Loftware™

7 Business-Boosting Benefits of Cloud Labeling

Embrace a world where labeling is limitless

Moving your labeling to the cloud makes sense.

Introduction

Here's everything you need to know to be able to begin your journey to the cloud today.

With its quick deployment times, lower upfront costs, easy access, ability to scale and automatic updates, cloud technology has changed life as we know it over the last several years. The impact of cloud technology is especially evident in the business world where companies have embraced a cloud-first strategy for many of their critical business systems including enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), and inventory management among others. And companies that manage inventory, customer service and logistics in the cloud are beginning to do the same with their labeling.

The proof for cloud adoption is in the numbers: Global cloud spending increased by 23.1% in 2021 to $332.3 billion, up from $270 billion the prior year, according to Gartner, Inc. Software as a service (SaaS)— simply, the delivery of software applications over the Internet—makes up the biggest chunk at $122.6 billion*. And there's no end in sight to the cloud movement. By 2024, Gartner expects more than 45% of all information technology (IT) spending on system infrastructure, infrastructure software, application software and business process outsourcing to shift from traditional, on-premise solutions to the cloud**. In fact, the research firm calls cloud "one of the most continually disruptive forces in IT markets since the early days of the digital age."

Further spurred on by the global COVID-19 pandemic and related business shifts (e.g., remote employees and supply chain disruptions), the cloud has hands-down become the simplest way for companies of all

sizes to design, manage and print labels across their business and supply chain operations. And it seems clear that labeling as a function has gained significant exposure during these times as business continues to recognize the role it plays in supply chain health.

This report highlights seven key "wins" that you'll realize when you move your labeling to the cloud. We'll show you how cloud-first labeling can help you save time and money, address current business challenges and plan for the future.

Global cloud spending increased by 23.1% in 2021

*Gartner Forecasts Worldwide Public Cloud End-User Spending to Grow 23% in 2021, Press Release, 4/21/21
https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2021-04-21-gartner-forecasts-worldwide-public-cloud-end-user-spending-to-grow-23-percent-in-2021

**Gartner, Cloud Shift Impacts All IT Markets, Article, 11/5/19
https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/cloud-shift-impacts-all-it-markets

1 Get connected
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From accessing shared files to jumping on a video call or gaining remote access through your mobile device, we all understand the importance of keeping connected in this digital day and age. And the recent global pandemic has proven that we can communicate successfully with business and family when forced to do so creatively. What's more, we now see that most business activities can be managed offsite by capable, skilled employees, many of whom were forced to leave their offices, plants, and other physical business locations due to COVID-19 shutdowns and health concerns.

A trend that was already gaining steam pre-pandemic, we all know remote work is here to stay at least for the foreseeable future. This means that easy, flexible access to essential business systems is critical. But to adapt, companies need to become more fluid. Which is why companies using on-premise, siloed business systems were hit hard when they needed to offer remote team members "anywhere anytime" connectivity.

When it comes to labeling specifically - cloud-based solutions had already been placed firmly on the radar of many organizations. Those companies understand that the cloud helps make it even easier to shift production and ultimately labeling, accommodate a remote workforce, provide device and location independence, and extend labeling to new partners and suppliers. This all works to ensure the continuous movement of parts and products – upstream and downstream – without delays.

2 Design and change labels on the fly

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How fast can you meet customer demands? It's not just about who can deliver anymore but who can deliver first. But, when you're dealing with constant change, complexity and ever evolving regulations, that can be a tall order when it comes to labeling. Whether moving into new markets or regions, attempting to meet new corporate brand standards, or just trying to keep up with subtle product related changes, your labeling solution shouldn't hold you back.

Today's fast-paced business environment doesn't wait for lengthy label design and change cycles. Businesses can't afford to slow production and risk competitors beating them to market. In the current business environment, you're being asked to change and adjust on the fly to meet new market demands. If it's not handled right, labeling can cause big delays and even bigger problems when you can't get the right data on the right label. Without the right technology solutions that adjust and adapt, you could wind up losing money, productivity, efficiency, and market share.

