

# ALL THINGS TECH

Brought to you by **SYSCON**

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

## What's New

The pools are open; families are planning vacations; the library summer book clubs are underway; Summer is Here!

The techs have been busy! We've been upgrading our Hosted Private Servers, including Microsoft Office. We've also gone 'live' with our new Voice over IP solution. Watch for more on this in the coming months.

Three of us just got back from the TUG event in FL. Great seeing our Sage 100 Contractor users and old friends.

We also have some new video demos of our custom software. They're on YouTube! We'd love your feedback.

- Catherine Wendt

**June 2018**



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

We love this stuff!

We are committed to helping businesses use technology to run their organization successfully and profitably.



## 3 Deadly Mistakes You're Making By Being Cheap With Technology

Today's small and midsize businesses (SMBs) have an uneasy relationship with technology - even if they don't realize it yet. As the marketplace reaches new heights of complexity and speed, and consumers migrate to cyberspace *en masse* to make their buying decisions, SMBs are responding in turn. Today's savvy business owners utilize ever-evolving technologies to capture their customers' interest and imagination, make conversions, and manage their day-to-day operations with unprecedented ease and clarity. Certainly, the Internet age is a thrilling time to be in business. Each business is equipped with wildly powerful tech that has transformed the landscape of commerce forever.

But there's an uncomfortable truth that goes hand in hand with this increased dependence on technology. At its best, IT allows us to do incredible things we never would have imagined were possible even 10

years ago. At its worst, IT is an unreliable, finicky, and potentially hazardous scaffolding upon which we built our loftiest hopes and dreams. Even the best IT requires wrangling to shape it to our needs and keep it on track and safe from intruders.

Despite this reliance on technology, the vast majority of business owners consider it an extra expense rather than a foundational element of their company. As a result, they skimp on technology spending. But being cheap comes with a cost - one much bigger and more dangerous than you probably realize. Here are three mistakes you're making by underspending on this key part of your business.

**1. You're spending on technology based on an unrealistic, poorly planned budget rather than building your technology budget around your actual needs.**

Continued pg.2

(continued from page 1)

When you're an SMB with limited resources, it's easy to see any money saved on software and hardware as a success, leading businesses to opt for cheap, clunky, and outdated solutions. But in a world where the lion's share of your day-to-day operations is dictated by the digital equipment you and your team use, where small businesses exist under constant threat of cyber-attack, and data is a precious commodity that could disappear at the speed of a failed backup, cutting corners is unwise. Updating your digital approach and tightening your cyber security may not result in obvious, immediate returns on your investment. But adequate technology spending is just that - an investment. When you invest in the latest technology, you're investing in the long-term productivity and security of your business.

**"When you invest in the latest technology, you're investing in the long-term productivity and security of your business."**

## 2. You're opening yourself up to disaster.

It's one thing to have an employee's computer unexpectedly fail or for an Internet connection to have a momentary hiccup. But if you're skimping on technology, you're leaving your business vulnerable to catastrophes that could cost you thousands. One of the most prominent and overlooked of these threats is cybercrime.

According to the 2016 State of Cyber Security in Small and Medium-Sized Businesses report, half of all U.S. small businesses fell victim to a cyber-attack in 2015 - a number that has only continued to climb. The majority of these attacks are ransomware, in which entire systems are locked out of vital data and forced to shell out enormous sums to recover it. Even if you assume you're secure (and you probably aren't), there are other risks to contend with. Server failures, backup loss, and system downtime can shutter businesses just as easily as a vicious hacker.

## 3. You're letting the competition get ahead.

Outsmarting your competitors takes more than just mimicking

whatever latest strategy the thought leaders of your industry are championing at the moment. It requires anticipating future trends and acting on them. And in business, there's one universal truth you can count on: The future of your industry lies in technology. Cloud services, new and constantly updating software, CRMs, and a staggering array of productivity-enhancing tools are just a few of the advances your competitors are considering (if they haven't snatched them up already).

If you neglect the future, your company is destined to become a thing of the past.

## Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine attended the TUG event in FL. Great catching up with S100C users and trainers across the country (lots of rain, too).

