



Is SaaS the right choice for your business?

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Introduction

SaaS (Software as a Service) is revolutionising how businesses access the computing power they need. Instead of installing and maintaining software in-house, applications are hosted on the cloud and accessed by end users through subscription. Emerging in the early years of this century, tech research company Gartner estimates it has grown in size by 500% in the last seven years and is now worth £140 billion worldwide.

The fleet industry has not been left behind by this revolution. More and more fleets are turning to SaaS to enable them to run their operations more efficiently. But what does SaaS offer that other fleet management solutions don't?

ONE - What are the alternatives to SaaS?

Many small fleets continue to use Excel, or similar spreadsheet applications, to log and track their fleet data. However, despite their low cost and simplicity, spreadsheets come with serious limitations and a high risk of corrupted data.

The traditional upgrade from a basic manual or spreadsheet system was to bite the bullet of installing licensed software on a business's own IT infrastructure. Not only does this require a large upfront capital investment for all the necessary hardware infrastructure and software licences, but there are also considerable ongoing costs. IT staff have to be recruited and trained, support packages purchased and upgrades paid for and implemented. For companies whose core business is not IT, these can all add up to a considerable financial and organisational headache.

TWO – What can SaaS offer?

The development of SaaS has been a godsend for SMEs who are looking for all the advantages of specialist software but without the major costs and organisational drawbacks of installed software.

Let's take a look at the key benefits of SaaS.

Low financial barrier to entry

A SaaS system comes at a fraction of the cost of a conventional system: No server and networking to install and maintain; no expensive IT staff to recruit and pay; no hefty ongoing service and support charges.

SaaS providers offer a range of subscription plans so customers can choose the option that best fits their needs. Once signed up, users just need an internet connection, browser and laptop or PC and they're good to go. Ongoing support and maintenance costs are included in the subscription so there are no hidden extras.

SaaS providers are able to offer a high-quality product at a low price simply because the costs associated with developing and maintaining the software are shared between all subscribers. As they say, a problem shared....

Simplicity of use

SaaS systems are built to be used by non-IT specialists. What's more, they are designed by industry experts who are familiar with the needs of your specific business sector. This results in a high level of usability, but with no compromise on functionality. Data migration is handled by the SaaS provider and new users get up to speed and productive in a short time.

Phone Apps, which are designed for specific users who don't have easy access to PCs or laptops, are a good example of the extreme user-friendliness of SaaS systems. The FleetCheck Driver App, for example, allows fleet drivers to log all kinds of time-sensitive data on the go.

Training and ongoing customer support are provided by those who know the system best - the SaaS providers themselves. This service will be included in the subscription price, but there's often an option to buy into upgraded levels of support.

Scalability

Business growth is, of course, a good thing. But with traditional installed software, this usually means upgrading IT infrastructure, with the associated time and cost implications. SaaS systems, on the other hand, are easily scalable. Extra resources become instantly available by simply upgrading the subscription to gain access to extra data processing resources and additional functionality as necessary.

The system can also be scaled down if the need arises, without the waste of capital investment that is no longer required.

The ease with which data can be transferred to and from third-party systems becomes increasingly important as a business develops. For example, fleets often need to exchange information with external organisations such as the DVSA, DVLA or FORS. Doing this manually can quickly become unmanageable. Because SaaS providers are aware of the specific needs of their industry, their systems are designed to will allow automatic integration with the most common third-party systems.

Compliance guaranteed

Reacting quickly to the needs of the industry it serves is at the heart of the SaaS model. With a wide sector-specific client base, customer feedback is actively sought. A problem faced by one business is likely to be common to many and so a solution will be found quickly.

Very importantly, the SaaS provider will be up to date with current legislation affecting the business sector. They will ensure their software is always up to date to ensure compliance with any changes in the law, relieving the individual business of this worry.

Updates and new features are centrally developed and then immediately available to all users as part of their normal subscription. There's no need for manual updates with the potential for errors and system glitches these can entail.

Security

Data security is rightly a major concern for any business that collects and stores data, particularly personal information. Whilst the SaaS provider obviously has responsibility for the physical security of the host infrastructure, they are also responsible for the security of operating systems, applications and data storage. Given their level of IT expertise, especially in the management of cloud systems, the level of security offered by SaaS is higher than anything an in-house system could deliver.

Should a business be affected by serious events such as fire or flood (or indeed, a pandemic), the potential for disruption to operations is minimised with SaaS. As no data is held on-site, it remains secure and employees can work from home using their own internet connection.

THREE - Is SaaS right for your business?

As we have seen, adopting a SaaS solution can bring immense efficiencies to a fleet.

- IT costs and responsibilities are drastically reduced compared to an in-house solution.
- The quality of the SaaS system is likely to be superior to anything bespoke because the experience of the whole fleet industry will have informed its development.
- The inherent flexibility of SaaS means it can quickly adapt to your changing business needs.

Summary

The benefits make SaaS an attractive model for any fleet facing the perpetual challenge of balancing the need for growth with limited resources. Expert providers such as FleetCheck offer no-obligation explorations of whether SaaS is right for your business and will help you come to an informed decision.

For more information contact: FleetCheck