Before You Buy
What to Know About Switching to the Cloud

Cloud-based software is growing in popularity as the software of choice for accountants, but by how much? In a recent study, **67% of accountants** stated that they preferred cloud-hosted accounting software over on-premise options. A recent CPA Firm Management Association survey found that **63% of firms** rely on an external cloud provider for hosting applications.

According to the same survey, 33% of respondents think that accounting firms will solely use cloud-based applications within the next 3-5 years. 32% think it will be less than three years.

But making the decision to switch to a cloud-based tool can be a difficult one, especially if your accounting firm has long relied on on-premise or legacy software tools. In this guide, we'll discuss:

- Key benefits to switching to a cloud-based software
- What functions a cloud-based software can perform
- What boxes to check before switching to the cloud

Five benefits of switching to cloud-based software for your accounting firm

If switching from on-premise to cloud-based accounting software is something you're considering for your accounting firm, you're going to want to know how it could benefit your accounting practice. Here are the top five benefits of making the change.

1. Convenient and flexible remote access for employees

Cloud-based software is a key part of **remote and hybrid work for accountants**. Cloud accounting software allows accountants to access tools, files, and data from any device. Whether traveling for a conference or working from home while you wait for a repair person to fix your kitchen sick, all you need is an internet connection to check your emails or tackle client work.

Remote access also facilitates better collaboration. Ask a fellow accountant to weigh in on how to apply a tax code or update files in your **client portal** so clients can review your work. Clients can use this same portal (also available from anywhere!) to upload files, sign documents, or pay invoices.

2. A greater degree of security for clients

The security of client data is vital for accountants. After all, you have access to sensitive information like tax records, social security numbers, and more.

Cloud-based accounting software provides some of the most robust security measures available. Accountants should look for software that uses SHA 256-bit encryption algorithms to create a hard-to-penetrate firewall.

Cloud-based software also offers secure methods for sharing files and requesting eSignatures. This means you don't have to rely on unencrypted and unsecured emails to get important information to and from clients. (What's more, using **file-sharing and eSignature tools** that are built into your practice management software can be a smart way to streamline your **workflows** and increase client convenience.)

3. Scalable software

When you build your accounting firm's tech stack with cloud-based tools, you have the benefit of flexible subscription options that allow you to upgrade your software as your practice grows. (Unlike on-premise options, you don't need to deal with purchasing and installing additional licenses or hardware!)

Additionally, updates for cloud-based software are automatic—and managed by your software provider, not your already-busy IT staff.

4. Streamlined workflows

Speaking of workflows, cloud accounting software provides your accounting practice with numerous opportunities to streamline your processes.

Save time and build workflows from **built-in templates** or customize your own according to your firm's needs. Once you have templates set up, you can automate tasks so assignments are automatically delegated to the appropriate team member. You can even set up email reminders so employees know when they've received a new assignment or a document is ready for their review.

These automations allow your team to save time on manual tasks. As a result, they can focus on more valuable projects that drive growth for your practice.

Cloud-based software also has useful filtering capabilities. Filters help you create customized searches and reports, **highlight key priorities**, and review assignments and statuses at a glance.

Other ways cloud-based software can automate busy work include:

- Invoicing and billing
- Importing client data
- Time tracking
- Client onboarding tasks

5. You can integrate all your tools more easily

On-premise software can easily create silos of information. These silos make it difficult to quickly access data, run reports, and gain meaningful insights into projects, client needs, financial outlooks, and more.

