

The Monthly Resource Guide For Startup Businesses

NEW BUSINESS

D E N V E R

October 2010



Keeping Your Head in the 'Cloud' Makes Business Sense

Google Apps Are Coming on Strong as a Powerful Tool for Integration, Communication and Collaboration. It's All About Cloud Computing and how it will benefit your new business. To help explain the power of Google Apps in the 'Cloud,' we turned to Denver-based InfuzelT and **Matthew Gale**, **Jim Nollsch** and **Steve Kregstein** to explain it all.

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Matthew Gale and Jim Nollsch

Special to New Business Denver

If you're not familiar with the term Cloud Computing, don't worry. You soon will be. It will change the way you run your business, from interacting with employees and clients to optimizing your internal processes and cost structures.

Cloud computing is a metaphor that refers to software applications that you access remotely, typically through your web browser or mobile device. The actual software and files you work with are installed and managed securely off site.

The leading example of a cloud computing solution is Google Apps, which provides a core of applications.

This represents a revolutionary opportunity for small business to once again compete on the big stage with the big boys. With cloud computing, small businesses can be more agile, more responsive and address more customers in a profitable and dynamic way. Most importantly, they can do it all without expensive hardware, complex maintenance and capital costs.

Old School

Here's the old-school version of how things were done: You bought the software you needed and installed it on your computer. If your computer couldn't handle the new software, you'd have to replace or upgrade it.

If you wanted coworkers to be on the same version, they'd have to upgrade to the new version. And in four years, there would be a new version you could move to, one with all the latest improvements and added features...at an upgrade price, not including new hardware costs!

With cloud computing, upgrades are instant for all users. It's completely turnkey and works through standard web brows-

ers. The costs and risks of adopting a new technology have never been lower because there is no equipment to buy, upgrade, maintain or retire. You just add, configure and operate the software capabilities you need and only pay for what you use.

Cloud History

In the last decade, bandwidth increased significantly and wireless devices became reliable, more powerful, always-on and always-connected. The ability to work or collaborate from anywhere became possible.

At this same time, leading companies like Google and Amazon realized there was an opportunity to leverage their massively scalable, secure and reliable infrastructures to build and sell cloud services. They built services that the average small business could "subscribe to" without the upfront capital costs. Hence giving small and medium business all the power without the cost or complexity.

The Google Apps Suite

Google Apps is a suite that includes just about everything. There is a free version that has limited storage and intrusive advertising to deal with. There are no extra fees, upfront costs or hidden requirements. If you are just starting your business and cost is everything, it works out of the box. All you need is configuration, training and a small amount of support.

But most new and small businesses that InfuzeIT talks to prefer the Premier Edition that charges \$50 per user per year. It has more storage, enterprise reliability, and sophisticated functions and no advertising to distract you and your employees.

There are seven core Google Apps which contain programs found in traditional office suites.

- **Email/Gmail.** Standard and ad-

vanced email management. Can replace your Outlook Exchange Server.

- **Calendar.** Shared calendars that integrate with email and mobile devices.
- **Docs:** Presentations, Spreadsheets, Word Processing, Forms and Drawings. You can save to or open the comparable Microsoft applications. Or just use Google Docs, for example, when you want to collaborate.
- **Sites.** Web host and web creation tool, commonly used for low cost intranet sites
- **Video.** Stream and share videos.
- **Talk.** Integrated instant messaging, video conferences and voice calls.
- **Groups.** Create mailing lists and discussion groups with customers, partners and employees.

There is also the large catalogue of Google's consumer apps in addition to third-party apps (the Google Apps Marketplace or "app store") and more are being added all the time, like the Gist app that integrates social network information, like facebook and twitter, into your contacts or email.

If you like the look and feel of your current Microsoft products, Google Apps integrates so well that you can use Outlook or Outlook Exchange Server on the front-end and Google Apps on the back-end.

And to the surprise of Microsoft enthusiasts, it is almost transparent. In most all cases, the Microsoft functionality with the Google Apps back-end are fully integrated. Use Outlook for you mail, ditch your expensive headache of an Exchange server, and plug in the Google Apps email back-end. You'll get the same ease of use with this set-up including compelling enhancements and a savings of roughly \$250 per user per year (at minimum).

Collaboration

One of the most valuable benefits of Google Apps is the ability to collaborate. You can work on the same document as your client, whether they are in the same room or across the county. You can highlight a section that your attorney is concerned with, show wording changes in real time. The client can respond instantly online. By accelerating the process, working in real time, and agreeing on a collaborative set of notes the client saves money

Sales proposals are another good example. Your sales people just go to Google Apps and grab the proposal template. There's no question if it's the most current version. If the template is changed, it's instantly available to everyone.

Installation and Training

The key to taking full advantage of Google Apps is to have it set up properly and get best practices training. Email alone is a mission critical application. Configuring it for wireless devices, establishing backup and recovery systems and transferring domains and legacy email is a process best left to professionals.

InfuzeIT has two kinds of clients. One

type is the business that is just getting started. They need basic, but reliable functionality right away and a flexible system that will grow with their operation.

The larger, more established businesses that use Microsoft Exchange Server, want a simpler, less expensive solution from the start. Soon, even these more established firms see the benefits beyond cost savings and partner with solution providers to get staff trained to be more proficient and effective.

