

Radio Days – 2010-07-03

Tip of the Week – Replace Slow Computers

If you want to cause your employees (or yourself!) the utmost frustration then just provide a computer which is as slow as (or even slower than) a wet week. All the research into how to make people more productive when using computers (and probably other tools as well, but this is a computer show) is to provide a computer which responds in less than a second. This is somehow related to people's short-term memory (and I wish that I understood just how this works).

This was an extremely old computer and not fit for current office use. Its hard disc could hold 10 GB of data, and discs this size have not existed for more years than I can remember. It also had very limited RAM and a slow processor: all in all a recipe for frustration if you were the unfortunate person who had to use it. It is false economy to keep such a slow computer: the cost, both in time wasted while waiting for something to happen and in frustration, may not be obvious but is still there.

During the week I helped a client with a very slow computer: it took about 20 minutes to start because the hard disc had less than 5% free space on a 10 GB drive. I then had to remove over 1 GB of files so that I could install the latest version of MYOB, and this installation took well over two hours.

Computers need at least 15% free space on a hard disc. With so little free space this computer was working at its limits, and everything was slow. The best solution would be to replace the computer: the owner took the second-best option to replace the hard disc. The technician's comment was that the computer was so old it had to have been Noah's trade-in!

New Financial Year

Now is the start of a new financial year: time to ensure that your accounting program is up to date, especially if you have employees and you calculate their pay using this program. This year there have been changes both to the tax scales and to the layout of the Employment Summary (the old Group Certificate). Less obvious, but as important to employers, is the new layout of the *EmpDupe* file which has to be sent to the Tax Office in July of each year.

Taking all these changes into consideration, employers will be well advised to get the latest version of their payroll program sooner rather than later. All employees will be aware that the new tax scales reduce their tax payable so they will expect to see more money in their bank account each week. If this does not happen there will be problems as some of your people will have spent at least some of their expected increase in take-home pay.

This increase is not massive (perhaps \$20 per week) and much of it will be lost by increases in the costs of electricity and gas. Tax reductions are a vote winner for governments (if not for employers) so they often appear in election years. Please realise that your employees will be looking for more money to spend each week: it is up to you to ensure that it is in their pay packet.

This may be the time to start using an accounting program to keep track of your business' financial records. A new client was delighted to be able to pay all her employees in under five minutes: previously she had taken five minutes per employee!

Websites

None this week