



What's New

August is when we meet company-wide and review the goals and focus of the last 12 months, celebrating successes and sharing the health of the company. We then look ahead to the new year's theme and share the upcoming goals and focus areas.

This year is no different – we'll all gather in IL to reconnect and share with each other. It's so amazing to review all that's been accomplished looking back, and to get excited and focused on the upcoming year.

In the meantime, we're moving our remaining Classic Hosting clients to our amazing Azure hosting platform. We've had great feedback from the clients who have completed this move!

- Catherine Wendt



Two Conflicting Truths?

I've often said we have amazing clients, and I've never been more convinced this is true than I am right now! I've also heard some of our client owners and senior staff wondering if they're an island as they boldly move forward with their initiatives and businesses. As I mentioned last month, it's a crazy world out there. If you listen to the news for more than a few minutes, you may start wondering if you're in an alternate reality.

It's interesting. We need to hold two concepts in mind that at first glance may seem contradictory – Protecting against Risk and Rising to the Opportunity.

Inflation is real and it's not over; the labor market is still very tight; there are real shortages and supply chain issues; and the list goes on. The results

of a mostly remote work force at this level and scale, across industries, is still up for debate. If you have cash, there's a real risk of loss when investing, and 'safe' investments won't keep up with inflation.

At the same time, we see our client base hitting new revenue and profitability highs. Some are expanding their offerings within their wheelhouses, accepting strategic new opportunities. Many are finding opportunity across state lines where their industry is under-represented or where they bring unique expertise. Across the board, we see strong balance sheets and strong cash positions as a result of good stewardship and leadership.

So, we thought we'd share some trends across the many states we serve and

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August 2022

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hope this will bring some encouragement and confirmation as you wade through the news reports while weighing the opportunities in front of you.

Fifteen years ago, hardware purchases including servers, network devices, workstations, and laptops, were about one-third of our revenue, like clockwork. In tougher economic times, hardware purchases went down, but we saw a new trend as clients invested in maintenance of their existing infrastructure and rolled out our then-new tools for automation of anti-virus, patch management, and monitoring. In 2019, there was a resurgence in hardware orders (with backlogs) as old Windows 7 machines and servers running 2008 R2 faced end-of-life deadlines. Many of these computers didn't have sufficient resources to run the latest Operating Systems.

This buying trend got quiet again followed shortly thereafter by the pandemic. The ground was shifting, people were forced to work from home, and those with aging infrastructure re-focused on moving shared files to SharePoint, moving server-bound software to hosted cloud offerings, and rolling out security measures such as Multi-

Factor Authentication (MFA). Clients who were undecided between replacing servers and hosting their critical applications re-engaged in the hosting conversation. Several clients have printed our education-focused documents and brought their notes and circled items to our video calls!

We saw our clients working to manage an increase in bid requests and awarded work in 2021 which seems to have no end in sight (but alas, it *will* cycle again). With no need to replace server hardware, our clients have focused on laptops, tablets, and multi-monitor displays, often with docking stations. They are better equipping their remote work force, making them comfortable at home and more mobile than ever.

So, what about your business? If you're feeling 'stuck' or having difficulty navigating these trends, there are quite a few places you can turn for inspiration and solutions. Many industries have focused organizations that are meeting in person again and still holding virtual meetings. As we look across the advertised topics, we see things like 'Making Remote Work Work,' 'Moving to the Cloud,' 'How to Stay Connected with Remote Employees,' and many versions of these. We've found some clever

solutions, some of which are new and untested, others that have solid results over the last months or even year.

At Syscon, we're focused on automation; answering our phones 'live' during the work day; our educational webinars and monthly newsletters; a Teams meeting room for staff to pop in-and-out throughout the day to stay connected; lunch brought in for anyone working at the office; fun outings like our April trip to Arizona for a weekend together; care packages and surprises for our remote teams; constant efforts to stay in communication and stay connected.

What are some of the things you've been trying? We'd love to hear them and learn about your results! Stay the course; you're in good company! - CMW

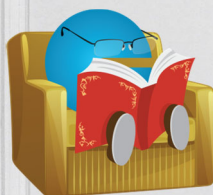
"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."