Larry was back in IL for our annual Programming retreat; great event!

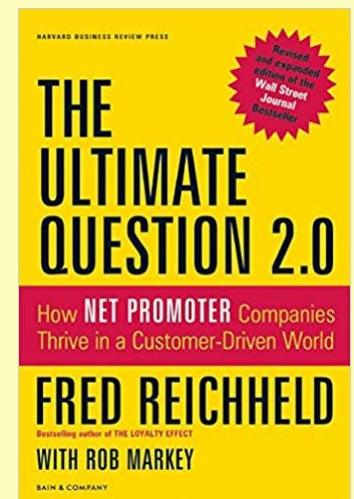
*'Joy is what happens to us when we allow ourselves to recognize how good things really are.'*

- Marianne Williamson

## The Ultimate Question 2.0 by Fred Reichheld

So what is this 'ultimate question'? You might have heard it called the Net Promoter Score, or NPS for short. This idea came out in 2003 and got a lot of companies thinking about their customer loyalty. There was such a following that there's even a user group called the NPS Loyalty Forum; and they even have annual meetings!

The ultimate question: On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend this company, or this product or service, to a friend or colleague? Scores between 1 and 6 are considered Detractors; scores between 7 and 8 are considered Passives, and scores between 9 and 10 are Promoters. To get your Net Promoter Score, you 'throw out' the Passives, then take the Promoters less the Detractors; that's the NPS score. The goal is to first understand how your clients view your company/service/product. There's a follow up question: What is the primary reason for the score you just gave? This feedback helps you understand what your customers want/need from you. There are great stories of companies who have used NPS. Lots of good takeaway's; recommended! - CMW



## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



### Watch What You Eat With LinkSquare

Everywhere we go, most of us use vision to navigate our world. Whether our mouth begins to water at the sight of a tasty dish or our brow furrows at the sight of a shady-looking dollar bill, our eyes are one of our primary means of connection to the world around us. But, just by looking, can you tell whether that delicious-looking food is as high quality as it seems? Or be absolutely sure that the dollar is real?

Enter LinkSquare, the pocket-sized spectrometer that enables us to gaze deeper into the objects around us. After you scan an object with the device, it uses machine learning to analyze the properties of all sorts of items, including the freshness of food, the authenticity of money or gold, the identification of stray medications and a huge variety of other potential applications. If you're interested in purchasing this wildly futuristic technology, it'll cost about \$300. Learn more at [LinkSquare.io](http://LinkSquare.io).

## From the Techs

### Captain Picard, the Borg, and your Network Security

I love the Star Trek series. A specific episode came to mind when we got the call from a client in IL whose systems had been hacked. But let's start with the story...

Captain Picard has been assimilated by the Borg and is 'resisting.' The crew have somehow got him back to the ship and they're trying to save themselves from a Borg attack. The Captain struggles through his situation and says 'sleep' a few times. The crew finally understands that they should send a command to the drones to 'sleep' since it is a low-security command. The crew sends the entire Borg vessel the command to sleep, and they obediently do so, thus saving the Enterprise!

So what does this have to do with our client back in IL? Everything – their corporate offices were hacked through a low-level service account. It was an unimportant service account that did not have the same scrutiny as the rest of the network accounts. It was a service account with a weak password, and it had access to get everywhere in the system – which is exactly what happened. Through this unimportant 'sleep' command, the attack hit every server in the multi-state organization and mayhem was right behind.

Fortunately for our client in IL, they have our Datto Backup unit. It's WAY more than a backup device, it's a Disaster Recovery unit and it definitely saved the day. Through some excellent efforts by the client's onsite IT person, supported by some great work and extra hours by Syscon technicians, their data was restored prior to the hack and they were back to work. Many of the corporate offices did not fair so well.

So, what would it cost if you lost all your payroll data so far this year and had to re-enter all employee data (where are those W-4 forms?) and all their payroll detail since January? What if you lost your Receivables list (who owes you what)? What would it cost you to figure out who you had paid and who you still owed this year, and how much? What if you couldn't access your contracts, pictures, and similar information?

