What's New

Our offices will be closed Friday July 3rd. We're looking forward to the 3-day July 4th weekend! We've been working full speed to keep everyone connected and working from remote locations, so we're ready for some R&R.

We're still going to carve out a few hours on Friday night July 3rd for some system maintenance. Our hosting environments, including email hosting, will be unavailable for a few hours beginning at 6:00 pm Central time on Friday July 3rd. Any questions, please let us know.

Whatever you think of the state COVID restrictions, remember we're all in the same boat. As things open up in your state, be kind to others. - *Catherine Wendt*

July 2020

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.
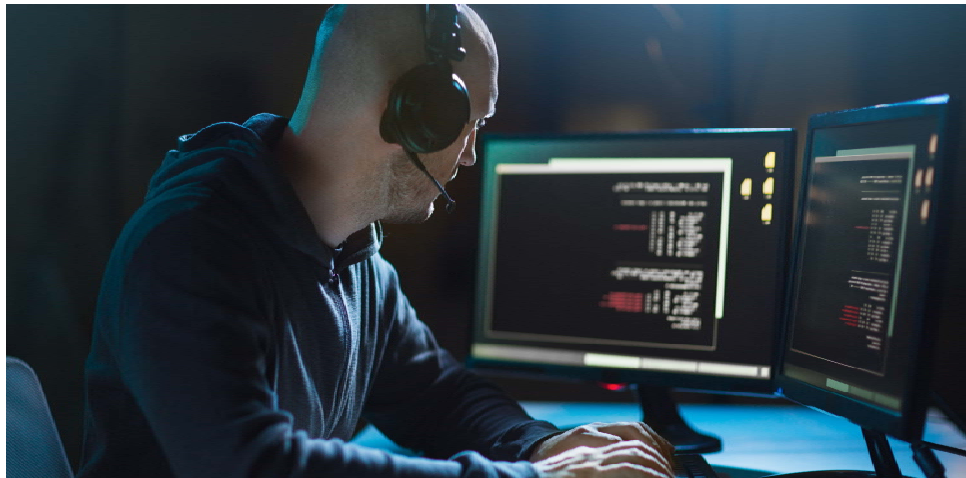
3 Critical Cyber Security Protections EVERY Business Must Have in Place NOW to Avoid Being Hacked

Five years ago, you might have had state-of-the-art security protecting your business and network. You had the latest malware protection, highly rated firewalls and a great data backup plan. Maybe you even had a handbook on how to address cyberthreats. You were set. But then you forgot to do one crucial thing: you didn't stay up-to-date with your IT security policy.

This is a trap countless businesses fall into. They invest in great cyber security *once*. Five years ago, this was fantastic. The problem is that cyberthreats are constantly evolving. Methods used by hackers and cybercriminals have come a long way in the past five years. Criminals stay on top of what's going on in the IT security industry. They are always looking for new ways to steal your data and make a quick buck at your expense.

What can you do to stay up-to-date in an ever-changing digital world? Here are three things every business must do to protect itself.

Understand The Threats
It's easy to assume that hackers are trying to get into your network the "old-fashioned" way. You might picture them hacking your network trying to get your passwords and usernames or breaking through your firewall protection. While some hackers will do this (it's easy for them if you use simple passwords), many of today's cybercriminals rely on social engineering.

The most common form of social engineering is the phishing scam. The criminal sends you or your employees an e-mail, hoping someone will click a link or open an attached file. Cybercriminals have gotten VERY

sophisticated. These e-mails can mimic the look of a legitimate e-mail from a legitimate business, such as the local bank you work with or another company you buy from (or that buys from you). Social engineering is all about tricking people.

This is true now more than ever! The hackers have had a field day with all the COVID updates. They've mimicked official information sites, sent email messages promising cures you can buy, or how to protect yourself from COVID. People who would usually be quite skeptical have clicked on these messages as they try to stay informed.

Update, Update, And Update
From software to hardware, you must stay updated. There is no such thing as "one-and-done" when it comes to network security. Something as simple as a wireless router can DESTROY your security if it's not regularly updated. Hackers are always looking for vulnerabilities in both hardware and software, and when they find them, they WILL exploit them.

What happens when a piece of hardware (like a router or firewall) is no longer supported by the manufacturer? This occurs all the time, particularly as hardware ages. Manufacturers and developers drop support for their older technology so they can focus on their newer products. When they drop support for a product you use, this is a good indicator that you need to replace that piece of hardware. The same applies to software.

> ## "When the manufacturer drops support, it's time to replace the hardware."

