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"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably"

6 Reasons To Choose Hosted Solutions Over Traditional IT

If you want to save your organization a good amount of money on hardware, software and support, you ought to be looking at the various hosted IT solutions that are available.

A hosted solution is simply a business application – be it a CRM system like Salesforce or Microsoft’s Exchange – that is stored (or hosted) on a server outside of your office and is accessed via the web. This is also called “cloud computing.” While some folks are still a bit skeptical of putting their entire computer network in the “cloud,” that fear is starting to subside with the incredible cost savings and ever-increasing security and reliability of hosted applications.

How Hosted Solutions Save You Money And Solve Many IT-Related Problems

- 1. Cost Savings.** With a hosted solution, you get the instant advantage of having very sophisticated software running on top-of-the-line, fully supported hardware without having to pay for it out of pocket. Since the resources are shared, you only pay a small fraction of the overall costs. Plus, upgrades and on-going maintenance are included, saving you even more.
- 2. You’re Not Stuck With Any One Solution.** Another advantage of a hosted solution is that there is no long-term commitment. If you don’t like a particular CRM or application, you can (usually) cancel the contract and move on to something else. Compare that against building your own in-house solution which costs a LOT more money and is much harder to walk away from because of the investment.
- 3. Your Costs Go Up Or Down Based On Users.** Since most hosted solution fees are based on the number of users who have access, you can quickly scale up or down.
- 4. Less Hassle.** Since your provider is providing these services like a utility, THEY are responsible for all the upgrades, maintenance, security, etc.
- 5. Faster Implementation.** Building your own infrastructure is not only expensive, but also time consuming. With hosted applications, you sim-



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How To Prevent Employees From Wasting Time Online

Do you have any idea how many hours your employees spend online checking eBay listings, cruising social networks, looking for vacation deals, Googling old flames or (even worse) ogling porn or gambling? A survey by America Online and Salary.com concluded that employers spend nearly \$760 billion a year paying employees to goof off on the Web. And with the ever-increasing popularity of YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites, the urge to goof off instead of working increases daily.

Where Do You Draw The Line?

While a certain degree of personal online usage may be perfectly okay, the goal here is to stop employees who waste HOURS online and/or to prevent employees from accessing damaging online content such as pornography or gambling web sites, as well as preventing them from downloading illegal software, inviting viruses into your network or spamming out racist or off-color jokes using your company e-mail – all of which can create bigger problems legally and financially.

Two Simple Fixes

So what's a business owner to do? First, make sure you have a good AUP or acceptable use policy in place that outlines what employees can and cannot do online or with company e-mail and resources. If you have one, make sure it's updated to include the use of social media sites and rules on sharing confidential company information. Next, we recommend installing good content filtering software that will "police" the network for you 24/7/365. **We recommend SonicWALL's Content Filtering Premium Edition as a scalable, dynamic solution to block non-productive web content.**

ply turn the service "on," making it much easier (and faster) to get started.

6. Easy Access From Anywhere. If you or your employees travel a lot or work from remote or home offices, going to a hosted solution makes even more sense because users can work from anywhere they happen to be connected to the Internet.

What About The Downsides?

Some folks are still a bit too squeamish to put their entire network and data into a hosted solution, usually because of concerns over security or the fear of not being able to access their data if the Internet goes down. While these are valid concerns, they can easily be addressed by choosing a reputable company with a long-standing history of good service (think Salesforce or Rackspace) and by getting a backup Internet connection (something we recommend to all clients).

If you really want to know if your business can benefit from hosted solutions, give us a call. Even if you're not ready to go 100% to the cloud, you can often get certain pieces of your network hosted to save money and provide easier access to those who



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IRS Warns Of E-mail Scam Targeted At Businesses

The IRS recently released an alert regarding an e-mail scam targeting people using the government's payment service. IRS spokesman Dan Boones said the scam claims a tax payment made through the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS) was rejected. It then directs you to a website which contains malware that may infect the user's computer.

Boone said the IRS never sends e-mails about taxes. If you receive this or any similar message, you are advised not to click any links or submit any information. You should also forward the e-mail immediately to the IRS at phishing@irs.gov.

The Lighter Side...

A Funny TRUE Story

A police officer found a perfect hiding place for watching for speeding motorists. One day, the officer was amazed when everyone was under the speed limit, so he went to investigate and found the problem...

A 10 year old boy was standing on the side of the road with a huge hand painted sign which said "Radar Trap Ahead." A little more investigative work led the officer to discovering the boy's accomplice, another boy about 100 yards beyond the radar trap with a similar sign that read "Tips" and a bucket at his feet full of change.

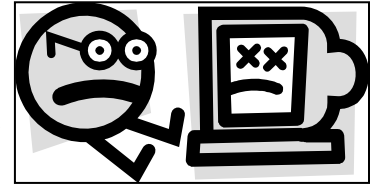
Easy To Swallow?

Parents of two young children had just finished tucking their young ones into bed one evening when they heard crying coming from the children's room. Rushing in, they found little Tommy crying hysterically.

He had accidentally swallowed a 5 cent coin and was sure he was going to die. No amount of talking could change his mind. Trying to calm him, the father of the boy palmed a 5 cent coin that he happened to have in his pocket and pretended to remove it from Tommy's ear. Tommy, naturally, was delighted. In a flash, he snatched it from his father's hand, swallowed it and demanded cheerfully, "Do it again, Dad!"

