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lower subscription fees and an increased ability to invest in software functionality.

A great example of the SaaS trend is the web-based CRM software Salesforce. Since its launch in 1999 Salesforce has dominated the CRM market - increasing their market share each year. Their model is simple. Companies pay a monthly fee per user to access Salesforce through a web browser. Salesforce hosts the software, provides multiple avenues for system support, and makes consistent and seamless software improvements that are immediately available to users. Even though the cost of Salesforce subscriptions over a 36 month

period exceed what most companies would have spent on licenses of traditional, on-premise software for the same period, the total cost of ownership of Salesforce can be substantially lower when considering the cost of hardware, implementation, and software updates.

The software industry is quickly following the lead of Salesforce and working to increase value while simplifying costs for both their customers and themselves. Google offers Google Apps, Intuit now offers an online version of QuickBooks, and even Microsoft will be releasing Office 2010 in a model that will be available on a subscription basis. This simpler software model is

also leading to substantially more software options available in niche markets like medical and legal practice management.

With more options available and a lower entry barrier, it is easier for small businesses to use software to simplify and streamline business management processes. We firmly believe that businesses that are deliberately but cautiously pursuing the efficiencies allowed by these changes will gain a substantial advantage over their competition.

Questions or Comments? Please contact me at pmelby@greystonetechnology.com.

Part 2: Saying Goodbye Personal Computers, coming in March

## LOCAL CONNECTION

### Current Events & Activities in the Denver Metro Area

**Denver Intl Sportsmen's Expo**  
Jan. 7-10  
Colorado Convention Center  
Th/Fri 12pm-9pm, Sat 10am-8pm  
Sun 10am-5pm, Tickets \$15

**CATS**  
Jan. 13-17  
Buell Theater  
Tickets start at \$15  
(303)446-4829

**New Shanghai Circus**  
Jan. 22  
Lincoln Center, Ft. Collins  
7:30 PM  
(970)221-6730 for ticket info.

**First Friday Art Walk**  
Feb. 5  
6-9pm,  
Sante Fe Dr. Art District  
www.artdistrictonsantafe.com

**Mile High Voltage Festival**  
Feb. 19, 20  
Newman Center for Performing Arts  
2344 E Iliff Ave., Denver  
(720)641-2414 for tickets

**Denver Restaurant Week**  
Feb. 20 - March 5  
Over 200 downtown Denver restaurants offer multi-course dinners., \$52.80/couple



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## Business First Pledge

We make it our business to understand your business and to be a partner you can count on by:

- ✓ Understanding your company's goals and objectives
- ✓ Developing a growth plan built on results
- ✓ Establishing security in the event of an IT disaster



Comments? Suggestions? We would love to hear from you! Email Jamie Stanislav at jstanislav@greystonetechnology.com

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## BLOG SPOT

### Is customer service dead?

by Byron Williams



Having traveled many times last year, I have noticed a change in the way airlines have

chosen to operate.

Sadly, as companies have made cuts to save cash, it seems their customer service standards have also slipped. At a ticket counter, recently I overheard an agent arguing with a customer. "I know that you were assigned a seat when you checked in online ma'am but it's no longer available," the agent said. "You can take a middle seat at the back of the plane or take another flight. It's up to you," she said. Clearly beaten down, the lady took the middle seat of the last row of an airplane - quite possibly the worst seat to sit in. Unfortunately, there no longer seems to be recourse for poor service. Employees and supervisors don't appear to care . . . and when a complaint letter is written, you are not likely to get a response (or at least a thoughtful response).

"What are you going to do though?" I overheard another frustrated customer saying. He was coming to the

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## TECHNOLOGY EVOLUTION: SOFTWARE

### Prepare your business for changes in the software industry

by Peter Melby

It's no secret that technology is always changing. Clients express frustration to me on a regular basis that the technology investments they make can't hold their value long enough to even understand the ROI. This isn't changing and in fact the changes in technology are poised to accelerate in the next few years. There are a few specific changes that I feel will bring about the most change to small business. The businesses that plan ahead and adjust their perspective on IT investment will be in the best position to capitalize on the changes. As the future IT landscape unfolds, we will be continuing to update and educate our clients and associates to ensure everyone has the opportunity to take full advantage of the benefits. In each of the next four issues of G:drive I will be highlighting a specific area of technology and the changes taking place.

