

## What's New

Well, I've indulged in my favorite October treat, candy corn pumpkins! Many schools are back in session, in person. The days are getting shorter, too.

After months of moving to and testing M365 for Teams, email, anti-spam, and some other features, and moving our Sage 100 Contractor data to Azure, we're ready to offer Microsoft 365 to our clients. Watch for our October 7th High Level 'Tour de Microsoft' Webinar and other educational updates.

We've had several clients come down with illnesses that seem to be stress-related. As we cope with unexpected cancellations and disappointments, be sure to take care of yourself so you can stay healthy. - Catherine Wendt



## Do You Budget For Your Equipment Costs And Replacements? Field, Office, Jobsites

Do you budget for your equipment? Maybe you don't sit down and write out a budget (although we recommend you do), but I'll bet you plan for some of these expenses:

- The truck you need to purchase (or replace), finance, maintain, along with the cost of licenses and plates
- Maybe you own your shop or office, so you budget for outdoor maintenance—mow the lawn, plow the snow, or keep under a car port, furnace replacement, roof repair
- How about scaffolding replacements or upgrades? Aging saws, trailers

You don't buy a truck and expect it to work year after year without gas, oil changes, maintenance, or tires, so you budget for the upkeep and

replacement. You keep up on insurance, license plates, and other fees because you count on the equipment. It will need to be replaced after a few years, and you're not surprised when you start thinking about how many miles are on it, what it's costing to keep running, and what you might get on a trade-in.

Most businesses have these expenses built into their budgets, or at least built into their estimating process—got to have the trucks and trailers running, insured, and safe. When you put a bid together, you have your burdened cost of labor, but you also have allowances for using (or renting) equipment, including the cost of cartage to move big items, consumables such as diamond blades, gas/oil, just to name a few.

*Continued pg.2*

## October 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.

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Twenty-five (25) years ago, only the field equipment and an allowance for overhead were part of the budgets, not computers. Now they're a critical, non-negotiable part of doing business and they need security, maintenance, updates, and replacement when the time comes. Tablets and cell phones to get on Teams calls; estimating software; accounting software to do your billing and track your job costs; email; jobsite photos; electronic certified payroll reports; field time collection.

But, I rarely see construction companies budget for their computers. Equipment ages and needs to be replaced. Just like old models of cars, there are old 'models' of Operating Systems and critical software that need to be upgraded or replaced. Newer software doesn't always run on old equipment. Switches run 24/7 and may need to be replaced. Firewalls need regular maintenance and security updates, just like vehicles. Firewalls also age and need to be replaced with a new 'model' that can address new intrusion attempts. These often have new features to thwart the bad guys.

Then there are backups—I see such resistance to this. Yes, it's like an insurance policy. And like insurance on a vehicle, your home, your life, you cannot afford to risk not having it. Da-

ta is a primary driver of any construction business these days, and you have to have backups to restore in case of a disaster, yes, or just employee error that accidentally unleashes ransomware.

### **Plan ahead – build the cost of IT and computer replacements into your overall company budget and be realistic!**

How much have you billed? What are your costs to-date? Who worked on that job? What are your receivables? How much are your payables and who do you owe? And what about that lawsuit that requires you pull a lot of history?

It's surprising how much push back, or delay we get when we point out that these critical systems need attention, replacement, or upgrades. Then when these recommendations are delayed or declined, the next call we get when things aren't working, or go down, is that we should have known this was going to happen (we did). Now our client has to come up with some serious cash to get stable again, not to mention the unexpected work interruption.

This is what we do, this is what we know – computers! You count on our computer expertise, and we ask that you let us help you with your computer needs, replacements, upgrades, and planning.

Plan ahead – build the cost of IT and computer/software replacements into your overall budget and be realistic. You need computers to run a construction company these days. Hardware, software, maintenance, upgrades, replacements, as well as user support. Plan for your computer budget needs and expect to write the checks, just like you do for your trucks, trailers, and buildings. We're on the same Team! - CMW

### **Cathy and Larry Sightings**

Catherine is back on the road to see staff and clients, and an industry event in the Nashville area.

