

ALL THINGS TECH

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Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably

What's New

Welcome! As we celebrate our 30th year in business, here's an update for those following our employee outings. Our mixer at Pinstripes was a great success; good food, really lovely evening, some serious bocce ball, and a chance to meet spouses and friends. Thanks to Renee and Mary for their hard work in putting this together!

I attended the Global Leadership Summit. This amazing line up of speakers absolutely filled my energy bucket! Patrick Lencioni along with Horst Schulze, Alan Mulally, Henry Cloud, Danielle Strickland, Bill Hybels, and others gave inspiring presentations.

Kids are back in school, so remind your staff to take care as they drive through neighborhoods. Hopefully, we'll enjoy a few days of Indian Summer before the leaves start falling! - Catherine Wendt

September 2016



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Catherine Wendt, President of Syscon Inc.

We love this stuff!
Our passion is helping businesses use technology to run their organization successfully and profitably.



Go Mobile - Without Killing Your Data

What if you could tap into the top talent in your industry, no matter where in the world they are? With the power of the mobile web, your all-star team is now - literally - at your fingertips.

Consider this: 83% of workers report that they prefer using cloud apps over those deployed on premise. Millennials, who will make up almost 50% of the available workforce by 2020, are "digital natives." And don't forget the potential money to be saved on real estate and office equipment with remote workers.

Yet there are risks. Spreading your network around the U.S., on a variety of devices you don't control, can expose your data in more ways than ever before. The key is to find the right balance between protection and productivity. Here, then, are five ways to effectively "mobilize" your workforce - *without* endangering your data.

Collaborate In The Cloud - A plethora of online collaboration tools have sprung up that make it easy for a geographically dispersed team to access and share the same

files in real time. These tools not only make sharing easy and instantaneous, they help your team communicate quickly and effectively. Tools like Slack, HipChat, Asana, Podio and Trello - to mention just a few of the most popular options - are proving to make teams more productive. And that includes keeping critical data safe and secure.

Expand Elastically - In-house investments in IT hardware, software and staff can lock you into a rigid structure that can't easily adapt to changes in demand. A cloud-based mobile workforce is able to contract and expand more easily as needs arise, and with very little loss of capital. Bottom line: use a VPN (virtual private network), Remote Desktop (RDC), and cloud-based collaboration tools to remain agile, flexible and competitive. Look at mobile apps to collect critical data.

Cut Costs Dramatically - Physical work areas, equipment, software, upgrades, and on-site security expenses can add up. Instead of spending money on office space, equipment and infrastructure, invest it in innovation and

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refinement. Combine the power of virtualization and the cloud with a well-designed workflow to reduce the number of people and physical equipment needed to get things done. That will free up your key players to focus on more important tasks – the ones that boost productivity and allow you to run with minimal office staff.

Deal With BYOD – Let's face it, BYOD (bring your own device) can be your greatest IT security threat. Yet, like it or not, workers will use their own devices on the job. Foisting strict controls without buy-in will just backfire. Yet doing nothing simply makes you a sitting duck for a cyber-attack. Solution? Audit how your employees use their devices. Note the data they access and the apps they rely on. Group them by the levels of security and compliance they need to be governed by. A

“Doing nothing simply makes you a sitting duck for a cyber-attack.”

CEO, for example, may need to abide by financial regulations. An HR manager must deal with employment laws. Armed with information from your audit, you can roll out new policies as well as technical and process controls. Train your team in safe practices. And be sure to contact us for help in getting all this done securely and effectively.

Go Remote Without Risk – Whether you want to cut commuting time for your team, tap into the talents of experts outside your locale or simply accommodate a worker caring for family members, mobilizing your workforce can have big benefits. The trick is defending it at all points. Make sure remote workers share files and communicate with other employees only via a secured network. Make sure they use adequate virus protection. And, if they are using WiFi, either at home or on the road, make sure they do it safely. For instance, ensure that their tablet isn't set to automatically connect to the default wireless network. That's often an easy

access point for hackers.

There are lots of tools out there, but they're not all appropriate, and they're not all safe. Be sure to bring your ideas and plans to our techs so we can discuss pros and cons, and make suggestions to get the end result you want while protecting what you already have!

Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine and Larry hosted the annual State of the Company meeting. In honor of their 30th year in business, the company-wide event was held in Las Vegas. After a lovely brunch, each Department presented their summary of the last year and their vision for the year ahead. The whole group enjoyed dinner and a show, along with some personal time. Congratulations to the Vegas committee for a successful event!

‘If there is no struggle, there is no progress.’

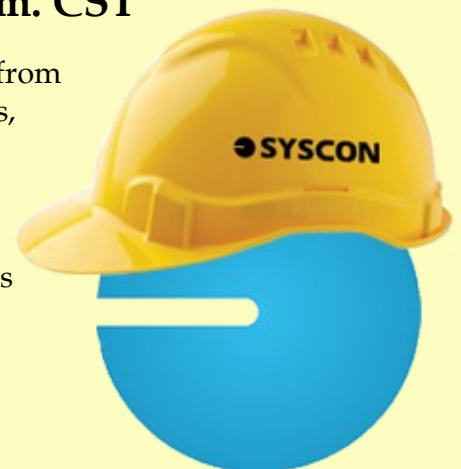
– Frederick Douglass

Chicago Use Tax Webinar – September 22, 11:30 a.m. CST

In the last few weeks, several construction companies received a letter from the City of Chicago auditing their material purchases back to 2009 – yes, seven (7) years! If you purchased materials from suburban material suppliers for a Chicago job, you will want to be part of this webinar!

The webinar will walk through entering Accounts Payable records to record the extra tax, set it aside for future payment, use part numbers to capture info needed for reporting to the City, and more accurately reflect your job costs. The webinar is presented by Catherine Wendt of Syscon who has 30 years of experience working with Contractors.

Register: www.syscon-inc.com/events; \$10 clients; \$25 guests





Construction Corner

For our clients who use Sage 100 Contractor

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



FitBark Keeps You And Your Dog Healthy

Do you know how well your dog slept last night? How much nutrition - or exercise - your dog really needs? Whether your pup is being well-cared for at doggy day care?

With FitBark you would know all this, and more, about your favorite canine pal.

Doggy health monitors are nothing new. But, according to hundreds of verified reviews on Amazon, Best Buy, App Store, and Google Play, FitBark leads the pack.

FitBark attaches to your dog's collar and shares data with FitBark Explore, a dog health data bank that collaborates with over 20 leading universities and research institutions in North America and Europe to gain a better understanding of dog health.

You benefit from all this data by tapping into what FitBark calls truly unprecedented insights into canine health and data. All toward keeping Fido - and you - on the path to health and happiness.

\$59.95 at Fitbark.com

Part II: S100C v20 Upgrade - The Real Story

Sage released the official upgrade to version 20 for Sage 100 Contractor in May 2016. This release and the information that has been provided about it have created a lot of confusion with our clients. This is Part II of the Real story. In last month's news letter, we covered:

- Why is version 20 so different than prior versions?
- Why did Sage make this change to a program that works so well?
- What does this mean to you as the user?
- This sounds too good to be true! Are there some "gotcha's" involved? YES

What about installing the new version on my server? Sage has a list of server requirements for the new version 20 software. Be sure to have your IT person take a look. One of the significant requirements is that the server on which the program is installed cannot be the Domain Controller. We're doing some testing on this and we'll have an update in the coming months.

How should you move forward with this upgrade? In a word, carefully (i.e., full of care and caution). If you have used Sage 100 Contractor for years or use many of the different modules (Document Control, Estimating, Service, Inventory, etc.), you should have a careful and methodical approach to the upgrade process.

- Pick a target date for your conversion to version 20.
- Have your IT team install Sage 100 Contractor v20 on the same server, and one or two workstations where you run your production data. This will allow you to test the two versions side-by-side.
- Convert a copy of your current data set from v19 to v20. This is straight-forward and can be done multiple times

throughout your testing process.

- Make a comprehensive list of the reports and tools related to Sage 100 Contractor inside the program and created by third party vendors, that you absolutely must have working the day you upgrade. Work with your staff, vendors, and consultants to upgrade and verify that each of these works properly in your test v20 database prior to your target upgrade date.
- Work through each item on your list and test, revise, and test again!