On the other hand, cloud-based software easily connects other accounting business tools. **Mango Practice Management integrates** seamlessly with popular industry platforms like:
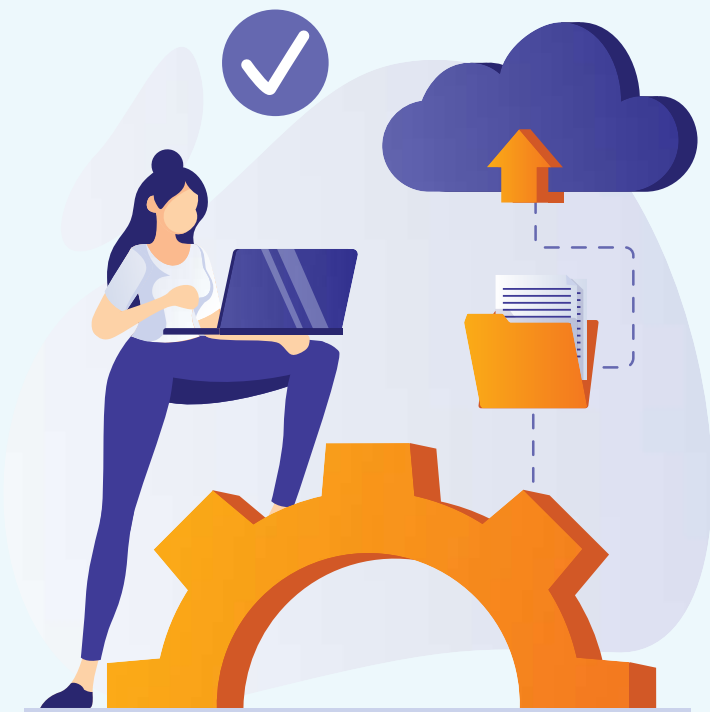
- QuickBooks
- Outlook
- G-Suite
- Tax software
- Sendinblue
- MailChimp

What can accountants do on the cloud?

Cloud computing is incredibly flexible. Accountants can use the cloud for many common accounting duties, including examining client financial data, connecting to tax preparation software, and working on projects with clients and coworkers. Here are some of the functions accountants can perform with cloud-based software, whether part of a robust practice management software or a standalone cloud-based tool.

Store and access client data

With cloud-based storage platforms, accountants are able to upload their data on remote servers rather than their own devices. This facilitates easier access and more secure sharing with team members and clients.

Run applications

Are you used to installing programs on your desktop and then worrying about how much space you have left? With cloud-based software, there is no need to do that anymore. Run applications for accounting, auditing, and tax preparation software from the cloud without taking up space on your hard drive.

Collaborate on documents

Cloud-based tools like Google Drive or Microsoft Office 365 facilitate teamwork between accountants by allowing multiple users to access and work on a single document at the same time.

Run analytics

Accountants can use the cloud's vast resources to research clients and unlock **fresh insights** about financial trends, business, and more.

Checklist for switching to the cloud

Considering transitioning from on-premise to cloud accounting software? That's great! For an efficient switch, make sure you check off each of the steps below.

Determine what your accounting firm needs from its software

Accounting practices range in size, scope, and complexity. As such, the needs of one firm may be entirely different from another. Before you make up your mind, make a list of everything you need from your software. What features do you consider "must haves," "nice to haves," and "don't need to haves?"

Consider factors like your budget, the size of your firm, your employees, your growth goals, and what other tools you're already using.
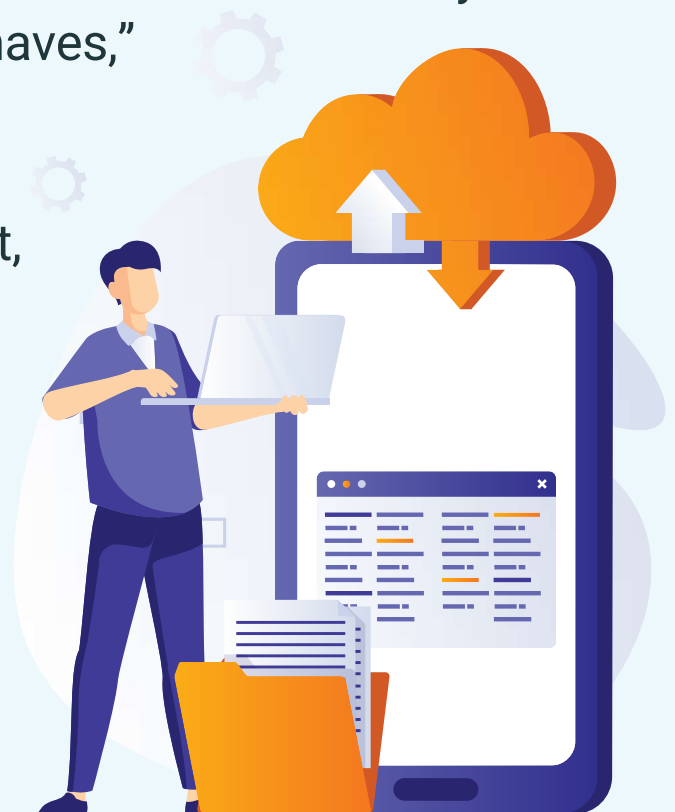
To best understand your needs, consider collaborating with your colleagues on this list. This helps create a better picture of your firm's needs—and it also creates a higher level of staff buy-in for any new software.

