

# Gauging the Real Value of Software as a Service (SaaS) E-mail for Small and Medium Businesses

- > The e-mail market is rapidly evolving as new business-grade software as a service (SaaS) e-mail options become a viable alternative to the traditional on-site e-mail by competing on price and value.
- > Information Technology (IT) decision makers are pressured to reduce costs, so they're considering a move to SaaS e-mail solutions, which is driving businesses to scrutinize current e-mail strategies.
- > Making a SaaS e-mail decision depends upon the unique needs of the business and how available options not only offer cost savings, but also productivity value.
- > This paper focuses on the SaaS e-mail market, its impact on small and medium businesses (SMBs), and how to find the real value in different product offerings.

## Executive Overview

As economic concerns strain business executives who need to balance costs with operational innovation, software-as-a-service (SaaS) e-mail becomes an attractive alternative to traditional on-premise e-mail deployments. Online e-mail provides rich user experiences, predictable costs, and convenience. New SaaS e-mail delivery and cost models are changing the way businesses acquire e-mail services. These new opportunities are prompting executives, vendors, and users to push IT decision makers to evaluate existing e-mail strategies and consider changing to SaaS for the company e-mail.

The good news is that SMBs now have more options than ever to get business-grade e-mail services at reasonable prices and without the operational headaches of the past . The bad news is that e-mail market dynamics now mean more complex choices for customers who need to spend time sorting through their options.

Competition for the SaaS e-mail market is currently being waged over cost; however, price alone does not always equal value. E-mail clients and services can either foster or hinder productivity, and in varying degrees. Although price is an important determining factor for choosing a SaaS e-mail provider, the combination of cost savings plus productivity gains defines the real value of e-mail to an organization.

Determining the value of SaaS e-mail offerings starts with considering how e-mail supports business processes and user productivity. In most cases it's impossible to know the true value of e-mail without knowing how information workers manage, communicate, and leverage e-mail to do their work. The Collaborative Strategy Guild (CSG) recommends that customers evaluate e-mail against an E-mail Productivity Framework and define a strategy that addresses the current e-mail market and competitive situation.

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## The Evolving SaaS E-mail and Productivity Market

Hosted e-mail is not new, per se. However, since late 2006 the hosted e-mail market landscape has changed dramatically with traditional e-mail software vendors (such as Microsoft and IBM) and web-based service providers (e.g., Google and Yahoo) offering software as a service (SaaS) e-mail to businesses. Many SMBs already rely on hosted e-mail services and are familiar with its benefits, albeit with limited features and functionality, such as no branding or integrated corporate directories, that keep them from operating “like one of the big guys.” New web technologies and business computing trends are presenting opportunities to change the dynamics of hosted e-mail services that any sized business can afford.

### What’s Different Now?

As Internet technologies continue to improve, new functionality and user experiences are possible through better than “good-enough” alternatives to on-premise messaging solutions. Until now, browser-based e-mail interfaces came with limitations, such as the inability to brand the e-mail service using the company’s domain name or the absence of calendaring and scheduling tools. New Web 2.0 interface technologies, more sophisticated usage patterns and skills, mobilized workforces, and convergence of communication and collaboration services to integrated suites are making it easier for SaaS providers to offer business-grade products and opportunities for customers to acquire integrated suites.

### A Disruptive Marketplace

The evolving SaaS e-mail marketplace is marked by the emergence of new vendors and service options. Motivated by the 2007 introduction of Google’s Apps Premier Edition (GAPE) and Microsoft’s Software + Services Online efforts, a renewed competition for e-mail market mind- and customer-share has created a dynamic SaaS e-mail marketplace. Leading SaaS e-mail

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providers (see The Leading Contenders section) are focused on creating the perception that the only way to save money is to go to the web. SMBs are particularly vulnerable to confusing marketing messages because many of their Information Technology (IT) decisions are based on cost and convenience. The SaaS market represents a shift from a buy (on-premise) to a lease (hosted online, or “in the cloud”) acquisition model for IT solutions. This dynamic can work in the SMBs’ favor, putting the onus on providers to keep creating more value while the buying power remains in the customers’ hands.

