# Syscon U

## What's New

Happy New Year! We're looking forward to working alongside you and your team in 2023. We wish you a safe, prosperous, and blessed 2023!

We are very excited over here. All of the legacy hosted servers have been moved to our Azure hosting platform—quite the undertaking! Thanks for your cooperation as we wrapped up this important project.

In 2023, we have a couple initiatives including our security hardening for all our clients.

This is a hectic month for most offices as you wrap up the 2022 entries, wrap up the yearend payroll returns, and kick off a new year. Look forward to the ride! - *Catherine Wendt*

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**January 2023**


## Change: Increase the Odds of Success

Planning on making changes in 2023? Many businesses have plans for the new year—new software; new workflow; new staff or new roles on a team; moving paper PO's and/or timecards to electronic; and so on. You've probably also read the statistics about the failure rate of New Year's goals or have your own stories about initiatives that failed. Well, you're not alone, and there are some very good reasons, as well as some things you can do to increase the odds of success.

Apparently, we are wired to resist change! According to Britt Andreatta, PhD, 'Several studies have shown that 50 to 70 percent of change initiatives fail.' If she's right, that's a huge amount of lost time and money, not to mention the unintended consequences such as the quality of work and employee loyalty. Changes can be small, like a new phone system or quite extensive such as a new estimating program. And while we're focused on the work changes, our teams have personal changes outside of work. They may have New Year's goals of their own, welcoming a new child, getting married, to name a few.

Dr. Andreatta has identified five types of change: **1) Strategic**: redesigning how we deliver our services; targeting a new market. **2) Structural**: opening a new division; changes in management and/or leadership; remote work vs. in-office. **3) Process**: optimizing existing processes; moving server shares to SharePoint; adding/changing software. **4) Talent**: everything from hiring, supervising, training; changes to employee packages to attract talent. **5) Cultural**: shift in office culture; core values playing out and re-enforced; how staff engages with customers or vendors.

A very interesting nuance—a change is something you execute; a transition is our emotional response during a change. In his book *Managing Transitions*, Dr. William Bridges points out that leaders often focus on

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designing and executing a change without thinking about or preparing to mange the transition. No matter how well thought out your plan is, people can and will be resistant, be reluctant, and in some cases, will dig in their heels!

So what if, while planning the changes, we put the same amount of effort into thinking through the team members who will be impacted? We have a couple of clients who do this very well. They know their teams, how much communication needs to happen before a change, who will be most resistant, and who will want to help make the project successful. One of our East coast clients had to roll out MFA in order to renew their cyber insurance, something we had been discussing with them for a while, but they knew there would be much resistance. Now with the threat of non-renewal, they had a 'bad guy' (the insurance company) and a reason to band together. For the few that were digging in their heels, they put a few office people in their cars, sent them to the job sites, and had them setup the phones right there in the field; brilliant!

Another aspect to consider is how long the change will take. A legacy accounting change will be a 4 month transition. Changing a legacy phone system to Teams Voice is 2 weeks for management, then one day once the lines are ported!

No one likes change; really. So when it's going to happen anyway, how much input, how much 'say' did the impacted team have in making the choice? Were they involved in the decision to make a change? The selection process? The planning process? All of these impact the level of cooperation and therefore the success of the change. Gone are the days when the owner walked in, announced the change and expected it to be done. People still grumbled and there were still resisters, but that's 'just the way it was.' In the current workplace, our teams have additional motivations and different expectations. They want and need to be involved. No one is suggesting you need consensus or a committee, but if you want a successful change and you want the team to survive the transition, you'll need some new leadership skills to get it done.

When you set the expectation and plan for the transition, knowing your people as well as you do, they'll be better equipped to ride out the change. They're not being difficult, it's human nature. You can expect a variety of emotions during the project, from shock, fear, anxiety, depression, all the way to acceptance, curiosity, and hope.

Lastly, consider how many changes are going on at any one time. Even a minor change like moving to Teams Voice could be the 'last straw' if that's also the time you're bringing all your server data to the cloud.

There are some great resources to help navigate and manage the changes as you grow your business. Get educated and get going! - CMW

> *"Fear comes free.*
> *Faith takes work."*
> — Jon Acuff

## Book Nook

### A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World
### by Ken Harrison

As I sat down to read this book, it sounded like it was written to men, specifically. After all, Ken Harrison is the CEO of Promise Keepers. I almost put it down, but I'm glad I didn't!

