



# Coaches Corner With Barry Knepper

By Barry Knepper

## Tab Member's Question:

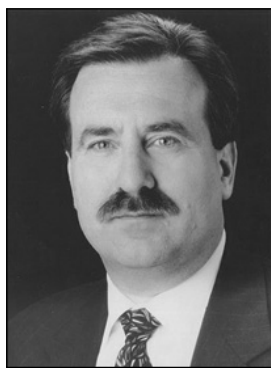
I have a solid salesperson whose performance has increased dramatically during her two-year tenure – both in successful sales and commitment to success. Before her, I was responsible for most sales, but the sales woman has now surpassed me (she brings in 75 percent of all sales), and I have been able to shift my attention to being the true CEO. The problem is her high rate of commission (15 percent up to quota and 30 percent above) combined with my higher cost of business (a recent move and increased payroll) is pushing against the ceiling of what I feel comfortable paying, yet I want to keep her happy, motivated and productive. I have thought of offering her some small ownership in the business and rejected that idea. Any ideas on maintaining her loyally and produc-

tivity with continued reward(s) that doesn't eat into my salary?

## Tab Coach:

The worst thing a business owner can do is screw around with his/her high performing salespeople's commissions. It's not the salesperson's problem that the business owner has taken on additional overhead. That should come out of your salary. Besides, if you are thinking in terms of his salary, you are thinking like an employee and not an owner. You should be thinking long-term and of the additional value (equity) being generated in your business by this salesperson.

Every time you sign her commission check, the bigger it is, the happier you should be.



Barry Knepper

Allow the salesperson to make more money than you while the salesperson helps to build the business and allows you to take more time off. In the end, you will reap the benefits – short-term pain for long-term gain. Another way of looking at it would be to place a dollar value on the time she allows you to spend on running the company, reducing expenses and expanding opportunities.

Find out what really motivates her. Although dollars are probably a good motivator, you might find being looked up to, continuous learning, etc. maybe equal motivators. Time off, opportunity to coach or pursuing some charitable interests may also serve to motivate her.

Ask yourself what happens to your salary if

you lose her altogether? Is this a question of not eating into your salary or her making more than you do? I would suggest that you frequently team sell with her so you meet her customers and has some type of relationship with them.

*Barry Knepper is the certified facilitator and coach in Queens for The Alternative Board® (TAB). Board members meet monthly to learn from one another's successes, to grow their businesses to the next level through a combination of peer advice and coaching. He also serves a part time Chief Financial Officer (CFO), utilizing his 30 years of full time CFO experience to help business owners maximize the profitability of their business through the development of a budget, business plan and monitoring of financial operations. He can be reached at 516-724-0351 or bknepper@tab-queensny.com.*

## TECH TALK

A feature from the Queens Chamber Info Tech Committee

# The Future Of Computing Is In The Clouds

By Scott Wolpow

There is a new 'buzz word' being used in the news Cloud Computing [aka grid or On Demand]. When I first started programming in junior high school, I used a Western Union teletype console and a 150 baud modem. That was 150 bits per second or 100,000 times slower than today's typical connection. The computer was a mainframe located at Grumman in Long Island, and I used what was called a time-sharing system. That meant that each user shared the mainframe. It was more efficient because the computer was idle between keystrokes, and that was wasteful. Cloud computing is the modern version of that.

The name comes from the symbol used to indicate the Internet in diagrams, which is a cloud. Businesses today have become more reliant on data. To compete, you must learn and use that data. Tracking your customers exact needs, keeping your inventory lean and watching every dollar takes specialized computer programs. The cost to maintain the hardware needed to do the job effectively is out of

the reach for most companies. Factor in the software licensees, a dedicated database and programmer, and you are in the range of \$250,000 per year, if not more.

The key is 'Cloud Computing.' You can use powerful hardware and software based on your needs. The vendor maintains the hardware and software in their facility. The one tradeoff is that your data is not on your machines, but it is safe from prying eyes. It may even be safer.

Amazon, Sun, Microsoft, Oracle, IBM are some companies that are already in the market. Amazon Web Services offers a few solutions. You can lease space for only data storage or just for computer transactions. If your business has peak times you can quickly scale-up to meet your needs and wind down after the fact.

Perhaps once a year your company needs to project production estimates and warehouse needs. Each minor change will affect the supply chain and capital demands. That would require an expensive computer that you only need once a year. Alternatively, you have tens of thousands of scanned documents you need

to access, and your hard copies are in deep storage. In both cases, you need costly computers, programmers and software. The choice is in house or outsource.

Oracle, a major sponsor of the Chamber, is a provider of the leading enterprise level database applications. They also offer many other business tools, like customer relationship management, to automate your company. I had a chance to chat with Marc Fieldler, VP of Product Development for Oracle on Demand. Marc was happy to share with the future and me Oracle's current offerings.

Oracle on Demand is the cloud version of their award winning database solution. This same software runs the largest companies in the world and numerous governments and municipalities. As stated earlier, it could cost a company between \$250,000 and up to run an enterprise class solution. With on Demand, companies can now utilize the same software on top rated machines, at a fraction of the price. As capital and credit gets tighter, this becomes even more practical to implement.

The current offering is targeted towards medium-sized businesses, with a budget

between \$12,000 and \$150,000 a year for IT services. By 2010, Oracle plans to roll out another version geared towards companies with smaller needs. Companies will only pay for the time the computer processes their data, just like you phone bill.

Oracle and other companies can achieve this by the power of 'grid' computing. A grid computer is a grouping of computers that distribute the processing among that group. This lowers the cost because others can use the power of the computer when you are not. This of course is how I began with time-sharing.

My prediction is that quite soon you will no longer buy what we now refer to as a PC. You will get a screen and a key board. The screen will have a built in processor and connect to the Internet. I know I am accurate because it has already started. Look at your smart phone [Iphone]. Just imagine that on your desktop. That is 'Cloud Computing' in action.

*Scott Wolpow is a member of the IT committee and helps companies with Internet related issues. You can reach him at qcc@scottwolpow.com*

# Twittering Your Way To More Business

By Jaclyn Miccio and Job Lawrence Postyn

Last month, we featured LinkedIn as our social networking site. This month, we are moving onto Twitter.

Twitter • <http://www.twitter.com>

Joining Twitter is easy and free. You just have to create a user name and password, and then you can login and start 'tweeting.' The premise is for people to

tell each other the answer to one simple question, "what are you doing?" You can 'follow' other people in the network, as well as search the network for specific key words (much like the 'Company Buzz' application in LinkedIn).

Twitter is a very easy way for a business to enter the blogging world. It is a great place to find people that you can offer advice to, while providing links back to your company's web site. Specifically, it helps one foster an educational marketing campaign.

Sales is no longer the conduit for information; prospects go out to the Internet to find

information on their own. One of the biggest users of social networking sites such as Twitter is Google – when you post something on Twitter, it can show up when someone searches it on Google.

So, for instance, in my company's case, I can post something on Twitter about how to fix a common printer problem. So, if someone searches out that problem, there is a possibility that my 'tweet' will show up in their Google search. If my advice helps them, they will develop a positive opinion about my company, and if they have a more complex problem next time,

they may come to me directly.

The downside of Twitter is it is time consuming, and it may not be for every business.

There are a number of add-on utilities that can enhance your Twitter usage.

Twitpic is a website that allows users to share photos on Twitter. Tweetdeck is a Twitter application that streamlines the browsing of all your Twitter notifications and tweets. Digsby centralizes e-mail, IM and social networking accounts into one desktop program. Unfortunately, I am a Mac user and Digsby is not yet available for Mac users.