— Arthur Ashe

Leadership is an Art by Max DePree

I love the opening sentences under the chapter What IS Leadership? "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you." Another nugget right at the beginning; "It also helps us to understand that for many of us there is a fundamental difference between goals and rewards." And these are just in the first 11 pages!

Mr. DePree is dedicated to amazing leadership in his company, the next generation of leaders as the company strives to maintain its excellent reputation, and ultimately, mentoring up-and-



coming leaders through speaking and writing. This book shares his many years' of experience along with some very thought-provoking stories.

Book Nook

In the 1920's, the company's then-president visited the widow of his millwright. This man was a key person in overseeing the work cycle of the equipment to make the furniture. At his home, the widow shared some poetry in memory of her husband. The poet was the millwright. Was this a millwright who wrote poetry, or a poet who worked as a millwright? Do we know our people?!

Another moving story was an unexpected event during an Easter Sunday church service. You really should read this (page 45). Then consider, do you have Roving Leadership on your team? There are many practical solutions and many compelling questions for you as you consider those you lead, whether at work, at home, or in the community. You simply **MUST** read this book! - CMW



Wells Fargo Text—Scam

All of us are pretty fed up with the email phishing scams saying they're from a bank, USPS, DocuSign, and so on. Well now we're getting text message scams as well!

I received a text message saying it was from Wells Fargo. It said they had 'frozen my account to prevent fraud from happening' and I should email them right away and they listed the email address. It ended in @wells.com, which isn't their domain name anyway.

Don't click the links and don't reach out in response to these texts. If you're concerned and it's really your bank, pick up the phone and call your banker. Many of our phones also have a way to block future communications from a specific number, so definitely take advantage of those as well! - CMW

Kaseya Acquires Datto

Many of our clients are familiar with Datto backups; either you have one of those amazing units protecting your data, or you had one before you moved to our hosting environment. We selected Datto to replace our Zenith backup fleet back in 2014 and never looked back. These disaster recovery units have come through for small requests and in serious situations; truly amazing technology.

Recently Kaseya announced it had acquired Datto. In the MSP (Managed Service Providers) industry, there have been huge praises and dire warnings as we watch another consolidation. I had the opportunity to hear Fred Voccola, the CEO and President of Kaseya, speak at an industry event and take our questions.

He's had some follow up interviews that have been shared, as well.

There are no plans to interrupt the Datto disaster recovery offerings. They are excited to add Datto to their solution offerings and are committed to continue development, improvement, and look for ways to reduce costs. We are cautiously optimistic. — CMW

Lending Tree Data Breach

Mortgage giant Lending Tree, LLC recently confirmed that the company has experienced a data breach after cybercriminals discovered a code vulnerability on its website. According to a notice filed by the company, on June 3, 2022, Lending Tree discovered a code vulnerability on the company's website that likely resulted in bad actors gaining access to sensitive personal information for customers. Lending Tree believes that the vulnerability was in place since mid-February 2022. Risk to Business: Severe

Exposed information varies depending on the individual, but may include client names, Social Security numbers, dates of birth and street address. Individual Risk: Severe.

The financial sector was at the top of the cybercriminal hit list in 2021 and that hasn't changed in 2022. — ID Agent

Guest Wi-Fi—QR Code

Here's an interesting and creative idea — we recently helped one of our clients with their internal and guest wi-fi segmentation. When our tech left, he shared how to get to each of them and what a guest would need to log on. On our next visit, they had turned that logon info into a QR code; go Texas!

When guests are in their office, they can use their cell phones to scan the QR code and get on the guest wi-fi. What a creative idea! It seems the QR code is making a comeback since the pandemic (touchless access). Perhaps it will stick this time. — CMW



Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Theragun PRO

First of all, Larry has one of these. He received it as a gift and LOVES it. This is referred to as a 'percussive therapy device.' This gadget is designed to provide a deeper, more effective massage.

The four highlights include 1) Amplitude, 60% deeper into muscles for a more effective, longer-lasting relief and recovery; 2) Power and Durability, their brushless motor can withstand up to 60 lbs of pressure; 3) Design grips include standard, base, and reverse to reach every muscle; 4) Personalized attachments from a safer foam material to targeted shapes for specific areas of the body.