I love the opening Preface—What's the Point of it all? Why are we called to be selfless? We can't 'earn' our way into heaven, so why try so hard? Why deny ourselves? Ken Harrison has some really good answers!

As business owners, you've heard of a 'life style' business, which often means a balance of comfort and dollars. Others want a 'growth' business, which usually means immersing yourself, making it your passion, stretching yourself and long days/weeks. There's an interesting concept here; is your faith, are your convictions a 'lifestyle' or a passionate growth motivator? When judgement day arrives, what will we say we did with our lives? This book is asking if we're willing to be daring!

Whatever your faith, are you all in? There's a great quote; 'There is an old saying that hard times make strong men, strong men make good times, good times make weak men, weak men make hard times.' We see this all around us. This book challenges us to revisit our comfort and asks if we've been courageous; are we staying 'salty' or have we been lulled into inaction; what opportunities do we have to step up for those around us; and more.

He's making his case from the Christian perspective, but I believe all of us would benefit from this book. Highly recommended! - *CMW*


## Outlook Signature Changes

As part of some recent Microsoft updates, you may have noticed a change in the email signatures. If you haven't seen it yet, it's coming your way. If the techs hadn't mentioned the latest updates in our daily meeting, I might have panicked and thought they were all missing!

I have quite a few signatures featuring our fun Gus logo characters and quotes I've collected over the years. At the end of the month, I logged in to update my default signature. What I found was a different layout.

Now there are different groups of signatures.  There is a list to choose from under the each email account, and a separate 'Signatures on this device.'

Unfortunately, the 'on this device' signatures are not available to select as a default under the E-mail account group. From what we've found so far, the signatures have to be re-created under the e-mail group in order to select as the default for New messages or Replies/ forwards.

Seems like the concept of 'signatures on this device' separate from default email signatures is a nice idea, but this doesn't play well in practice.

For now, if you want to have any of the 'device' signatures as a default, they have to be re-created under the E-mail so they can be selected; very irritating! - *CMW*

## SharePoint: Locked and Password-Protected Files

Several of our clients use password-protection on various files, especially Word and Excel. Also, many of our clients have the Autosave feature turned on for these documents. This brings up several interesting questions when editing these files, and some interesting logistics when someone tries to open the file.

Let's start with the call we received. A file that was definitely password protected showed that the last person in the file was someone who should NOT have access; very concerning. Turns out that when someone tries to open a password protected file and does not have the password, but has Autosave turned on, they can't get into the file, but it will show that person as the last one editing (Autosave was on). That doesn't mean they got into the file.

The collaborate feature with Autosave is another interesting situation. If you un-protect a password protected file, it will Autosave right away making it technically available for others while you're working on it. You would see them 'enter' the file of course, but then it's too late. We suggest you turn 'off' Autosave while working on the protected file so it's not saved as 'open' while working.

One other fun fact: when working in the Web version of Excel, if a file is password protected, you can 'unprotect for only your session,' which unlocks it only for you. There's a button that says 'manage permissions' and a 'lock icon' button that unlocks it for 'my session.' —*CMW*

## Windows Defender

When we setup a computer for our clients, we turn this off. Our Anti-virus/ Endpoint Detection & Response (EDR) tool is MUCH better, providing all the protection you need.

You might see a prompt that Windows Defender is not enabled; please do NOT enable it. When a computer has two AV programs, they 'fight' each other and can bring your computer to its knees! - *CMW*

## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

**Neo P1**

According to their website, our homes are 5 times more polluted than outdoor air due to Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). It's their goal to fight air pollution one home at a time.

Regular plants tested by NASA sometimes capture VOCs, but without a way to recycle them, they end up accumulating. Instead of storing the pollutants, the Neo P1 turns them into water, sugars, amino acids, and oxygen, which makes it a power plant and an elegant way to purify the air.

Why spend $179+ for one of these plants? They have introduced metabolism-engineered genes to create synthetic pathways. These special genes turn harmful chemicals into proteins. Then the plant's cells become a natural air purifier. The shell the plant lives in is planet-friendly and maximizes the air exchange between the soil and the room. Check out the science and system at neoplants.com.

# CONSTRUCTION CORNER

## Positive Pay

This seems to come in waves. Last year at this time, and this year too, more and more clients are experiencing bank fraud. Checks are presented against their accounts and cashed. In many cases, our clients lose a lot of time, but they were not responsible for the stolen funds. We have a couple of things to share on this topic.

