

Why Cloud: Targeting guide



A guide for identifying cloud-reluctant small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs)

The purpose of this guide is to help partners:

- Classify types of cloud-reluctant SMBs
- Distinguish cloud-reluctant from cloud-adverse customers
- Reframe the way you talk to cloud-reluctant customers
- Find new cloud leads from old customers
- Dive into the conversation

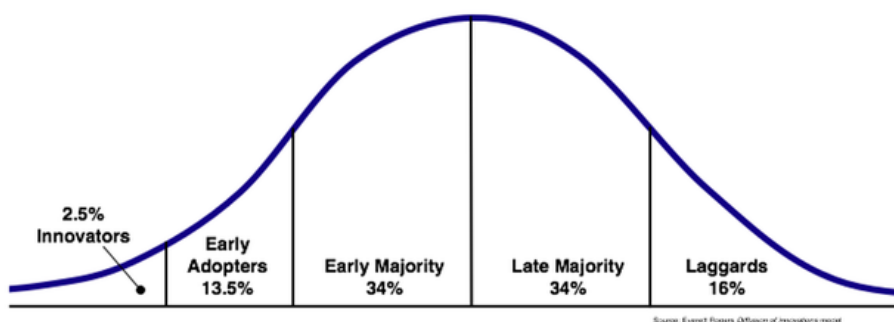
Classify types of cloud-reluctant SMBs

Based on simple observations you can make around your customer's office, you can get a feel for how comfortable they are with the cloud. With the exception of "cloud owners," who use paid online services, the customer types described below may be considered cloud reluctant.

Customer type	Current technology	What you might see	Cloud comfort
Cloud owners	Online paid subscriptions	Ex. ADP, Salesforce.com, MailChimp, WebEx	Embrace
Cloud skimmers	Online free tools plus desktop services	Ex. Gmail, Google docs, Excel 2010	Side hug
Cloud builders	On-site servers and cloud storage	Ex. Office 2010 (Word, Excel, PPT), Dropbox or Google Drive	Handshake
Box thumpers	Desktop servers and out-of-the-box licenses	Ex. Window Server and Office 2007, Access	Arm's length
Paper pushers	Landlines and legacy desktops	Ex. Windows XP, Office 2003, AT&T, answering machines	Cold shoulder

Distinguish cloud-reluctant customers from cloud-adverse customers

Cloud-reluctant SMB customers live in the "late majority" and "laggard" portions of the technology adoption curve, meaning they may eventually adopt. For example, they may be different from cloud-adverse companies in that they recognize their customers have growing expectations for cloud services but aren't sure yet how the cloud fits into their business model.



Cloud-reluctant customers fall along the technology adoption curve where "no" can also mean "not yet."

It's important to recognize that truly cloud-adverse customers are not represented on this graph at all. They think the cloud is a passing phase and/or have plans to retire alongside their existing systems. It can't hurt to talk to them about the cloud to enhance your reputation, but do not mistake this customer as your target audience.

Cloud-reluctant SMBs are different from early adopters and early majority companies in that they view the cloud more cautiously. The state of their environment today is likely a symptom of the issue that's holding them back. For example:

Customer type	Hypothesis for cloud-reluctance
Cloud owners	N/A
Cloud skimmers	May be hanging back from full cloud adoption because of the price.
Cloud builders	May keep servers on-premises because they don't trust cloud security or business continuity.
Box thumpers	May run old equipment because they think it's "free" and "simple" compared to cloud.
Paper pushers	May feel like the cloud is selling out their honest way of doing business in person.

Reframe the way you talk to cloud-reluctant customers

For many cloud-reluctant SMBs, their concerns about cost, security, and business disruption are left over from early days when the cloud was less predictable and less secure. Others see the cloud as a threat to the way they do business—they've created their own formula that's informed their personal identity too.

By being empathetic to your customer's business identity, acknowledging their priorities, and drawing a clear line between cloud benefits and their business needs, you can help shift perceptions of the cloud and show your customers how it can be used to accelerate and enhance their business formula without undermining it.

Find new leads from old customers

You probably have a database full of customers who have told you "no" when it comes to cloud. Those are likely your best leads. Start winning them over through a phased approach:

1. Use casual side conversations to explore whether they are cloud adverse or cloud reluctant.
2. If they're cloud adverse, don't push the cloud but do get caught being cloud knowledgeable, so they know you are a cloud expert and not just "on-premises" support. You can do this by sharing new things you're working on, cool cloud technology that you're excited about, and examples of cloud projects you've done with other customers.
3. If they're cloud-reluctant customers, set up time to have a business discovery conversation using the conversation guide. Learn their business inside and out before even broaching the topic of cloud. You can win them over by demonstrating you have their best interests at heart.

Dive into the conversation

Once you've identified potential cloud candidates and re-established your connection, use the Conversation Guide to kick off the discussion.