

# Superfast Business Wales



SECTOR GUIDE

# Information, Communication & Technology (ICT)



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



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## Making the most of ICT with superfast broadband

Superfast broadband is a vital ingredient for any business in which the Internet and communication is important, by which we mean “any business at all” at the moment. The application of this technology is even more important.

The ICT sector has unprecedented opportunities not only to sell the technology but to use the newly-available speed to sell services based upon it. This guide will outline some of the ways this is possible and highlight some of the competitive edge superfast broadband offers.

You need to be in this market if you’re hoping to continue competing in this quickly-evolving sector.

# What does superfast broadband offer your business?

As an ICT business you're likely to be using some sort of broadband system already. The good news is that it's going to improve.



Among the benefits a faster connection offer are:

- **You can use voice services through Voice over IP**

For the ICT business this means vastly cheaper support calls. There is also the sales opportunity; putting VoIP into a client represents incremental business and extra income; for the client this represents a plummeting phone bill. The basics like Skype are well known but a switched-on ICT specialist will be able to offer a more corporate service, imitating a full-blown internal switchboard.



- **You can make communications broader than voice**

You can contact your customers in different ways; applications such as Yammer and Convo look like Facebook or LinkedIn but they're private. So you can have a searchable collaborative network held centrally rather than disparate emails on individual computers, allowing better and more effective sharing with colleagues. Consider also internal chat apps, which allow for a quick text exchange when a call isn't necessary. Also look at offering video conferencing. A better camera and microphone than those issued with standard laptops will improve the video experience.

**You should end up spending less and enjoying more effective business communications.**

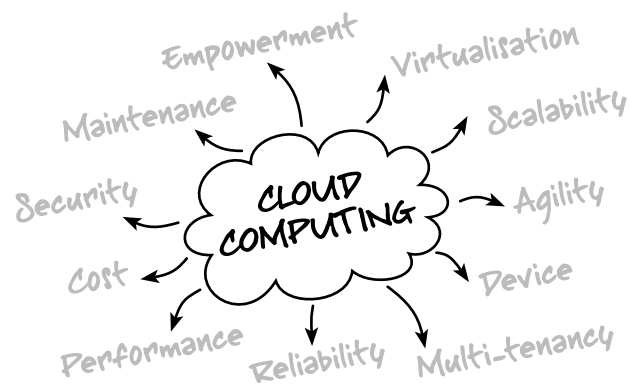
# A lot of technology in the cloud will help an ICT business

## • The “...as a service” family

Traditionally, software has been sold as a one-off purchase and so has infrastructure. This is evolving. For a couple of years now it has been possible to buy applications as common as Microsoft Office on a monthly basis, scaling the number of users up and down as necessary. This offers two advantages: first, the cost is transferred from CapEx to OpEx, which the finance departments like. Second, the client pays only for the service they use.

So, can this be made to work for your business? Data centre operators can certainly use it to their advantage, there is the opportunity to co-locate your own data with someone else's to save on cost, for example. Once again, there is also the opportunity to sell the benefits on to your clients. If you're in software development, you can now turn a one-off client assignment into a revenue stream by offering your software on an as-a-service basis.

It isn't just software that works like this. You can offer infrastructure as a service as well by moving into the cloud. Your end client might not have the resources or skill to manage a data centre but if you can offer it on tap they might be willing to take it on for the competitive edge it offers.



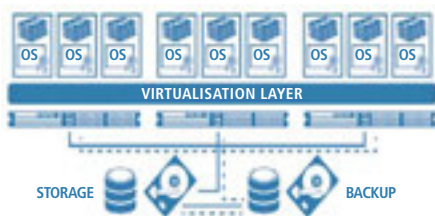
## • Additional cloud services

Storage in the cloud will save customers from having to upgrade their hardware every time their disks are full, and applications in the cloud will allow them to use technology that might be beyond the reach of their ageing computers. All of this can reside on your system. You will need a robust contract outlining what happens when there is downtime and explaining exactly what you do about backup and security – and you'll need to explain this to your clients as well.

# A lot of technology in the cloud will help an ICT business

## • Virtualisation

As long as your connection and that of your clients are based on superfast broadband, they don't need a lot on their own computer systems at all. You can actually host entire desktops, so that they log on – from anywhere on any connected machine – and their own computer desktop appears in front of them. It's not just desktops – you can virtualise entire servers, firing them up and deactivating them as needed.



Consider a client in the retail and e-commerce field, for example, who might have a huge spike of demand over Christmas; you could fire up extra servers for them and deactivate when they're not needed, deploying the computing power elsewhere. Your client will pay only for the service they use.

# Make the most of I.T.

The end result will be a slicker operation in which you and your clients are both beneficiaries.

• **By paying only for the infrastructure** you need and can sell on, you will save a lot of money without impacting your service offering.

• **Communicating through different technologies** and bypassing the costlier traditional phone will again reduce costs without damaging your service.

• **You have the opportunity** to sell these services on to your end clients as well as use them yourself – and if you offer data centre services your clients will notice an uptick in your performance immediately you switch to a faster connection.





## Top Tips

**You're likely to be offered** a range of Internet speeds from providers offering superfast broadband. Opt for the fastest you can afford. It might appear faster than necessary this year, but in 12 months' time it may not seem so quick.

**Clients are aware of the benefits** of the Internet but can overestimate them. A wise consultant will ensure they're conscious of what is and isn't in a service level agreement.

**A chain is always as strong only as its weakest link**, so when evaluating a client's needs don't forget that if they're connecting from home on a dodgy connection, that's what they'll think of your service. Manage expectations accordingly.



**You will be able to offer** increasing amounts of cloud and virtualisation services once people are liberated by a fast Internet connection. You may need to upgrade your skill set before putting this on the market.

**Check your own computer systems** for applications running in the background as these can slow you down – superfast broadband may look slow if your systems are busy doing other things!



## Superfast Business Wales

To complement the roll-out of superfast broadband across Wales, you can access advice on what you can do once it's available to you, and what you can do in the meantime, to ensure your business gets the most from superfast broadband.

- Grow your business
- Boost productivity
- Increase efficiency
- Cut your costs
- Increase profitability

For more information and to download your **FREE 'How to...' Guides** visit:

[www.business.wales.gov.uk/superfastbusinesswales](http://www.business.wales.gov.uk/superfastbusinesswales)

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