In one case, our client left checks in the mailbox for the carrier to pick up when they drop off the mail; lots of us do this. The checks were taken, the name replaced, and the thieves cashed the checks themselves.

You've probably heard of Positive Pay. Your banker may have even asked you to consider implementing it. Basically, you provide the bank with a list of checks that you've cut—date, payee, dollar amount. These are uploaded on the bank site in a specific format. From there, the bank matches all those details to the checks that are presented. If anything doesn't match, they reject the check.

Yes, it's one more step after a check run, and this would include all checks you issue including Payroll checks. The amount of time to create the file and upload it to the bank is a small fraction of the hours and aggravation you'll go through when there's fraud. One of our clients had to setup a new checking account, which was subsequently compromised! The whole nightmare started over again.

There's also an option called Reverse Positive Pay. In this case, only checks above a specific dollar amount have to be reported. Unfortunately, the thieves know about this option, so one of our clients was shocked to find about 40 checks had cleared the bank, all for under the $100 limit, all fraudulent!

> *"The amount of time to… upload is a small fraction of the hours and aggravation you'll go through when there's fraud."*

For our Sage 100 Contractor clients, we have a Positive Pay program that is fully integrated with S100C and provides the file you upload to the bank. Our templates work with most banks, and since it's our tool, we're able to make changes to meet bank-specific criteria.

Check with your bank to see if your business accounts include Positive Pay, or if there is a charge to use this feature. We strongly recommend implementing this safeguard. It will save you much heartache and lost time. Don't be surprised if banks start insisting on Positive Pay; this is expensive for them, too! -*CMW*

### Aatrix: Not Just Tax Returns

In addition to updating all the Federal and State payroll tax forms in Sage 100 Contractor, Aatrix has a library of other HR forms such as updated W-4 forms, I-9 forms, as well as the New Hire report. And, they can file electronic forms on your behalf. Aatrix.com for info.

## SendGrid to Email Check Stubs

In a recent newsletter, we shared Microsoft's decision to end SMTP to send group email such as direct deposit vouchers. The old format has long been considered a risk, then Microsoft decided to shut it down.

Sage knew this change was coming, so version 24 is all set to make the move from SMTP to SendGrid. There are free accounts based on a limited number of email messages.

Clients with say 55 employees were surprised to find out they had exceeded the 100-count limit, so what happened? Sage made the decision to hard code that not only does the recipient get the email, but the Sender gets an email too. So those 55 emails are now 110, pushing you above the 'free' limit. We'd like to emphasize that this is hard coded in Sage—we cannot turn off emailing the Sender when these go out.

It might seem a little annoying to have to move to the paid version, but in the big scheme of things, it's still a cost savings. No envelopes to get to the job sites, no postage to mail the pay stubs, no paper costs for printing; it's still a win, so take a deep breath and sign up for the paid service. Feel free to send a request to Sage to make the Sender copy optional, though! -*CMW*

## Change Orders: Description Defaults

Many of you use the Change Order module to manage and track change orders on your jobs. Approved Change Orders update the contract and budget. Open Change Orders are visible in the 3-5 Contract Summary so you can get them resolved before issuing Final Waivers. This is a great module!

One of the questions we hear from time-to-time is how to force the description field in the grid to default to the description that was already typed in the general information above.

Be sure you're logged in with Administrative rights. Click on the description field in the grid and hit the F7 (Function 7) key. In the default entry field across the top, type this field name: prmchg.dscrpt, then Save!

# M365 Education Station

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## 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

