SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS WITH INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

Small businesses are in constant competition with each other and large corporations who have the upper hand with more capital and employee expertise. In the digital marketplace, data is valuable and often not utilized to its fullest extent. Information systems offer small businesses opportunities to advance in their industry and improve their processes to be more effective and efficient. With multiple systems to choose from, information systems have something for every type of business need. The future of business and information systems is moving toward cloud computing services and the flexibility it offers small businesses. With limited capital, system customization, and paying only for what is necessary is making cloud services a possibility for small businesses to create a competitive advantage. Small businesses can find cost savings, more effective processes, better decision-making, and security with information systems, leading to success.

INTRODUCTION

Small businesses make up the majority of companies in the U.S. and have a significant influence over the economy and jobs. They face challenges when it comes to capital costs, time, and competition with other businesses. Information systems have been around for a long time before becoming fully digitalized and integrated into businesses, everyday operations and decisions. Simple and complex, they offer storage, analysis, and data security to make processes more efficient and effective. Systems can be chosen based on the company's needs, and there are many options to choose from. Information systems have a lot to offer small businesses. Utilizing information systems in small businesses can lead to cost savings, less time spent on non-value-added processes, security, and expertise from system providers. A competitive advantage can be created when small businesses integrate information systems into their operations. Cloud computing services offer small businesses a push into the future of the business world and ease of use, accessibility from anywhere, and flexible options. Small businesses can move into the future of and create lasting success with information systems.

My research question is how small businesses can use information systems to become more successful and compete in the business world. I already have background knowledge on information systems and how they are used, mainly by large corporations. However, I wanted to know how small businesses could advance and do better by using information systems to have continued success and possible advantages in their industry. This topic is important because of the impact small businesses have on the U.S. economy and the ever-growing pressure from consumers for businesses to be using the latest technologies to meet their expectations. Therefore, small businesses should be informed and educated on the opportunities available to them through information systems. I provide background into small businesses within the United States, how they are classified, and the technological obstacles they face. Then I provide definitions and background in information systems along with different types of systems and how they are used. Next, I explain and discuss how information systems bring advantages and further success to small businesses, and the future of these working with cloud computing services. Lastly, I discuss obstacles I faced in my research and the conclusions I found through it. I used the literature review method to conduct my research and find my sources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Small Businesses

Whether you live in a metropolitan area with crowded streets and constant chatter or a quaint rural town with a single stoplight, you most likely have supported a small business owned by an entrepreneur with an idea. Small businesses may be hard to spot between the large stores owned by their even larger corporations, but they are there, and they make up almost 99.9% of the companies in the United States (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2018). 99.9% of American companies are employing friends, family members, neighbors, and other community members. These small businesses account for a large part of the U.S. economy and its structure. Without small businesses, people would not have jobs, and the United States would not be as prosperous nation as it currently stands. People start small businesses for many reasons as well. They may want to work from home permanently, they want to be their own boss and set their own schedule, they may want a fresh start and change what they do for a living, but the main reason people start their own business is to make more money (Kiisel, 2021). Small businesses are

created from an idea, passion, or gap in the market that individuals think they can fulfill with their business.

When someone says, "small business," most people think of their local mom-and-pop shop or a self-employed entrepreneur working from home. Since a small business can be thought of in many different ways, what specifications classify a business as small? Essentially, what makes a small business, a small business? According to the Small Business Administration, two factors determine a small business, the number of employees or the average annual receipts (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2021). The number of employees accounts for all types of employees that may work for a business, no matter how they came to work at that business (Business Credit and Assistance, 2021). Full-time, part-time, and temporary employees are all viewed and accounted for in the same manner. The average annual receipts are all accounts and types of revenue from all sources and can be calculated by adding the total income with the cost of goods sold (Business Credit and Assistance, 2021). The SBA only requires one of these to identify whether or not a business may be considered "small," and it ultimately depends on the industry the business is operating within. Industries are divided into sectors, then subsectors. Depending on the specific industry, the small businesses within that industry are determined by the maximum number of employees or the maximum annual receipts.