Larry started training for his cross-country bicycle ride in March 2021; about 65 miles a day!

*'We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.'*

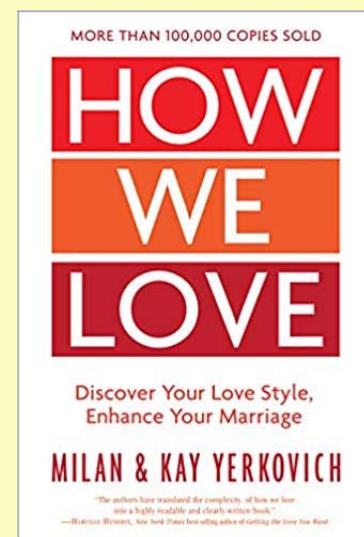
- Albert Einstein

### **How We Love by Milan & Kay Yerkovich**

As business owners and managers, we work hard all day and strive to do our best. But at some point, we go home to our family. This book is focused on our relationship with our spouse, although these 'styles' play out in our other family relationships, too.

While looking back at the original family imprints that shape who we are and how we communicate with our family now, this couple carefully and repeatedly says that our parents and caretakers did their best. In some cases, these important people didn't have good examples themselves, so they could not teach us what they did not know. We can now do better. There's an online assessment that we both took; very interesting. The primary love styles are the Avoider, the Pleaser, the Vacillator, and the Chaotic (Controller and Victim). There are great stories from their years working with married couples that bring together the ideas and 'labels.' It's pretty eye-opening when you realize 'that's me' or 'that's us.' There are concrete suggestions to improve how you love.

What does this have to do with work? Well, a balanced, thoughtful, centered, and confident leader will be successful at work, and at home. Definitely recommended. - CMW



## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



### Ovo Portable Steam Iron And Garment Steamer

The **Ovo Portable Steam Iron And Garment Steamer** is much smaller than your average iron and yet capable of so much more. It's an iron *and* a steamer and the perfect companion for when you're traveling and want to look sharp. Or keep the Ovo at home to save space!

The Ovo fits easily in your hand. It's lightweight and won't take up much space in your luggage. Plus, it holds enough water to create up to 10 minutes of steam. You can quickly switch from the metal ironing plate to the brush attachment to add finishing touches to delicate fabrics (and remove any lint or pet hair). It even comes with a heat-resistant travel case. Learn more about this mini-marvel at [bit.ly/2CgQzJG](http://bit.ly/2CgQzJG)!

## From the Techs

### American Payroll Association Breach

The American Payroll Association just notified its members that it has suffered a breach. Threat actors installed skimming malware on both the log in web page of the APA website and the checkout section of the association's online store by exploiting a vulnerability in the APA's content management system. It was discovered around July 13, but before it could be removed unauthorized individuals gained access to information including first and last names, email address, job title/role, primary job function, company structure, gender; date of birth, address (either business or personal), including country,

To keep you informed and safe, every Monday morning we send a short technology email tip. We highlight a new threat or scam we've seen; an upcoming expiration of a service or product you use; tips on hardware and software specific to running your company; and much more!

If you're not receiving our updates, be sure to whitelist 'Infusionmail.com' which is the platform we use to safely send email to you. If you need any help, call the office and ask for Beth or a Tech and we'll give you a hand!



province or state, city, and postal code, company name and size, industry details, and the types of payroll and attendance software used at the member's company. — *Kevin Lancaster, ID Agent*

### Interested in a Surface Pro?

We are now authorized to sell the Microsoft Surface Pro computers and we couldn't be more excited. In fact, we've ordered one that should arrive any day. Stay tuned to hear about the new features and share the fun we plan to have with this new computer!

### Changing Your Password In The Hosted Environment

Our password policy has been published and shared with all our clients, and we continue to share it. We recommend that our clients enforce a minimum of 8 characters with a combination of upper and lower case letters, at least one number, and at least one special character (\*, +, !, @, #, etc.).