### Good News and Bad News for SMBs

This competitive marketplace brings good news and bad news for SMBs. The good news is that SMBs now have more options than ever to get business-grade e-mail services and productivity tools without the traditional management headaches and at reasonable prices. The bad news is that there is a more complex set of choices and less transparency with the SaaS offerings.

### Barking with the Big Dogs

The business-computing shift from stand-alone application spaces (e.g., e-mail, productivity editors, telecommunications) to integrated service platforms increases complexity and costs for businesses to deploy solutions in-house. Turning to SaaS for e-mail functionality makes it possible for customers to rapidly deploy e-mail and additional services to users. SaaS e-mail offerings tend to focus on the convergence of collaborative and content management aspects of business communication, although stand-alone e-mail services are available from vendors such as Microsoft and IBM who also offer on-premise e-mail solutions. One reason to justify the incremental cost for business-grade SaaS e-mail is that it offers more than just messaging services when buying an integrated package.

New SaaS e-mail bundles, such as Google Apps Premier Edition (GAPE)<sup>1</sup> and Microsoft’s Business Productivity Online Suite (BPOS)<sup>2</sup>, provide – in addition to mailbox services – communication, collaboration, and social software services that can’t be deployed on-premises without great effort or cost. Being able to get some or all of these services at low predictable prices is highly attractive to SMBs (and even enterprises) that typically don’t have the resources to deploy such complex in-house systems or have relied on mixing-and-matching non-integrated consumer services.

## More Choice Complexity

Today, the e-mail market is marked by an abundance of delivery and service choices, each representing a different delivery and cost model. Customers can choose to deploy e-mail services on-premises, SaaS e-mail online, or a hybrid of the two. Hosted offerings can range from mailbox services to e-mail support such as archiving or perimeter security, to web application services such as integrated line of business tools or customized applications, to data center services. Cost models for each option range from free to very expensive depending on the services and usage of the system.

As new contenders emerge, each brings its unique strengths and points of view about the future of business-grade SaaS e-mail. For example, Microsoft and IBM have long been providers of on-premise enterprise e-mail systems and offer more flexibility and choices such as dedicated hosted e-mail servers, lightweight to full e-mail services only, or e-mail bundled with collaboration, communication, and social software services. This is in contrast to consumer-cum-business e-mail provider Google, whose single GAPE bundle is designed to support all customers.

Despite the benefits of SaaS e-mail, moving e-mail to the cloud is not a foregone conclusion and some customers prefer to keep e-mail on-premise for risk and content management purposes. By the same token, SaaS e-mail and on-premise e-mail is not an either-or proposition, and can complement each other in a hybrid delivery model. Even so, the cost savings potential of web-based solutions is beginning to put the squeeze on on-premise options, when on-premise deployment may still be the best choice for some businesses.

## The Real Value of E-mail Productivity

With up to four generations of employees in today's workplace<sup>3</sup>, the diversity of skills and preferred working models range from e-mail dependent to e-mail averse. Employers are feeling the pressure to offer more modern communication and collaboration solutions. Competition for the SaaS e-mail market is currently being waged over cost; however, price alone does not always equal good value. Understanding how e-mail supports business processes and makes users more productive is key to understanding the real value of e-mail to the company.

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## The Real Cost of SaaS E-mail

The SaaS e-mail decision is most often focused on price and fails to consider whether the level of service, features, and functionality of the solution are enough to support the needs of the business. In some cases user experience may be negligible – such as a university that provides school-branded e-mail to alumni – whereas in other cases user experience is vital, such as a brokerage firm that needs support for legal and regulatory oversight. Customers whose employees work closely with outside suppliers, contractors, or clients are more likely to benefit from SaaS e-mail bundles that provide collaboration and real-time communications (e.g., IM and conferencing). This is in contrast to organizations that want to extend e-mail capabilities to employees who traditionally don't get e-mail, such as manufacturing floor workers or sales clerks. In each case the level and grade of service depends heavily on the job the user is performing.

SaaS e-mail services are built on standardized bundles that are determined by the provider. Derivation from the bundle may be possible, but it costs more. For example, most SaaS e-mail offerings provide a fixed sized mailbox; the need for larger mailboxes will increase the monthly fee. Additionally, SaaS e-mail vendors tend to quote mailbox or service bundle prices only. Services, such as archiving, mobile communications, perimeter security (i.e., spam and virus filtering), or integrated tools (e.g., fax, customer relationship management [CRM]) often come at an additional cost.

