



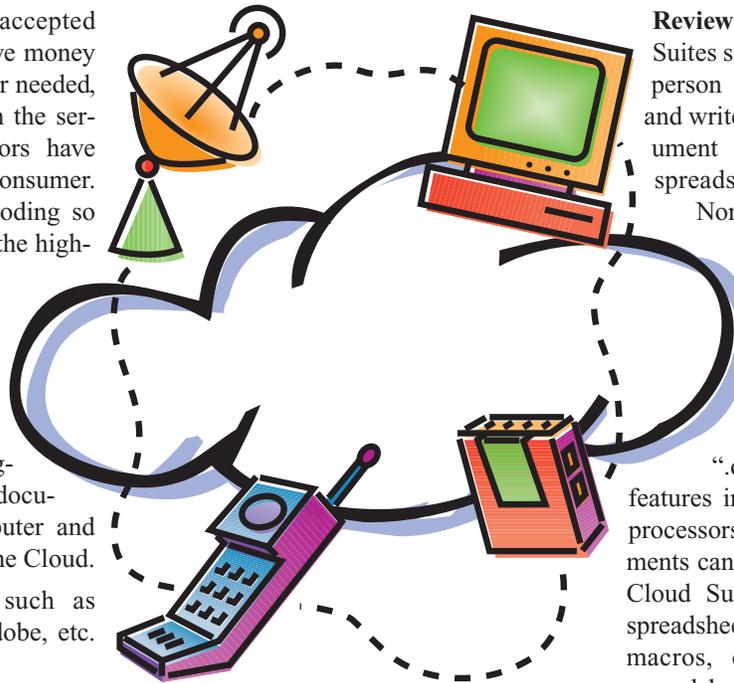
# CLOUD COMPUTING FOR CONSUMERS

By Wayne James, I.T. Consultant

The business community has accepted “Cloud” computing as a way to save money by renting the extra computer power needed, and lets software vendors maintain the service software. Now Cloud vendors have turned their attention towards the consumer. Because Cloud computing is exploding so fast, this article will only touch on the high-lights with more articles to follow.

The great advantages for the consumer are as follows:

- **Free Office Suite.** This includes word processing, spreadsheets, presentation manager, etc. These products open documents directly onto your computer and the documents can be stored in the Cloud.
- **Free Gig Storage.** Vendors such as Microsoft, Google, Amazon, Adobe, etc. offer free gigabyte storage.
- **Share Pictures and Text Documents.** Choose selected personnel or friends across the Internet to come into your computer to share pictures and records.
- **Increase Your Software Inventory.** Now that software is in the Cloud, you can rent or lease instead of purchasing expensive software. The vendor maintains and updates the software. Some vendors, such as Intuit, already offer Turbo Tax Basic for free on the Cloud. Adobe allows you to rent their suite of photo editors.
- **Sync Applications to Your Computer.** Synchronize applications to your computer, iPad, iPhone, etc. This keeps you up-to-date plus allows you to communicate with your friends and business associates real time.
- **Thin Client Computer.** These computers have just enough processing power for business and/or home usage. These cheaper PC’s, notebooks and laptops store files and key software on the Web. An added advantage is if the computer is lost or stolen, there is little on it. Google is



currently in a beta test for an inexpensive *Thin Client Computer* that has its own operating system. It will go directly to the Google site.

When selecting a Cloud vendor, consider the following:

**Visit Each Vendor’s Web Site.** Determine who offers the services you require. The basic concepts are the same among the vendors even though their offerings are different. For example, Office Suites allow you to share documents and communicate in real time.

- Microsoft offers 25 GIGS of free storage, but only 5 GIGS can be used for shared data storage.
- Google offers over 7 GIGS of free storage, but only 1 GIG can be used for storage that does not have the Google Word Processing extension.
- Adobe gives 5 GIG free although their web-site states 2 GIG are for file storage.
- Amazon is primarily for file backup and music storage.

**Review Office Suite’s Capabilities.** All Suites satisfy requirements for the average person or small business. They all read and write Microsoft and other popular document extensions for word processing, spreadsheets or presentation manager.

None of the suites have extensive “add-ons” that Microsoft 2003 Professional and Microsoft 2007 are using. If you want the Cloud Suites to read your documents from your Office Suite, do not save your document with the new 2007 extension of “.docx”. If you are using advanced features in the high end professional word processors, then it is doubtful these documents can be read correctly (if at all) by the Cloud Suites. This situation is worse for spreadsheets that use redirecting pointers, macros, or complex commands. Cloud spreadsheets are somewhat basic. Note: Microsoft, Google, and Adobe all use their own proprietary Office Suite systems. Oracle and IBM Cloud systems are targeted for businesses, but offer Office Suites.