The definition of a small business may vary by industry but at the heart of a small business is an individual with an idea they want to create a business and earn a living from. Running a small business takes more than just an idea. It takes money, time, space, dedication, customers, and many other elements that bring an idea to life and create a sustainable business. Small business owners do not start with investors or a large amount of capital to start their business and pay for all the upfront costs that come with it. Renting space, equipment, inventory,

employees, insurance, and marketing are some of the most common startup costs associated with starting a business (Kiisel, 2021). Running a business costs money, and most owners are counting on their small business to be successful for them to make a profit to continue to run and live off their business. Businesses have many moving parts, and keeping track of everything can be complicated and timely, especially for one person. The average small business will grow 2-3% each year, and yet only 40% of the 30 million of them in the U.S. will be successful (Kiisel, 2021). Small businesses commonly start with one to very few employees at first and with such small projected growth each year, and such a high rate of failure, small businesses are a risk to startup.

When it comes to connectivity and internet accessibility, small businesses are even more disproportionately disadvantaged because of the costs required for hardware and software. A study on small businesses done by the U.S Chamber of Commerce, it was found that 55% of small businesses face challenges because of the costs of connectivity and everything required to have a basic internet connection (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2018). Technology and Wi-Fi may be almost everywhere we go, but there is a common misconception that everyone has access to the internet. Even with access to the internet, 57% of small business owners lack understanding and knowledge of digital applications and tools (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2018). The resources available online may be abundant and vast, but sorting through them to find what is affordable and suitable for a person's specific business takes time, and they may not know what to look for to expand their business. It can also be difficult for small businesses to find employees experienced in systems and technology to manage and help the business advance. Since small businesses cannot always hire employees to help excel their business, they must turn to what is available and affordable.

Information Systems

We live in a society that now depends on technology and connectivity for everything from small daily tasks to helping to operate entire economies. Technology has become necessary for any job, and information systems are all around us, whether we realize it or not. Information systems help us collect and process the constant stream of data and information we interact with daily. While most people are familiar with technology and specific aspects of it, they often do not know what information systems are or do even when they interact with them all of the time. Information systems and information technology are often referred to and thought of as the same concept. Even though they are two different areas of study, they are related. Information technology is considered a subset within information systems that helps us manage technology and how it is used. Information systems are far more complex and do far more behind the scenes than we realize.

Information systems are defined as specific components consisting of software, hardware, data warehouses, or a database, people, and processes. Communication is sometimes intertwined with this group or replaces people and processes completely depending on the source or definition. A more formal definition of information systems is an integrated network used to organize and process data to create useful information that will lead to knowledgeable decision-making (Bourgeois, 2014). Information systems may seem more of a recent invention, but people have been developing ways to help them record and process information for centuries now. Herman Hollerith created his census tabulator machine in 1890 to read and sort through U.S. census cards (Zwass, 2020). This census tabulator is considered one of the earliest, if not the first, information system used on a large scale. Hollerith's creation was a step forward in innovation and automation. Hollerith's tabulator contained what we consider now essential

components of an information system. It contained hardware, people, procedures and made the census counting process more efficient and accurate.

Information systems consist of many different parts that create cohesion and develop knowledge for businesses and everyday life. The main components of an information system are divided into hardware, software, people, process, and data. Hardware for an information system can take on many forms depending on what is needed. Traditional system hardware is typically thought of as servers, cables, processors, databases for storage, and stationary computers (Gregersen, n.d.). Just as information systems have adapted over the years, the hardware has as well. Information systems are now operated from mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, and even smartwatches. Personal laptop computers have also enabled people to separate from the traditional hardware and work on the go.

There is a wide variety of software that can complete the simplest tasks to running complex applications. Information systems use software for various reasons to help the user. The software works in conjunction with the hardware to make the entire system run and operate correctly (Gregersen, n.d.). The software instructs the hardware on the functions required to perform, and the hardware allows the software to connect networks and the internet.

Software instructs hardware on the steps and tasks to complete to run the system and applications. For this to happen processes need to be put into place. Processes can be complex or straightforward, but they all usually contain more than one step to complete. Information systems can run multiple processes at once and help to improve current processes in place. Systems such as enterprise resource systems combined with data can streamline processes to improve business operations (Bourgeois, 2014). Processes demonstrate the combination of all the components of an information system working together and reaching the final results.

Data is an integral part of an information system. Without data, knowledge cannot be created, and processes cannot be completed. While data is valuable, it is unprocessed and not practical for use in business. Information systems help process data into knowledge that can be acted upon and used to make informed decisions. Data must be processed into information to then become knowledge. Data requires analysis and context to be valid and not ambiguous. Data is all around us and is constantly being recorded.