The bottom line is that SaaS e-mail costs may not be transparent, so careful studying is in order before making a purchase. While all offerings have common system services such as high availability, secure servers and data centers, and customer-based account management, the level of service and protection vary from provider to provider. For example, GAPE does not include Google's Postini business-grade spam filtering and archiving services. Rather, it is offered as an add-on service. Likewise, although the BPOS Exchange Online service includes native Exchange Server 2007 message filtering and Forefront Online Security for Exchange spam and virus filtering, perimeter messaging security and encryption requires purchasing Microsoft Exchange Hosted Services (FrontBridge) or a third-party solution. Customers should be aware of shifting delivery models and make sure they get the value they need for an acceptable price.

## Productivity is Something to be Gained

E-mail clients and services can either foster or hinder productivity depending on how they support business processes and facilitate work. Although price is important when choosing a SaaS e-mail offering, productivity is a value that is measurable in time and money. For example, if it takes a user two minutes to find a memo filed in a mailbox folder, but takes the same user fifteen minutes to search through a mailbox that doesn't support folders, then there is a productivity cost to using the latter mailbox. The first mailbox represents a productivity gain that can represent savings to any business.

Productivity can also be measured through operational efficiency. A well-maintained, always available service that ensures data integrity and safety supports productivity. However, operational efficiency should not be taken for granted just because someone else is managing the system. If a service is down unexpectedly, inaccessible for an extended period, or users need to log into multiple tools using different passwords and usernames, the lost productivity due to system outage or multiple logins is hardly made up for by lower prices, refunds, or service credits. Similarly, the real cost of legal, regulatory fines, reputation, and lost business are usually very high if information is lost or stolen. Liability and compensation for lost data is covered by the vendor service contract, which is typically written in favor of the provider.

The bottom line is that the value of a service is not in the price paid for the service, but in the way the service supports the business and its productivity. Venturing into SaaS e-mail services requires a greater understanding of business, user, and operational needs that go beyond cost savings. The benefits, as well as risks, shift the discussion from price only to value. If the customer is willing to take on the incremental cost of business-grade SaaS e-mail, then evaluation of the offering needs to focus not just on price but also on the value of the services.

## E-mail Productivity Framework

E-mail has grown from an asynchronous messaging platform to a robust front-end productivity and personal information management environment with a complex back-end services platform. E-mail supports different types of productivity from simple store-and-forward messaging, to personalized time and task coordination, to advanced group collaborative activities. E-mail clients have become more sophisticated as usage increases and vendors add features and functionality. CSG has outlined e-mail capabilities into an E-mail Productivity Framework (Figure 1) to evaluate e-mail usage and how it supports business activities.

