



What's New

February, the month of 'love.' I noticed there's no shortage of candy and big stuffed bears in the store, despite the supply chain issues; kind of interesting.

We've completed the move from our 10-year-old Hosted Exchange to Microsoft 365 for client email. Thanks to all for your cooperation. We're very glad to see so many of you taking advantage of Teams, OneDrive, and even rolling out SharePoint.

In January, we received notice that our application for WBE status has been accepted and we are officially certified as a Women Business Enterprise! This opens the door for some of our clients to include Syscon as a WBE vendor to meet contract requirements! -Catherine Wendt

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February 2022



Phishing, Social Engineering, Oh My!

In an article by a Kaseya Security manager, phishing was one of the top three (3) cybercrimes in 2020 per the FBI. Phishing incidents doubled from 114,702 in 2019, to over 241,000 in 2020. And, 90% of incidents that end up as a data breach start with phishing.

So what's phishing anyway? Hackers put out some 'bait,' something they think you'll nibble at so they can engage you. Sometimes they're looking for specific data, pieces of information that by themselves seem innocent enough, but when combined with other data they've found, bought, or stolen, gives them all the pieces they need to impersonate you or gain access to your network, email, or shared files.

Social Engineering often involves tricking you into thinking you're communicating with a trusted source, someone you know or work with. They present themselves in reasonable communications—you have a fax (wonder what it is and who it's from?);

they use scare tactics such as your password expiring; they claim to be helping you because they noticed a problem with your computer. Let's face it—they're trying to trick you!

Spam relays are another popular tool so I thought I'd clarify how this works and why it's so insidious. The hackers find a server, a network, and gain access. They use all these servers to send out their 'bait' and bogus email messages, so they come from many sources that regularly change—no way to just block a specific sender or location because they are using many computers and often, the offending sources don't even know they're part of the problem! Imagine I could use 100 servers from 100 different companies to send thousands of phishing email. Now imagine one of those 100 is an actual company you know or do business with; it's an uphill battle.

So you're in a rush and don't notice

Continued pg.2

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the company name is mis-spelled; the email address has a typo; you don't know if you're expecting a fax or a package and you're curious; you struggle to remember your password and the thought of it expiring makes you panic; your office manager is tickled that you've trusted them with the secret gift you said you're giving and is anxious to help order those gift cards; you didn't know you had a new vendor so you click the link to the invoice; if Microsoft sent you an email to confirm your password, you type it in. All of these are SCAMS!

When kids are little, you repeatedly remind them to look both ways before crossing, not to talk to strangers, not to open the door to strangers, to say please and thank you, and in our house, to hold the door for others, especially Mom! When it comes to your business, one study indicates that 55% of remote workers rely on email as their primary form of communication. How often do you remind yourself, your team, your family members about these villains? There's an interesting quote I've run a few times — *'People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed.'* - Samuel Johnson.

Here are five (5) of the most common phishing attacks as listed in MSP Success Magazine — these might be worth pinning up in the break room, reading in the monthly company meeting, and including in all new hire documentation:

- 1) Notification that you have received a voicemail or fax
- 2) Fake tech support email alleging malware on the computer and requesting remote access to install software to fix the issue
- 3) Business email compromise (BEC) with a fraudulent invoice embedded with malware
- 4) Phony emails from HR asking new employees to change their direct deposit information
- 5) Spoofing and social engineering attacks designed to trick employees to reveal confidential information.

The last one is interesting: We're your vendor and your staff won't share your email or cell phone but they'll send them to a stranger via email!

You know you have to send out a certain number of bids to get the work — **it's often a numbers game. If you win 50% of your quotes and you only add two jobs you won't have enough work.**

Bid 30 jobs with a 50% 'win' ratio and that's a different story! These hooligans play the numbers, too.

So now what? We can add filters, block senders, and use tools to limit exposure. BUT, you and your staff still play an important role. Assume it's a Scam! Even with great locks and alarms, you still have to lock the door!- CMW

Cathy & Larry Sightings



Catherine moderated a panel discussion on Succession Planning, hosted by ASA Chicago.

Larry spent January with his nose to the grindstone with data conversions and W-2s.