### Changes in software licensing that benefit your businesses

The standard licensing model of software is changing as software companies are finding new ways to expand the software market while providing more value in a lower total cost model. For years, if we wanted to buy any type of software we paid a one-time cost to own a license for that product. We were permanently granted permission to use that version of the software as it existed at the time of purchase. In most cases software purchases were a capital expense. However, in recent years we have seen a shift to what the industry calls the "Software as a Service" (SaaS)

model. In this model, software licenses are not owned, rather they are paid for on an ongoing basis similar to the way that most companies pay for other services. In most cases, these software offerings are hosted on infrastructure owned and managed by the software provider - not the software buyer.

The benefits of this model are simple - software companies are able to provide numerous financial advantages, including lower total cost of ownership, while providing better software functionality and support.

The entry-barrier for acquiring new software is substantially lower because the entire cost of the software does not have to be paid up front. In most cases, the expense of upgrading software is also eliminated, as these updates are provided within the scope of the recurring cost. The hosted model allows companies to avoid or eliminate costly setup and maintenance of local infrastructure required to use the software.

Software developers see significant advantages in the SaaS model as well. Controlling the hosted environment allows them to simplify their support and development because they only have to worry about one specific environment. This eliminates the need to spend money supporting the software across a variety of platforms in unknown environments and, in some cases, has eliminated 80% of support and development costs resulting in

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realization that the airline could treat their customers however they pleased. In the past, I would have simply taken my business elsewhere – but that is no longer feasible. With the reduction of the number of flights, airplanes are much fuller. We passengers buy the cheapest ticket and take the poor treatment we are given as a consequence. Sadly, this is not an issue isolated to the airline industry. We notice this in almost every aspect of our lives – consumers spend their hard earned money to buy a product or service only to be let down with poor service. While there are exceptions, I have found them to be few and far between. By the way, it should be noted that I am the first one to acknowledge excellent service by speaking to a supervisor or by writing a letter to the corporate office.

Fortunately, I have the opportunity to work for an organization that is growing, but I cannot help but attribute a portion of that growth to our commitment to service. This is deeply engrained into our culture and everyone I work with takes it seriously. Now, I don't mean to sing our own praises but I cannot help but contrast the service standards I see elsewhere with those at Greystone. Superior customer service is a key ingredient of growth. While this has always been true, it is even more important today. Of course, at some point, we all fail at this, but when that happens, the situation must be corrected as soon as possible. Consumers have a good memory and while no one likes mistakes or mishaps, I believe that going the extra mile to remedy these circumstances goes a long way with your customer.

**\*Check out our new blog for more staff articles at [greystonetech.com](http://greystonetech.com)**

## CORPORATE CULTURE COUNTS

*How a positive work environment can improve business*

While corporate culture is something often discussed by experts, in business articles, and on television, it can be hard to see how it applies to your small business. Corporate culture encompasses the values - stated or unstated - and behaviors that constitute the normal way of conducting business in your company. Thus, culture plays a large role in the success of your business, too, because it embodies the philosophy and attitude of owners and management toward both their employees and their customers.

Corporate culture exists in every business, be it positive or negative. Successful small businesses are usually the result of a tremendous amount of hard work by a driven executive. While this is a generalization, it has been noted by experts to be true that the very qualities that make your small business successful can interfere with the ability to foster a positive corporate culture. As a business owner or administrator, you should take steps to cultivate the work atmosphere and employee morale you desire for your business. This is vital because corporate culture affects your employees more than any other factor in the work environment. All staff members should, in turn, encouraged to project the company's culture to customers, vendors and associates. This attitude – the embodiment of who your company is - will further support your company's mission. By the way, if you haven't written down your mission and shared it with your staff, make it a point early in 2010 to do so.

### **Productive, Well-Trained Staff Help Increase Revenue**

A positive culture can heighten staff

members' productivity and commitment to your business, while a negative culture can stall a company's growth or contribute to its failure. When a business is new, executives often assume control of most of the work done. As the business grows, however, other employees should be trained to take over responsibility for critical functions. This frees executives and key staff to concentrate on the big picture, creating an environment of growth.

