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- Scott Phillips, Synergy Computing

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"Ok, here comes farmer Brown, put these on and remember.....act natural!"

Technology Times

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

Google Apps, Office 365 And Apple's iCloud: Which One Do You Choose?



With all the hype around cloud computing, you've certainly heard about the cloud-based office applications being offered by Microsoft, Google and Apple. All are promising cheap, easy and convenient computing...but are they REALLY all they're cracked up to be?

The most important thing you need to know is that these are relatively new technologies with new features being added on a monthly, even weekly, basis. And like any new technology, there are things that will not work as well as a very mature desktop application hosted on your machine. If you are a power user of Microsoft Office, you'll quickly get frustrated when you discover Office 365 can't perform some of the more sophisticated functions such as creating Macros in Excel or the advanced markup in Word.

Google Apps is a good platform for those businesses that need simple, inexpensive cloud-based collaboration software. However, if your company has been using Microsoft Office for years, you have a big investment to consider since all those documents will change when switched to Google Apps. Therefore, most companies will want to stick with Microsoft Office 365 rather than go through the pain of having all their documents slightly "off." Additionally, Google Apps doesn't always play well with certain line of business applications that were designed to integrate seamlessly with Microsoft Office.

Then we have Apple's iCloud. While this is a cloud-based service, it shouldn't be compared to Office 365 or Google Apps since it's geared towards organizing, storing and accessing media (music, videos and pictures). While they do have some applications for e-mail and calendaring, it's not designed to replace an office productivity suite.

But the war is far from over yet, and in the grand scheme of things Google may resolve all the above mentioned issues. Again, these are new technologies that are changing rapidly; what might be a good choice today could be a second rate choice next week. So which one should you choose? That depends on your own unique situation. No two companies are alike in the way they communicate, store information and work; therefore, it's important you work with an IT consultant who takes a custom approach to solving your organization's needs—not a one-size-fits-all company that only sells hammers and treats every client like a nail.

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Shiny New Gadget Of The Month



Here we are in April...how have you done with your New Year's commitment to "get in shape" or "eat better and exercise more?"

Well, if you have fallen off the wagon, I have some good news for you. And even if you have stuck with it, this little tip can make your efforts even easier.

MyFitnessPal.com provides a FREE online tool for tracking your diet, exercise activity and fitness goals. This site makes it easy to set your weight loss goals and overall nutrition plan. Each day you can log in to track food you eat for a breakdown of calories, fat, carbs and protein of each item. Any exercise activity can be logged and will subtract from your daily calorie bank.

There is also a social element to this site. Much like Facebook, you can ask to "friend" other members, post on a common wall and share encouraging words throughout your journey to good health.

MyFitnessPal.com is easy to use on your computer or via apps available for iPhones and other Smartphone devices.

As they saying goes, "That which is measured improves." By simply tracking and measuring your food and exercise results on a daily basis, you become accountable for everything you eat and for every activity—or lack thereof. Seeing your progress in black and white will surely boost your results!

Check it out:
www.MyFitnessPal.com

Dealing Crack? There's An App For That

Not too surprisingly, drug dealers and criminals are using the latest technology to run their "business.." Recently an iPhone developer, A-Steroids, created an application known as "Drug Lords," a program that would enable both drug-dealers and users to find one another in real time and space using their smart phone's built-in GPS. This application allows dealers to post prices of the various drugs they are selling, the amounts available and even comes with a convenient calculator that determines the prices per gram. They can even raise or lower the prices by location and supply so the price per gram is cheaper in Paris than New York.

Using Google maps, buyers (a.k.a. customers) can quickly find the location of the nearest dealer and compare prices to make sure they're getting the best deal possible. And like any good "market" online, it contains a star rating system allowing buyers to post feedback on the quality of the products and customer service. More recently, A-Steroids added a point system that allows you to pull some strings, like to gain full police protection for some period, to postpone your loan shark pay off or even to get a full refund for your equipment upgrades so you can rearrange them. There is a free version of this app and a more robust paid version.

Fortunately, Apple rejected the application to be sold on iTunes stating that "anything that involved or implicated the trafficking of illegal commodities would not pass the bar or be accepted for sale." The developer, A-Steroids, claims the application was meant only as a game and that it was not designed to assist real-world drug deals; but since the application worked exactly as advertised, it could have easily become the perfect app for drug dealers.

Not to be discouraged, A-Steroids rebranded the game as "Underworld: Sweet Deal." While all the basic features and objectives of "Drug Lords" remained intact, the products being sold were changed from cocaine, heroin and marijuana to donuts and lollipops. Naturally, this can still be used by drug dealers provided all the users agree that "lollipops" is code for heroin.

Attention Parents: The above story is a good reminder to make sure you are constantly monitoring your children's phones, Internet usage and other devices. You also need to keep yourself up-to-date on the latest scams and threats so you know what to look for to keep you and your family safe. For more information on how to protect your family and your business, check out our web site: www.tinyurl.com/pykonline for 4 things you should do now to avoid being the next victim of online crime.

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The Lighter Side... The Earth Is Getting Lighter Every Year



Did you know our planet is losing 50,000 metric tons every year, even though we gain 40,000 metric tons due to gravity pulling in space dust? Why the loss? Here are the numbers according to Dr. Chris Smith and Cambridge University physicist Dave Ansel:

- Earth gains about 40,000 metric tons of dust every year, the remnants of the formation of the solar system, which are attracted by our gravity and become part of the matter in our planet.
- NASA says that Earth gains about 160 metric tons of matter a year because the global temperature is going up: "If we are adding energy to the system, the mass must go up." Oh, those crazy thermodynamics.
- But here the biggest reason for our weight loss: about 95,000 metric tons of hydrogen and 1,600 metric tons of helium escape Earth every year. They are too light for gravity to keep them around, so they get lost in space.

