



## What's New

Hard to believe the first quarter of 2022 is history! Now we welcome longer days and Spring showers and flowers.

Our whole team got together for a few days of Arizona sun, grilling, scorpion hunting, and a few brave souls even made their own short video in the library! We also spent some time reviewing the last six months for each department, our progress on this year's goals, and several new technologies. Chris and Mary came in early and we had our quarterly Traction meeting.

I'm again reminded what a great team we have, wonderful people who love their work, and love you, our clients!

- Catherine Wendt



network  
solutions®



One World, One Internet

## Network Solutions and ICANN – Will Others Follow?

ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, is an organization that catalogs who is registered to which domain. They perform maintenance on the Domain Name System (DNS) root zone registries. When you enter a domain name such as Syscon-inc.com for example, DNS root zone registries route the request to the right domain, the address for the specific computer you're trying to talk with.

When registering a domain name, the domain owner's name, address, phone number, and technical contact are required. From time to time the registrar, the company the domain name was purchased through, will ask to verify the owner's info. This has always been a fairly simple process; you review the information

via email to see if it is correct. If changes are needed, just reply with the information. Responding that there's no change has never been mandatory. The 'check in' email has typically been seen as a courtesy, a good neighborly habit to keep things in order. The ICANN system is a separate body, not affiliated with the registrar. For more info, check out [www.icann.org](http://www.icann.org).

Recently one of the registrars, Network Solutions, decided to start enforcing ICANN review requests by suspending a domain if the contact/owner on record did not respond to an ICANN request. We're not even sure if they have the authority to do this, but one of our clients was shut down for over a day by Network Solutions. It's so unusual it took

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**April 2022**

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us a while to figure out what was happening! Everything was in place, updated, correct, but no email was flowing and there was no access to anything related to their domain. After a couple of hours on the phone with Network Solutions, they admitted they had shut it down as a result of no confirmation response to the verification email request – unheard of! They said it would be 24 hours until the domain was back up. That meant no email for our client, no website available if anyone was checking. Our client couldn't believe it and we had never heard of such an action taking place. From our perspective, they interrupted this company's ability to do business without any notice or interaction and no warning that a lack of response would result in the shutdown.

The next morning it was still down, so Mike got on with Network Solutions again and was told it would be another 4 hours or more. Mike

wouldn't hang up and said he would sit on the phone, continue to ask for the next level of manager, and stay on with them until the domain was back up. What do you know? Within an hour, it was back up. What a nightmare!

***"[Network Solutions] interrupted this company's ability to do business..."***

**Lesson 1:** If you receive a request to confirm your domain ownership information, respond!

**Lesson 2:** If you have Network Solutions as your domain registrar, consider moving to a different provider! No company can afford to be in this situation.

We are so distressed that our client had to endure this situation. Be forewarned – if this can happen through Network Solutions, will other registrars follow suit? – CMW

## Cathy & Larry Sightings



Catherine sang two concerts with the Alleluia Orchestra. What a treat! Three pieces with a full orchestra.

Larry played French Horn with two orchestras including the Alleluia Orchestra as well as the Chandler Symphony.

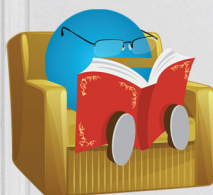
*"You cannot do kindness too soon; for you never know how soon it will be too late."*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

### *9 Lies That Will Destroy Your Marriage*

Larry and I have been married over 38 years having enjoyed and weathered many life events. We've attended several Couples Retreats with Focus on the Family and heard both these authors on several occasions. Add in the title of the book and I was intrigued.

After a brief introduction of the authors' qualifications and experience, each chapter is devoted to one of the 9 Lies. There's usually an example situa-



tion of how the lie is playing out for the spouse or a couple and the logic behind the lie, its origin – then

by Robert Paul & Greg Smalley **Book Nook**  
they take it apart.

The thing about any enduring lie is that it usually has a grain of truth. Each chapter walks through where the lie falls apart and how to make a new path if you're stuck in this lie. Then there are follow up stories on how these changes have positively impacted couples.

In the Conclusion, the authors provide concrete processes to improve communication, build and maintain safety in this very personal relationship of marriage, and how and why to dig into and bring conclusion to conflict!

Definitely Recommended -CMW



## Microsoft License Changes

Many of you were able to attend our mid-February webinar where we shared the Microsoft price changes and the new rules for licensing. Thanks to all of you who responded so quickly with your decision on the licenses; we were able to get everything updated before the deadline!