While data is an essential part of information systems, people are very much needed to use the knowledge gained from data. Larger companies may hire specialists to manage different system components, such as software programmers, project managers, data analysts, engineers, and others (Bourgeois, 2014). More sophisticated information systems that are handling vast amounts of data and information at one time will need people to maintain it and ensure it is running effectively as well. Smaller, less complicated systems may not need an entire team of employee dedicated to it. Yet, they still require input and interaction from people. Information systems make processes more feasible and more efficient, thus making more time for people to do other tasks. The interaction between systems and people is still necessary for quality control and making sure the information system is working for the better of the business.

There are many roles and areas of a business that need to be managed. Information systems help to organize all the information flowing to and from a business. Storing past data is essential for future analysis and decision-making. An information system replaces how data used to be stored and keeps it organized and safe online (Davoren, 2019a). Moving to an information system to store and collect data will save space, money, and security compared to having everything on paper. An information system can keep everything a business needs as close as a

single click and accessible anywhere. Storing data in an information system can make it more manageable when processing it to create information, knowledge, and decisions.

Storing and accessing data in an information system is quick and easy, but unprocessed data is not helpful. Manually sorting through, deciding what is important, and how things should be categorized takes time. An important role of an information system is to help analyze and make sense of it. Certain types of information systems can assist in these ways to lessen the burden on business owners. Information systems can analyze data and sort it into functional categories to aid in decision-making. After analysis, the information system can use past data to assist in decision-making for multiple areas of business (Davoren, 2019a). Analysis and decision-making are critical roles of information systems that help business owners make better and more informed choices.

Information systems contain many elements that come together to create knowledge and make decisions. These components can be used in different degrees to create certain types of decision-making. There are three main section information systems are usually sorted into, management support, support of knowledge, and operational support (Zwass, 2020). Within each section are subsystems that focus on that type of support for the business. Within operational support, there are transaction processing systems, supply chain management, and customer relationship management. The support of knowledge work sections contains knowledge management systems, professional support systems, and collaboration systems. For management support, the supporting systems are decision support system, executive information system, and management reporting system (Zwass, 2020). Some supporting systems are more commonly known and used than others. Businesses may want to have all in place eventually to have a fully integrated system, but some are more integral to have than others.

It takes a lot of planning and coordination to have everything for a successful business. Inventory needs to be restocked before a sellout; invoices need to be sent and paid in on time, etc. Supply chains help the world plan, order, receive and restock. People in and outside of the business world widely know of supply chain management because it is an integral part of how our world is run. Supply chain management is the planning and logistics of resources and activities in an efficient and effective manner (Nordmeyer, 2019). Supply chains help get resources and final products to the final consumer quickly and as cheaply as possible. There is a lot more that goes on behind the scenes in a supply chain. Materials need to be sourced and procured; orders must arrive on time, and managing the flow of information and money throughout the supply chain (Nordmeyer, 2019). Supply chains are an excellent example of an information system in action. They require the collaboration of hardware, software, people, processes, and communication for everything to run correctly.

Supply chain management might be the most well-known supporting information system, but there are many others that are also useful to running a successful business. Along with running a thriving supply chain, businesses need to maintain prosperous relationships with their customers, and they can accomplish this with customer relationship management systems. The name very well described the system. Customer relationship management is used to track, maintain, plan current customer relationships, and predict future trends and possible customer demographics (Davoren, 2019b). This system allows customers to interact with the business, share their feedback on products or services, and have their thoughts heard.

Any business in any industry is buying and selling products and services every day. A transaction processing system can help manage transactions monetarily and the data obtained from the transactions of customers and vendors. The system helps to process transactions both

in-person and online. Transaction processing systems can connect to other systems to help track inventory as items are sold, record debits and credits to different accounts, collect data for orders or future decisions, as well as other transactions (Davoren, 2019b). Transaction processing systems are often called or mistaken for point-of-sale systems. Technically, point of sale systems are transaction processing systems used in-store, often managed by an employee, and can be many different types of hardware or software (Ingram, 2016). Transaction processing systems can help a business keep everything in order, especially for small businesses that may not have the capital to purchase more expensive systems.