"People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed."

— Samuel Johnson

False Assumptions by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend

I love these two authors so when Larry mentioned this title, I was all-in. We bring false assumptions to our conversations and relationships pretty regularly as we try to make sense of what we see and hear. Turns out this book is **focused on 12 specific 'crazy' beliefs that are usually presented as 'Christian' but are anything but!**

The initial request was to address a singles group at a church in CA about spiritual growth. The Drs held a series of Sunday night lessons taking honest questions and giving hon-



Book Nook

est answers. That led to the book, designed to address some 'crazymaker' assumptions that are wrapped up in a 'Christian' wrapper, but miss the mark. As each assumption is presented, there is a patient's story, the assumption which usually has a grain of truth, then a deep dive into where it falls off the wagon. There are many cited Scriptures and practical applications as each one is unwrapped.

Although the book is from 1994, these 'crazy' assumptions are all around us almost 30 years later. Definitely recommended, no matter your faith background! -CMW



Microsoft 365—Price Increase

After several years of steady prices, Microsoft is making a change. We don't have all the details yet, but in March, Microsoft is increasing the price for many of the M365 licenses. This includes M365 Basic and Premium, two of the most popular business license levels. We anticipate a 20% increase or more.

Many of our clients bundle their M365 licenses with backups and support services, so the impact will be less dramatic. Others purchase their licenses a la carte, and these will be hit with the full increase. We hope to have more specifics in the coming days, so please watch for updates. - CMW

Most Common Passwords of 2021

| Rank | Password |
|------|-----------|
| 1 | 123456 |
| 2 | password |
| 3 | 12345 |
| 4 | 123456789 |
| 5 | password1 |

It took less than 1 second to crack the 20 most common passwords used in 2021, according to data collected from Nordpass. The No. 1 most common password of the last year was breached over 3.5 million times alone!

Selecting an easy password just so you can recall it later is not going to keep your

account information secure. Make it at least 8 characters, and be sure to combine letters, numbers, and special characters. We also recommend enforcing MFA for an added layer of protection, so even if your password was stolen, your data would have a second layer of security.

BTW, this list is available for anyone to find—good people and hackers alike! If you use any of these passwords, please change them! -Nordpass, BK

Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR), an Update

Our anti-virus replacement has been in place for several months already and we are very pleased with the results! We thought we'd share a few 'wins' we've seen since making this change.

There was an Acrobat file that was flagged as possibly malicious. EDR noticed that the Publisher Name was 'Supercool Applications' which is definitely not Adobe. The file was flagged as a virus and removed.

The second one involved Firefox. EDR flagged it as malware, so when we dug in and checked the source through the EDR tool, turns out this specific installer file had been tampered with; EDR caught it!

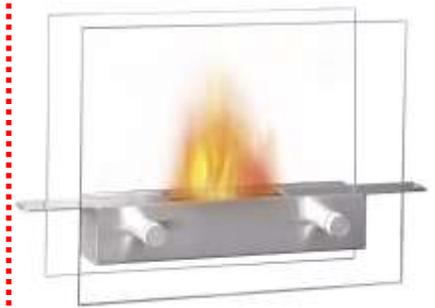
These are very nuanced, which is exactly what malicious actors are trying to exploit—details that are easy to miss and just might get through! - CMW

Shutterfly Breach

Digital image and photography services company Shutterfly was hit with a ransomware attack. The Conti ransomware gang is accused of the attack that encrypted over 4,000 devices and 120 servers. Stolen data includes legal agreements, bank and merchant account info, login credentials for corporate services, spreadsheets, and possibly customer information.— ID Agent, CyberTalk



Shiny New Gadget



Tabletop
Fireplace

If you want to add a fireplace to your home, you'd think you need to hire a contractor (or multiple) for a construction project. No need for all that time and expense with the Metropolitan Tabletop Fireplace!

This gadget requires zero construction, no access to a chimney, no electrical hookup, and no gas line. It uses a bio-ethanol fuel for a clean burn that doesn't produce soot, smoke, or ashes.

Any indoor or outdoor space can be outfitted with the Metropolitan Tabletop Fireplace. It is 14" x 11" x 5" and weighs 13 pounds. It burns for 1.25 to 2.5 hours, depending on how wide the damper is opened.