There are a few hiccups for Microsoft, though. With the Teams Voice changes, you no longer need to purchase this as a separate service (different than Teams VoIP, BTW). But, Microsoft is struggling with the roll out of this licensing. Our vendor has worked with us to provide a temporary license while Microsoft addresses the license change issue. –CMW

## Google and App Access

We can't allow our computer equipment to get too hot, so we have an air conditioning unit in the server room. To monitor the temperature, we installed a probe in our server room years ago. Each day we get an email with the high, low, and average temperature; it's been great. The probe connects to a Gmail account, sends the info, and we receive the daily update.

This is a very basic account with a robust password. This is considered an 'app' account because an application is reporting and accessing it. In many of our clients' offices, there are similar app accounts for things like printers, scanners, and other web-enabled tools.

Google has announced that beginning May 30th, it will no longer support these third-party apps or devices since they only require a user name and password and do not use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), making these accounts less secure. Google has taken it one step further and said 'If an app or site doesn't meet our security standards, Google might block anyone who's trying to sign in...'

This is sound logic and makes sense, but it's also a pain in the neck. For our server room we've found a replacement product and will shut down our Gmail app account. For many of our clients who have implemented MFA (which we HIGHLY recommend), we have specific workflow in place for scanners and other accounts to keep them secure and functioning. If you have an Internet of Things (IoT) device, scanners, or other devices that use Gmail accounts, time to give us a call and make some changes so you don't have any surprises on May 30th. – CMW

## Canon Printers

Canon has made some changes to their printers and copiers. As these roll out in the coming weeks, some of these Canon devices may stop working.

Turns out there is a firmware update that when installed, will get these copiers and printers back up and running. If you have a Canon device that's been working just fine, and it stops working, give us a call and we can update the firmware. – CMW

## Log Out of Cloud Sessions

Turning off a monitor doesn't log you out of the programs. Clicking the 'X' in a cloud session is like turning off a monitor!

Log out of the program itself which also frees up licenses and writes data from memory to the drives. Then log out of your session!



## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



**Amazon  
Astro**

The Amazon Astro robot brings us one step closer to having an automated home like the Jetsons did. However, this robot won't cook your breakfast or provide personal grooming services.

Astro is for home monitoring. Using Amazon's intelligent motion technology, Astro moves around people, pets, stairs, and other objects to monitor rooms. It has a built-in camera and mic. Use the Astro app to remotely control Astro and sound the alarm in case of an intruder.

Astro syncs with virtual assistant Alexa. Use Astro to place video calls; direct Astro to take objects to other people; or set reminders. Astro is equipped with a cargo bin and cup holder.

Astro is built with a periscope, sensors with red night-vision LEDs, a display camera, navigation and obstacle sensors, speakers, a charging dock, and microphones. It's a little pricey at \$999.99, but would be unique!

Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/shinygadget>





# Construction Corner



## Budget Allowances – Good or Bad

I get this question a lot, so I thought I'd share some thoughts and invite you to explore some of these things with your Estimators and Project Managers.

Let's get the terminology in sync – the budget represents the money you expect to spend to perform the scope of work. The difference between your budget and the contract is your profit. Make the budget and you lock in the expected profit.

When putting together the budget, it's important to consider sales tax, fully burdened payroll, possible labor rate increases, payroll-related insurance; everything you will spend. Since none of our clients have a crystal ball, many have an allowance for unexpected items and build that into the budget. This provides a cushion while you hold PM's responsible for the specific line items in the budget.

The more common question is whether to book an artificial percent to each job to cover things that aren't being charged to the job but probably should be. The list I receive usually has Workers Comp, General Liability, employee benefits, company trucks, and similar.

With this list, it's time to look at getting these actual costs included in the first place, rather than artificially charging the job and using a contra account, then have these showing up in overhead as

## Huge Time Saver

**'The F.I.T. System is a HUGE time saver. It reduces data entry mistakes.'**

-Candy Corie, Director of Operations,  
Chicago Electrical Company

well. Here are some of the things you can book down to the job in the first place.

**Workers Comp and General Liability –** Setup the WC tables in the payroll module, match the comp codes, and get the net rate per \$100 paid. When you run payroll, these costs will be part of the fully burdened labor costs. In the same table, you can add General

***"It's time to look at getting these actual costs included in the first place."***

Liability for the W-2 staff. For Subs you hire, you can accrue the General Liability when you enter their AP invoices and set it aside in your liability account against the premiums.

**Employee Benefits –** Most clients have the deductions setup in the payroll module. It's easy to add a calc for the employer portion of the benefits, whether you cover the full health, dental, vision, etc., or a portion. The deduction and the employer portion together should match the premiums. When payroll is posted, the fully burdened costs hit the jobs.

