SYSCON U

What's New

Well, looks like we made it through January's deadlines! Now we can enjoy some delicious chocolates, perhaps some gifts, and the father-daughter special night out this month.

We are launching our Syscon SendGrid service—Microsoft and Sage set the stage, but many of our clients have frustrations with the mass email solution. We've put together a great service at a 'slam dunk' price point. Check it out! —>

We've been rolling up our sleeves to earn some Microsoft certifications and have several training initiatives that begin this month. A reminder that March is also the beginning of Daylight Savings; Spring Ahead!
- *Catherine Wendt*

In this Issue

February 2023

SendGrid—How About An Alternative

In last month's newsletter, we had a short article under the Construction Corner about the change from SMTP to SendGrid to email direct deposit stubs. Back in October, Microsoft made the smart move to turn off a security risk. Sage was ready for this change, allowing the SendGrid alternative to be configured to email payroll vouchers.

So here's what happened next (and an alternative we put together):

- Sage hardcoded that when you send one of these, the sender receives a copy, creating two 'sends' for each person, pushing many of our clients over the 'free' limit

- Even the paid version has some limits—when you unblock a provider, it's not 'locked in' since these are not dedicated IP addresses at the lower service levels.

- Support through SendGrid is limited with the basic paid versions

- You have to manage your own account

You need a better option. We hear you!

Turns out that at the higher level packages, many of these issues are resolved. Unfortunately, these higher service packages are quite pricey, especially when you consider that the previous process was free (but had security risks). Our techs are pretty frustrated, too. As soon as they get things off the black lists, and approved, SendGrid processes next week's data through a different IP address and the whole process starts over. Meanwhile, your employees are waiting for the email with their paystub info—very frustrating!

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The techs put their heads together and did some research to come up with a solution we can offer while addressing several of these key concerns.

We're offering a Syscon SendGrid service. Here's how it works and why you'll want to consider making the switch:

- We have purchased a high-level SendGrid account which provides higher level support.

- With this level of service, we have dedicated IP addresses, so once things are unblocked, they'll stay that way!

- We can continue to be your first call for support and issues. No more sitting on hold with the vendor.

- At $15/month, you'll have better service through us and a better experience, all at a cost savings!

The fee to make the move to this service is $50, one-time. For our hosted and fully managed clients, we'll waive the $50 charge to switch you from your existing account to our service.

> *"The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow.'*
> — William Pollard

Features	Free	Essentials	Syscon Service
Technical Support	Ticket Support	Ticket and Chat Support	Syscon Supports You!
SMTP and API	✓	✓	✓
Purpose Built Mail Transfer Agent	✓	✓	✓
Domain Authentication (SPF/DKIM)	✓	✓	✓
Reputation & Delivery Visibility	✓	✓	✓
Dedicated IP Addresses	✗	✗	✓
Automated, dedicated IP warm up	✗	✗	✓
Dedicated IP Pooling	✗	✗	✓
Bounce and Block Classifications	✗	✗	✓
Guaranteed Support Response Times	✗	✗	✓

Book Nook

"If You Want Something Done…' by Nikki R Haley

Before anyone gets mad at me, I'd like to state for the record that Larry recommended this book to me! This isn't a 'complaining' or an 'I'm better than you' book. The women featured include many names from history, as well as a few 'everyday' heroes. The book's title is a take on a Margaret Thatcher quote.

In these 10 life stories, the bold and courageous women spent their lives learning and becoming the type of person they needed to be at the moment the situation called them to rise up. Some women chose their path; others had no choice as to where they found themselves, only in what they chose to do next!

Although the women are from different spans of time and geography, they had some common qualities—Tenacity, Perseverance, Service, Decisiveness, Courage, and strength. Fortunately for the rest of us, these are qualities we can continue to grow in our own lives.

You'll recognize some of these names, and their stories are truly fascinating. The author herself, Nikki Haley; Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meir; Wilma Rudolph; Amelia Earhart; to name a few. These women faced many issues on many fronts. They pushed through fear, moving into a higher purpose. We are reminded that we, all of us, are more than the issues the media divides us on.

I'll bet you have some young women in your life; a daughter, niece, granddaughter, sister, friend. This book could be a source of encouragement. For the men, a window! *- CMW*

Microsoft Authenticator MFA Changes

I remember when 'day lamps' were a new thing for cars. We were encouraged to have our headlights on during the day, and new cars were coming out with an 'auto' feature for day lamps. At the time, the insurance industry cited many studies where this small change had a huge impact, reducing accidents! Then we got used to the headlights, and although it's still important, the impact is reduced; it's just human nature that we would get used to seeing the headlights.

