

## What's New

The days are getting a little shorter; kids are heading back to school. Fall officially kicks off the evening of September 22nd; and this is the last month of Quarter 3, 2018.

We've been busy! Several large clients have building projects coming to a close; we finished the upgrades of our virtual environments; and we're working on plans for some security-related projects.

We've had some fun! Our annual State of the Company at Ditka's was a delicious success. Each department made a great presentation; lots of prep time! A fun and informative afternoon for all. And, we've hit 100+ video blogs!

- Catherine Wendt



## 4 Questions You Should Ask Any IT "Expert" Before Letting Them Touch Your Network

As businesses have become ever more dependent on technology, IT services providers have been popping up left and right. They've all got different strengths, capabilities, and price points to consider. Some charge you by the hour and, while available to address any concerns you may have, they are pretty hands-off. Others are working on your network around the clock but charge more in turn. Many may boast an impressive record when working with a broad range of companies, but lack the experience necessary to understand the ins and outs of your specific industry. Some cost way too much month-to-month, while others try the "bargain bin" approach, but as a result, can't afford to field the staff needed to respond to issues in a timely fashion.

There's certainly a lot to consider when

looking for an IT services provider for your business. And if you're not particularly knowledgeable about information technology yourself, it can sometimes feel like you're going into the process blind.

To figure out whether an IT company will mesh with your business's workflow and industry-specific requirements, it's important to vet them thoroughly. The key is to ask the right questions. Here are four that will allow you to zero in on any IT company's priorities and strengths, and help you determine whether they're a good fit for your organization.

### 1. DO YOU TAKE A PROACTIVE OR 'BREAK-FIX' APPROACH TO IT?

When your car breaks down, you take it to the shop and you get it fixed. The mechanic charges you for the

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## September 2018



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We love this stuff!  
We are committed to helping businesses use technology to run their organization successfully and profitably.

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work done and for the parts, and then sends you on your way. Many business owners consider their computer network to be the same kind of deal. Why not just wait until an outage happens and then call up somebody who charges by the hour to fix it? That way, they imagine, they won't be paying for "extra" services they think they don't need.

But unfortunately, unlike your car, when your network is out, you're losing dollars every single minute. The cost of a network outage is difficult to overstate - not only will it bring your business to its knees while it's out, but it'll frustrate customers and employees and result in a cascading set of problems. And, if you haven't kept up on maintenance, it will take more time.

Instead of a "break-fix" technician on hand, you need a managed IT services

**"when your network is out, you're losing dollars every single minute."**

provider. These experts work directly with your company to optimize your network and its security at every turn, and are available nearly any time to address your concerns. And they're genuinely invested in providing the best service possible, since it's in their best interest as well.

## 2. DO YOU ANSWER YOUR PHONES 'LIVE'?

**The Number 1** highest rated client support item from our Client Survey was answering the phones 'live' during the work day. When you're already frustrated that you can't work due to a computer problem, working through a phone tree to get some help can put you over the top. Some IT groups send all incoming calls to their cell phones. That means they're taking new requests while they're working for you.

## 3. WHAT WILL COST ME EXTRA?

This question is particularly important if you're looking at a managed services provider (which you should be). The last thing you need is for a crisis to strike, only to discover you need to shell out a bunch of surcharges to get your network back up and running. Make sure the costs and services in-

cluded are crystal clear before you sign anything.

## 4. HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE?

As scrappy as the "new kid on the block" may be, you don't want them in charge of one of the most important aspects of your business. Make sure any IT professionals you do business with have extensive experience not only in IT, but in your particular industry as well. That way they'll know exactly what to do to optimize processes and keep your data under lock and key.

## Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine presented the Key Note at our State of the Company, and the Client Survey results, which were amazing!

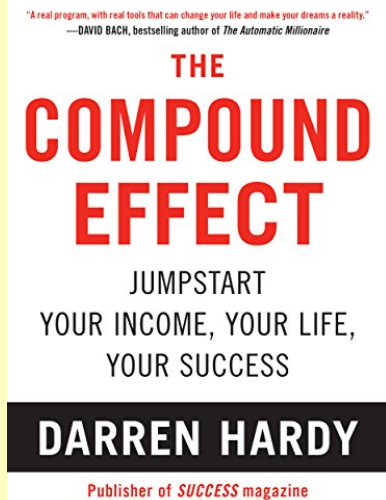
Larry spent some time in FL visiting a client; time in TX visiting family; time in IL at our annual State of the Company event.

*"The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary!"*  
- Vince Lombardi

## The Compound Effect by Darren Hardy

Looking for that magic bullet; the one that will turn your whole life around? Maybe it's that one deal; the bigger house; losing 10 lbs.; *then* you'll be all set, right? Well, Mr. Hardy bursts your bubble, then tells you exactly how to get the outcomes you want, if you're willing to accept the challenge.