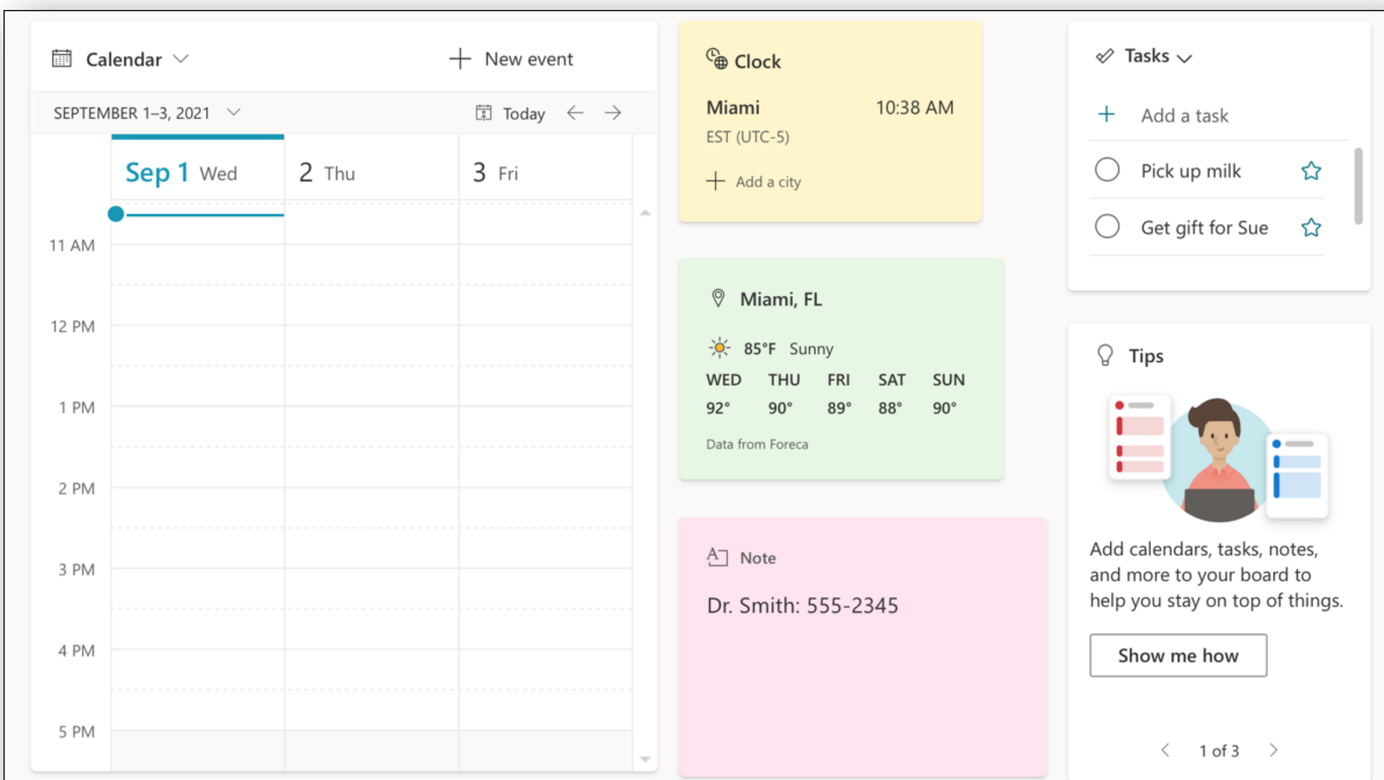
### Did you know?

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

(our favorite)

Mozilla Firefox

Microsoft Edge



## How Did They Do It?
### Syscon, Inc.

We actually started as a music company. Larry composed for acoustical instruments which we recorded and sold through local stores and catalogs. We found a local artist for the cassette covers and a duplication vendor in Carol Stream, IL. Then we created a sampler CD for our *Quiet Times* series.

Larry took some programming projects on the side to help fund the new music business while he worked on his Masters in Mathematical Probability and Statistics. We had a Leading Edge computer and lots of green bar paper! It didn't take long for the computers to move from a 'side' focus to the primary.

Having grown up the son of a Mason Contractor, we became a trusted advisor to contractors as they began to adopt computers. Most of our work was in the Chicago area with lots of miles on our cars. As remote access and monitoring tools came to the marketplace, we were able to serve more clients, more quickly, without all the drive time.

All those computers needed software, so we became resellers of Master Builder, now Sage 100 Contractor. We use the tools we support at our clients, so we moved our accounting, sales quotes, and work orders. With our programming background, we became well-known across the U.S. for custom reports and other analytical tools for construction.


**Larry & Cathy Wendt**

We continue to serve clients in about 33 states with anything computer related – remote time collection; networks; cloud hosting; analytical tools; accounting and project management workflows; payroll processing; day-to-day user support. It's been quite a ride and we're excited to see Chris move to the VP role. – *CMW*

Fast Facts

**Location**: Hinsdale, IL
**Specialty**: Technology for Construction
**Founded**: 1986
**Affiliations**: TUG, C12, ASA Chicago, ASA Arizona, CFMA, Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce, Microsoft CSP, Professional Women in Construction, Certified WBE

www ***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:** **Field Time Collection the Easy Way,** webinar

**Date:** Thursday, Jan 19th

**Time:** 1:00 p.m. Central

**Register:** www.syscon-inc.com/events

## 2022-2023 Theme

***Team Momentum***

***Who We are***

***How We Work***

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**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.**