Online Tools to Support the Growth of Human Services Transportation Programs

Adapting Cloud-Based Productivity Solutions

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What is “the Cloud”?

- A marketing term, so its meaning shifts a bit depending on who’s doing the marketing
- Generally: computing, communication, or digital storage that relies on computers located in data centers which are accessed via the internet
Some Benefits of the Cloud

- Data stored in data centers
- Vendors manage software, backups, encryption, some (not all) data security, HIPAA compliance, etc.
- Highly scalable
- Lower spending on hardware: fewer or no servers
- Easier collaboration
Example 1: Data

Spreadsheets can be the perfect tool for tracking lightly structured data:

- Customers
- Trips
- Vehicle maintenance events
Benefits of Cloud Spreadsheets

Spreadsheets in the cloud (Office 365 or Google Workspace) add significant value by:

• Sharing with others is easy
• Allowing multiple concurrent editors
• Providing version tracking that protects against data loss and gives an audit trail to support staff training
Watch Out For

• Finding the best data layout and design; you may need to iterate to get it right
• Using for more complex data structures; you may need a relational database
Use Case: RideSheet

• Built on Google Sheets, designed for demand-responsive services with 10 or fewer vehicles
• Integrates with Google Docs, Maps, and Calendar
Example 2: Documentation

• Office 365 and Google Docs can serve as the nerve center for aligning staff around shared process and procedures
• A way to crowd-source documentation
• Version tracking + track changes are a powerful combination
Keep in Mind

• Moving to the cloud involves training, including:
  • Password management
  • Proper care with sharing documents
• Internet connectivity becomes more essential: Have local backups and consider network redundancy
• Platforms need management: users, permissions, etc.
These Tools Can Transform How You Work

- Can relieve staff of managing servers, software & upgrades
- Increase organizational agility by eliminating barriers to collaboration
- Reduce risks to business continuity from data loss