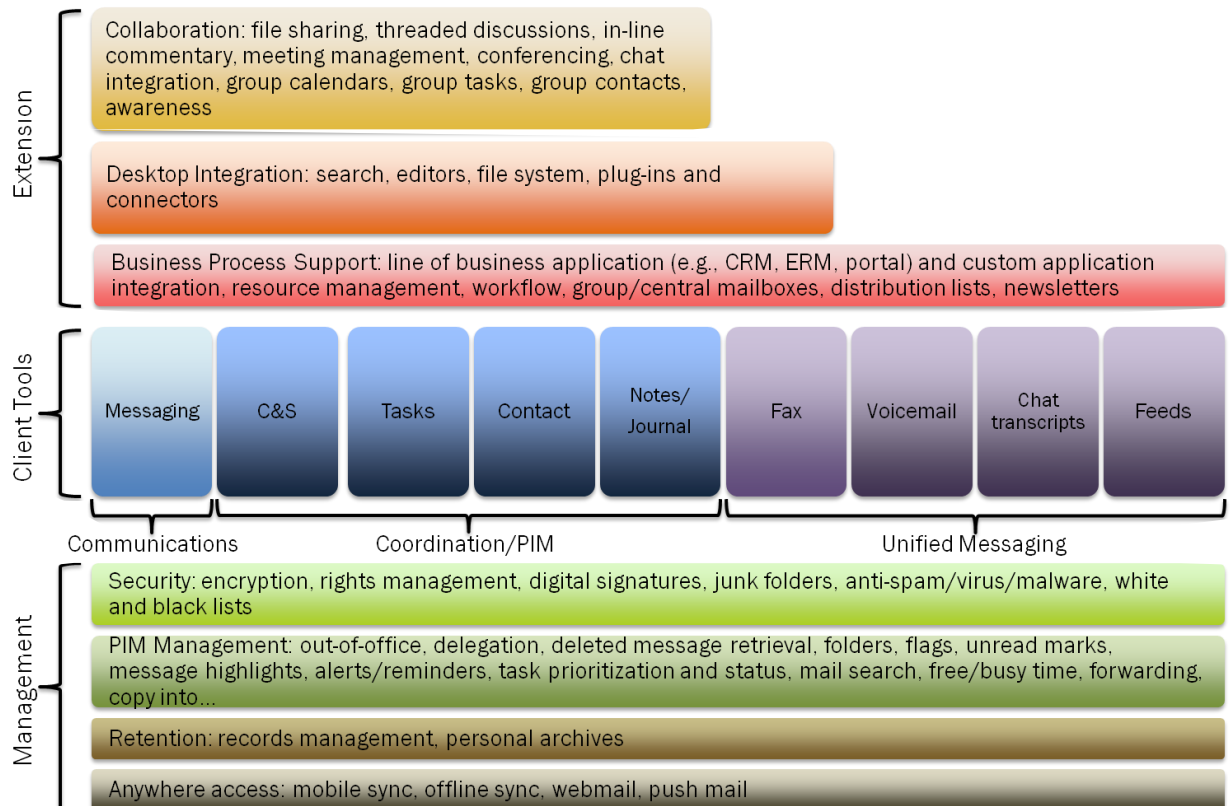


Figure 1: CSG E-mail Productivity Framework

The framework is a visualization of the depth and breadth of e-mail (client and services) features and functionality that information workers leverage to conduct business. The framework is broken into three main functional areas:

- **Management:** of messaging services and what users do to maintain their mailbox content.
- **Client tools:** that support user actions within the e-mail client, including the creation, sending, and management of e-mail content (e.g., messages, contacts, appointments, etc.). Functionality within client tools can be divided into three areas of activity:
  - **Messaging:** the creation and receipt of e-mail messages.
  - **Coordination/Personal Information Management (PIM):** the use of messaging capabilities to coordinate time, contacts, tasks, and notes for personal purposes.
  - **Unified Messaging:** the integration of external communications artifacts into the inbox and e-mail folders such as faxes, voicemail, feeds, and chat transcripts.
- **Extension:** of messaging services into purpose-focused business activities such as collaboration, line of business tools, and integration with desktop applications.

Although each e-mail client package varies from vendor to vendor, most business-grade e-mail solutions offer many of the features in the framework. Until recently, when the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies allowed developers to create rich, interactive interfaces within browsers, many of the framework features were only available in desktop installed e-mail clients. Today, business-grade SaaS e-mail clients from leading providers offer rich functionality that, while not as full service as their desktop counterparts, offer many features that satisfy information workers' needs.

It's worth noting that integration of the e-mail client with other tools and applications is a leading contributor to user productivity. The effectiveness of an e-mail client is degraded as the number of steps (e.g., switching windows or tools) a user has to take to accomplish a task increases. For example, most non-Microsoft SaaS e-mail packages claim they support the Outlook e-mail client, especially for off-line use. However, these solutions are only possible through Outlook plug-in code that is usually limited to artifacts the messaging engine supports (e.g., e-mails, tasks, calendar entries) or functionality the plug-in is designed to handle. Conversely, being overly locked-into a single platform, such as that of IBM or Microsoft, makes it harder to implement tools and solutions that are not offered by the vendor.

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## Weighing the Options

Many companies are at an e-mail services crossroads trying to decide whether to stay with their current solution or move to another delivery model. There is a great deal of confusion, and diverse vendor offerings make it hard for customers to compare their options. Businesses that evaluate their existing e-mail services and define an e-mail strategy are better prepared when negotiating with vendors, executives, and users. Having as much information about how e-mail supports its business will help the company determine which messaging service is the best value for the price.