Collecting data and information is vital to predicting future trends and keeping up with the changing markets, interpreting data to make the best decisions can be challenging. Using a decision support system helps organize and analyze the data and transform it into valuable knowledge for business decisions. Decision support systems combine data, business knowledge, and future plans to create interactive reports to help business owners make informed decisions (Olavsrud, 2020). The reports created can help to visualize trends and see how customers are reacting to changes and patterns. Decision support systems can be applied to all areas where decisions are made from financial budgets, future product demand, seasonal orders, and many others.

Success with Information Systems

Having an online presence for a business is vital in today's competitive market. Businesses both large and small need to effectively communicate, collaborate, manage, and market their business. Business is a digital world and having the ability to interact with customers, vendors, and others through the digital landscape can make or break a business. An online presence is much more than being on social media and interacting with customers through it. A business needs to manage its inventories, orders, vendors, and customer relationships while also planning for the future. Information systems can advance a small business forward while helping them to excel in the current digital market.

With information systems and higher computerization of business processes, small businesses can receive benefits such as better recordkeeping, increased productivity and timeliness, better cash flow control, and more accurate data (Lees, 1987). It cannot be denied that a small business can be better and be more successful with an information system in place. Having a system in place to save time, money and help to make better decisions should be on every small business owner's radar regarding the future of their business and investing in it properly. Information systems offer collaboration at its best without requiring in-person meetings. File sharing, collaboration, email, and connected networks allow businesses to receive and send information in promptly no matter the location or time zones (Brookins, 2017). Customers and vendors appreciate the ease information systems bring to businesses, whether they know about it or not.

Small business owners constantly need to make decisions on everything concerning their business, from accounting and budgeting to how much inventory to order for the next seasonal change. Decisions help with planning the day-to-day activities to planning the next few years in business. Business owners take their knowledge of the industry and the external environment to make the right choices (Choo, 1996). Data collected from doing business also plays into how decisions are made but making sense of all the data at once can be a challenge, especially if the data is unprocessed. Information systems and subsystems like decision support systems and transaction processing systems can help sort the data collected. These systems can help to plan for short-term and long-term goals as well as daily activities. Having resources to assist in the decision-making process can lead to better decisions based on actual data collected from the business. Data is an asset, but only having it does not lead to decisions or basic information. Implementing an information system to process data can lead to competitive advantages and better knowledge about the business (Farhoomand, 1985). Competitive advantages may be a rare thing to come by, but they offer a business a chance to excel. It takes more than just having information systems to get advantages with them. They must be used strategically and to the business's advantage.

Information systems can bring a competitive advantage to small businesses in their industry. Utilizing the interconnectedness of the systems to inventory, accounting, customer, and vendor relationships, and more can lead to faster decision making, efficient restocking, and proper allocation of resources. This interconnectedness leads to better communication between businesses, customers, and vendors. Communication with the information system vendor is also important in using an information system successfully within a business. Businesses that take advantage of the relationship with their system vendor leads to better use of their information system, better decision-making, and a greater impact on how they run their business (Lees, 1987). Information system vendors have valuable advice and expertise to implement information systems and get the best use out of the system. Information systems offer a competitive advantage from their system, the people managing it, and how the business utilizes it. Working with the system vendor helps to replace the need to hire specific employees to manage the system and run it. Small business success with information systems is not connected to the presence of analysts or programmers (Yap, 1992). A small business can hire analysts and programmers, but this does not mean they gain an advantage from these employees. These employees may not be skilled in the information system that will work best for your business and may not have enough knowledge to provide any resources. It is better to utilize the resources provided by the information system provider directly as they will be the most knowledgeable. Using the resources from the system provider typically comes at no extra cost to the business compared to hiring new employees out of pocket.

The Future with Cloud Computing Services

We talk of the cloud as an ambiguous place that stores our data, but it does much more, and cloud computing has opened a more comprehensive range of abilities accessible through the cloud. Cloud computing gives access through the internet to allow users to access data, applications, servers, network, and their capabilities from anywhere (Vennam, 2020). The cloud and cloud computing may sound like everything is becoming virtual and online, but this is not the case. There is still a large amount of physical hardware required to run the software to access the networks and applications on the cloud.

The idea of the cloud has grown in our everyday vocabulary and everyday use exponentially over the last ten or so years. Cloud services are available everywhere we go and on almost all of our smart devices. The cloud was mainly just used for storage purposes and not much else. Like other technological advancements, the cloud and its capabilities grew and became more of an asset for everyday use and decision-making. The cloud has expanded from basic storage to offering a wide range of capabilities to improve business operations such as accessibility, flexibility, lower risk of lost data, automatic updates, data protection, and greater efficiency (Freeman, 2018). Cloud services offer many advantages for small businesses in any industry.