You might balk at the cost of buying new technology, but in the long run, the cost is well worth it. Think of the cost of buying a new router versus the cost of cleaning up after a data breach. Some small businesses never recover after a hack – it's just too expensive. Keep your malware software updated, keep your firewall updated, keep your cloud backups updated and keep all your devices and software UPDATED!

Invest In Proactive Network Monitoring
When it comes to the security of your network and overall business, being proactive can make a huge difference. Proactive monitoring means your network is being watched 24/7. Every little ping or access to your network is watched and assessed. If a threat is found, then it can be stopped.

The great thing about proactive network monitoring is that you have one less thing to think about. Someone is always keeping an eye on your network, making sure the bad guys stay out. You can review the weekly antivirus reports, too.

You might think, "How am I going to do all this?" You don't have to go it alone – and you shouldn't. Work with an IT services firm. Work together to find the best solutions for your business. When you work with IT specialists, you can rest assured your team will be updated on today's threats. Read the newsletters; listen to our short video blogs and share them with your team. You'll know your network – and everything connected to it – is updated. And you'll know someone is watching over you. That's the ultimate peace of mind.

Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine has spent a lot less time traveling. Along with some other musicians, we're hoping to stream a 'live' recital over Facebook.

Larry has been doing a lot of phone trainings on our Cost to Complete program that integrates with S100C.

'If you don't have time to do it right, when are you going to have the time to do it over?'
- Coach John Wooden

Gap Selling by Jim Keenan

Reading books about selling is not my favorite pasttime. This was recommended to me, so I poured my favorite beverage and dug in. It opens with a lot of 'preaching' but then he gets down to brass tacks, as they say.

The overall premise is to revisit some sales myths and take a look at things from the perspective of the buyer. Mr. Kennan starts with looking at understanding where the customer is right now, the 'future state' they'd like to be in, and whether your solution is the right fit to fill 'the gap.' He spends quite a bit of time talking about the discovery process and has some very practical examples to work on gathering the necessary information. It's interesting how many times this type of conversation unearths the root issue that helps us get to the real solution.

The next section talks about knowing when the customer is ready to make a change (change can be painful, even good change), and ultimately managing the sales team (or estimators). Our author is definitely passionate about his topic and he has a lot of common sense info. I found myself coming up with lots of ideas! - *CMW*
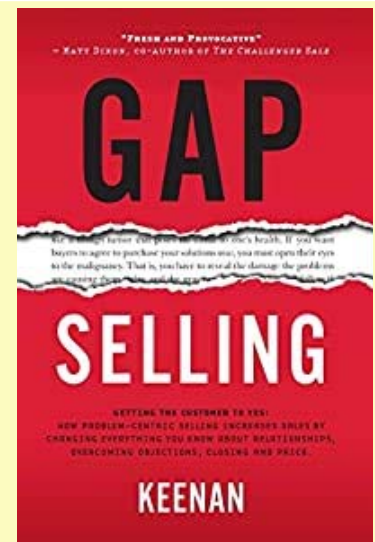
Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

FitTrack – A Smart Scale That Does More

The bathroom scale isn't always the most useful device in the home. FitTrack is a smart scale that aims to change that. It's a different kind of bathroom scale that gives you *much* more than a single number.

Traditional bathroom scales don't tell you anything about what's happening in your body. FitTrack *does*. It gives you an "inside look" into what's going on inside your body. It measures your weight, body fat percentage, body mass index, muscle and bone mass, hydration and more. In fact, it tracks 17 key health insights.

The advanced scale pairs with the FitTrack app, which you can download to your smart phone and connect to the smart scale. All you do is step on the scale with your bare feet – the scale actually reads electrical signals from your body – and it sends the results to your phone. Simple and useful. Learn more about FitTrack at **bit.ly/2VOg7Vs**.

From the Techs

Windows 7 Computers

We've heard some very interesting things about the end-of-life Windows 7 Operating System that is still on some computers. I'd like to bring you up to speed, then put a few holes in some comments we've heard.

Windows 7 is end-of-life; it is now a <u>serious security risk</u>. Microsoft is not releasing any more updates for this Operating System. Having this machine on your network is not safe. Those machines need to be upgraded (if they qualify) or replaced, NOW.

'*But I've been running my Win 7 machine without any problems.*' Good for you; you've been lucky so far. This is not something to play with; your luck will run out. Your network, your data, is at risk.

'*If it's Windows 7 Pro, it's not a risk, I'm OK.*' This is a silly one, but that's what a prospect was told. No, this is not OK. Don't believe me? Google it!