## The Leading Contenders

Today the leading contenders for web-based business e-mail consist of relatively few providers. Some have tenuous holds on the market and are building up service memberships while others have enough traction to take on each other and address hefty customer requirements such as data migration and risk management. Table 1 is a list of leading SaaS e-mail solutions that are currently available.

### Leading Contenders Table

| Vendor           | Product                                   | Includes  | Description   |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Google</b>    |   |   |   |
|                  | Google Apps Premier Edition (GAPE)        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-mail</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Contacts</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Instant Messaging (IM)</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proprietary Gmail client purchased through Google.</li> <li>• 25 gigabyte (GB) web-mailbox standard.</li> <li>• Limited bidirectional sync between Gmail and Outlook desktop client via a plug-in.</li> <li>• Includes collaboration with Google Docs, Google Video, and Google Sites.</li> <li>• Includes unified communications through Gtalk.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>IBM</b>       |   |   |   |
|                  | IBM LotusLive Notes                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-mail</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Contacts</li> <li>• Tasks</li> <li>• Notes</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IBM Lotus Notes/Domino (Notes/Domino) mail purchased through partners and for companies over 1000 users only.</li> <li>• 1 GB web-mailbox standard.</li> <li>• Optional add-on collaboration (Domino) and unified communications (IBM Lotus Same-time) or LotusLive Engage.</li> <li>• Proprietary webmail client IBM Lotus iNotes (different from LotusLive iNotes).</li> <li>• Supports Notes mail client and limited Outlook functionality via plug-in.</li> <li>• Notes/Domino can be deployed on premises.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Microsoft</b> |   |   |   |
|                  | Business Productivity Online Suite (BPOS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-mail</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Contacts</li> <li>• Tasks</li> <li>• Notes</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• IM</li> <li>• Conferencing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 e-mail purchased through Microsoft or partners.</li> <li>• 5 GB web-mailbox standard.</li> <li>• Uses Outlook as desktop e-mail client and Outlook Web Access as webmail client.</li> <li>• Supports push e-mail using Exchange Active Sync.</li> <li>• Includes collaboration via SharePoint Online.</li> <li>• Includes unified communications via Office Communications Online and Office Live Meeting.</li> </ul>  |
|                  | Exchange Online                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-mail</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Contacts</li> <li>• Tasks</li> <li>• Notes</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 e-mail purchased through Microsoft, partners, or third-party ISPs.</li> <li>• 5 GB web-mailbox standard.</li> <li>• Uses Outlook as desktop e-mail client and Outlook Web Access as webmail client.</li> <li>• Supports push e-mail using Exchange Active Sync.</li> <li>• Exchange can be deployed on premises or in hybrid.</li> </ul>   |

## Leading Contenders Table (Cont.)

| Vendor                   | Product                                | Includes  | Description  |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Microsoft (cont.)</b> |  |   |  |
|                          | <b>Exchange Online Deskless Worker</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-mail</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Contacts</li> <li>• Tasks</li> <li>• Notes</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 e-mail purchased through Microsoft or partners.</li> <li>• Includes a 500 MB web-mailbox that uses proprietary Outlook Web Access Light client.</li> <li>• No support for Outlook desktop client or on mobile devices.</li> <li>• Optional SharePoint Online Deskless Worker add-on for lightweight collaboration.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Oracle</b>            |  |   |  |
|                          | <b>Beehive 1.5</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-mail</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Contacts</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase through Oracle, partners, or third-party ISPs.</li> <li>• Proprietary webmail client</li> <li>• Limited Outlook functionality via a plug-in.</li> <li>• Supports push mail.</li> <li>• Includes additional collaboration capabilities using Oracle WebCenter.</li> <li>• Does not provide unified communications such as IM, conferencing, etc.</li> <li>• Can be deployed on premises.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Yahoo</b>             |  |   |  |
|                          | <b>Zimbra Collaboration Suite 5.0</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-mail</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Contacts</li> <li>• Tasks</li> <li>• Notes</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase through Yahoo Zimbra or third-party ISPs.</li> <li>• Proprietary webmail client and desktop client.</li> <li>• Supports mobile and push mail, SMS, and web services integration.</li> <li>• Limited Outlook functionality via a plug-in connector.</li> <li>• Includes additional collaboration capabilities.</li> <li>• Does not provide unified communications such as IM, conferencing, or telephony.</li> <li>• Zimbra can be deployed on premises.</li> </ul> |

**Table 1: Leading contenders for business-grade SaaS e-mail offerings**

Note that the table reflects currently shipping products only. Offerings such as IBM LotusLive iNotes and Cisco PostPath are still in development are not listed because they are not available yet.