Working From the Cloud

InfuzeIT follows a simple framework for their clients so that solutions can be implemented cost effectively and logically.

- Simplify what customers use today. If they have an email server that is expensive or burdensome, InfuzeIT can migrate their email to the cloud and enable the company to re-purpose the hardware and revenue generating activities.
- Accelerate how customers do business. InfuzeIT will provide detailed, hands-on training that can help business owners to scale their own

activity along with certifying that employees are capable of executing daily tasks more productively and consistently.

- Manage and scale Growth. This is more consultative. InfuzeIT will look at where a business wants to be in six, 12 or 24 months. Today customers might need a simple spreadsheet system to track projects and customers. Six months from now they may need a cost effective CRM system. In 12 or 24 months, the customer might need something more robust – like Salesforce.com's Enterprise or Unlimited Editions.

Client Success

One of InfuzeIT's clients, Nokero, that builds solar powered light bulbs that replace kerosene as a light source in third world markets. They are based in Denver with operations in three locations, including Hong Kong. They just started the company this Spring and their growth is impressive, but still unpredictable. Because they were small and just starting, their systems were simple, manual, and not built to scale efficiently.

The reason Cloud Computing is growing is that the benefits have such a bottom-line impact. Here are some comments from different business professionals on their experience.

The Lawyer (Steve)

I work with entrepreneurs who are cost conscious and often stretched for time. Cloud based collaboration and real-time sharing/editing of specific language, terms and meaning facilitate easy communication and the crafting of well targeted language regarding complex subjects. The net effect is that clients can cut costs, save time and obtain superior results.

The IT Manager (Sam):

The day is never long enough and there are always more things to configure, secure and update. By using cloud based software, I've added days, if not weeks of time to my schedule that use to be consumed by the simple, yet time consuming, tasks of managing and maintaining email. Add to the mix, the support savings that we realize by managing fewer desktop and server software licenses, versions and interoperability, the benefits of the cloud are clear and substantial.

The Marketing Manager (Matt):

I'm constantly working on multiple documents with multiple contributors, editors, artists and senior management. By using documents that live in the cloud, I'm can now remove myself from the nightmare of versioning and delegate tasks and deliverables more efficiently. But most importantly, the real-time editing, note taking and sharing and discussion capabilities have helped me and my teams to communicate more effectively and quickly. Lastly, once a piece is done, I can distribute it to sales, support, customers and partners all at once and without a need to redistribute, even if I make changes at a later date.

The Operations Manager (Jim):

Sharing process and procedure, tracking progress and dependencies and communicating status and roadblocks is the core to what an ops manager can facilitate. With cloud based project management and information sharing the job of keeping the trains running on time is becoming easier every day. I spend less time tracking down data and status by asking key stakeholders to update their own status, which enables me to spend more time on the critical work of coordination and communication.

They understood that if the business grew like they hoped, manual solutions would be short-lived. Orders were laboriously tracked through Excel spreadsheets, which were downloaded, reformatted and then emailed (in numerous versions and duplicates) to the other locations.

The information and process wasn't integrated. And as InfuzeIT reviewed more of their processes, it was clear they were a perfect candidate for Google Apps and other cloud base solutions that were inexpensive to test and cost effective to scale.

The road map InfuzeIT set up for them called for moving the process to a central infrastructure that is more flexible. That helped to simplify things, which in turn remove many common errors. The goal is to accelerate their productivity and add application function as the business grows.

The World Has Changed

A common misconception is that

Google Apps is a free solution and that the technologies, solutions and applications isn't suitable for a serious business environment. Wrong.

Google Apps is arguably the most powerful set of productivity tools created within the last 10+ years. The reality is Google Apps are powerful enough to handle big jobs and big organizations. For example the City of Los Angeles, Genentech and Colorado State have all switched over. To date over 3 million companies across the world have adopted Google Apps.

In the last four or five years, the world has changed. With Cloud Computing, those changes have accelerated. Cloud Computing with Google Apps is the democratization of the technology, it's available to everyone. People use it at home, at the office and on the road. And you can take it to whatever level of complexity you want.

As a new business, you're probably looking for affordable ways to make your

operation more efficient, while managing your costs. It's time to consider what Cloud Computing and Google Apps have to offer.

Matt Gale is Founder and CEO of InfuzeIT, a Denver-based Google Apps reseller. The company works with small, medium and startup businesses to implement simple solutions that will grow with them using cloud technologies. He can be reached at:

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Jim Nollsch is the COO of InfuzeIT. Jim helps clients focus on the principals of cost containment and growth management available through Google Apps and other similar cloud applications within InfuzeIT and our customer base. He can be reached at:

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—NBD

Coming InfuzeIT Google Apps Events

Oct. 22

9 a.m. to Noon. Offices of the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce, 1624 Market St., Suite 340, Denver. Register Online at www.cwcc.org. Go to Events. Breakfast will be provided. \$30 for non-members.

Seminar - On-Line Software Solutions to Improve Business Operations.

Learn how to improve your business operations and save money by using Google Apps and other on-line software.

Agenda: Cloud Computing Overview. Presented by Enrique Gutierrez with Qwest Communications.

Dec. 7

7:30 to 10 a.m., The Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, 924 W. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80205. "On-Line Software Solutions to improve Business Operations." Featured presenter is Infuzeit.com.