**Company Trucks –** Consider the Equipment/Shop module (maybe you already have it!). This allows you to track Indirect costs, things that are in support of the jobs but not directly charged to only one job. This can include maintaining company vehicles, fuel for the PMs' cars, shop utilities or rent, shop-related insurance, bulk purchases of safety equipment and shop supplies, and so on. This paints a great picture of how much it costs to have the shop in support of the field. Are the jobs profitable enough to cover this expense?

**Inventory –** Do you carry items in

**Save the Date**  
**Thursday, May 12th**  
**1:00 Central Time**  
**Paygroup Updates**  
**Webinar**

inventory that are used on your jobs? When they're pulled, are those costs moved to the job? If these items are needed on the jobs, consider the inventory module to track the value of what you have and to have a method to move those costs to the jobs. This is also a great accountability mechanism for the owner and PM's.

**Vacation and Sick Days –** Artificially charging these to jobs plays havoc with the budget. Still goes back to the jobs having enough profitability to cover the cost of vacations and sick time. There are better options.

When you artificially add costs to a job, you play with the Budget to Actual, which impacts the Over/Under billing (WIP). If you add these artificial costs at the beginning, it looks like you've earned revenue which isn't true; if you add them at the end of the job, all the WIP reports throughout the job were incorrect, lowering expected profit.

Tightening up the actual costs is best and provides your Estimators with good info for future bidding. Having a small budget allowance for unexpected price increases is helpful; if you don't use it, your profit just went up! – CMW

## Joke of the Month

What did the window glazer say when he cut himself on the glass?

*This is paneful!*

# M365 Education Station



Microsoft

Partner

## New Look for Outlook on the Web

Outlook on the web has a new look featuring several design elements, including:

- Rounded corners and icons
- Taskbar with more space
- Cleaner look



## Calendar Board View

Perhaps the biggest change is the Calendar Board View for the Outlook calendar. This view enables users to add items and move them around. It's like a visual planner.

Here's how to create a board on outlook.com:

1. Go to the calendar and select the views menu in the upper right corner of the screen.
2. Select Day, Week, Work Week, or Month.
3. Select Board, then select New Board.
4. Name the new board and hit Create.

## Add to the Board

There are two (2) ways to add items to the board:

1. From the board view, select Add to Board in the upper left corner of the screen. This brings up a drop-down menu with several options, including calendar, note, file, person, and more.
2. From the inbox or calendar, right-click an email message, note, task in MyDay, or event in the web calendar and select Add to board.



## Tip of the Month

### Did you know?

These 3 browsers provide the best experience with Office on the web:



Google Chrome

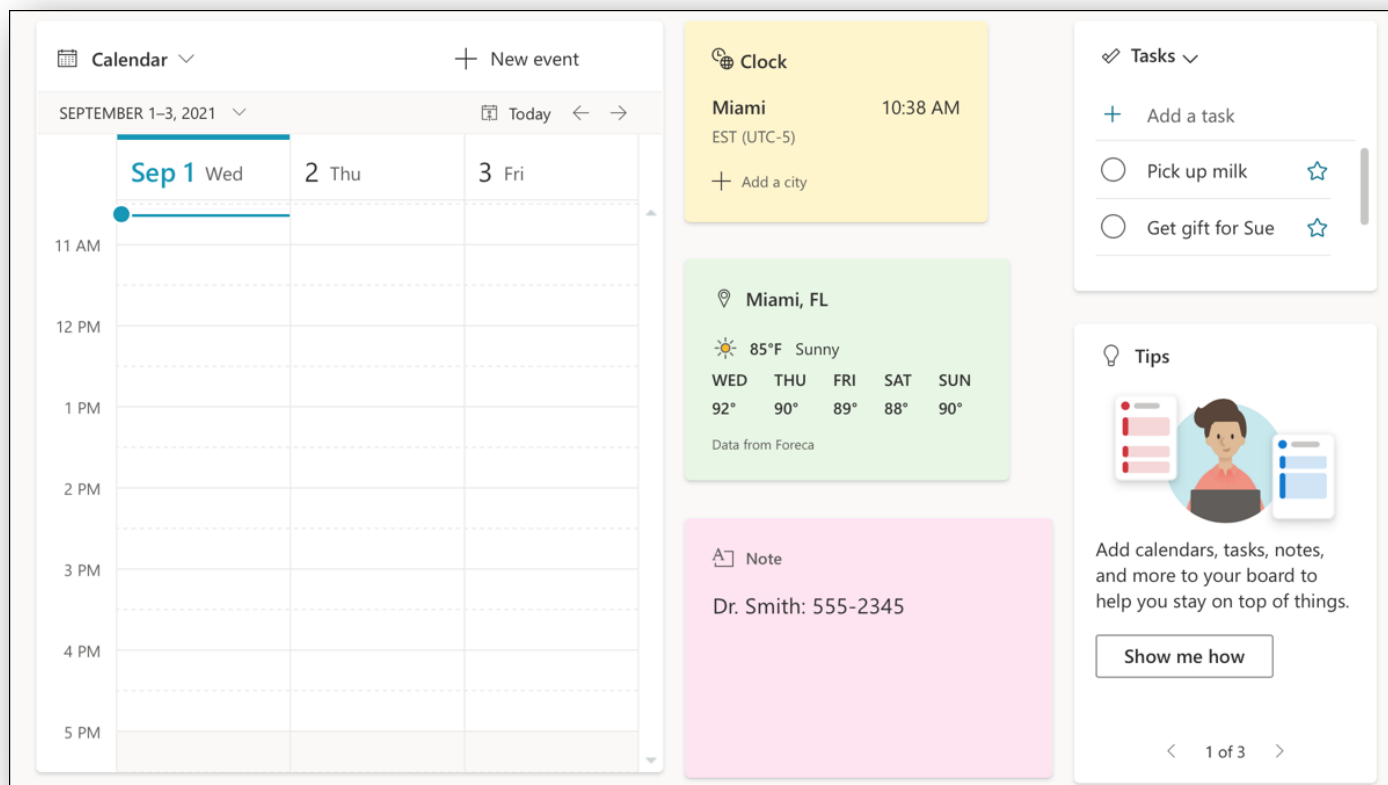
(our favorite)