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## COMPLIANCE CORNER

### FIRING WORKERS ON FMLA LEAVE: IT CAN BE DONE

The federal FMLA and the California Family Rights Act (CFRA) don't forbid you to fire employees after they return from leave – or even while they're on leave. You're simply prohibited from firing them *because* they took FMLA or CFRA leave.

**ADVICE:** Be able to show and document the reasons for the firing (e.g., insubordination) that occurred before the employee requested leave. Before you terminate on-leave employees, ask yourself three questions:

1. Would the employee be discharged if he or she weren't on FMLA leave?
2. Have other employees been discharged for similar conduct?
3. Does the conduct indicate the employee is a danger to himself or herself and others? (If yes, a court probably won't second-guess you.)

The more “yes” answers, the more likely the firing won't be seen as retaliation.

**Recent Case:** A clerk who suffered from bipolar disorder met with her boss to discuss performance problems. It did not go well. She cried, screamed obscenities, tossed her improvement plan at the boss and slammed the door. She then threatened suicide. She was hospitalized briefly and took FMLA leave. The company investigated the incident and fired her. She sued, alleging that firing her while on FMLA leave was illegal. Not so, concluded the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, which includes California. The firing was related to her behavior, not to FMLA leave.

*Source: Gambini v. Total Renal Care, No. 05-35209, 9th Circuit*



## 5 FUNDAMENTAL STEPS FOR IMPROVING MOTIVATION

Motivation may not be easy, but its essentials are relatively simple. Incentives, speeches, and formal programs have their place, but for any of them to work, you've got to start with these basics.

- **Interact with your employees.**

Don't limit your conversation to workplace issues, nor sit behind your desk reading reports and writing e-mails. Get to know your people as people: their education and history, their interests and hobbies outside work, their career ambitions and personal dreams. You need a personal connection to spark people's motivations.



- **Don't withhold feedback.** Managers

sometimes hold back on pointing out mistakes or performance problems for two reasons: They believe employees will figure things out on their own, or they fear that employees can't handle constructive criticism. Either way, the job doesn't get done. Practice giving feedback that employees will hear and respond to, even if it has to be negative.

- **Explain your decisions.** “Because I said so” isn't management or leadership. Your employees aren't children, and if they understand why you're doing something, or asking them to do it, they'll generally do a better job. Even if they don't agree with your reasons, they'll pick up on your respect for their intelligence.

- **Base praise and rewards on employee's needs, not yours.** Some employees don't want to be recognized in public because they find it embarrassing. Tickets to a sporting event as a reward for performance will fall flat with someone who doesn't know a field goal from an infield fly. Appreciation and awards can be important tools, but smart managers use them appropriately.

- **Stay positive.** Employees want to work for upbeat managers. Be honest about your challenges, but avoid doom-and-gloom scenarios and focus on the possibilities for success. Don't criticize other employees or upper management with your staff; it looks immature and makes employees wonder what you're saying about them behind their backs.

## CLOUD

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Hewlett Packard has announced a Cloud strategy for both consumers and businesses. However, it is in the planning stage and not an actual product at this time.

Free suites are available that can be downloaded to your PC or flash card and serve as back-up in the event the Cloud is not online. Two of the best is “OpenOffice” backed by Oracle Corporation, and IBM’s “Lotus Symphony”.

The Cloud is here to stay. There are advantages for everyone such as free software and file storage, software for rent, and real time communication with smart phones, computers, or iPADS.

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## FACEBOOK FACTS

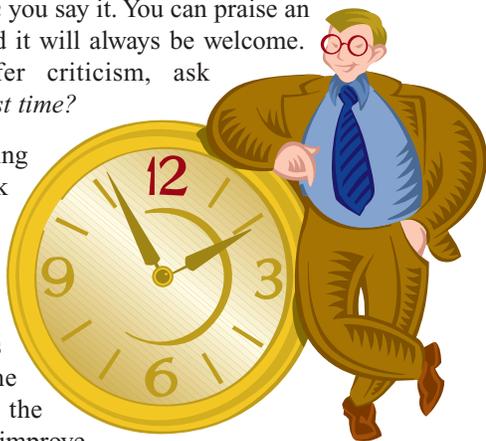
- Facebook has over 600 million users (As of January 2011)
- Facebook surpasses Google for weekly traffic in the U.S.
- Facebook added over 200 million users in less than a year
- One in every 13 people use Facebook
- 70% of Facebook users are outside the U.S.
- If Facebook were a country, it would be the 3rd largest
- Over 60 million status updates happen on Facebook daily
- The average user spends more than 55 minutes a day on Facebook



