

What's New

Fall—what a great time of the year! Cooler evenings, leaves changing colors, and candy corn!

After seven (7) years, we have restructured our multi-tenant hosting environment which provides Sage 100 Contractor access to a shared cloud environment. The updated structure accommodates the many significant changes Sage continues to make with the version 20 SQL backend product release. The deadline to move to v20 is fast approaching.

This month, Scott Lowell celebrates 11 years with Syscon! Please join me in congratulating him. Great Job, Scott.

- Catherine Wendt

October 2017



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.



You're Better Off Giving Your Employees A \$1,000 Bonus Than Being Cheap With Technology

Imagine, for a minute, that you're the CEO of a scrappy, promising new start-up. In the beginning, it was just you and two other employees working on dinky PCs out of a 12-by-12-foot office, but times are picking up and the company is heading into the uncharted waters of rapid growth.

As the business moves into the public eye — and, in turn, the hungry eyes of potential hackers — it's become obvious that you're going to need to lock down your data. At this critical stage, a cyber-attack could mean the death of everything you and your team have built.

But the budget is looking lean. Everything you've done so far has been by the skin of your teeth, so why should security be any different? You put one of your more tech-savvy employees on the case,

tasking him with finding the cheapest cyber security solutions available. Sure, he may not be an expert, but he understands computers. What could go wrong?

He scours the web, perusing dozens of "Top 5 Cheap Firewall Software" articles, and, with the help of a scrappy how-to guide, installs what seems to be the best of the lot on your servers and across all your computers. The entire process takes 10 hours, and costs the company next to nothing.

Potential crisis averted, you turn your attention to other matters. We'll revisit our cyber security later, you think, once we have a little more financial wiggle room.

Across the following year, the company's success skyrockets. The phone is ringing off the hook, new business is flooding in and

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your profit margin is exploding. You even ended up snagging a feature in *Entrepreneur* magazine.

That is, until the day that you get hacked. One morning, an advanced strain of ransomware easily side-steps your free antivirus and starts wreaking havoc. It slithers through your systems and locks you out of *everything*, from client data to basic Word documents, and encrypts it behind a paywall, demanding \$50,000 in Bitcoin or you'll lose access to all of it – forever.

You couldn't make room in your budget for a robust cyber security solution. Well, how does that \$50K ransom strike you?

This may sound like nothing more than a horror story, but in reality, this happens to business owners all over the world each and every day. An IBM security study from last December discovered that over half of businesses surveyed had paid over \$10,000 in ransomware pay-offs, with 20% paying over \$40,000. And that's not even including the millions of dollars of damage caused by other forms of malicious software every year.

The fact is, when your time, money, and business are on the line, it

simply doesn't pay to be cheap when choosing your cyber security technology.

Think of it this way. Say, with your free antivirus, you're "saving" \$100 a month. Lo and behold, a virus manages to punch its way through and causes chaos throughout the company server. Even if you're lucky and it isn't ransomware, by the time you've managed to eradicate the virus from your business, you'll have put in countless man-hours, guaranteed to cost you more than that \$100 a month. Instead of throwing those thousands of dollars down the drain, you'd be better off giving each of your employees a \$1,000 bonus!

Free antivirus software, giveaway cyber-protection, or a \$5 firewall seems like a great idea, until a hacker cuts through your company's defenses like a warm knife through butter. These guys *love* when they see these outdated, cheapo barriers guarding your priceless data.

You wouldn't buy a rusty, secondhand old lock for your house, so why are you installing primitive cyber security software to protect your most precious company resources?

In today's world of rampant cyber-crime, it's inevitable that somebody will come knocking at your digital door. When that day comes, do you want a free piece of software that you saw on LifeHacker, or a tried-and-tested, up-to-the-minute, comprehensive security solution?

Don't be shortsighted and risk everything just to save a quick buck. Invest in your company's future, and protect yourself with the most powerful tools on the market.

Cathy and Larry Sightings

In addition to client training visits in Nashville and Atlanta, Catherine attended a peer group coaching session in FL with a Gazelles coach, then off to the C12 Business Conference in San Antonio.

Larry trained for and rode in a hilly, group bike ride in Kentucky; beautiful country!

'What we see depends mainly on what we look for.'

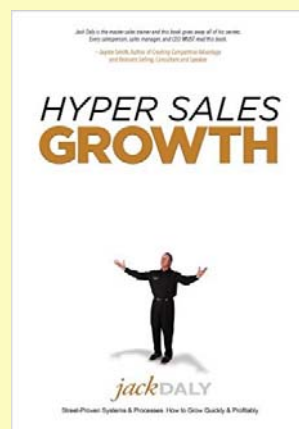
- John Lubbock

Hyper Sales Growth by Jack Daly

I had the opportunity to see and hear Jack Daly at an event in Nashville. This man has a TON of energy and clearly loves his topic and what he does! His presentation was slotted for the whole morning, two back-to-back sessions. We just couldn't get enough. His qualifications and stories were amazing.

Most sales books focus on logistics, and he definitely covers this, but much later in the book. The beginning is all about culture; creating intentional culture, encouraging it, focusing it, and living it daily with your team.

Recommended: Whether you **are** the sales person or you have a team, this book is definitely worth your time. You will feel energized and encouraged, and get some great logistics! – CMW



Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Picture Keeper Connect, The Best Way to Backup

Nothing feels worse than having to delete an old favorite to make room for some new photos. The Picture Keeper Connect solves both of these issues, providing an easy-to-use backup for your phone or tablet.

