



GROW YOUR BUSINESS

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Using the Cloud Right to Benefit Your Business

By now, it is likely sounding like a broken record: cloud computing, changing the face of business, technology expansion affecting traditional methods of doing business, etc. Before you yawn, remember that constant change means the constant need to stay 'in the know'.

The pros and cons for small vs. big business are different- learn to cater the technology to your business for best results.

The most attractive quality for small business owners would be the ability to lower costs. Moving to the cloud means utilizing all your hardware and increasing its value. Going virtual also lowers IT costs, power bills, support costs, upgrades, installation fees, and more.

Virtual also means flexibility and remote working capabilities. Moving forward means a fluctuating model for what best work conditions may be.

The ability to have work completed remotely opens doors, encourages unique (otherwise potentially impossible) collaborations, and allows a conducive work environment to all employees.

Mobility- it's part of who we are today- the cloud allows access from anywhere, anytime, and that is today's gold standard of business.

With the cloud, backing up your system has never been easier. Natural disasters, system failures, viruses, and hackers- the threats are more immanent than ever.

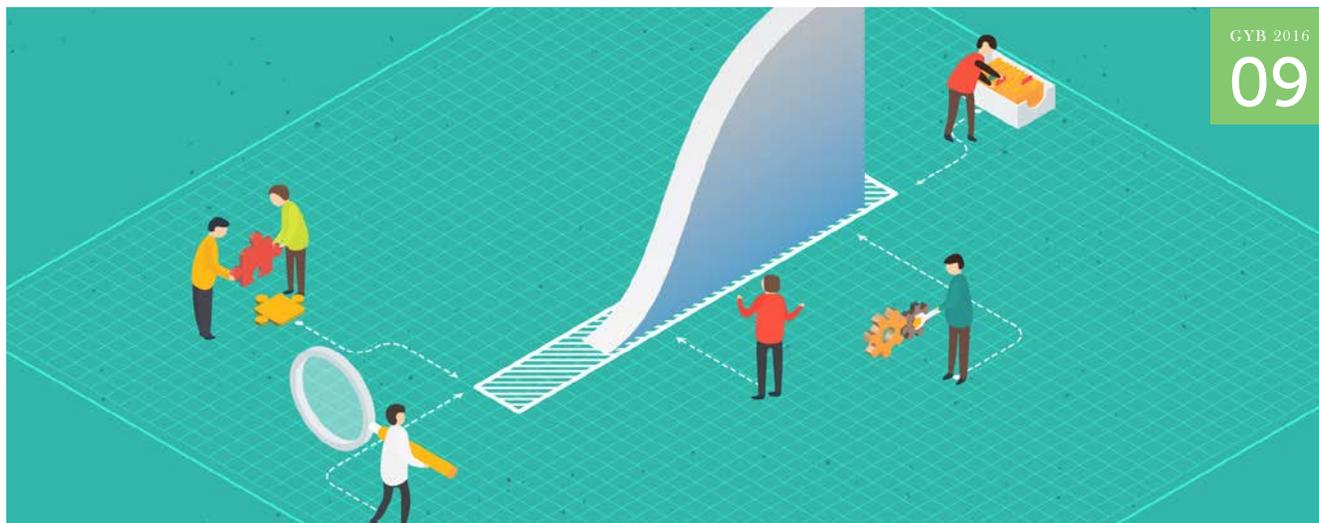
Auto-updating and off-site storage systems are the major selling points with the cloud.

One of the most pertinent benefits pertaining to small businesses is the clouds ability to facilitate and function through the growth process.

Its fully capable of scalability allows you to start small, utilizing the few functions you may require, thus keeping cost and effort minimal.

As you grow, the clouds capabilities and options grow as well, maintaining only what you need - when you need it.

At this stage in the game, the pros far outweigh the cons and most small business owners should be ready to consider the cloud as a viable management strategy.