What To Do When Someone Posts Negative (Untrue!) Comments About Your Company Online

The popularity of user review sites such as Yelp, CitySearch or Google Local Search can be an excellent way for businesses to get some positive PR. But what do you do when a user posts a NEGATIVE comment about you or your business that isn't true?



Unfortunately, people love gossip, especially when it's negative. And since users will often take the word of an anonymous poster over the word of the company being discussed, it's important to keep a close eye on negative comments posted about your company online and address them. (Side Tip: We recommend setting up a Google Alert with your company name to monitor this.)

The best way to deal with a negative comment or complaint is head on; ignoring it is akin to an admission of guilt and will leave visitors assuming the worse. However, your rebuttal shouldn't be nasty or vindictive. Instead, politely address the complaint by giving your side of the story and/or correcting erroneous information.

For example, if a user posts that the customer service stinks at your company, you could reply back that providing top-level service is very important to your company and that you are willing to make good on the problem. You might even offer the person to contact you for a refund, a do-over or other solution to the problem. That way you appear to be a transparent organization that cares about customer feedback.

Another approach would be to ask your happy customers to counter the comment with their own positive comments. Often that will bolster your image and push the negative comment down the line. If the information is an outright lie, be polite but firm. Point out that you don't have any record of the transaction (or other facts surrounding the situation) but would be eager to investigate this further if the user would contact you. In some cases of outright slander or unfounded vicious attacks, you might be able to contact the web site and ask for the post to be removed. Just remember this: it isn't slander if it's true or if it's the opinion of a legitimate customer who is expressing their opinion about your product or service.

If a diplomatic approach doesn't work (and provided the comment is harmful enough) you may want to take legal action to get the post removed. Many social media web sites are becoming more sensitive to this issue and are willing to take down content that is defamatory, slanderous or abusive in nature.

ATTENTION:
**Microsoft Scheduled to Release Windows Small
Business Server (SBS) 2008 R2
Before the New Year!**

Please stay tuned or contact us for more information!
(410) 884-0225 –or– marketing@xpertechs.com

Are Digital Devices Dumbing Us Down?

Cell phones, which have become full-fledged computers with high-speed Internet connections, let people relieve the tedium of exercising, the grocery store line, stoplights or lulls in the dinner conversation. Now, instead of having a moment of downtime, every waking second can be filled with text messages, e-mail, Internet connectivity and games. But is this constant digital connection harming us?

According to scientists, the answer is a resounding “yes.” One of the unanticipated side effects of not giving your brain a break from the constant “noise” of PCs, cell phones, iPods, Blackberry and other digital devices is brain fatigue. People who keep their minds busy with constant digital input are not allowing their brains much-needed downtime.

One study conducted by the University of Michigan showed that a person was more effective at learning, retaining and processing information after a walk in nature versus a walk in a high-strung, noisy urban environment because the constant stimulation fatigues the brain, making it more difficult to be effective. One neurologist was quoted as saying, “People think they are refreshing themselves when they are actually fatiguing their brains.”

So the next time you have a minute waiting in line or at a stop light, resist the urge to pick up your cell phone and text someone!

Are You Serious About Saving Money on Your Taxes? Well, Good News! Section 179 Has Been Updated!!

In what has come as a welcome surprise to many business owners, **H.R. 5279 (The Small Business Jobs and Credit Act of 2010)**, which was signed into law on September 27, 2010, now contains several substantial changes to Section 179, the ever-popular business equipment tax deduction.

Initially, the \$250,000 “magic depreciation”, as we like to call it, was set to expire in 2011. Many of our clients were worried because they had planned large equipment upgrades for Q1 2011 that had been stalled for the last 18 months due to the economy. Thankfully, our political leaders addressed it before it was too late.

Information posted on Section179.org suggests that the following changes have been made:

- An increase of the total amount available for deduction to \$500,000 (up from \$250,000).
- An increase to the total amount of equipment purchased to \$2 million (up from \$800,000).
- The above numbers are to be in effect for 2010 and 2011. In addition, the bill also extended the “50% bonus depreciation” to tax year 2010 (it was rescinded earlier this year, but has been restored).

Here's How XPERTECHS is Sweetening the Pot

And the savings doesn't stop there!!

If you upgrade your network with XPERTECHS **before December 31, 2010**, we will include:

1. **3 FULL MONTHS** of our XperCARE Proactive Managed IT Service (a \$3,000 value!!) **absolutely FREE!!** All computer networks need ongoing maintenance to keep them running problem-free, and with our XperCARE Proactive Managed IT Service, you'll not only enjoy faster and more reliable service from your computer network, but you'll gain incredible piece of mind knowing that your network and the data it holds is safe from loss, corruption, downtime, viruses, hackers, spyware, and a host of other problems.
2. We'll allow you to continue your XperCARE Proactive Managed IT Service at a **special discounted rate** that will easily save you **THOUSANDS** in IT support! After the three months are up, you can continue to receive regular maintenance, critical updates and security patches, fast, remote support, and 24-7 watch over your network and data at a special discounted rate. Of course, you are under no obligation to continue this maintenance, but I'm certain you are going to want to continue after you see how we keep things running.

Don't miss out on the SAVINGS!! Contact us TODAY!!

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