## CHECK THE TIME BEFORE YOU CRITICIZE

It's not only *what* you say and *how* you say it that you must consider; it's also *when* you say it. You can praise an employee any time and it will always be welcome. But before you offer criticism, ask yourself: *Is this the best time?*

If an employee is working on a complicated task or project, let him finish. If an employee is about to leave on a three-day weekend, wait until she gets back. You want the individual to accept the criticism and use it to improve performance. Yet in each of the examples cited, your input will likely become only a momentary distraction and a lasting morale-killer. Choose a time when the employee can fully concentrate on what you have to say.

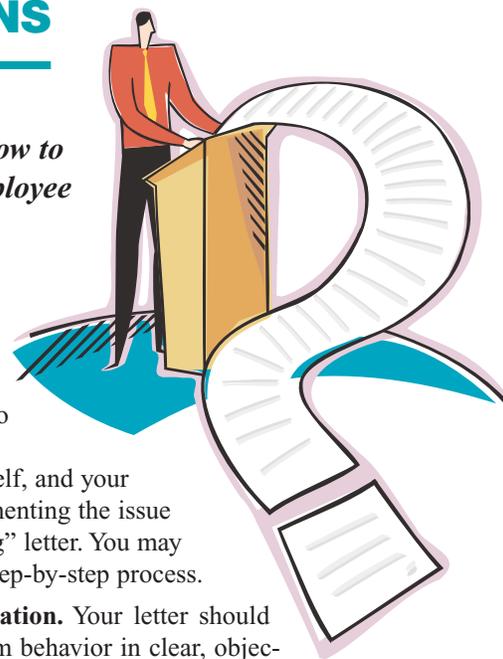


## SHARON HYDER, CMC, CRM ANSWERS YOUR MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

*Do you have any suggestions on how to discipline an employee due to poor performance?*

You are correct in wanting to address poor performance. However, don't be too quick to take drastic action. Protect yourself, and your employees, by documenting the issue with a “First Warning” letter. You may want to follow this step-by-step process.

- **Describe the situation.** Your letter should lay out the problem behavior in clear, objective terms. You should have discussed the issue with the employee already, so document what was said (and the employee's reaction) to show that you've brought the problem to his or her attention. Tell the employee that you're drafting the letter so it doesn't come as an unexpected shock.
- **Lay out our expectations.** Don't just reiterate what's happened; outline what specific improvements you want to see. This tells the employee exactly what you expect and should be as clear and objective as your initial description of the situation.
- **Set a specific time frame for improvement.** Instant improvement may be unrealistic. Your letter should establish a definite monitoring period with a clear cutoff point that tells the employee what the deadline is for shaping up, and when your surveillance will stop if improvement takes place.
- **Spell out the consequences.** Use your letter to tell the employee what may happen if the problem isn't resolved. You don't want a worker to complain (to a lawyer) that he or she didn't know termination was impossible. You might also want to outline possible benefits and rewards for improvement to motivate the employee to do better.



## FAMOUS QUOTE

*“The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.”*

— Thomas Jefferson, U.S. President



## **TRENDS...**

### **HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND LOOKING FOR DOCUMENTS?**

- U.S. companies spend approximately \$20 on labor costs in order to file a document, \$120 on the labor required to find a misfiled document and \$220 to reproduce a lost document.
- An information worker spends between 20-40% of their time searching for documents manually.
- For lost documents, companies pay a cost of searching that is 6 times the value of the original document.
- Companies that need to redo documents pay 11 times more than the cost of the original document.
- The average paper document is copied 19 times.

- 70% of today's businesses would fail within three weeks if they suffered a catastrophic loss of paper-based records due to fire or flood.
- Paper files are doubling every 3.5 years.

*Source: Coopers & Lybrand*

- 15% to 20% of paper documents are lost.
- Over its life, a single document can cost an average of \$30.
- Companies on average spend \$25,000 to fill a typical four-drawer file cabinet, \$2,000 to maintain it annually.

*Source: Delphi Group*

- The average American office worker is estimated to use a sheet of paper every 12 minutes.

*Source: Hawken, Lovins & Lovins*

**Contact Hyder & Associates To Solve Your Records Management Problems**



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