It's constructed of stainless steel and tempered glass. The fuel is sold separately.

Use it to impress a client or significant other. No word on if this gadget increases property value. ☺ Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/tabletopfireplace>



Construction Corner



Union Paygroups – Tracking Vacation/Holiday Time

The rules to track and pay vacation time vary greatly across the U.S. For some, Holiday pay is mandatory in the bargaining agreement. For others, the company pays its key Foreman as an additional benefit.

Some of the most common questions we get involve ‘missing’ hours and pay on a union report due to how Vacation and/or Holiday pay was entered in the 5-2-2 screen. Knowing what you need to report and how the various choices flow through to the reports will save you some headaches. When paying Vacation or Holiday time for union staff, there are a couple of things you need to think through before you make the entries.

- Do you need to report these hours to the union? Are they part of the bargaining agreement?
- Do you owe benefits and dues as usual, or are these modified for vacation/holiday?

Let’s take these one at a time. If the benefits and deductions are the same as any work day, and you report holiday or vacation pay on your regular union reports, you’ll use your regular paygroups. Only use type 1-Regular, 2-Overtime, or 3-Premium time in the Pay Type. This allows all the rules to flow through and all the hours to show up on the union reports.

Very User Friendly

‘F.I.T. saves time for the field and in the payroll process time in the office. F.I.T. is very user friendly and takes very little training for all involved. It’s the single largest time saver we have implemented in years!’

-Colleen Murphy, Office Manager, Walsh Electric

For those of you with modified benefits or deductions, but they still end up on **your union report, you’ll need separate paygroups.** Usually we see these as separate paygroups for the Journeymen and Foremen at their regular hourly rates, then on the Benefits tab, enter the benefits and/or deductions that apply when paying vacation or holiday pay.

“Some of the most common questions we get involve ‘missing’ hours and pay on a union report due to how Vacation and/or Holiday pay was entered.”

For those of you that pay key union members for holiday and vacation time, but are not required to report to the union, set aside benefits, or have modified or no deductions, you have a few more options. We recommend a separate paygroup to reflect the lack of benefits and/or deducts, but you can use Pay Types 5-Vacation or 6-Holiday for tracking. This will update the **Vacation ‘buckets’ in the employee screen for tracking, and holiday pay is reported on various Employee reports.**

To recap: If you are mandated to pay Holiday or Vacation pay and report these to the union, only use Pay Types 1-Regular, 2-Overtime, or 3-Premium (NOT Vacation or Holiday). Then consider if you need modified paygroups to reflect benefits and/or deduct changes for these special hours. Lastly, if this is voluntary and does not need to be reported on the union report, but needs to be available in an audit, use the modified paygroups and pay types 5 -Vacation or 6-Holiday for tracking. – CMW

Adding GL Accounts
This time of year, we see a number of

clients making adjustments to their Chart of Accounts. They may want to stop using a specific account, or add a few for more detailed reporting. All of this is done through the 1-7 screen.

New accounts need to be added in the correct range so they show up as expected in the Trial Balance, Income Statement, and Financial reports. Some accounts may benefit from being flagged as requiring Subaccounts. A good example for this is Employee loans with the Employees as the subaccount, for example. Another is PrePaid expenses since the subaccounts will allow you to track who these were paid to and for **how much, and when they’ve been applied.**

For those of you with Departmental financials, there are a few other considerations. At a minimum, most of the income accounts should be flagged as Departmental, so if you are adding Income Accounts, you need to choose 2-Departmental in the 1-7 screen when you set these up. The same is true for any Direct Expenses. In some cases, you may have Indirect accounts (Equip/Shop) that are Departmental, or even overhead accounts. Follow the pattern **already in place. Then after you’ve created the additional Departmental Income and Expense accounts, go back to the 1-9 screen and use the Options feature to push the list of Departments to these new General Ledger accounts. We’re not surprised this gets missed; it’s not very common to add accounts, but if you need to, these are the steps.** - CMW



Joke of the Month

What did the calculator say to the pencil?

You can count on me!