We all know about compounded interest and what a big difference it can make. Small changes made over time, like interest, really add up, providing big benefits. The struggle is a culture that wants everything right now! A small change done consistently over time doesn't give us that big rush of adrenaline or immediate results we want, so we give up and move on to the next thing, hoping *that* will give us the slam-dunk we want. This book is practical, encouraging, and flat out honest. Highly Recommended! - CMW



## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



### Is This The Best Bag For Frequent Flyers?

If you're constantly traveling around the country for business, you need a piece of luggage that's essentially indestructible, and hopefully one that you can carry on any flight you need, saving on costs and precious minutes wasted at the luggage turnstile. Luckily, with the Victorinox Lexicon Hardside Frequent Flyer 8-Wheel bag, you may have a contender that checks all your boxes.

With a sleek, ergonomic, compact design, it offers plenty of volume without being bulky, along with a slick eight-wheel design that makes scooting around the ticket lines easier than ever. And for those of us living in the 21st century, there's a dedicated pocket for a battery pack, enabling you to attach a USB charging cord directly to your bag for when you need a little extra juice.

## From the Techs



### Mac Users beware...

Apple goes to great lengths to make its Mac computers secure, and even has secondary protocol in place to limit damage if an attack has been successful.

When there's a malicious action taken, the Mac blocks it and displays an alert or warning. The problem is, hackers have found a way to generate a click to dismiss the alert; it's referred to as a 'synthetic click' according to an article in ArsTechnica by Dan Goodin.

Apple has issued some patches, but even with a fully patched High Sierra OS, hackers can get around this. Essentially they click past the message before the user ever sees it.

I'm sure Apple will continue to address these findings. In the meantime, don't be lulled into thinking Macs cannot be hacked, or believe it at your own peril!

### Another Scam—Don't Be Tricked!

Just last week, I received an email from a name I knew and a domain name I didn't recognize. It said that my Microsoft Outlook Password would expire 'today' and I should 'Click Here' immediately to fill in the form and correctly submit for validation.

Of course I did NOT click anywhere, and neither should you! You'll never

get this kind of request from Microsoft. Delete it RIGHT AWAY! If you're unsure, give us a call; don't risk it, always check!

### Google 'Location History'

We recently upgraded our cell phones—mine was significantly out of date, so I'm told. Shortly after that, there was an update to be installed, and I had been 'guilted' into keeping my phone current, so I let it update...and nothing looked the same again!

The biggest change was I kept getting these notices to rate the store or restaurant I was just at—how do they know where I was? Why are they tracking where I'm going? Sure, I could turn off the alerts, but that doesn't stop the tracking.

One of the techs shared an article by Cyrus Farivar at ArsTechnica with me. It says that Google is being sued because of their policy, 'You can turn off Location History at any time. With Location History off, the places you go are no longer stored' is apparently not true after all!

A Federal law suit has been filed in California. Even the FTC has issued 'strong wording' to Google. Big Brother anyone? - CMW

**Do you get our weekly email blasts?** These are short, **2-minute video updates** on tech-related topics. There's often a **short blog** if you want to read more on the topic. If you don't get these, **please call Jonathan** at our office and we'll make sure you're on the list. You might have to 'white list' us, and we can tell you how to do that, too!



# Construction Corner



## Key Staff, Unexpected Emergencies

— We’ve seen it a lot in our 30+ years working with contractors — a key person has a medical event or an extended medical leave; the controller is caught re-routing funds to their personal account and is immediately fired; the primary accounting person walks out.

Most construction companies run a tight back office. They’re efficient and usually have little cross-over training. So how do you protect yourself? You could hire two of every role, but that’s not financially feasible. When it comes to cross training existing staff across duties, not everyone on the team has the same skill level, no matter how much training you provide.

Then, many professional services want you to have ‘separation of duties,’ but there just aren’t enough hands to go around.

So, what are the options?

1. Owners should do their own bank reconciliation. It’s not hard, and you get a high-level view of what’s happening with your money. Don’t know how? We can show you. If this is just not possible for you, hire an outside company to do these, someone you trust. We actually perform this service for quite a few of our clients. This meets the ‘separation of duties’ guideline while protecting your controller.
2. Where’s your procedure book? Is it collecting dust? Assuming you have one, is it current? Could you follow those steps, know where to log on, and know the due dates if you pulled it out and worked through it? If you can’t say ‘yes’ to these questions, make

a commitment to get these updated this winter. Then set a reminder for a bi-annual or annual review of the book.

3. Don’t have a procedure book? You can start one today! Every week, maybe on Fridays, ask your staff for just one procedure. Where to start? What are the most critical functions? Payroll is usually a good place to start and there will be several procedures covering this process. Then move to billing, AP, and so on.

Be methodical — your company’s well being (and therefore your well being) is on the line!



## 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 **September 20th at 11:30am CT!**

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

This month’s trivia question:  
**Which of the following websites was launched first?**  
 a) Wikipedia b) Myspace c) Facebook d) Google

**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: September 20, 2018**

Congratulations to last month’s Trivia Contest winner, **Susanne Cole**, with **Controlled Access**, GA! Susanne’s name was drawn from the fishbowl for last month’s correctly answered Question:

*The term ‘GUI’ stands for:*  
 d) Graphical User Interface