

Cool Tools for Your Business

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Everyone knows how important it is to “work smarter, not harder”. One of the exciting things about technology is how many new products and services are being developed to allow you to do more with less. By leveraging these new tools, you can focus less on administrative details and more on your core business. Below we will review a few of the best products and services for your business.

Automated Voicemail Transcription

Simulscribe (www.simulscribe.com)

Cost: \$9.99 per month for 40 messages, \$0.25 each additional message.

How many times have you been in a meeting and were unable to answer the telephone? Normally, you let the calls go to voicemail and review your messages later when you have time to dial in and listen to them. The only problem is that there is no quick way to review your voicemail messages. In most cases, you have to go through and listen to them in order and from start to finish to make sure you do not miss important information. With voicemail transcription, if the calls go to voicemail they are automatically transcribed into text and sent to you via email (good for Blackberry users) or to your mobile phone via text message. As text is easier and quicker to scan than audio, this is an incredible time saver. A one minute voice message can be read in seconds. If you want to listen to the actual call, you simply dial in to the voicemail system as you normally would. If you receive your transcribed calls via email a recording of the call will be attached as an audio file. Simulscribe works with both mobile phones, landlines and most any phone system that uses a voicemail service.



Toll-free Numbers, VoIP, and More

RingCentral (www.ringcentral.com)

Cost: \$9.99 and up per month

Every company needs to project a professional image, especially when a customer calls. Your phone system can save you a lot of time and trouble and can even make you seem bigger than you are with an automated directory service, after hours messaging and hold music. New virtual PBX services are popping up all over the place to replace the traditional PBX systems used to route inbound calls for most businesses. In addition to providing a ton of extra features, you no longer need to purchase or manage expensive hardware. RingCentral stands out because they offer everything you need and then some. RingCentral provides toll-free numbers and local numbers, Internet fax / fax to email, virtual extensions to connect to any land line or mobile phone, answering rules, hold music, voice mail and a lot more. With RingCentral, you can access the same phone service as a Fortune 500 company for a few dollars a month.

Web-based Spreadsheets and Documents

Google Docs

(docs.google.com)

Cost: Free

One of the unexpected costs of running a business is buying and upgrading office software. If you have multiple computers, a large staff, or multiple locations, the costs can quickly add up. Recently, Google released a suite of free tools to allow online document creation, sharing and management called Google Docs. Right now, Google Docs consists of a word processor and spreadsheet editor. However, Google is expected to add other

applications such as a PowerPoint-style presentation editor in the future. Google Docs is a little different in that it is launched from your web browser rather than as a separate application. Once created or imported, your documents are available anywhere you have an Internet connection. In addition to the usual editing, Google Docs supports easy document sharing and collaboration. You can add other users to share and work with your documents. Google Docs is compatible with Microsoft Office and other popular office suites in that you can import from and export to most of the popular document formats such as: Microsoft Word, Rich Text Format, Microsoft Excel, and Adobe PDF. Google Docs is worth trying before you go out and upgrade everyone to the next version of Microsoft Office. Although it lacks some of the more advanced features and functionality you might find in more expensive applications, Google Docs is perfect for doing the basics. I even wrote and composed this piece in Google Docs.