Five Ways to Make Growth Simple

Experiencing growing pains? All small businesses do- growth is inevitable; if you are not growing, you are not succeeding!

On the path to be bigger and better, there are lots of tips from the trade to try and ease the transition, also make growth a simple and effective part of your process.

- 1. Consider credit.** This may sound like conflicting advice, however, when attempting to jump up in the food chain, you must be prepared financially. During times of growth, consider business credit or loans, specific to your growth plans.
- 2. Build growth spurts into your business plan.** Granted you may need to adjust these accordingly as business can be unpredictable, but having plans in place, timeline

and perhaps even some stockpiled cash for the transition will be the resources you need to stay on target.

- 3. Freak out, but do it in your head.** Having doubts? Unsure of the plan? Feeling like you can never make this happen? Resist the urge to share your hesitations with your team- your job as leader is to captain the ship, weathering all the storms brazenly and without fear. Fear is a parasite- do what you can to quell it before it spreads.
- 4. Prepare yourself for roadblocks, speed bumps and the word “no”.** During growth, you will be asking for a lot- from yourself, your employees, vendors, clients, etc. Be mentally prepared to gracefully navigate these potentially touchy times by always demonstrating tact, patience, and kindness.

- 5. Similar to number 4, prepare your team, vendors, and clients for the transition ahead.** As you grow, it is imperative that you retain what you have- whether that be cash flow, employees, loyal clients, etc. After all, they are the reason you choose now as ‘the time’. Keep them informed on the process, the timeline, and how it will affect them at each stage.

No matter the industry, one thing can always be said about growth- it's challenging. It will be a true testament to the business, your leadership, and your team. As with everything business related, solid planning will always build a good foundation for success.



Millennial Workers - What Do Young Professionals Need Above All Else?

For those potentially living under rocks: "Millennials; (noun); a person reaching young adulthood around the year 2000; a Generation Yer." (Google).

Those youngsters who are increasingly flooding the job market, pushing innovation, embracing change, and constantly with their heads in the clouds (the computing cloud, we mean, of course!)? Yes.

It is no longer a matter of competition, but rather, integration. Their stronghold in the world of technology has created a business world in which they are a necessity in navigation and innovation.

Even small businesses these days should be capitalizing on their qualities. However, they can be difficult to manage as they carry a different set of values, have contemporary expectations and the occasional (seemingly) ridiculous demand.

So what can you expect when managing millennials?

First and foremost, millennials have garnered a reputation for having one foot out the door at all times, constantly on the hunt for the newer, the better, the next best thing.

In order to facilitate retention, encourage mentorship programs. Don't try to talk down, but try to be a colleague, who simply has different information to share. It's not about lording experience, it's about teaching, sharing, and collaborating.

Offer yourself as a coach, not a boss.

Additionally, you will find you need to adopt and offer some of the more newfangled workspace concepts, such as remote work flexibility, community service days, think tanks, the list is long. Adopt what works for you, but also

creates an attractive, supportive and inclusive environment.

Millennials thrive on achievements. Assist with setting goals, keeping them on track and positive reinforcement when necessary. Keep them feeling challenged, as well as rewarded, a tricky mindset for those used to putting their nose to the grindstone and potentially never receiving praise.

Most importantly, create and allow a work-life balance. This has seeped through the antiquated 9-5 business model and is the main selling factor for the gen-Y-ers.



New Manager Checklist - 5 Things You Need to Know to be A Good Leader

Being a leader is intimidating at best, but being a first-time manager can be downright terrifying.