They have a Pro model for \$599 which can also be personalized with custom engraving (for a fee), Elite for \$399, Prime for \$299, and Mini which is portable for \$199.

The Pro came with a really nice case for the device, chargers, and attachments.

Check it out at therabody.com



CONSTRUCTION CORNER



Insanity!

Twice a year I assist several clients in updating their Iron Workers' Union rates and benefits for the paygroups. More than once I found myself shaking my head in disbelief while I entered the updated information, and this July was no exception.

Those Iron Workers have a tough job, and those that work on the high rises have a very risky job, even with all the safety improvements over the years. The hourly wage is significant, but so is the skill and risk required to do the job.

Still, I don't know how the construction companies compete for work. This July, the Journeyman wage is \$55.70/hour with an hourly dues contribution of \$2.52 – again, skill and risk, I get it! Here's the kicker – the Employer benefits for the same hour are an additional \$85.65/hr!! On top of that the Employer has the matching FICA and Medicare, Workers Comp, Gen Liability, State Unemployment, and in some of those states, even more state-specific costs.

Even an Apprentice making between \$28.97 and \$30.18/hr has another \$59.48/hr in Employer expenses, and that's for the Apprentices. I sure hope the members receive these benefits and that the unions are being good stewards. We would encourage those of you who are union contractors to stay involved in your boards and in the negotiation

Fast AP and AR Aging Statements for S100C

One of the complaints we hear all the time is how long these aging reports take to run. Several clients use our Fast AP and/or Fast AR Aging reports and they love them! They're each \$10/month and save a ton of time! Interested?

processes. It's in all our best interests that you do. – CMW

Part II: Sage 100 Contractor v24

Before I jump in, a reminder that not all third-party software that integrates with S100C is compatible with this new release. Check with your vendors before you start. AND, if you're using Sage Estimating version 20.1 or earlier, and you're using the integration feature, do NOT upgrade to v24 yet; these are not compatible.

“...a new 7-7 User Activity menu item...to see all entries an employee made during the last two weeks of their employment...”

In last month's newsletter we covered: **Nick Names** for Employees; new **tax tables** for AL, IL, Maryland state and counties, and UT; new options for access to the 1-3 Journal Transaction screen so those who are entering can **drill down**; the new copy-paste option for **contact info from a client screen** into the job screen; one of my least favorite, **'changing' a saved record**, but what's really happening is Sage voids the original and re-creates the new one with your changes, sometimes crossing posting periods and now this is expanded; a security feature that allows you to **restrict access to an individual employee record** instead of the menu item; updated the Employee Pay stubs to show **Direct Deposit allocations** by account; and the ability to run a Job Cost Summary **Report by Date**, rather than just posting period.

I ran out of room, so here's the rest of the highlights. All the features are listed in the release notes from Sage, too.

Purchase Order Field Changes – I am NOT very excited about this one, and we've already had a client call and ask

how the PO data was changed. Sage now allows the Vendor (real bummer), the Job, and the Phase fields to be changed in a saved Purchase Order. We see a lot of problems with this change. At least you have to turn on the right to change these fields in the 6-6-1 screen, but if you do, proceed with caution!

This one is very common in the IT industry so we're glad to see it rolled out here. If you have rights to the Utilities module, there's a new **7-7 User Activity menu item**. This allows you to view the history for a selected user in various modules for a specific date range. The example they gave was a report to see all the entries an employee made during the last two weeks of their employment, all without building/using queries. You have to have Administrator credentials to get at this feature.

According to Sage, U.S. banks now require a **Standard Entry Class Code** in the headers of ACH files. In the 7-1 Company info screen, on the Vendor ACH tab, they've added a Standard Entry Class Code option. Code PPD is when most of your ACH payments are to individuals, and CCD is for payments to companies and/or tax entities.

Not sure if I like this one – you'll now get a warning when Saving or Posting a transaction to a job with a status **5-Completed**. If it works like the recent default check number warning, this may be annoying.

Those are the rest of the highlights from the Release Notes. – CMW



Quote of the Month

“It's rare when a well-managed job is under billed.” - Tim Long

M365 Education Station

10 Things to Do in SharePoint

1. Upload Files to SharePoint

From Office.com, you can drag files from your computer into your document library. You can also upload files or folders from SharePoint.