The Picture Keeper Connect, which looks a lot like a conventional flash drive, is designed specifically to back up photos, videos and contact information with just a couple of button presses. It plugs into your phone and gets to work. Even better, it can do all of this without the need for WiFi or a network connection. It keeps your photos in their designated album, meaning you won't end up with a cluttered mass of photos when you transfer them to a new device.

Simple, functional, and portable, the Picture Keeper Connect is a must for any avid smartphone photographer.

News From Our Techs

Equifax Breach—Have You Thought About This?

You might be tired of hearing about it, but this is a big deal. Think about the amount of details this company has about YOU! Now What?

At the very basic level, change your passwords—bank sites, utilities, home security cameras, investment sites, network log on, home computer, and software you use. Reconsider a Password Vault (search our website for our article on this).

Now, what other personal data do you have in the cloud? Is all of that necessary? Where does 'convenience' lose to security? Think about it...

Cyber Security: Part I (Complete Article in the August 2017 Business Ledger)

Cyber Security is the latest IT-related buzz word. As is often the case, this covers a huge range of topics, but **our** focus is always the small- to medium-sized businesses and their IT needs, so that's where I'll start.

The threats, attacks, and the onslaught of social engineering efforts against businesses have become staggering. It used to be that up-to-date anti-virus software, a firewall, and anti-spam for inbound/outbound email was all you needed to be fairly secure, especially if you were a 'small' company.

There's a strong perception that a small business is just too small for hackers to bother with – that is absolutely not true. So, is this threat real, or are we just exaggerating and creating fear? I'm confident that if you check the news (or the column above),

you will hear of small, medium, and large companies being compromised. I've visited new clients only to hear they've paid the ransom several times!

So where to start? The best starting place is the basics: a good anti-virus software that is up-to-date; a firewall with country blocks and specific port configurations; anti-spam filtering, inbound and outbound.

Next, educate your staff and arrange ongoing educational opportunities. The number one reason hackers get in is the human factor! This can include weak passwords, sharing log on credentials, and walking away from your computer but staying logged in. Social Engineering in this venue is the process of determining what types of 'hooks' a user will fall for such as email that looks like it came from your bank, a package delivery notice, or a document that needs to be signed.

When you look at these email messages, the sender might have the wrong domain name, or it is misspelled; they often include requests to provide the user name and password, something your staff should never provide. Be skeptical!

Helping your staff approach email with a critical eye will go a long way in protecting your network and data, as well as their personal data. Who sent the email? Is there a link to click on (who knows where that actually goes)?! Is this a bank you don't even do business with? Are we expecting a package (just call them)?!

Next month we'll wrap this up and share Part II of the news article. Check out the entire article on our website under *News*. - CMW

Construction Corner



CFMA Echoes Syscon Recommendations

On a recent flight back from a client on-site training out of state, I had a chance to catch up on my reading. I've been a member of CFMA (Construction Financial Managers Association) for a while, most recently with the Valley of the Sun (VoS) chapter after many years with the Chicago chapter.

I was so excited to see that CFMA is talking about some of the same things we have been sharing in our regular Video Blogs and monthly newsletters. Here are a few things that the July/August issue of the CFMA magazine, *Building Profits*, is talking about. If you've been listening to our stuff, these should sound familiar!

Mobile Devices: the pro's and con's of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) trend. Great benefits for the employee and the employer, but definitely some security considerations. There are a variety of software tools that can be used, but having a policy, a procedure, and enforcing them is the key to your data security and safety.

So You've Been Hacked: Now What? We ran a similar article recently, and again, this publication echoed some of the same points. Don't think you're too small to be a target. Your money is as good as anyone's, and this is big business for the hackers. There are a variety of precautions you can and should take for your network and the endpoints (devices that connect to the network), but the human element is the biggest wild card – educate and train your staff! There's no need to open an email from a bank, especially one

you don't even do business with; don't click the links! And so on...

Glad to see industry organizations and publications that support construction echoing the information we've been sharing in our 30+ years of business supporting the Construction Industry.

We have short videos you can share with staff, and previous newsletters you can pass out; just let us know what you need and we'll send it to you.



Ready or Not, Mobile Computing Is Coming

Great news! Syscon has Mobile Field Time Collection – NOW! AND it integrates with Sage 100 Contractor – Curious? We'll tell you all about it.

IDES Reporting Now Available through My Tax IL

For our IL clients, IDES is now payable through My Tax IL. If you are using Aatrix reporting through Sage 100 Contractor, this is a seamless change.

Aatrix has confirmed that the e-file process for submitting information to IDES has not changed; everything is all set!

Who Else Wants To Win a \$25 Amazon Gift Card?

This month's trivia question:

Which legendary salesman was President of International Business Machines (now called IBM) and oversaw a period of tremendous growth from 1914-1956? He is alleged to have said in 1943 "I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."

a) Thomas Edison b) Dr. John H Watson c) Ken Olsen d) Thomas Watson

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.

Deadline: October 20, 2017

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner, **Susan Rose**, with

Notch Mechanical, MA! Susan's name was drawn

from the fishbowl for last month's correctly answered question:

What is the once ubiquitous but now obsolete type bars machine?

c) IBM Selectric