Now, there are two lessons here: passwords need to be cycled frequently (at least every 90 days) and need to be 'strong'; next, it is

incredibly expensive, and maybe even a death sentence to your business to skimp on a Disaster Recovery plan and appropriate equipment. If you aren't sure these are 'all set' at your company, it's time to take action; give us a call. – CMW

### TeenSafe App was Hacked, and it Just Gets Worse...

There's a child monitoring app that allows parents to monitor their child. As with any service, you sign up, have a user name and password, and provide some additional information. According to a posting by [SlashGear.com](http://SlashGear.com), the Amazon cloud server with all of this information was hacked. But there's more...

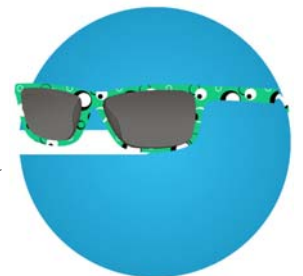
Also stored by this company was the child's Apple ID email, sometimes the device name, and the password. This information was not only hacked, but it had been kept in plain readable text.

In the company's effort to teach parents tech safety, it seems they left the barn door open, as the saying goes. – CMW

### Microsoft Surface Pro 4's; Flickering Screens

Turns out that these units may have flickering screens. The blogs were lit up with extraordinary efforts to stop this annoying problem. Some advocated putting the Surface in the freezer; others said to use a hair dryer.

The good news is that Microsoft now acknowledges the problem. According to [ArsTechnica.com](http://ArsTechnica.com), anyone with this issue can contact them within 3 years of the purchase and they'll provide a refurbished, equivalent Surface Pro 4. Some had already paid for repairs, and those people can request a refund. The great news is that Microsoft is making good on the equipment malfunction.



## Construction Corner



### What's New in Sage 100 Contractor ?

**Version 21.1 is here!** – On May 31st, Sage will release version 21. Here are a few of the highlights.

**Ability to create recurring salaried payroll records**

**Ability to send Direct Deposit stubs at a later date** – be careful on this one; when I checked for more specifics, it's really that you can reprint these at a later date, not that they are queued up to go out at a later date.

**Keep track of Employee Raise history** – you can even go back and add previous history, then it will automatically update the table going forward.

**Remove the 'Protected Sheet' flag when printing to Excel** – all I

can say on this one is, Yeah!

**CAREFUL** – grab your exact client name per Sage's records, and your Sage ID before you install this release. The process blows this information away and you'll have to re-enter it at the end of the update. Sage indicates this is due to 'technology enhancements' although we're not entirely sure what that means.

### Successful TUG Event!

In mid-May, we attended the TUG event. The breakout sessions for Sage 100 Contractor were great and well attended. The vendors were relevant, accessible, and very knowledgeable. The resort and food were excellent. Aside from the rain, a great time was had by all.

We'd like to congratulate the winner of our TV give away promotion. We had badges with S100C-specific accounting terms.

Find someone with your matching term, bring them to our booth, and they both received a Starbucks gift card, and were registered for our drawing.



Congratulations to our winner, Heather Garcia from T & T Construction in Central Florida!



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FIELD INTEGRATED TIME SYSTEM  
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### Collecting Time From the Field Just Got Exciting!

We're helping our clients collect field time from mobile devices, and we're fully integrated (really!) with Sage 100 Contractor v20.

We can collect cost code information, work order numbers, phases, client signatures, and a whole lot more. Your field can use iPhones, Androids, or Tablets.

Interested? Join us for a demo on **June 7th at 11:30am CT!**

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

This month's trivia question:

**Which of the following search engines has been helping people find things online for the longest? Which came first?**

- a) Ask Jeeves b) Yahoo! c) Google d) WebCrawler

**To enter:** Go to [www.Syscon-inc.com/Trivia](http://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: June 20, 2018**

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner, **Susan Janasik**, with **Kole Construction, IL!** Susan's name was drawn from the fishbowl for last month's correctly answered Question:

*In a 4/4 Musical time signature, what does the bottom 4 indicate?*

- c) the quarter note gets the beat