

# Software-as-a-Service: Suggestions for Mid-Market CIOs

By Rick Davidson

Senior IT leaders and CIOs considering integrating new SaaS applications with on-premise systems will have to solve thousands of problems along the way. But don't let that be a showstopper.

Even though SaaS is relatively new, most of the implementation issues have been solved before and now include best practices for repeating successes. Experienced third-party SaaS system integrators and managed service providers can save an enormous amount of time and money while offloading the technical headaches. Still, CIOs and senior IT leaders need to understand the size and scope of the challenges involved in deploying and integrating multiple SaaS applications with on-premise applications.

## Here Are Seven Recommendations That Will Help Get You Started

1. **Get involved early in the evaluation and selection of SaaS vendors to ensure compatibility with the technical standards and interoperability across the existing application portfolio.**
2. **Ensure issues like service level agreements, security, e-discovery, data ownership, data privacy and data migration during contract exit are understood and incorporated into the SaaS vendor contract.**
3. **Determine all costs related to configuring, deploying and supporting SaaS applications. This would include integration, regression testing, data governance, business intelligence and single sign-on (SSO) capabilities.**
4. **Implement a disciplined end-user training program to accommodate the 2-3 annual product releases from SaaS vendors (note: all SaaS customers are required to upgrade to the latest version of the software).**
5. **Implement a rigorous regression testing program to identify and mitigate issues with SaaS API fidelity and deprecation while improving the efficacy of your testing capabilities through automation.**
6. **Perform back-ups of production data and SaaS configurations to address inadvertent deletions of company data by internal staff (note: SaaS vendors maintain backups, but recovering data from SaaS vendors can be costly).**
7. **Actively manage account usage to avoid over- or under-payment of user licenses within the constraints of the SaaS vendor subscription model.**

## Allocating Staff Roles

Another key consideration for most CIOs considering a mixed SaaS and on-premise application portfolio is to determine which support roles should be performed by internal IT staff vs. which ones are best managed by an external partner.

A direct assessment of staff skills is the only way to know, and a training program is advised where internal skills and capabilities fall short. The table below can give you some basic guidance on allocating resources.

### Internally vs. Externally Provisioned SaaS Roles

Role/Activity	Internal	External
SaaS configuration/customization	2	1
SaaS-to-SaaS integration.	--	1
SaaS-to-On-Premise integration	1	--
Functional, integration & regression testing	2	1
Data governance (ownership, quality, stds.)	1	2
Business intelligence	2	1
Security - access, authentication	1	--
Business analysis	1	--
Project management	1	--
Help desk	1	2

1: primary responsibility

2: secondary responsibility

### Internally vs. Externally Provisioned SaaS Roles for Mid-Market Companies

Integrating new SaaS applications with on-premise systems won't be easy, but the rewards are worth the expense and effort. As a senior IT leader or CIO, you can save a lot of money and time by getting directly involved at the earliest stages of planning and remaining actively involved. SaaS and integration experts, best practices and analytics will help guide you.

## About Cimphoni

Cimphoni is built on the premise that technology, when properly applied and led, can deliver innovative solutions that transform businesses, enrich the products we use daily and improve the quality of our lives. The Cimphoni team is comprised of technology and business leaders, physicians and medical researchers with a thirst for innovation and a passion for solving problems. Cimphoni Consulting is focused on business transformation using information technology to enable new product and service offerings and improve business performance.

Cimphoni Solutions develops Internet of Things strategy, devices and data analytics, as well as custom enterprise software. Cimphoni Life Sciences creates new medical devices and solutions that address acute and chronic illnesses and improve the health of individuals.

Founded in 2012, Cimphoni is headquartered in suburban Milwaukee and has an office in Phoenix to serve customers throughout the United States. More information can be found at [www.cimphoni.com](http://www.cimphoni.com).

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