What about all those buildings we construct and trash we create? Apparently that has a zero sum effect since these items are being made of matter that already exists and is merely being transformed.

How To Get Your E-mail Broadcasts Opened, Delivered And Responded To

Despite all the spam, e-mail is still the workhorse of online marketing. As a business owner, the lure of fast, cheap and easy communication to hundreds if not thousands of customers is too hard to resist. But e-mail is certainly not a "perfect" media. Response percentages are low to non-existent and you can quickly make a lot of people angry if you don't use it properly.



First and foremost, get your customers to give you their permission to e-mail them. Sounds obvious, but many salespeople are using LinkedIn or other sneaky ways to garner e-mails online for prospects they've never met or talked to. If you don't mind making a handful of people REALLY angry with you, this might be an okay strategy. However, if you want to build a good relationship with the people you are trying to sell your services to, then work hard to EARN their attention, not steal it.

So how do you do that? By offering some type of valuable information or entertaining content to them in exchange for their e-mail address. This could be a "how to" webinar, white paper, eBook or buyers guide. For example, a realtor could offer a monthly newsletter on home sales and home values for their neighborhood. A vet could offer a free report on "How To Solve The Top 3 Misbehaviors In Dogs," or "How To Choose The Perfect Cat." A restaurant could offer coupons and specials exclusively for their newsletter subscribers along with recipes and invitations to VIP client events. This type of information should be offered on what's called an "opt-in" page. You can see one of ours by going to: www.synergyinc.net/free-stuff/freebook/.

Once you have their e-mail address, don't abuse it by sending boring, off-target spam. That means you'll have to work hard to consistently come up with good, valuable and interesting content or subscribers will ignore, delete and opt out of your list fast. And finally, make sure you have clear opt-out instructions on every e-mail you send along with your full contact information; the law requires this and it's just good online etiquette.

Referral Program

We will pay you \$25 for anyone that you refer to us that we get an appointment with.

When your referral becomes a client (and spends \$1000 or more) then we will pay you \$50 more. And, we will give your referral \$100 off their purchase.



Call us or visit www.synergyinc.net/about-us/referral-program
Get More Free Tips, Tools, and Services At Our Web Site: www.synergyinc.net



FREE BUSINESS ADVISORY GUIDE:

"12 Little-Known Facts Every Business Owner Must Know About Backup, Security And Disaster Recovery"

If you are relying on tape drives, external hard drives or USB devices to back up your data, then it's critical for you to get and read this informative eBook. You will learn what most IT consultants don't know or won't tell you about making sure your company's critical data is safe from loss, corruption, cyber criminals, natural disasters and employee sabotage, in addition to:

- 1) The only way to know for SURE your data can be recovered if lost, corrupted or deleted—yet fewer than 10% of businesses have this in place.
- 2) 7 critical characteristics you should absolutely demand from any offsite backup service.
- 3) Where tape backups fail and give you a false sense of security.
- 4) The number one cause of data loss that businesses don't even think about until their data is erased.

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Batman, Alfred And Your Assistant Job Description

Believe it or not, Batman has more than one lesson to teach entrepreneurs. One of those lessons is the how and why of a dedicated personal assistant—an Alfred. Do you have an "Alfred"? If so, do you utilize him or her properly?

I have posted a brief video to help you learn the four steps you can take to determine whether or not you need an assistant, and how to set that person up to succeed through his or her assistant job description. Check out the video here: <http://tinyurl.com/batmanandalfred>

After you watch the video, here are a few action steps:

- Decide if you really need a personal assistant vs. an employee
- Follow the order of offloading
- Document the position
- Follow the 75% rule
- Share your perspective or ask questions on that page

Here are the key principles to pick up on from this concept:

- Personal Assistants are dedicated to you 100%. Their job is to help you and no one else. If you need someone to focus on a specific part of your business then what you really need is an employee or perhaps a contractor.
- If you don't follow the order of offloading, you may hire an assistant prematurely.
- A Position Agreement is a documented system that describes in detail what a personal assistant does.
- The 75% rule states that your personal assistant should have tasks that do not require your constant attention for at least three quarters of their work hours.



Guest article provided by:
Dave Crenshaw is an author, speaker and CEO coach. He has appeared in TIME magazine, Forbes, SIRIUS XM Radio, and the BBC News. His first book, *The Myth of Multitasking: How 'Doing It All' Gets Nothing Done*, has been published in six languages and is a time management best seller. His latest book, *Invaluable: The Secret to Becoming Irreplaceable*, is also an organizational behavior and motivational bestseller. For videos and articles from Dave, visit www.DaveCrenshaw.com

Who Else Wants To Win A \$25 Gift Card?

Take my monthly "Trivia Challenge" and you could win too!

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is Mark S. Pasternak, CPA in Santa Barbara! He was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from December: **On December 3rd, 1967, what medical breakthrough took place?**

The choices were: a) The first successful Siamese Twin separation b) Artificial insulin was first produced c) The first successful heart transplant. The correct answer is c) The first successful heart transplant. Congratulations, Mark, you've won a \$25 Gift Card!

Now, here's this month's trivia question. The winner will receive a gift card to Blenders In The Grass.

What event directly caused the creation of "April Fool's Day?"

- a) The addition of January, February & March to the original calendar
- b) A huge snow blizzard that occurred on April 1, 1909
- c) A series of jokes played on candidates on April 1st during a political campaign

**Call me at 805-967-8744 or email me at
info@synergyinc.net right now with your answer!**