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BUSINESSES.

Rene Lacerte • Apr. 29, 2013

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Paper is inefficient and doesn't easily scale. It is a pain to store, retrieve and share. And yet companies and accountants of all sizes are dependent on it to manage their businesses. I believe this is about to end. The next three years will mark a sea change in how accountants and their clients of all sizes manage the back office and the never ending sea of paper.

One thing I have learned from running my businesses and talking with accountants and businesses all over this country is that businesses can't afford to be inefficient in any way. They need help and the Cloud is the answer.

Cloud applications are eliminating inefficiency, enabling accountants and businesses the ability to scale and execute more effectively. Accountants get an extra efficiency gain since the Cloud enables collaboration across distance on both the source documents as well as transactions.

Cloud applications make it easy for groups to collaborate, no matter the geographical distance between members. For example the process of approving bills for payment goes much faster when bills and the associated documents are accessed electronically. And staff at distant offices can all access the same data simultaneously.

"No Check" CEOs never have to pay for a software upgrade, because cloud applications are upgraded continuously as part of the service. Their IT costs are lower, because they no longer have to purchase servers and the cloud provider handles all the maintenance.

Best of all, cloud applications can be used from anywhere, from any device with a

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These “No Check” CEOs aren't tied to their offices, but free to manage their companies from wherever they need to be, with instant, real-time access to their business and financial data from anywhere, 24 hours a day.

Many never use paper checks, because they send electronic payments instead. Their staffs never waste time printing invoices or stuffing envelopes, or spending money on supplies and postage because they invoice and process bills electronically. And because they also get paid electronically, you never see a pile of checks sitting in an office waiting to be deposited – customer payments go straight into their accounts.

Some “No Check” CEOs don't even have file cabinets in their businesses. That's because they don't need to save and store paper receipts, purchase orders, contracts or the paper invoices their old-school vendors still send – not when it's so much simpler and more efficient to scan all these items to a cloud based system where they're always instantly accessible from anywhere, whenever they're needed for making the right decisions.

But don't think they do all this just to save trees, although paper manufacturing is the third-largest user of fossil fuels in the developing world, and contributes significantly to deforestation, greenhouse gases and climate-change.

And they're not doing it just to save space, either, although getting rid of file cabinets, folders, shelves, microfiche systems and drawing cabinets does free up a lot of room, and eliminating the need for off-site document storage does lower costs.

These smart, innovative “No Check” CEOs know from experience that replacing paper with cloud-based technologies frees their time, speeds their responsiveness to competitive change, improves their customer service, drives down their costs, and gives them unprecedented visibility into business performance.

“No Check” CEOs have proved that eliminating paper wherever possible makes

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no one can find) to do the proper accounting. Take away all the wasted time looking for documents, signing checks, and dealing with paper, gives you precious time we could all use.

My suggestion as you get through tax season is to look around your office and examine all the inefficiency caused by paper. Then invest in learning some cloud tools so you can shred up the mountain instead of the paper.

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