

Lesson Plan

Module: Cloud accounting

**Learning Unit: Digitising Small Business
Accounting**

<p>Desired Core professional goal</p> <p>Learners will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – be energized and motivated to digitize their small business accounting using cloud accounting tools they have learned in previous lessons, such as e-invoicing, staff management tools, and payroll systems, – overcome tech fear and barriers in adopting cloud accounting tools for e-invoicing and staff management through a transformative learning activity. 	<p>Benchmark</p> <p>e-invoicing</p>
<p>Level</p> <p>Basic</p>	<p>Framework</p> <p>Energise</p>
<p>Professional micro-learning outcomes</p> <p>Learners will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – understand the benefits of digitizing small business accounting, including increased efficiency, accuracy, and cost savings. – explore various cloud accounting tools and their features, such as e-invoicing, staff management tools, and payroll systems. – recognize the potential challenges and barriers to digitizing small business accounting and develop strategies to overcome them. – develop a plan for implementing cloud accounting tools in their small business, including setting goals, identifying resources, and creating a timeline. – feel energized and motivated to take action and digitize their small business accounting, knowing the potential positive impact it can have on their business success. 	
<p>Micro-learning activities</p> <p>Learners will</p>	

1. watch the video Module 4: Cloud accounting - Energise: Digitising Small Business Accounting: <https://youtu.be/mEQ48LPmj60> (3:07)
2. do the following activities:

In today's fast-paced business landscape, digital transformation is becoming increasingly important. Specifically, cloud accounting tools for e-invoicing and staff management can greatly benefit micro and SME owners.

Why digitizing small business accounting is so crucial?

Understanding the Need for Digitizing Small Business Accounting:

Firstly, manual accounting methods can be time-consuming and error-prone. By embracing digital tools, you can automate repetitive tasks, saving valuable time and reducing the risk of mistakes.

Secondly, digital transformation opens up growth opportunities for your business. With accurate and up-to-date financial data, you can make better-informed decisions and identify areas for improvement.

Lastly, digitizing small business accounting can lead to cost savings and increased efficiency. By automating processes, you can reduce the need for manual labor and minimize the risk of costly errors.

Cloud accounting tools offer a range of features that can help you streamline your accounting processes and improve your business operations.

For example, tools like QuickBooks and Xero offer intuitive interfaces and easy-to-use features, making it simple for small business owners to manage their finances. These tools also integrate with other systems, such as e-commerce platforms and payment gateways, allowing for seamless data flow.

Let's start by looking at a case study scenario of an imaginary micro or SME that is struggling with traditional accounting methods. By adopting cloud accounting tools, they have the potential to streamline their processes, increase efficiency, and improve their overall business performance.

Case Study: Cloud Accounting for Staff Management

You will be given a case study to work on, where you will be required to use cloud accounting tools to manage staff.

Background:

ABC Company is a small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) that provides consulting services to various clients. The company has a team of 10 employees who work on different projects and are paid on an hourly basis. The company has been using traditional accounting methods to manage staff, such as spreadsheets and manual timesheets. However, the company is experiencing difficulties in managing staff efficiently, which is impacting its profitability.

Challenges:

The following challenges are faced by the company in managing staff:

- Difficulty in tracking employee hours and calculating their pay accurately.
- Time-consuming manual processes for managing staff records, such as leave and attendance.
- Lack of real-time visibility into staff performance and productivity.
- Difficulty in generating reports on staff performance and profitability.

Your objective:

- Choose any search engine and explore various cloud accounting tools and their features, such as e-invoicing, staff management tools, and payroll systems. List which cloud accounting tools should be implemented to manage staff more efficiently and help the company to improve its profitability. Then make a list with the benefits which can be achieved by their implementation.

Feedback (to be displayed to learners after completion of task)

The following feedback should be given to the learner after completing this activity:

Suggested solution:

The company can implement cloud accounting tools to manage staff more efficiently. The following tools can be used:

- ✓ **Time Tracking Tool:** A cloud-based time tracking tool can be used to track employee hours accurately. The tool can be integrated with the company's accounting software to calculate employee pay automatically.
- ✓ **HR Management Tool:** A cloud-based HR management tool can be used to manage staff records efficiently. The tool can be used to manage leave, attendance, and other HR-related tasks.
- ✓ **Productivity Tracking Tool:** A cloud-based productivity tracking tool can be used to monitor staff performance in real-time. The tool can be used to track project progress, identify bottlenecks, and improve productivity.