As small businesses look for more ways to stay relevant and reach customers as effectively as large corporations do, they must take advantage of the opportunities in technological advancements. Cloud technology and services have a lot to offer small businesses in how they can improve their processes. 75% of consumers expect the businesses they interact with to be using the newest technologies to improve the customer experience (Salesforce, 2020). With customers expecting the best from businesses, it is beneficial for small businesses to invest in cloud services as it can protect them and their customers. Cloud services provide some of the best security measures for the data stored on their cloud. With protection from outside attackers, the chance of losing any data in a crash or lost laptop is also an advantage for small businesses as they will save time, money, and security (Salesforce, 2020). The flexibility of small businesses is an excellent fit for the flexibility cloud services offer as a business only has to pay for what they use for services and storage. The ability to increase or decrease based on the business's current needs makes it so the business can control what they are using and how much they are spending.

There are many choices for cloud service providers out there now, so there is a variety to choose from regarding what a small business would want and need for their industry and business itself. Cloud services can be divided into three different types of services with varying levels of who has control over what when it comes to software, hardware, platforms, and user applications. Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) can be described as a half and half type of service where the service provider manages more of the hardware half. The business takes care of the other half, such as software and applications. More specifically, the service provider manages the network, storage, servers, virtualization, and operating systems, while the business manages the middleware (if applicable), runtime, data, and the applications (IBM, 2019). With IaaS,

businesses are more in control of their applications and platforms and are not restricted to what the cloud provider requires or uses.

The next step up in services would be Platform as a Service (PaaS). In Platform as a Service, the service provider oversees even more parts of the information system and its technology. In PaaS, the business only has to manage its data and applications. PaaS still gives the business control over the applications they use and how their data is handled. One of the key components of PaaS is the ability to collaborate on and control data without having to oversee any of the operating systems, backups, or compatible software (IBM, 2018). IaaS and PaaS may seem similar, but it all comes down to how much the business wants to handle and control its information systems.

The last cloud service option is Software as a Service (SaaS). In SaaS, the service provider handles everything, from hardware, software to the final applications. Some of the most common SaaS applications are video conferencing, email, file sharing, and online office tools (Freeman, 2018). Businesses using SaaS do not have to worry about updating software or managing and upgrading hardware and can focus on their goals and customers. Businesses also have more access to high-end applications that can improve their business functions and customer experience.

Small businesses are an investment that requires capital and constant reinvestment from their owners. Investing in cloud services leads to cost savings in both the short and long term for small businesses. Bringing cloud services into a business can save money by reducing the amount of hardware, software, and applications used and managed by the business owner (Ward, 2020). Business owners will save time and money by not updating to the newest hardware to support software and applications every time. Moving data storage online space and time can be

saved as the cloud will organize and secure the data. Small businesses that have already moved to cloud services report better security and productivity from switching (Galov, 2021). Along with better security, 82% of small businesses have reduced costs because of switching to cloud services (Galov, 2021).

As cloud services become more popular among smaller businesses, cloud companies have begun to offer different pricing options and subscription services specific to the needs of the business. Introducing pricing options and flexibility with needs has made it possible for small businesses to invest in cloud system services to advance their businesses. It may seem like an obvious choice for a small business to choose the Software as a Service option because they will not have to manage any hardware or software on their end, but it all depends on their business needs and wants for their future. Cloud services offer a lot of flexibility in what services a business wants, so the possible options for customization are broad. Any business, small or large, in any industry can find what fits right for their needs.

METHODOLOGY

Through my literature review of the content published, I found information relevant to my overall research and its components. My overall subject of research was the success and betterment small businesses could gain from utilizing information systems. From this subject, I divided my research into several parts to fully understand my subject. I researched what defines a small business in the United States and how the U.S. government classifies each business by industry. Then, when researching information systems in its entirety, I focused on defining of information systems, the components it is made of, and the roles it plays in business. I also discussed important subsystems within the umbrella of information systems and their importance in business settings. The next part was the focus of my research on how small businesses can be successful using information systems. From the literature I reviewed, I found that using an information system will lead to cost savings, efficiency, effectiveness in their industry, and possible competitive advantages. I analyzed literature from when computers and information systems were first being utilized within businesses to more recent findings in the digital business market.