Interestingly, most of the listed providers showed up in the SaaS market within the last few years. Because these offerings are so new, they have some limitations that will take time for vendors to resolve. For example, Gmail was originally designed to be a free consumer-based webmail solution and was therefore built for scalability and multitenancy<sup>4</sup>, whereas Exchange was originally developed for on-premise deployment and not to support multiple domains. By the same token, Gmail has suffered from a lack of enterprise functionality and, until recently, a perpetual “beta” label that kept enterprises at bay, whereas Microsoft has been able to offer bundles that meet a variety of business scenarios and out-of-the-box integration with the Outlook desktop e-mail client. SaaS e-mail is

an evolving market with many new offerings that must mature before it can support many scenarios. In the meantime SaaS e-mail offers organizations a viable alternative to traditional e-mail systems, depending on their needs, even if it isn't all-things-to-all-customers.

## Feeling the SaaS E-mail Pressure

E-mail is the most mission-critical business application in most organizations. As economic concerns strain business executives who need to balance costs with operational innovation, SaaS e-mail is emerging as a viable alternative to on-premise e-mail by offering modern e-mail experiences conveniently and with predictable costs. IT decision makers are pressured to make SaaS e-mail decisions from:

- **Management:** looking for cost savings by moving to, or at least considering, SaaS e-mail offerings.
- **Vendors:** placing greater emphasis on hosted or cloud-based services after making exorbitant investments in data centers and high-stakes gambles to displace entrenched on-premises e-mail systems.
- **End Users:** seeking better e-mail and communication experiences similar to ones they have through consumer-based communications and social software tools.

As a result, SMB IT decision makers find themselves in the precarious position of satisfying diverse needs and requirements. Choosing SaaS e-mail over on-premise, whether to consider hybrid on-premise and cloud-based options, and which bundle to purchase are tempered with avoiding buyer's remorse.

## What Do SMBs Need to Know About Their E-mail?

Consideration of email's real value, how it supports the business, and what it currently costs are primary factors in comparing different offerings and making decisions. In most cases it's impossible to know the value of e-mail to the business without some preparation and comparison. CSG recommends that customers conduct the following studies and analyses to gain a better understanding of the real value of e-mail to the business before deciding on a new e-mail platform (hosted or not):

- **Systems analysis:** detail how the e-mail is currently deployed at the company including all supporting services (e.g., integrated fax or voicemail, security, mobile, archiving).
- **Cost analysis:** determine what e-mail and its supporting services are costing the business on a per user, per month basis.
- **Productivity evolution:** examine which e-mail features (based on the E-mail Productivity Framework in Figure 1) are most beneficial to users and how they support the business.
- **Business process analysis:** determine which business processes depend on e-mail and what would happen if e-mail wasn't able to support them, including a list of all line of business applications that are integrated with e-mail.
- **Risk analysis:** evaluate the business' risk tolerance for e-mail services, including corporate policies, data loss prevention, and any regulatory requirements that must be met.
- **User segmentation study:** determine usage patterns of various types of e-mail users (e.g., manager, clerical, information worker) as defined by the messaging services they use.

The value of e-mail productivity is unique to each organization. Whether the benefits outweigh the risks depends heavily on what the business can tolerate. Regardless of size, each business has specific needs and risk tolerance. For example, a company that handles private customer information is held up to more regulatory scrutiny and requires services that support auditing and oversight. Performing the above studies and analyses pinpoint the tolerance levels of the firm and define the requirements for e-mail services.

## Five Things to do Before Moving to SaaS E-mail

CSG recommends that customers follow a five-step methodology to create an e-mail strategy that addresses the current market and competitive situation.