- ✓ Reporting Tool: A cloud-based reporting tool can be used to generate reports on staff performance and profitability. The tool can be used to generate reports on billable hours, project profitability, and other key performance indicators.

Benefits:

The following benefits can be achieved by implementing cloud accounting tools:

- Improved accuracy in calculating employee pay.
- Time savings in managing staff records.
- Real-time visibility into staff performance and productivity.
- Improved profitability through better staff management.

Embracing Digital Transformation: Overcoming Tech Fear and Barriers in Cloud Accounting

However, one of the biggest challenges in embracing digital transformation is overcoming tech fear and barriers. Many business owners may feel overwhelmed or intimidated by new technology. Today, we will explore how we can overcome these fears and barriers through a transformative learning activity.

Self-Assessment

Now, take a few minutes to assess your current level of tech fear and identify any potential barriers you may face in adopting cloud accounting tools. Please take a moment to reflect on your own experiences and feelings towards technology. Check out the following self-assessment criteria to facilitate your reflection or discuss them with your team or other learners sharing the same needs with you using our course forum or chatroom. You may introduce yourself to the course forum and make a team with other learners sharing the same interests and professional sector. We highly recommend working collaboratively throughout the course. Then you may share your self-assessment results and insights and we encourage you to reflect on your fears and barriers and discuss any common themes or challenges you may be facing.

Self-Assessment Criteria

Instructions: Please take a moment to reflect on your own experiences and feelings towards technology and assess your current level of tech fear and identify any potential barriers you may face in adopting cloud accounting tools for e-invoicing and staff management. Circle the appropriate response for each statement.

1. I am comfortable using technology in my business operations.

Not at all comfortable Somewhat comfortable Very comfortable

2. I have a good understanding of cloud computing and its benefits.

No understanding Some understanding Good understanding

3. I am confident in my ability to learn and adapt to new software and tools.

Not at all confident Somewhat confident Very confident

4. I have concerns about the security and privacy of cloud accounting tools.

Extremely concerned Somewhat concerned Not concerned at all

5. I have the necessary resources (e.g., budget, time, staff) to implement cloud accounting tools.

Not enough resources Adequate resources More than enough resources

6. I have access to reliable internet connectivity for using cloud accounting tools.

Poor internet connectivity Average internet connectivity Excellent internet connectivity

7. I have concerns about the reliability and support of cloud accounting service providers.

Extremely concerned Somewhat concerned Not concerned at all

8. I am open to learning and seeking assistance to overcome tech fear and barriers.

Not open at all Somewhat open Very open

9. I believe that adopting cloud accounting tools will bring significant benefits to my business.

Strongly disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

10. I am willing to invest time and effort in training and upskilling myself and my staff.

Not willing at all Somewhat willing Very willing

Barrier Transformation

Once you have completed the self-assessment, please reflect on your responses and identify any potential barriers you may face in adopting cloud accounting tools. Write them down and brainstorm potential solutions and strategies for overcoming the identified tech fears and barriers. Think creatively and consider both individual and collective actions.

We encourage you to discuss your self-assessment results and share your tech fears and identified barriers such as experiences and challenges you may face or already have faced in adopting and/or implementing cloud accounting tools in your business. This is an opportunity for open and honest discussions, so please feel free to share your thoughts and concerns. Remember, this is a supportive and non-judgmental environment. By learning from each other, we can collectively overcome hurdles and achieve success. Discuss with your team or other learners how to transform these barriers into positive statements or actionable steps suggesting strategies and solutions for each transformed barrier. Together, we can find ways to overcome these obstacles and embrace digital transformation.

Action Planning

Now that you have transformed our barriers into positive statements and actionable steps, it is time for you to create your personalized action plans for adopting cloud accounting tools.

Please use the transformed barriers and strategies you reflected and/or discussed with other learners or your team to set specific goals, allocate resources, and establish a timeline for implementation. Remember that it's important to revisit and revise your action plan as needed.