So, how much time do I actually have to upgrade? If you run payroll in Sage 100 Contractor, you are limited by the payroll tax upgrades for v19. The most recent tax release was in July 2016 and included an update for both version 19 and 20. We think there will be at least one v19 update in January 2017 for the year-end 2016 payroll reporting (such as W2 forms). We are recommending that you complete your 2016 year with v19 and prepare your year-end, then upgrade to v20 in Quarter 1 of 2017.

If you do not use payroll, you have a little more flexibility. In this case, we recommend you wait until there has been at least one major service pack released for version 20 before you upgrade, most likely before the end of 2016.

Finally, if you just purchased Sage 100 Contractor, or you have a very small database with no add-on tools or custom reports, upgrading to and using version 20 of the program can be done right now.

Summary... Watch for regular email blasts and postings on our web site for more information about version 20 as it becomes available and as we continue our testing and roll-out to our clients.

Check out the complete article on our blog, watch the video, or take a look at the August newsletter for Part I. — LAW

Other Stuff

Are you addicted to your work?

To find out, rate yourself 1 to 5 on the following statements. Give yourself a 5 for "often" and 1 for "rarely": a) You think of how to free up more time to work. b) You spend more time working than initially intended. c) Your work helps you reduce feelings of guilt, anxiety, helplessness and depression. d) You get stressed when you can't work. e) You set aside hobbies, leisure pursuits and exercise in favor of work. If you averaged 4 to 5, then you may be at least mildly addicted to your work. Is that a bad thing? Not necessarily. While your well-being requires a certain amount of balance, having the drive, enthusiasm and energy to achieve impossible goals marks many of the most successful entrepreneurs.

-Forbes



We bet you've never even heard of these new technologies.

1) *Perovskite solar cells* promise to be cheap, easy to install and efficient enough to power entire buildings, large or small. Made with a compound called perovskite, they reach new areas of the light spectrum, thus producing far more energy than current solar technology. 2) *Organs-on-chips* allow scientists to test how drugs impact the body – without putting humans or animals at risk. These micro-sized chips emulate how human organs work. By injecting the chips with drugs, scientists can observe responses such as heart palpitations to predict human responses to drugs and diseases. 3) *Super-smart nanosensors*, tiny enough to fit inside the body could, for example, alert a doctor if a patient starts to show signs of heart failure. -Inc.com

Did you know your iPhone could do this?

Respond to texts without unlocking the phone. When you get a notification, swipe left on the message and a blue "Reply" button appears. Just tap it and text away! Take a photo with the volume button. For that ultimate, one-handed selfie, open the camera app and press the "+" button for volume on the side of your phone. Have Siri read your texts out loud. This is a great tool for when your hands aren't free or you're on the road. Press the volume button and hold it. When the beep sounds, tell Siri, "Read my texts." When done reading, she'll ask you what to do with the messages. You can have her reply or read them again. -Entrepreneur

You are just minutes away from creating a dazzling design - free.

With these 3 online tools you don't need to pay a pro or buy fancy software. 1) *Canva* templates make it easy to create a business card, ebook or info-graphic. Just drag and drop objects until you like how it looks. Add images, tweak colors, swap fonts and voila - You've got a design you can be proud of. 2) Your brand's color palette helps get your message across and can even drive conversions. But getting just the right shade can be tough. Upload your photo to *Pictaculous* and get instant color recommendations and hex codes. 3) *PicMonkey* lets you easily edit, re-color, add borders and text - even insert graphics into your images. -HubSpot

Trivia Contest: Win a \$25 Amazon Gift Card!

This month's trivia question:

One of the first computer science PhDs was earned by:

a) Henry Kissinger b) Sister Mary Kenneth Keller c) James McDivitt d) Leonard Nimoy

To enter: Go to www.Syscon-inc.com/Trivia

and type in your answer.

All correct answers will be put into a fishbowl and we'll randomly draw the winner. The Winner will be contacted shortly after the deadline and will be announced in next month's newsletter.

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner Paul Brose with Freese and Associates in Lombard, IL! Paul was drawn from the fishbowl of last month's correctly answered question:

Which of the following worldwide computer viruses caused an estimated \$5 billion worth of damage? b) ILOVEYOU