"Do more with less."

The idea may seem small, but it's big as can be in the business world. Those four words can underpin the driving philosophy for everyone in an organization's hierarchy, from customer-facing frontliners to decision-making executives.

Cloud integration can help companies make the most of their assets and human efforts as businesses constantly attempt to boost productivity. Gartner claims the technology is so vital that strategic cloud adoption will impact over half of all IT outsourcing deals through 2020. In short, companies can increase productivity with cloud integration. But understanding the high-level idea and grasping the low-level applications are two very different things. In terms of streamlining operations, workflows and processes, there's a lot cloud can do that might not be immediately apparent.

Here are three important categories that showcase the transformative potential cloud technology holds, and a look at several ways businesses can leverage them.
1. Time is Money

More than anything else, time savings gained from adopting cloud-based technology — which leads to cost savings — makes automation the most important point of an organization's digital transformation, with cloud providing the necessary backbone. Today, the right cloud-based automation tools can mitigate pain points large and small, increasing productivity and boosting the bottom line in ways that are hard to imagine without experiencing them firsthand.

Take, for example, an employee in a pre-cloud integration call center. While this agent relies on technology and even has some limited interaction with cloud-based systems, they're still expected to do most of the heavy lifting during a call's opening minutes. To perform even the most basic task, the agent will need to ask the caller's name, their identifying account information, the reason for their call, and numerous other tidbits of information, wasting several seconds that add up to major needless expenditure, multiplied across every desk in the call center.

Knowing in Advance

The modern cloud contact center remedies the problems often seen in pre-cloud integration centers. Here, calls automatically route to the best possible personnel, and critical information, including the customer's name, account notes, and high-level reasons for the customer's call, immediately populate the agent's screen. Information about repeat customers is given in real time. To customers, the time saved having to communicate all of this information projects confidence and competence, building brand loyalty and positive associations in the process; it's the difference between a cold opening ("What is the purpose of your call?") and a knowing one ("I see you're calling about problems with your service. How can I help get things right?"). Additionally, employees are able to get down to brass tacks that much faster and move onto the next call, saving time that adds up call by call.

To be sure, this is only one take on the immense potential automation brings and only one way to increase productivity with cloud integration. In another organization, automated, personalized marketing emails based on data housed in a cloud-based CRM system may...
be used to shorten cycles and close sales, while another may use cloud-based productivity tools to send automated SMS appointment reminders without need for human intervention. In all these cases and countless others, automated productivity tools for the enterprise that utilize cloud-based data and infrastructure lead the charge, solving problems and optimizing processes, all to the delight of the organization integrating the tools.

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### 2. Mobility: Any Device, Anywhere

While simply getting all the visual information needed in one conference would have been a hair-pulling nightmare even ten years ago, cloud platforms can implement conferencing solutions like Amazon Chime, regardless of the medium. The exec using her tablet to dial in over 4G gets the same features as the home-based claims employee and the desktop-using location manager. Even those without a dedicated app get an easier experience, as worthwhile cloud solutions also include browser-based support.

The work-from-home staffer should be able to contribute just as easily as a roving sales consultant or the compliance officer sending and reviewing video feeds from their collection of offices across remote branches — not to mention those actually working from within headquarters.

Here's another example, this one set in an insurance industry's claims department. These departments are comprised of several human assets with distinct roles and locations. Adjusters may bounce from home to home and vehicle to vehicle, capturing images or video of damages with cloud-connected smart devices. Service reps — such as those in the modernized, automated contact center mentioned above — may spend an entire day at the same cubicle; investigators, processors, and other roles may embody a blend of the previous two, bouncing between sites to carry out assigned tasks.

### Real-Time Communication

Roles that require out-of-office work frequently intersect, needing close collaboration in order for the larger agency to function seamlessly. With the right cloud-based platform, processing claims effectively becomes far easier to manage than it might've been in years past. An on-site adjuster, for instance, could instantly share visual data containing a customer's sensitive personal information with an investigator in a different state using a secure cloud-based environment, which is far easier than coordinating across dated online properties requiring a secondary exchange of information, such as URLs or login credentials.

A service rep utilizing a unified communications-as-a-service platform on the same cloud, meanwhile, can use the same tools to quickly locate and get in touch with relevant personnel for a highly technical question — and easily flip the call to a videoconference with screen and document sharing, if needed — all while holding a customer on the other line. With a cloud-based platform, teams can stay on the same page and effectively collaborate from afar, ultimately saving team members time and the company money.

The insurance company mentioned above could also be a legal organization, a retailer, or any other entity where people across some distance need to share a visual space. Say the organization holds a weekly videoconference. Claims personnel need to transmit images
directly from their smart devices to the conference audience, while management needs to share desktop slide documents featuring the latest KPI updates, and a member of the exec team needs to consume the content from her tablet, since she's dialing in from the train to work.

3. Innovation That Nurtures Collaboration

There's a reason companies across the business landscape have prioritized teamwork, collaboration and problem solving above all else over the last decade: We now have the technology to enable them at the highest possible levels. Strong collaborative capability is less about a single function than a strong collection thereof.

For example, ticketing platforms such as Zendesk and JIRA allow teams to audit and prioritize a variety of internal issues and tasks across departments, ensuring problems can be elevated and fixed faster and projects run more smoothly. Visibility into historical data on certain issues can help predict which problems may recur or justify proactive measures to ensure everyone across teams is doing their jobs on an active campaign.

JIRA's use as a project management tool, for instance, can permit a project manager to delegate tasks to any number of team members. Documents can be attached alongside them to inform direction, certain members of the team can be tagged and included in specific updates, and integration with email ensures anyone assigned to a certain project or task is up-to-date on the latest as projects continue.

Driving Productivity with Cloud

With everything integrated in a single cloud-based solution, workflows go uninterrupted, allowing for greater efficiency across — and within — teams.

Providing a shared space is only part of a cloud-focused company's total effort. Making sure hardware concerns don't get in the way must also be a top-of-mind concern. That's especially true today, in a time when employees increasingly expect a consumer-like user experience for work systems. The company that meets this need while providing a strong shared workspace and automating tasks that add up to major bottom-line savings is one that sets itself up for success with its cloud-based initiatives — wherever their employees work, whatever they do, and however their tasks may be optimized.