Task: Developing an Action Plan for SME Owners

Instructions:

1. Start by clearly defining your goal: Determine the specific objective you want to achieve by adopting cloud accounting tools. For example, it could be to streamline your accounting processes, improve data accuracy, or enhance financial reporting.
2. Identify the resources needed: Make a list of the resources you will require to implement your goal. This may include financial resources, staff training, IT support, and any other necessary tools or equipment.
3. Set a timeline: Break down your action plan into smaller steps and assign a timeline to each step. This will help you stay organized and ensure that you make progress towards your goal.
4. List the action steps: Create a list of specific actions you need to take to achieve your goal. Use the provided action plan template as a reference and customize it based on your unique needs and circumstances.

5. **Prioritize actions:** Determine the order in which you need to complete each action step. Consider dependencies and any prerequisites for certain actions.
6. **Allocate resources:** Assess your budget and allocate funds for implementing the chosen cloud accounting tool. Identify any additional resources or training needed for yourself and your staff. Explore options for financial assistance or grants if necessary.
7. **Provide training and support:** Identify the key staff members who will be involved in using the cloud accounting tool. Schedule training sessions or workshops to familiarize them with the tool. Offer ongoing support and guidance to ensure their comfort and proficiency.
8. **Address data security concerns:** Research the security measures and protocols of the chosen cloud accounting tool. Implement strong passwords and two-factor authentication for added security. Regularly backup data and ensure data encryption is in place.
9. **Test and integrate the tool:** Create a testing environment to ensure compatibility and functionality. Coordinate with IT professionals or the cloud accounting tool provider for seamless integration. Conduct thorough testing and troubleshooting to address any issues.
10. **Gradually transition to the cloud accounting tool:** Start by using the tool for specific tasks or departments. Monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and efficiency. Gradually expand its usage to other areas of the business.
11. **Regularly review and evaluate:** Set up regular check-ins or meetings to assess the tool's performance. Seek feedback from employees and customers on their experience. Make necessary adjustments or improvements based on the feedback received.
12. **Stay updated on new features and updates:** Subscribe to newsletters or follow the cloud accounting tool provider's blog for updates. Attend webinars or training sessions offered by the provider. Continuously explore and learn about new features that can further streamline accounting processes.
13. **Celebrate milestones and successes:** Acknowledge and celebrate achievements along the way, no matter how small. Share success stories with employees and other business owners to inspire and motivate.
14. **Continuously seek opportunities for improvement and growth:** Stay informed about emerging trends and technologies in cloud accounting. Attend conferences or workshops related to digital transformation in accounting. Network with other business owners or professionals in the field to exchange ideas and insights.
15. **Remember to regularly review and update your action plan as needed.** Stay committed to your goals and embrace digital transformation as a continuous learning and growing process for your business.

Feedback (to be displayed to learners after completion of task)

The following feedback should be given to the learner after completing this activity:

Here is a suggested [Action Plan Template](#) to help you develop your personalised Action Plan following the instructions above.

3. have an option to see more resources:
 - a. [Cloud Accounting Basics | Xero](#): This video explains what cloud accounting is, how it works and what are the benefits of it for small businesses, using Xero as an example
 - b. [Cloud Accounting Basics: What It Is & Reasons to Use | NetSuite](#): The article explains what cloud accounting is, how it works and what are the benefits of using it for businesses of all sizes and industries. It also introduces NetSuite as a leading provider of cloud-based accounting and ERP solutions that offer automation, accessibility, security, scalability and integration.
 - c. [8 Cloud-Based Accounting Tools 2021](#): This article compares seven different tools for small businesses and e-commerce, such as FreshBooks, QuickBooks Online, Zoho Books, Xero, Sage 50Cloud, NetSuite, and Wave Accounting.
 - d. [Manage Your Finances Like a Pro With this Complete List of Accounting Tools & Software](#): The article presents a list of 40+ accounting and financial management tools and software for various types and sizes of businesses, mainly in the e-commerce sector.
 - e. [17 Biggest Accounting Challenges and Solutions in 2023](#): The article discusses the main accounting challenges and solutions for 2023, such as cash flow, hiring, tax changes, automation, cybersecurity, remote work, and cloud-based software. It also introduces NetSuite as a leading provider of cloud-based accounting solutions for businesses.