However, standardizing on a cloud-based solution offers you the opportunity to re-evaluate your labeling so you can take advantage of automating your labeling processes, while gaining flexibility, accuracy, and consistency to avoid mislabeling and easily support any requirements you may have. Moving to cloud-based labeling makes it easier to draw from sources of truth for label data and dynamically address labeling variability. With this type of centralized approach, you leverage data from your systems of record and configure rules that dynamically change label content based on that data. This streamlines label formatting and printing so you can easily manage regional, language, regulatory and customer specific requirements. It allows for quick label template updates and streamlining of the label changes and approval processes - changes and updates can be made by business users in hours rather than days, weeks, or months so that requirements are met quickly.

3 Give your IT team a break

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We all know there's been increasing demand on IT teams and tech support, and we understand how essential these resources are to our business. In addition to the day-to-day requests and of course the panicked demands that come from inevitable system breakdowns, there's also all the company-wide technology solutions and applications which must be maintained, updated, and replaced regularly. Not to mention the countless hours to implement and deploy these technologies. Then, there's security, availability, performance monitoring and disaster recovery to consider.

Now, imagine having the opportunity to become the "hero" when you free up those scarce and costly IT resources to focus on other tasks. Because when it comes to cloud computing there's no IT infrastructure to purchase or maintain. Overall, this shift from physical to digital resources offers a much smoother, highly controlled, flexible option for application deployment, offering benefits for everyone involved – especially your IT team.

Unlike other applications, cloud-based labeling solutions don't require a large IT team or limitless budget. With cloud labeling there's automatic software updates and once up and running cloud applications allow users to design, manage and print collaboratively while providing valuable business insight, including the ability for trusted partners to monitor customers' supplies and usage to help grow their business. Again, these activities can all take place outside of the realm of the traditional IT department. Because, when you implement a cloud-based labeling platform that integrates with sources of truth and leverages business logic, business users can easily make changes and updates without requiring assistance from IT.

4 Save money and
manage costs

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Everyone wants to save money right? Well, there's big opportunity for cost savings and management when it comes to cloud deployment. First and foremost, the cloud offers financial predictability – eliminating the need for you to make extensive upfront investments. It also reduces the need for internal IT infrastructure and IT team involvement, thus resulting in even more cost savings, less hassle, and more resources to allocate elsewhere.

Ultimately, the cloud removes barriers and puts world-class solutions into the hands of companies of all sizes making enterprise applications affordable. With cloud labeling you can save money across the board from staff costs and overall manpower hours to costly hardware and software updates and expenses involved in scaling your labeling. Additionally, investing in cloud technology solutions on an "as a service" basis transforms traditional IT operations into an operational expense (OpEx) versus a capital expense (CapEx). Where the latter requires companies to make an upfront investment that generally has to be depreciated over time (usually on an amortized basis over the life of the asset), OpEx removes the need for a large upfront investment. Simply put, you only pay for what you use when you use it.

Other, less obvious cost advantages of cloud labeling include its smaller environmental footprint (e.g., no big servers to maintain onsite) and dramatic reduction in errors. This, in turn, leads to less waste and fewer scrapped supplies, both of which can contribute to a company's carbon footprint. As one of the most efficient ways to access fully digitized quality assurance, the economies of scale included in cloud labeling mean less infrastructure, less electricity (even for large-scale label development), and integration with cloud-connected printers and other tools to create a fully integrated infrastructure.

5 Stay up and running around the clock

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The business world moves fast. Products become obsolete, have shorter lifecycles and the number of product SKUs continues to increase with personalization and product variability. Factor in cyclical swings, slowdowns, and the threat of future global health crises, and the picture becomes even more complex and challenging. With all this, companies are still under pressure to operate more efficiently; keep costs down and quality up; improve their ability to respond quickly to customer requirements; and most importantly, to keep their operations running so that goods flow throughout the supply chain in a fast and frictionless manner.

When it comes to labeling, the best way to make sure this happens is to have a reliable cloud-based solution which ensures continuous uptime and availability. However, even with the pressures of a pandemic and the impact on our global supply chains, many companies still leave mission critical labeling up to chance, using homegrown and disparate software solutions. Unfortunately, over time these patchwork systems only serve to cause confusion and delays while giving shippers little visibility into their labeling activities across the supply chain. This leads to a number of data errors, high maintenance costs, non-compliance, and lost business.

But, when you deploy labeling in the cloud you can readily shift labeling activities from one site to another in the case of an outage, workforce shortage or any other reason – giving you the confidence that your labeling won't go down in these circumstances. Ultimately, you can rest easy knowing that you'll have high availability, speedy disaster recovery and high levels of data security with trusted partners like AWS and Microsoft Azure. You'll have the confidence that you'll always stay up and running around the clock, with full availability to meet all your business demands across the globe.