2. Open a Document

If your computer is sync'd with SharePoint, open documents in various folders through the 'tree' as usual.

3. Work on the Same Document with Others at the Same Time

Open the document you want to work on. The initials of each person in the document will be at the top right of the document.

4. Share Documents

From Office.com, select the document you want to share, click the ellipses (...) to Share or download.

5. Share Sites

If you have site owner permissions, click SharePoint or Sites, then choose the site you want to share, and click Share.

6. Create a Team Site

A team site is a group of related web pages, a document library for files, and lists for data management. Log into SharePoint. Click +Create site and select Team site.

7. Add a List or Library to Team Site

From your Team SharePoint site, pick New and then pick List or Library from the list.

8. Keep Prior Versions of a Document While You Revise It

In SharePoint, right-click to open a document and click Version History.

9. Search for Something

Type a search keyword in the Search box, then click the Search icon. The Search feature at Office.com or through Teams is very robust! (Chris loves this!)

10. Share Information with Your Entire Organization

Select +Create news post and share your news.



Tip of the Month

Did you know?

A document library is a secure place to store files where you and your co-workers can find them. SharePoint is Microsoft's secure document library that you can access from any Internet connection, provided you have active credentials. This replaces logging into the server to see file shares.

You can use a desktop, laptop, tablet, or smartphone!

Rather than emailing a file, you can send them a link and include security restrictions using SharePoint through Office.com!



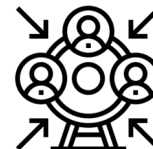
Simple sharing & seamless collaboration

Share files, data, news, and resources. Collaborate effortlessly and securely with team members inside and outside your organization, across PCs, Macs, and mobile devices.



Harness collective knowledge

You're just a click away from what you are looking for, with powerful search and intelligent ways to discover information, expertise, and insights to inform decisions and guide action.



Engage & inform your organization

Drive organizational efficiency by sharing common resources and applications on home sites and portals.



Transform business processes

Accelerate productivity by transforming processes—from simple tasks like notifications and approvals to complex operational workflows. With SharePoint lists and libraries, Microsoft Flow, and PowerApps, you can create rich digital experiences with forms, workflows, and custom apps for every device.



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How Did They Do It? Nappa Electrical Contractors

Changing guidelines. Supply chain struggles. Increasing costs. Workforce challenges – keeping everyone healthy and working. Setting up and administering FFCRA leave. These may sound familiar – so many companies are facing these pandemic-related obstacles.

How did Nappa Electrical overcome these difficulties not only to continue their services but to expand their offerings? Nappa Controller Angela Vacirca listed a few reasons, including longtime employees, some of whom have been with the company over 25 years. “The success of the company is really based on the longevity and dedication of the employees at growing the company through (owner) Ed’s direction,” Angela said. Ed Nappa provides excellent leadership. He’s also helped the company carve out a niche in bio tech – Angela credits his customer service with his success in this sector. And the last reason

for their growth? “We learned things are ever-changing, so we need to be patient and ride out those waves,” Angela said.

COVID pushed them to move to cloud hosting for Sage. “It changed our lives tremendously. It’s been great,” Angela said. Using Syscon’s Field Integrated Time (F.I.T.) System has streamlined their time collection and payroll process. Now that Nappa has expanded to offer more design build services instead of strictly electrical installations, they need to be as efficient as possible! – BK



Angela Vacirca,
Controller

Fast Facts

Location: Burlington, MA

Specialty: Electrical

Founded: 1969

Affiliations: American Builders Company, MA Electrical Contractors Association.

 **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: Cyber Security:
What You Need to Know,
in person Lunch and Learn

Date: Tuesday, August 30

Time: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. PST

Register: Blanco Cocina +
Cantina, Biltmore Fashion
Park, Phoenix AZ

www.asa-az.org
or call 602-274-8979



Featured Articles

**The Daily Herald, a
Suburban Chicago
newspaper, interviewed
Catherine Wendt as part
of their Coffee Break
series. The article ran
online and in print on
Sunday July 17th!**

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