



## Smarten Up your Data

Nowadays, it's impossible to go anywhere in the tech industry without hearing about the cloud. And, currently, it's dwindling down into all areas of business, big and small, and even resurfacing into our own personal, day to day lives. Sneaky little thing, isn't it? However, if used wisely, the benefits of the cloud for any type or size of business are endless because of the cloud's delightful ability to translate data from a dinosaur-sized, hodge-podge of something to a little pocket full of goodies. The cloud enables one to become 'data smart.'

How, you say, does this occur? How can you and your business become 'data smart,' enriched with smart data, and smart with that data? Well, by utilizing the superb goodness of cloud-enhanced applications, of course. The list below is a short compilation of data smart programs just waiting to be exploited by you and your business.



**Office365:** While the payment and terms may vary, Office365 offers a plethora of wholesome joy for any user that will leave you wanting for not. 365's beautiful yet user-friendly interface gives you not one, not two, not three but nine separate programs: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Outlook, Access, Publisher, OneDrive, and Skype. These are accessible via your mobile device and have the ability to be personalized. Can I get an Amen?

**Dropbox:** How would you like to be able to share files instantaneously with your employees? And, no, this does not mean via email where you have to upload it, create a subject line, tie it together with a couple sentences and throw your signature at the end (and ultimately waste about five minutes of your life). With Dropbox, attachments and signatures are a thing of the past. Add your team members to your Dropbox and any file you want them to see will appear inside their Dropbox, as well. No uploading necessary. If given access, their edits or add-ons can miraculously appear onto your file. It's as easy as that.

**OfficeTime:** This is a one-time purchase program with a minimalistic design that focuses on the cost of your work. That's right; this is the ultimate efficiency calculator. Ever wonder how long and how much went into something you did for a customer? Well, with OfficeTime, you'll soon find out. Billable hours spent on a project are recorded, paused, and broken down minute-by-minute. Basically, this program has a built-in scare-your-employees-into-actually-working ripple effect. "So, John, tell me why exactly it took you 87 minutes and 12 seconds to create an invoice for Billy Bob?"

Obviously, the list does not stop here. The pain of invoicing and expense tracking can be eased with SageOne. Signing documents on the go can be accomplished with DocuSign. Salesforce can take the guessing game out of marketing and sales. There are so many unique and invaluable options within the cloud that can help you make sense out of all that data and to actually turn it into usable information. Take the time to explore some of these opportunities and you better believe the benefits will start pouring in. It's all up to you on what exactly you take out of the cloud and, theoretically, put into it.

# Cloudy, With a Chance of Productivity

A business is dependent on the processes it puts in place to maximize productivity and drive revenue; processes put in place to get from point A to point B.

Route 1: The path you've taken all of your life. Past your old high school. First right at the park in the center of town. Two quick lefts. Around the circle. Right at the corner barber shop then another right, left, left and right until you pass the old soda fountain. Quick nod to the statue of the founder of your hometown, just for sentimental reasons, and boom, you've reached your destination.

Route 2: On the new cross-town freeway, off the new cross-town freeway. You're there.

Which route would you take? The route that you've always taken just because you've always taken it even though you waste a half a tank of gas? Or the new and improved route, even though you aren't really sure you want to change your ways? Ultimately, the route most of us would choose is the route that would get us there faster and give us back that valuable commodity known as...time.

Office 365 is the cross-town freeway of office productivity. Gone are the days of being tied to the office because all of your files are located in the file cabinet in the corner of your office, or on the hard drive of your secretary's computer.

**If the route isn't as clear in your mind as the route from the days of old, it's time to familiarize yourself with the benefits.**

## **Access:**

If you don't want to invest in new equipment, you don't have to. Maybe the computer you have is just not something you're willing to part with because it's the only thing that survived an ill-fated love affair, rest easy lethario. Utilizing enterprise "cloud" software, you can access your data from anywhere with Office 365 and all you need is your computer and an internet connection. The software runs in a Microsoft data center so you simply connect to the Internet or access the software.

## **Security:**

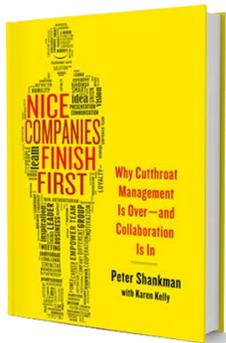
If your idea of secure files is writing them all in invisible ink and handing out super spy decoder rings to members of your inner circle, never fear. Security for each document or file can be as lenient or as strict as you want it to be. So if you want everyone to be able to read it but only certain people to have access to edit it, you choose and you set the parameters.

## **Reliability:**

If it all sounds a bit "cloudy" still, let's clear one more thing up. Your data being safe, easily accessible and always accessible is key to your productivity. What is a business that is not productive? Out of business. With multiple datacenters located all over the world ensuring that if one datacenter experiences an outage, another picks up, your data is always available with little to no service interruption.

These are just a handful of the vista points on the technology cross-town freeway with many more attractions along the way with Office 365. For more on the benefits of Office 365, [click here to learn about our Office 365 Lunch and Learn on March 18th](#).

# Business Book of the Month



Your mother always told you, “if you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all”. It not only applies to the words you say, but also to the way you should run your business, says Peter Shankman, business consultant, speaker, and author of the book *Nice Companies Finish First*.