If you're in our hosted environment and access the hosted server through a Remote Desktop Connection (RDC, sometimes called RDP) icon, you still need to change your password every 90 days or so. Ctl-Alt-Delete only works on your local machine, not in the private cloud. So how do you change the password?

Log into the hosted server as usual, then press Control-Alt-End (Ctrl-Alt-End) keys at the same time to get the password change screen. Type the old password, type the new password, the re-type to confirm, and you're all set!

Still need help? Give us a call and we'd be glad to help. - CMW

So what exactly is **Microsoft 365**? We hear about it all the time. Take a 'Tour de Microsoft' with us on **October 7th at 10:00 Central Time** and you'll be 'in the know'!



## Construction Corner



### Using the Summary Feature in S100C

Many of us use general ledger subaccounts to track a second layer of detail under an account. On the Trial Balance and Financial reports, the single account displays, but you can also print additional detail by subaccount. Some favorite uses include multiple Vehicle Loans; Employee Loan amounts; interest expenses by bank or lender; professional services. In each of these, an additional layer of detail is important, but when presenting to a bank or board, or to maintain privacy, one number is presented.

If you run Departmental Income Statements, some of these accounts may already be broken out by the departments, so you can't add subaccounts. Or, you may have multiple equipment lenders and don't want their names on the financials, but need the named accounts to make the loan payments. So how can you present a combined total on a Financial Statement?

So glad you asked – in the 1-7 screen, there is a field called Summary. Let's take the example of having multiple loans. You can create a new account called Equipment Loans. Then in each of the actual named loan accounts, enter the 'umbrella' account number in the Summary field. In a Trial Balance, each account will present (the new Equipment Loans account is zero). In a Financial presentation (2-8 screen), these will summarize up to the new Equipment Loan account for one grand total. – CMW

### IL Certified Payroll Change

Beginning in September 2020, the state of IL is requiring all Certified Payroll reports to be electronically filed.

Good news – Aatrix is working on an e-fileable report to meet the new IL guideline (thanks Bridget), so stay tuned and check with them. Not in IL? Don't worry, this trend is probably coming your way, too. - CMW

### CFMA – A Great Resource

Are you a member of the Construction Financial Members Association? Mary and I are, and we're so glad to have them as a resource and partner.

Did you know that affiliate members

such as CPA firms and insurance brokers also participate in the CFMA? Both of these industries contribute to articles and webinars, and they're available to interview for possible services.

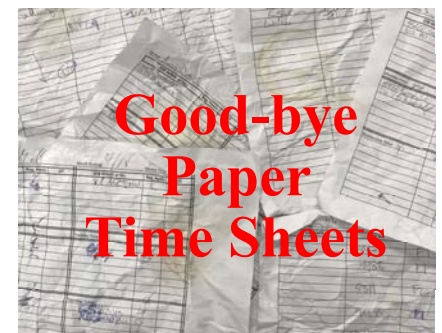
If you're looking for a CPA, or looking for an insurance broker in your area that knows construction, the CFMA members may be a great place to start. – CMW

### Payroll Services – Some Assistance, Please

Did you know that we provide payroll assistance for many of our clients? For some, we run their payroll each week; others, we check for anomalies and confirm balances and tax payments are correct; for others, we run quarterly and year end reports. Could you use some help with the weekly payroll? Or a second pair of eyes to make sure things are right? Give us a call! - CMW



### Learn to Love Your Mondays



Tired of **babysitting** every Monday? Tired of moving costs from the **wrong jobs**?

Join us Thursday, **October 29th at 11:30am Central Time!** Register at [www.syscon-inc.com/events](http://www.syscon-inc.com/events).

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

This month's trivia question:

**What technology is used to record cryptocurrency transactions?**

- a) Digital Wallet b) Mining c) Blockchain d) Token

**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: October 20, 2020**

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner, Christine Barry with **Mid Hudson Construction Management** in Poughkeepsie, NY! Christine's name was drawn from the fishbowl for last month's correctly answered question:

**Who designed the first small computer for home use?**

- a) John Blankenbaker

Visit [www.syscon-inc.com/Trivia](http://www.syscon-inc.com/Trivia) for contest rules.