Along with reviewing past literature, I looked to the future of small businesses and information systems, cloud computing. I discussed cloud computing and how there is a wide variety of companies that are expanding more into the cloud and what it offers. Next, I covered the main three types of services offered and their differences. I lastly discussed how cloud companies are worth looking into as they are offer pricing and system options that can fit the needs of every business type, small and large.

The primary sources of my research and information come from articles, journals, and books from authors who are experts in their fields. My research has contained information from both academically published resources and Forbes, IBM, Britannica, U.S. Federal Code of Regulations, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and others.

DISCUSSION

Research Constraints

Through my research, I found numerous articles and journals that researched and discussed how small businesses and businesses, in general, use information systems. Many of

these articles were very dated. The majority of the research was done in the 1980s and 90s. This was a shock to me, considering how much information systems and the internet have evolved since then and have become integrated into our everyday lives. Research on how information systems are being used currently would be a great analysis of how business is adapting and changing to the online world. There are more recent articles from non-academic but reliable sources such as The New York Times, the Washington Post, Forbes, and others. Still, proper academic studies could benefit how business is done in the future and what resources could become available.

While I discussed the definition of a small business according to the U.S. Government, what is considered a small business can vary widely from industry to industry. Industries are broken into different sectors and then further broken down into their specific business type. Then each specific business type is either measured by their average annual receipts or the number of employees, as I mentioned earlier. Each industry and business type are unique in their own regard, which may factor in how they are classified. Depending on the type of business, they may be limited to as few as 100 employees to remain classified as a small business or can be able to have over 1,000 employees (Business Credit and Assistance, 2021). When it comes to the average annual receipts determining whether or not a business is small, the dollar amount varies widely by industry. The smallest average annual receipt for some sectors is \$1 million, and others are allowed \$40+ million (Business Credit and Assistance, 2021). It may be more expensive to run certain businesses, but businesses with higher receipts are more likely to have more room to invest in information systems.

Outreach and Resources

Small businesses differ in many aspects when compared to larger corporations. CEOs, board members, and presidents of multi-national companies are often interviewed and asked about business decisions and methods, yet small business owners are often left behind. Even when small businesses are researched and written about, the people involved in those businesses are often forgotten and not included in narratives about their sector. Interviewing small business owners about navigating their industry, trying to compete with large corporations, and staying successful is essential when reporting on the state of business and economy. Small businesses make up the majority of companies in the U.S. and the U.S. economy. Large corporations have investors, stocks and are identifiable. Small businesses deserve to have news space just as large companies do. Including small businesses and their owners in their own narrative can benefit how small businesses are researched and discussed.

With more small businesses looking to expand using information systems and cloud services, service providers should take the initiative to dive into this niche-type market to grow the services they offer and business as well. Working with a single small business may seem like a waste of time but catering to the small business market will attract more opportunities for a service provider and give them a competitive advantage in the small business sector.

CONCLUSIONS

The results from my literature review have found that small businesses can become more successful by utilizing information systems. Information systems can bring a competitive advantage to a small business no matter the industry they work in. Information systems can make small businesses more organized by storing and analyzing their data in one place. Small businesses can make better and more informed decisions from the data and analysis collected through information systems and subsystems such as decision support systems, customer relationship systems, and others. Along with the information system assisting the business in improving operations, working with the system provider can be beneficial to improving the use of the system and what is best for the small business. Cloud computing services are pushing businesses and systems into the future and are expanding consumers' expectations, which businesses are being expected to meet. Cloud services offer flexibility, compatibility, and security that is attractive for small businesses that do not have the expertise to run software and applications independently. Overall, information systems and cloud services offer monetary and timely savings allowing business owners to reinvest into their business and spend more time in other areas needing improvement. Information systems and cloud services offer small businesses the opportunity to integrate their business and compete in today's digital business market.

The results from my research are important in influencing the small business community in how they operate and perceive the importance of information systems in the future of business. Small businesses compete with one another and the large corporations that dominate industries. They have to stay ahead of the latest trends and the ever-changing markets while keeping consumers attention. In this digital age it takes more than social media profiles to compete. Data is everywhere and dominating how businesses make decisions and attract customers. Small businesses have the opportunity to utilize the data they already possess to move their business into a competitive position. The accessibility of information systems and cloud services is greater than ever. Small businesses should be informed of these opportunities as they are a commanding force in the business world.

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