Shankman collects the anecdotes, principles, and best practices of companies that are growing astronomically simply by being nice, giving up cutthroat practices and embracing collaboration. He sums them up in what he calls the Nice Nine:

1. **Enlightened Self-Interest:** Think in terms of how what you do can benefit others as well as yourself. Business decisions have the potential to be very lucrative for both sides of the equation. Work on creating authentic interactions with colleagues, clients, and others that promote good business all the way around, not just for one side or the other.
2. **Be Accessible:** Tear down the walls of the ivory tower and work with people from all walks of the organization. It does no good as a business owner to lock yourself in a room and do your own thing all the time. Instead, be visible to the people that work in your business, make connections, and share information for all involved.
3. **Strategic Listening:** Listen to understand not simply to craft your next response. Get to the bottom of issues by listening for deeper meaning. Then, take action on what you’ve heard. Don’t just be a good sounding board.
4. **Be a Good Steward:** Be a good neighbor and a good community member. Get involved in something that’s important to you and your business that’s not directly related to your bottom line.
5. **360 Loyalty:** Don’t blindly keep all of your employees simply because they’re “loyal” to your company and you’re “loyal” to them. Definitely keep the good ones. Also, try to rehabilitate the bad ones, but when it’s time to cut them loose, don’t be afraid to do so. You’re not being disloyal, you’re being loyal to all of the other employees that are having a positive impact on your company.
6. **Be the Half Glass Full Person:** No one wants a Debby-downer, even in the face of adversity or an apparent crisis. Come up with the solution and lead your team in that direction. Accept responsibility, don’t pass blame, and know that your attitude, ethics, and principles will be reflected by the rest of your company.
7. **Customer Service-Centric:** There are innumerable examples of terrible customer service. Why? Because most people think too much about their own company, and not about the customers that frequent it. The problem with that logic is that service can breed loyalty or disloyalty. Which side of the coin should you be on?
8. **Merit-Based Competition:** Basically, play fairly in the sand box. Look for ways that you can create unique competitive advantages. Focus on improving your business, not tearing down others.
9. **Gives a Damn:** Bottom line? Care about what you’re doing. Care about the people, the company, and the customers. Most importantly, do everything with integrity.

By adopting these nine main concepts, you too can pioneer an advantage over competitors that are stuck back in the management practices of the 80s and 90s.

## Client Spotlight

The Civil Justice Association of California (CJAC) is a powerful coalition dedicated to improving California’s civil justice system. That said, in 2012, CJAC understood that TLC Tech could help improve the efficiency of their office and made the decision to make the switch from their old IT provider.

Prior to working with TLC Tech, the tech company CJAC had been working with was not able to fix their IT issues in a timely manner. Since making the switch to TLC Tech, they have found that TLC Tech is extremely efficient and are able to solve their problems promptly. They especially appreciate the “self-triaging” option that allows them to elevate problems if needed, based on deadlines and work flow.

CJAC had initial concerns and reservations about switching from one IT support company to another but found that TLC Tech made the transition very easy and have stated that TLC Tech has freed up so much of their time and mental energy, which enables them to focus on the important matters at the office and not worry about whether or not the technology is going to throw a monkey wrench into their day.

They recently were able to assist in completing a major file transfer that involved multiple stakeholders and multiple offices, and the project was completed efficiently and in a timely manner while offering advice and guidance to improve the process.

“TLC Tech is a wonderful part of our team. They keep us moving forward and are extremely reliable. Anyone who is not 100% satisfied with their tech consultants should consider moving to TLC Tech. It was one of the best decisions we have made for our company and I would recommend them wholeheartedly.”

- Debbie Edgar, CJAC

# 5 Ridiculously Easy Ways to Make the Most of Your Work Day



## To-Do List

It may seem silly but a to-do list can prove to be very helpful. Write your tasks down, track them on your phone, or expand them onto an all-encompassing program. No matter the method, the simple act of extracting from your jumbled mind the tasks of the day, the week,

or the month can be a sure-fire way of increasing productivity and can even relieve some stress. Merely seeing it outlined before you instead of jostling around inside the mess of your mind can work worlds of magic. Basic apps such as Google's Keep or intricate ones like Asana can keep your business life nice, neat and oh-so productive



## Dress-Up your Desk

It's not just about ergonomics anymore. Lighting, smell, the color of the walls, these can all affect your work productivity. So take the time to freshen up your surroundings. Place a photo here, put a plant there, stick a candle somewhere, and, yes, tack that inspirational quote to the wall. Feeling at ease where you spend the majority of your waking hours can proliferate that wondrous fruitful energy your boss loves so much.

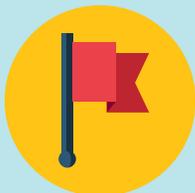


## Snooze Time

Take a nap at lunch. No more than 20-25 minutes is needed for this task which still leaves you time to stuff your face. You'll be more at ease, not so stressed and more enthused to begin the second half of your work day. However, if naps are not for you, another totally opposite option is to jump around. Exercising can have the exact same effect as a short nap. Hopefully you don't mind going back to work a little stinky but, hey, that's why you put that candle on your desk.

## Keep Track of Yourself

Tracking your time is not just a great way for your boss to see whether you're expendable or not. Time tracking is also a rather productive means of structuring your work day. Set deadlines for yourself or give yourself a pre-determined amount of time to complete a normal task or an extensive project. This can be done in the most simplest of ways by merely checking the clock or more methodically by utilizing a program such as TOGGL.



## Notification Time

They are so hard to ignore. The calls, the texts, the emails, the Clash of Clans notifications are always on your mind. And, why is this? Well, that would probably be because your phone is plugged into your work computer sitting atop your desk and buzzing uncontrollably throughout the day. Turn it off. Yes, that's right—off. Or, at the very least, make it silent. A good idea is to create a notification break for yourself. You don't need to be distracted every 30 seconds by personal announcements that your friend is bored or your village was just attacked or your car payment is due. Reduce this interruption to a five minute period once every two hours. If that seems too difficult, make it once an hour. Your work input will increase by an enormous and slightly embarrassing amount.