Lastly—if you're on our Managed Services, or our Fully Hosted services, you have to have current Operating Systems on your equipment. If there's a compromise on your network, and it is related to a Windows 7 machine, we will bill for any work related to the compromise including work on that machine, removing malware, or any other security breach remedies.—*CMW*

Maintenance—Let's Get Back On Track

These last few months have been absolutely brutal on everyone, especially computers and networks! Many of our clients have had to add access to their networks through home computers. Often these are not kept up-to-date with patches, may or may not have anti-virus, and are usually sitting behind an internet router. Most homes don't have a firewall, and many internet routers have default passwords still in place! What a security nightmare.

Meantime, office machines have been turned off so they're not getting updates, and no maintenance has been done in months. Not everyone is back in their offices, so this continues to be a concern for us since you look to us to keep your computer systems safe.

So, we'd like your help:

- We're offering to do some regular maintenance remotely! We can remotely connect to the computers and laptops and run through our checklist.
- We're ready to come onsite (if you're in IL) and get things back on track.
- You don't have everyone back in the office yet? No problem, whoever is in the office can just turn them on for us.

You know the drill—we'll have to take over the computer for a little bit, so staff members can have a meeting, run errands, or work on an alternative machine. For the server(s), same thing; we might have to 'bounce' the server so there might be a short work interruption.

Whether you're ready to have us onsite, or you'd be more comfortable with remote help right now, we're ready to set it up with you! - *CMW*
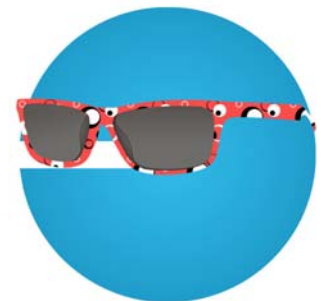
Construction Corner

Miscellaneous Updates

PPP Extensions— Mary did a great job summarizing the PPP Flexibility Act of 2020 which was signed into law. There are more details on our website, but be forewarned—as soon as the ink was dry, the very next day, there were changes.

Here are a few highlights:

- The number of weeks to use the funds and qualify for forgiveness has been extended from 8 to 24 weeks.
- The loan maturity was increased to 5 years for loans approved on/after June 5th.
- The deferral period for payments of principal, interest, and fees has been extended.

Retirement Account Changes—There are some interesting developments here, too. This is an 'FYI' only, so get with your tax professionals, but here are some things you can ask about:

- Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) on retirement accounts have been modified. Some are waived, others deferred, and there are lots of rules.

- Penalty-free Withdrawals in 2020! Under certain guidelines, you can withdraw retirement funds in 2020 without the 10% penalty fee.
- The 2019 IRA filing deadline was extended.

Check into all the rules and guidelines if any of this applies to you.

Sage Web Chat Issues – Some interesting developments here. You might recall that Sage went to 'Live Chat' for Sage 100 Contractor! There is a Java Script load that performs a Geo IP Location look up (where *you* are) which resolves to an IP in Germany (?). Lots of firewalls block foreign countries for security, so Chat wasn't working.

We reached out to Sage with the info and they're digging into it. In the meantime, here's an alternative:

- You can initiate Live Chat for S100C through Sage City from the Sage Construction & Resources page. Go to the Contact section, then Chat:, then Chat: 100 Contractor to kick it off.

4-6 vs. 4-2—How To Choose

We have an intern helping us out with some bookkeeping, gaining some real job experience. Along with 'how' to do things, there are usually questions about 'why' and under what circumstances.

Well, he asked a good one—Why are some things in 4-2 AP Invoices, and others entered in 4-6 Recurring?

This varies by company, but here are a couple of good guidelines; this might even be an opportunity to re-visit how you handle some of these.

- Not all vendors send an invoice, and rent is a good example. The 4-6 screen provides a reminder.
- Some invoices have a lot of detail in the grid. It's faster to have a 4-6 recurring record to update and post, than to find a previous one, copy-paste, update, then post.
- If you receive a paper invoice with a unique invoice number, and you want that invoice number on the check stub, enter it in 4-2.

A word of caution: If you have people sharing this responsibility, be sure your procedure or checklists are very clear about what is entered where. If you enter in 4-2, then again in 4-6, it will *not* catch the duplicate.—*CMW*

Learn to Love Your Mondays

Good-bye, paper time sheets!

'Hello' field time collection via smartphone. **Interested?** Join us Thursday, **July 30th at 11:30am Central Time**! Register at www.syscon-inc.com/events.