Mozilla Firefox



Microsoft Edge



**Calendar** + New event

SEPTEMBER 1-3, 2021 Today < >

**Sep 1 Wed** 2 Thu 3 Fri

11 AM  
12 PM  
1 PM  
2 PM  
3 PM  
4 PM  
5 PM

**Clock**

Miami 10:38 AM  
EST (UTC-5)  
+ Add a city

**Miami, FL**

85°F Sunny

WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
92°	90°	89°	88°	90°

Data from Foreca

**Tasks**

+ Add a task

- ☐ Pick up milk ☆
- ☐ Get gift for Sue ☆

**Tips**

Add calendars, tasks, notes, and more to your board to help you stay on top of things.

Show me how

< 1 of 3 >

## How Did They Do It? Walsh Electric

Electricity and entrepreneurship run in the Walsh family. Pat Walsh's grandfather and great grandfather were both electricians and his parents also owned their own business. Pat Walsh set a personal goal to start his own electrical business by his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. He achieved that goal and has been working hard at growing both the business and developing a new generation of young electricians for over 30 years. Led by an excellent core of employees with 20+ years of loyalty, Walsh Electric stays charged up to keep the business running.

Walsh was able to keep working on all projects during the COVID pandemic. Walsh only had two job-based employees with COVID in 2020; notably neither was from workplace contact. They are very proud of their ability to adapt to conditions to keep employees and customers safe. Perhaps the electricity in the Walsh genes insulates against emergencies!

Syscon helps keep Walsh running more efficiently with the Field Integrated Time (FIT) System. Colleen said it saves her a lot of time. She said they most enjoy that

they can call one company that can support both IT and software issues while also providing innovation of processes. Custom reporting tools for Sage 100 Contractor, FIT, Power BI, and the OverUnder Billing report are just a few of the many services that Syscon provides to keep Walsh efficient in the office setting. — BK



From Left to Right:  
Owner Pat Walsh,  
Owner Bill Walsh,  
PM Chris Sikorski

### Fast Facts

**Location:** Yorktown, VA

**Specialty:** Commercial Electric

**Founded:** 1987

**Affiliations:** Association of General Contractors, New Horizons Apprenticeship



Read more at [www.syscon-inc.com/how-did-they-do-it](http://www.syscon-inc.com/how-did-they-do-it)

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

## Upcoming Events

**Event:** Insurance Looks WAY Different These Days, webinar

**Date:** Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 1 p.m. CST

**Register:** [www.syscon-inc.com/events](http://www.syscon-inc.com/events)

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

**Date:** Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>

**Time:** 1 p.m. CST

**Register:** [www.syscon-inc.com/events](http://www.syscon-inc.com/events)

## Featured Articles

**Daily Herald Suburban Business newspaper:**

*How to Protect Against Phishing Scams*



## Proud Members



## Proud Partners



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

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