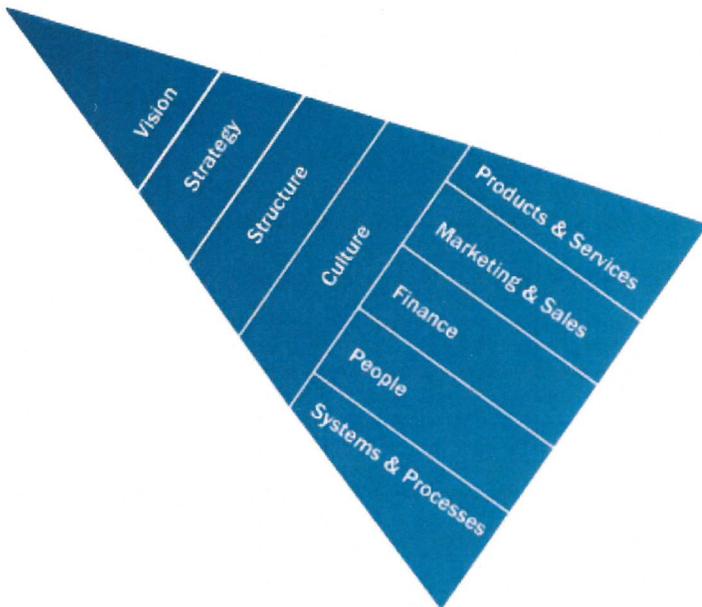
Sure, it's a promotion, but it's also a huge leap into uncharted territory- including landmines like disciplinary action, decision-making and (eek!) management skills!

Take a breath, then take a look through the five things that you need to know before your first day as a new manager!

- 1. As your daily tasks adjust, remember that your foundations are what got you to this place.** Anchor yourself with a reminder of your strengths and skills and highlight those as you move into the new role, using them as building blocks to grow.
- 2. Talk to your superior, ensure that you are both on the same page** about your new role. If you aren't sure, this is the time to ask. If you don't feel ready for specific areas, request training sessions. Showing the initiative at this point will save you the embarrassment of being caught without the answers later!
- 3. Check your ego at the door.** Sure, pat yourself on the back at home and celebrate with your pals but do not bring that arrogance to the office. With every promotion, there is someone who was looked over. Instead, come in with a humble attitude, brush up on your listening skills, and continue to be a team player.
- 4. Engage in transparency with your employees.** Likely you are now privy to information you were not before. Help your team connect with you by offering up information when you can, which will distract from the times when you cannot.
- 5. Be acutely aware of developing your own management style.** Imitation may be the most sincere form of flattery, but in business, it will make you look unprepared and inexperienced. As a manager, eyes are on you at all times, be wary of the image and persona you want to identify with and define yourself as a leader in your own ways.

Seeking a mentor can assist in assuring that you seamlessly adopt the above five tips, and can provide much needed insight as you navigate the new role.

BLURB: Concerned about Safety? Train your staff to lock their computers every time they step away, even for a moment. Create uniquely generated usernames and passwords, and send a mandatory password change reminder every three months. Encouraging best practices at even this simple a level ingrains it deeper into your business culture.



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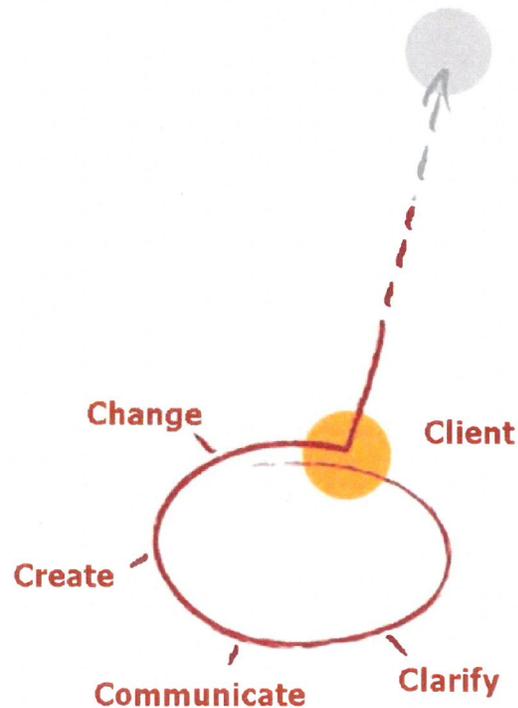
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