal said.

The Techaisle survey found that both small businesses and midmarket enterprises are most likely to acquire converged infrastructure to support data center consolidation. SMBs also cited virtualization applications and data migration as reasons for adoption of converged architecture. Other popular reasons for adoption include big data management, unified communications, SharePoint and the need for a cloud-ready infrastructure.

The survey showed that while small and midsize businesses may evaluate converged infrastructure on similar criteria, their experiences with deployment can be very different. Small businesses are 35 percent more likely than midsize companies, for example, to resist the internal changes necessary to make converged infrastructure work. Small businesses in particular can't afford infrastructure disruption for any length of time.

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In contrast, midmarket companies are more likely to have issues with time and resource constraints, infrastructure disruption during the rollout, and challenges related to integrating the converged infrastructure with existing infrastructure. Techaisle recommends that these companies choose a supplier that can address these issues for SMBs upfront. Agrawal suggests that both small and mid-sized companies communicate concerns and goals directly with suppliers of converged infrastructure solutions to ensure the right fit.

The Techaisle survey also pointed out that the size of the company often correlates with how much IT staff and expertise are available for ongoing management of converged infrastructure. More specifically, while businesses with 50 or more employees are actually increasing their IT staffing and can often handle converged infrastructure management on their own, that's not the case with businesses that have fewer than 20 employees. It often makes sense for these companies to choose other approaches to cope with sprawl and complexity, such as turning to external server providers.

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