**Step One:** Assemble a dedicated e-mail strategy team. Create a team of key personnel to evaluate e-mail options and develop a strategy for e-mail. The team should include representatives from IT, business units, and the user community who have a stake in e-mail services.

**Step Two:** Analyze existing e-mail services. Analyze the current e-mail state and how it supports the business.

**Step Three:** Examine alternatives. Review all options in the marketplace, determine which offers real value to the business, and provide recommendations for the most viable options.

**Step Four:** Tell a compelling story. Have the team create a business case for the recommended options demonstrating real value metrics and present their case to decision makers.

**Step Five:** Plan and deploy. Develop a plan for achieving the desired strategy.

Even if there is little pressure or the strategy team members are also the decision makers, following these steps will prepare the company and mitigate the risks and unexpected events that may come from working with new vendors or systems.

It may not take long to do some of the steps, but others may require extra work. For example, most companies with on-premise e-mail services know how much the entire system currently costs them, but may not know the per-user-per-month cost for just mailbox services, a figure that is necessary to use when comparing SaaS e-mail leasing models. Cost calculators that figure out the overall and per-user cost for all e-mail services – including hardware, staff, archiving, licensing, storage, network, mobile, and security costs based on projected e-mail volume – can help customers fully understand the current cost of e-mail services.

Customers need to scrutinize all contracts, guarantees, and liabilities along with features and functionality. Provider service level agreements (SLAs), liabilities, support coverage, and compensation policies vary widely but can make the difference when there is a problem.

For example Google's SLAs do not cover features, such as Google Video, that are part of Gmail Labs. Reading the fine print of the agreements will tell the customer what the provider will cover and the liabilities it assumes, which typically favor the vendor.

The team will likely spend the most time interviewing providers and testing the different delivery options. The team can use the studies and analyses results from Step 2 to build a customized request for information questionnaire that can be used to interview different providers. Take advantage of your buyer's market power by piloting and performing usability tests of the top contenders' offerings before making a decision. Testing the different providers' solutions will highlight any deployment, technical, or adoption issues that may arise in a full deployment.

**The value of e-mail  
productivity is  
unique to each  
organization**

## **Conclusion**

Although the competition for SaaS e-mail market share is being waged over cost, the decision to choose one vendor over another is a matter of value. Customers who design an e-mail strategy and test their assumptions prior to moving to another service are better prepared to mitigate any issues that arise as a result of their decisions. SaaS e-mail offers huge gains for SMBs in business-grade e-mail functionality as long as the offerings support the needs of the business. Without knowing its real value, e-mail can become a cumbersome application, no matter what it costs or where it is managed.

***SaaS e-mail offers  
huge gains for  
SMBs as long as  
the offerings  
support the needs  
of the business***

**The Collaborative Strategy Guild is rolling out additional content on SaaS e-mail operation and risk management, SMB market impact, and costing tools over the next few months.**



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<http://collaborativestrategyguild.com/>

The Collaborative Strategy Guild: Where insights are transformed into actions at the intersection of collaboration, information management, security, and business strategy.

Collaborative Strategy Guild brings together domain experts and focused problem solvers to collaboratively advance your strategic agenda. The Collaborative Strategy Guild is comprised of independent analysts and thought leaders who have extensive backgrounds working with the largest end-user enterprises and top-tier vendor solution providers. We offer a rich set of customized offerings and access to some of the most innovative and effective thinkers in the business.

## Notes

1. Google Apps for the Enterprise is an online business productivity suite offered at \$50 per year per user. GAPE includes the following Google tools: Gmail, Gtalk, Google Calendar, Google Docs, Google Sites, and Google Video.
2. Microsoft Business Productivity Online Suite is an online business productivity suite offered at \$15 per user, per month. The bundle includes the following Microsoft Online tools: Exchange Online, Outlook Web Access, SharePoint Online, Office Communications Online, Office Live Meeting, and Online Services Administration Center.
3. According to the 2005 United States Census, the current U.S. workforce is represented by four generations: 28.5 million born between 1925 – 1945, 76.7 million born between 1946 – 1964, 49.1 million born between 1965 – 1980, and 73.5 million born between 1981 – 2000.
4. Multitenancy: SaaS system architecture where a single instance of software is installed on one server and is used to support multiple customer accounts. Data is partitioned into virtual application instances for each customer.

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