Research software options

There are lots of cloud accounting software options on the market. Before you even set up a demo or trial, thoroughly research your options. Cross-reference them with your list to identify your contenders. Once you have your list of contenders, evaluate their reviews on sites like Trustpilot and G2. Make sure you **compare your options** carefully to see exactly how they stack up.

Consider the cost

Cloud-based accounting software is often more affordable over time, but as noted, each accounting firm has its own needs—and any software is an investment of time and money.

Cloud applications typically have multiple tiers and options for **monthly and annual payment plans**. Don't just look at the software costs for switching to the cloud, though—calculate expenses involved in making the switch, such as time spent training staff, managing data migration, and rolling out the software

Think about data migration

Speaking of data migration, this can be a stressful process for any business. Data migrations, when handled incorrectly, can lead to data loss. Recovering this data can be a costly process, so consider how you should prepare for the process and mitigate potential problems.

Evaluate security

As noted above, security is vital for accounting practices. Make sure any contenders offer necessary security measures that will fully protect client and practice data.

These features should include:

- Bank-level SHA-256 encryption algorithm
- Secure file-sharing
- Legally binding **eSignatures** with a digital audit trail
- Optional client portal for additional password protection
- SSL-encrypted payments in the client portal

Demo your software options

As with any investment, it's a good idea to try before you buy! Depending on your needs and goals for your new software, you may either opt for a demo or a free trial. Both options offer insight into:

- User interface
- Features and functions
- Options for customization
- Support and training for software
- And more
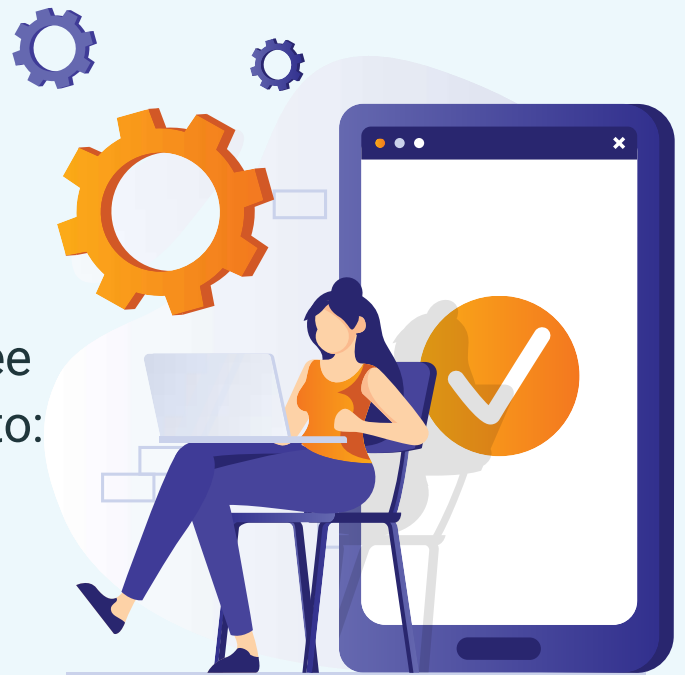
Try Mango's cloud-based practice management today

Looking for **cloud-based practice management software**? Mango can help. You don't need to rely on a patchwork of separate tools—Mango provides everything you need to run your accounting firm in a single, simple-to-use package. Mango was created by accountants, for accountants, so it's tailored to exactly what your CPA firm needs in their workday.

Although thinking about new software can be stressful, Mango offers limitless, free data migration and training. You can get assistance from our support staff at any stage of the implementation procedure. We also provide i ntegrations with popular tax and accounting programs so you can continue using the programs you rely on.