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At some point, every accounting professional needs to stop and ask the question: Is the Cloud really better? Of course, "better," is a relative term and means different things based on who is asking (and answering) the question. For example, if someone asked you "Is a Range Rover better than a Toyota Prius?", answers will vary based on what "better" means to you. If you desire a large luxury SUV or the perceived status, the answer might be "Yes, the Range Rover is better." On the other hand, if you are looking for good gas mileage and cost effectiveness, the answer will be "No."

What I'm getting at is that there is more to answering the question about the Cloud than a simple Yes or No. It's important to understand why you are asking the question. Are you looking to increase efficiency, lower costs, and/or elevate client service? Many factors play into whether you are ready to move to the Cloud...and whether it's "better." To help you decide, below are some of the key benefits firm leaders can expect from Cloud technologies. After reviewing the list, your answer should come much easier...

- **Anytime-Anywhere Access**—I know; you hear this all the time. But in terms of efficiency, 24/7 access is critical to today's firm and can't be overstated. The ability to access data and applications on an anytime-anywhere basis is monumental. This means workflow is seamless, even from multiple offices, at home, from Starbucks, or an airplane, so process is never interrupted.
- **Heightened Data Security**—Cloud technology offers better data security and disaster recovery. Top-tier cloud solutions are housed in Level 4 data centers, providing greater security safeguards and scheduled backups. If you have your data housed on a network server in your office, security is only as good as the lock on your front door. And do you even know if your backups work?

- **Reduced Network Maintenance**—With Cloud solutions, maintenance shifts to

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document storage are just a few examples of solutions that support seamless collaboration with clients.

The benefits offered via Cloud technologies are vast and support the trends taking place in the profession today:

- Professionals want the option to work when and where they desire. The idea of the traditional mode of working—that is, tethered to a desk for 60-70 hours per week—is unacceptable to most.
- Connecting data from multiple sources provides efficiency and convenience that is driving consumers to the Cloud.
- Mobile is winning—we all want access to data when we want it and from the device of our choosing (e.g., smart phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop). The Cloud supports this.

The Cloud is important to accounting professionals. It's important to our clients. Like me, many of you started with DOS, then moved to networks, Windows, and finally to the Internet. The next step is the Cloud and mobile. And trust me, there is no going back. It's time to move forward or be left behind. The time has come to say "Yes" to the Cloud.

Technology

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