### **Corporate Culture Begins at the Top**

You must project the vision, attitudes and behavior you want to see in your staff. Remember that your actions set the standard for your employees. Be sure to provide a clear example of your expectations – both what you expect and what others can expect of you. Ensure that all staff members are treated equally. Being fair and showing respect for each employee helps them feel valued. This does not preclude rewarding exceptional efforts, but does require diligence to ensure that no favoritism is shown. Fair treatment gives employees a sense of security and helps with staff retention.

### **Keep Lines of Communication Open.**

Share business concerns and problems in a candid way with staff members, asking for help in solving them. This gives employees a chance to engage and participate in the business. Offering input vests staff members in your business and motivates them to work hard for its success.

It is important to understand that culture can make or break a small business. To enhance employee morale, improve staff retention and increase revenues, make sure your corporate culture is a positive one that reflects well on you and your business. Here's to a productive and prosperous New Year.

## BROWSER MAINTENANCE

*Protect your investments by keeping your equipment and software up to date*

by Nathan Traiser

It can be said that owning a computer is like owning a car: if you don't keep up with the maintenance you will soon find the "Check Engine" light on. The "Check Engine" light alerts you to issues you may know little about. Unfortunately computers don't really come equipped with such a warning. Problems with your PC's performance can find you feeling equally as trapped in a technological black hole. In the internet age, it is virtually impossible to function efficiently (or even function at all) without anti-virus, anti-spyware, anti-malware and numerous other products that help keep systems operational. And remember that, like a car, your computer will start losing its value the moment you swipe your credit card to pay for it; however there are steps you can take to prolong the life of your investment.

### **Program Inventory**

Let's say you purchase a new laptop. The first thing that you should do is remove all unneeded or unwanted applications. All major PC manufacturers have numerous partnerships with software vendors. Unfortunately, these unnecessary programs can hog memory and even slow down your system. The rule of thumb: keep only what you need. (Note that you should never delete a program if you are unsure what it is or what it does) Next, once you have cleaned up your applications, I recommend a free utility called CCleaner. This powerful application allows you to flush a long list of temporary, application and system files. Review the check list and select what you want cleaned. Whether you leave the default settings selected or customize what you want cleaned, important or critical files will not be lost during this process.

### **Registry**

The next important step is to employ the Registry option. Run this after you cleanup/uninstall any applications. More often than not, applications do not fully

remove all files associated with them (often by design). After every scan, select "Fix Selected Items." Upon selecting "Fix," you will be prompted with the question, "Do you want to backup the registry?" The Registry is the nerve system of Windows. While this decision is yours to make, our consultants regularly use this program and have never had registry issues after running it.

### **"Tools"**

The last function of this utility (that is pretty cool if you ask me) is the "Tools" option comprised of these three sections;

- Removing applications
- Managing your Startup Directory
- Using System Restore.

"Uninstall" is self explanatory feature. It is simply another interface for removing applications. The second feature is "Startup List" and it provides you with the ability to disable or delete the programs that automatically run on your computer when you turn it on. If you are unsure about an application, disable it. You can always go back and enable it at a later date. Finally, "System Restore" is another interface for the Windows system restore feature. By default, Windows will run this service every time Windows update, device

drivers or applications are installed. If any one of these installations corrupts a part of the OS and renders it inoperable, you can reboot in Safe Mode and revert back to the system state prior to the install. Keeping this application on your weekly checklist will dramatically improve the longevity of your PC's operating system (XP, Vista or Windows 7).

Remember that it is important to you keep your system clean. Malicious developers know that Windows sometimes does a poor job at this and they are keenly aware that a majority of users will not clean up after their browsers. In a way, your browser is like a 10yr old child who wants to wander, explore and get dirty - and when it's all said and done, taking a bath is just not a priority. (Ahh, the good ole days!) It's up to you to do the cleaning. Firefox, Internet Explorer, Chrome, Opera - whichever browser you like to use - these options are built in to manage/flush your surfing history and temp files, but none of them are enabled by default. CCleaner is a fantastic solution because it doesn't care what you use; the program cleans all browsers at no cost to you.

