

March 2010

- ▶ ROI: Extending the Benefits of Energy Efficiency
- ▶ How to Avoid Workplace Favoritism
- ▶ Social Networking: First Do No Harm
- ▶ Getting Around the Windows 7 Desktop
- ▶ Quote of the Month
- ▶ Laugh Out Loud

Getting Around the Windows 7 Desktop

You may not have "invented" Windows 7 as the ads say, but you can certainly take advantage of the many new features that makes working on your PC more convenient and more organized.

Watching this 6 minute video will show you what's new, how to use the Aero Shake to minimize and the Aero Peek to preview the desktop as well as many more useful features.



Click on the image to see the video

Do You Know the ROI for Your IT Spend?

ROI: Extending the Benefits of Energy Efficiency

The article re-printed courtesy of IBM ForwardView eMagazine
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What's good for the environment can also make incredibly good business sense. By taking advantage of green IT strategies such as virtualization and server consolidation, midsized businesses can realize immediate ROI in 2010. What's more, today's energy-efficient technologies do more than just alleviate power and cooling costs. Green IT solutions can also have a significant impact on company-wide operational efficiency.



Facing the rising costs of business Running a midsized company today calls for doing more with less - while also keeping up with the technology curve to remain competitive. Yet supporting new IT services often means increased costs in hardware, maintenance and power. As time goes on and energy costs continue to rise, many companies start to run out of physical space, or overload the power and cooling capabilities of hardware facilities from small computer rooms to large data centers.

So while many companies pursue green agendas, capacity issues often become the foundation for adopting energy-efficient IT technologies.

Explains Logan Scott, IBM energy efficiency offering manager, "If we keep growing with the current model - a very distributed IT model where a lot of companies are running one application per server - that is not really going to be sustainable. That's where we are seeing server sprawl. And even on the storage side it is just becoming too difficult to keep up with the increasing demand for storage capacity."

Energy-efficient IT for efficient operations

There are many reasons for midsized businesses to go green, according to Scott. "First of all, there is a major opportunity for cost savings," he says.

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How To Avoid Workplace Favoritism

by Rieva Lesonsky
 reprinted with permission from the Microsoft Small Business Center

Q: I know from past experience that bosses sometimes favor some employees over others based on personal reasons. Now that I'm a business owner, how can I be sure I'm treating my employees fairly and not showing favoritism?

A: You're right to be concerned about this; it's a common employee complaint about bosses. Since it's human nature to like some people more than others (and bosses are people, too) you have to constantly monitor your actions and deeds to make sure you're not favoring some employees over others. But being fair doesn't mean everyone on staff gets treated exactly the same. All too often when business owners try to dole out equal treatment, no one benefits.



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Quote of the Month

Sandwich every bit of
criticism between two thick
layers of praise.

Mary Kay Ash

LOL



Of course you cannot discriminate when it comes to salaries and "hard" benefits (medical, vacation, personal and sick days, etc.). But you do have some flexibility when it comes to the "softer" benefits- and here's where you can tailor your offerings based on the needs of your individual employees.

Let me tell you about a situation I faced several years back. I heard one of my single staffers thought I favored the mothers on the staff since they were allowed to build their schedules around their kids' schedules. Instead of letting the situation fester, I asked the employee to come into my office to discuss the situation. She (after a bit of coaxing and several assurances I wouldn't get mad) said she thought it was unfair that the moms got so much flexibility in their schedules. I pointed out that I gave her a flex schedule when she wanted to take some classes (non work-related). And it was as if the proverbial light bulb went off in her head.

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Social Networking: First Do No Harm!

By: Robert H. Spencer, PhD & Randolph P. Johnston, Exec VP, NMGI

It has been estimated that more than 76 million "millennials" (Americans born between 1978 and 2000) are ready to enter the workforce throughout the next decade. At the same time significant numbers of the "Baby Boomer" generation will be retiring.



It seems that as these younger workers are graduating and entering the work force, we are undergoing a significant sea change in how workers view and respect sensitive information in the daily course of business. The advent of Social Media tools such as Facebook and Twitter has changed our ability to rapidly access and disseminate information. This makes it more important than ever to be sensitive to our responsibilities to guard our clients' information. However, the natural approach of management today is to simply put a stop to it.

The good, bad and ugly of Social Networking

The good of Social Networking is that is a powerful sharing and collaboration tool. Used properly it facilitates and accelerates our ability to communicate, quickly replacing e-Mail as the tool of choice. Whereas e-mail is a one-to-one communication platform and can be managed via encryption and other tools, social media tools are one-to-many, immediate, and there are few if any tools available to restrict or manage their use. Just as we needed to develop Internal Control Procedures to train and convey to employees what were permissible uses of e-Mail, so too must we develop procedures to establish guidelines and limitation on what is allowable uses of Social Networking in our workplace and, what information is restricted and may not be conveyed outside the office as well.

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