6 Manage growth across your business

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Your company is growing - adding new facilities and expanding into new regions. But is your labeling ready to scale alongside your business? You need a labeling solution that you can control centrally, one that can flex with your business as you need it to. Whether you need to add more locations, increase print volumes, manufacture new products, or comply with regulations, you must give all your stakeholders access to meet corporate labeling standards.

In today's business environment, manual processes represent barriers to growth and scale. However, once digitized in a cloud based labeling solution, these manual processes quickly give way to the seamless exchange of data and allow companies to maintain existing systems and user interactions to improve efficiencies and scale labeling across their entire business ecosystem. Also, cloud-based labeling increases the elasticity of your overall labeling system, giving users' more flexibility with re-provisioning, adding, or expanding technological infrastructure resources. Most importantly, you can onboard new sites quickly, provide simplified, consistent, and standardized training via a user-friendly platform and extend labeling to suppliers and partners so you can avoid any potential disruptions. And when you provide controlled access to labeling you eliminate errors which result in costly and time consuming relabeling.

Maximizing regional flexibility is also key in enabling your businesses to adjust rapidly, up or down to meet the challenges of global expansion or redeploying resources. Deploying labeling through the cloud enables all your locations to solve their unique labeling needs while ensuring that a common set of labels, centralized applications and data sources are used across your supply chain. This centralized approach helps companies ensure business continuity and achieve consistency and accuracy while empowering them to enable mass label changes to meet complex, global and high-volume labeling demands.

7

Enable next level security and instill confidence

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You probably have enough to worry about without wondering if your data is secure. However, many companies are still concerned about security - they understand the urgency in keeping data safe online whether it's hosted in their servers or through a provider. This is why, when it comes to protecting your cloud environment, you need a trusted partner with a dedicated team of certified security professionals that understand best practices across policies, processes and controls involved in securing data and your overall cloud infrastructure.

You'll want commitment and surety that your deployment was built with security and stability in mind, providing the confidence that your entrusted data is protected. You also want a provider that can implement security measures to protect your data in the cloud with the resources needed and the expertise dedicated to security. Fortunately, with the cloud, security is often better than other traditional systems, in part because service providers devote resources to solving security issues that many customers cannot afford to tackle or which they lack the technical skills to address. Of course, the ideal cloud-based solution will be built

on AWS or Microsoft Azure which are architected to be the most flexible and secure cloud computing environments available today.

Remember that at the end of the day, the partner behind the technology is just as important—if not more critical—than the technology itself. Look for one that provides deployment options that put security and stability front and center, that ensures entrusted data is protected and can verify security measures to protect your data in the cloud.

Moving to the cloud makes sense

It's clear cloud adoption is on the rise for many business systems and your labeling shouldn't be any different. Because at the end of the day, cloud-based labeling allows you to speed deployment and take fast, corrective actions to eliminate bottlenecks, improve time to market, and ensure compliance while future-proofing your labeling operations.

If you're looking to get connected with any device at anytime and anywhere, while also saving time and money, along with getting rid of headaches for your IT team, you'll

want to start considering the cloud for your labeling. In an era where supply chain disruption, shipping delays and labor shortages have become the "new normal," these advantages all help support growth across your enterprise in any business condition.

So, if any of the business-booting benefits outlined above make sense and you think any of them can help you boost your performance, and make you job easier, then

why wait? Shouldn't today be the day you get started on your journey to the cloud? Don't be left behind – get in touch with Loftware today and we'll get you started on your digital journey and your path to cloud labeling success.

Loftware is the world's largest cloud-based Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management provider, offering an end-to-end labeling solution platform for companies of all sizes. Maintaining a global presence with offices in US, UK, Germany, Slovenia, China, and Singapore, Loftware boasts over 35 years of expertise in solving labeling challenges. We help companies improve accuracy, traceability and compliance while improving the quality, speed, and efficiency of their labeling. As the leading global provider of Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management solutions, Loftware enables supply chain agility, supports evolving regulations, and optimizes business operations for a wide range of industries including automotive, chemicals, consumer products, electronics, food & beverage, manufacturing, medical device, pharmaceuticals, retail and apparel.

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