M365 Education Station



Microsoft

Partner

Teams – 10-4

The mobile Teams app has a new Walkie Talkie feature. No need for clunky radios/handsets! The Teams app for both iOS and Android devices can be enabled to deploy this communication method.



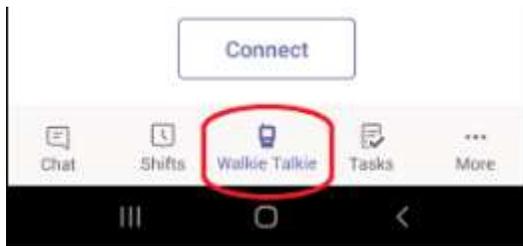
Enabling Walkie Talkie

Before Teams users can start using the Walkie Talkie feature, the company's IT administrator needs to enable this feature from the Teams Admin Center—it is not pre-installed on the mobile app. Contact your IT admin (or ask us!) for help enabling it. Once enabled, it takes up to 48 hours for the Walkie Talkie feature to appear on users' Teams apps.

How to Use Walkie Talkie

Once this feature is enabled, here's how to use it:

1. From the Teams app on your mobile device, tap the Walkie Talkie in the navigation bar at the bottom of the screen. If you don't see this when you open Teams, tap the 3 dots with More to find it.



2. Tap the right-facing arrow next to the word Channel. Note that only one Channel can be connected at a time.



3. Tap the purple Connect button.

4. When ready to talk, press and hold the purple button while speaking, then release it when finished talking.



Tip of the Month

Did you know?

It's possible to pin the Walkie Talkie app for quick access if it's not already pinned to the navigation bar in the Teams app. Here's how:

1. Open the Teams app on your mobile device
2. Swipe up on the bottom navigation menu
3. Tap the Edit option
4. While in the Edit navigation option, drag Walkie Talkie from More Apps to the top section
5. Congratulations! You've now pinned it to your navigation!

Do You Know Your Meeting ABCs?



A Audio—are you connected to quality audio?



B Bring your laptop!



C Collaborate—designate roles such as facilitator.

How Did They Do It? TW Chicago

Three traits make it possible to navigate recent challenges: attention to detail, flexibility, and persistency – a little luck **along the way doesn't hurt either**, according to Project Accountant Gary Espey. As with many businesses, navigating the recent pandemic posed major challenges. With many construction projects placed on hold due to uncertainty, other opportunities surfaced and being flexible and persistent made it possible to navigate through a period of uncertainty. TW Chicago is a general contractor specializing in commercial work.

During this same period, implementing additional Sage modules along with the assistance of the Syscon staff helped to further streamline operations. At the present time, Gary supports all financial activities, monitoring financial results of current projects. The relationship with Syscon has grown and currently includes a fully hosted environment of Sage 100

Contractor along with ancillary Syscon-based applications for positive pay along with waiver generation and Office 365. Gary called it a great working relationship.



Gary Espey,
TW Chicago
Project Accountant

TW Chicago maintains a commitment to business development and continued acquisition of clients. The company was founded in 2014 by its three principals. The company has now grown to over 20. Holding to those three key traits – attention to detail, flexibility, and persistency – will help Gary navigate the upcoming growth rebound projected for 2022. - BK

Fast Facts

Location: Oak Brook, IL
Specialty: General Contractor
Founded: 2014

Read more at www.syscon-inc.com/how-did-they-do-it

Are you interested in having your story featured? Let's talk!

Upcoming Events

Event: How to Get Field Time that's **FULLY Integrated with Sage 100 Contractor**, webinar

Date: Thursday, February 10th

Time: 1 p.m. CST

Register: www.syscon-inc.com/events



Event: Getting Started with Teams, webinar

Date: Thursday, February 24th

Time: 1 p.m. CST

Register: www.syscon-inc.com/events

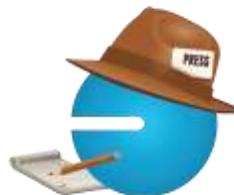
Featured Articles

TUG Pulse newsletter:

Business Leadership – A Hero's Journey: What's Changed and What's Next

Construction Executive Digital Newsletter:

Foundational Shift: How to Get Your Arms Around the Azure Change



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