MFA Fatigue—the new human 'syndrome' impacting the success of MFA to secure your accounts. When you have multi-factor authentication (MFA) enabled (and you should!), you'll receive a message asking for approval, often through the Microsoft Authenticator app on your phone. If you're not actively logging in, then someone else may be trying and you can 'Deny' so they can't access the account. This has saved quite a few of our clients!

In a rather high-profile case, a C-Suite member of a large company was being inundated by authentication requests. Out of sheer frustration, he hit 'Accept' and was hacked! I'm glad to report that when one of our clients had a similar barrage, they called us and we were able to confirm the hacking attempt and shut down the bad actors.

In response to this 'fatigue,' Microsoft has made some changes to the authentication message. If you want to approve the sign in, you'll enter the two-digit code you received. There's even an option to see a GPS image along with the code. Seems

like a simple change, although it is yet another step.

The biggest resistance seems to be coming from those with Apple watches. It was pretty easy to hit 'Approve' but less convenient to type in the two digits which are in a pretty small font when displayed on a watch!

So here's the news we need to share—Microsoft has been rolling this out over the last several months. It's been included in various updates and new installations, and for now, it's something that can be enabled. *Beginning February 27th*, this will no longer be optional; the two-digit code for MFA will be enforced. Kind of reminds me of seat belts—first it was recommended, then it was the law and was aggressively enforced. Now all new cars come with the annoying beeping if you don't have it on. I think we all have to take a deep breath and know that this is for our safety (belts and two-digit codes). Any questions, give us a call. - *CMW*

Firewalls: Hardware vs Software

Hardware: A physical firewall works independently from the computer(s) it's protecting as it filters information and traffic coming from the internet into the network or work group. The unit will protect the entire network and devices, not just one computer. These business-class units provide deeper and more advanced protection from a broader range of threats. It can also allow traffic (or restrict) to certain devices such as a server or camera system while leaving the rest of the network/group protected.

Software: This is a program on a computer itself. It inspects the data coming in and out of the specific device. It can be customized by the user and provides only a basic level of protection, and only when the unit is up and running.

Thanks Dan! — *CMW*

The Paper Tablet—Kind of interesting that an electronic note-taking system is touting how similar it is to paper! One of the features is that with this tablet, you are 'unplugged' from the constant notifications, allowing you to stay focused on the document, drawings, and sketches you're working on. Then when you're ready, your writing can be converted to text.

The notebook's 'instant' response and texturized surface make it a great writing experience. For the text conversion, it supports 33 languages, cursive and block letters, and you can share the notes via email.

This system allows you to keep your notes in one place with 'practically unlimited' pages and folders; use tags and bookmark key topics. The subscription service includes unlimited cloud storage, a 1-year free Connect trial, and hardware protection plan. Also access files through MS One-Drive, for example.

With a 2-week battery life, and other features, these start at $299.

CONSTRUCTION CORNER

FIT System—My Day

Quite a few of our Sage 100 Contractor clients use our Field Integrated Time (FIT) System to electronically collect time, approve it, and pull it into payroll for processing. Thanks to those of you who have shared such nice comments about the program and the time-savings you've experienced!

We've also had some suggestions to streamline the time entry, especially for Crew entry. Our programming team has made some beautiful changes! We've been testing them, and have rolled them out to several clients, with great results.

In the coming months, all of our FIT System clients will move to the new My Day time entry page, and all new clients will start with this view. We held a webinar a while back announcing this change for all FIT System core users, and shared some of the other modules.

So what's new?
- Card Focused Design—Distinct Sections on each page for a mobile-forward design
- One page for Hours, Expenses, Time Punches, and Schedule Viewing
- Easy view of your Total Hours for the day and week
- Switch between days with ease
- View Work Hours and Lunch entries with just one click or tap
- Easily Punch in and out with FIT's Time Punch feature
- Add 'sticky' jobs to your week to

reduce entries (and save time!)
- There's even a My Day Tour for a self paced overview of all the features

In the coming newsletters, we'll review some of the features in the Core FIT System (you might be surprised by all that's included!), as well as some add-on modules to meet specific needs. Both existing FIT users and those

> ### *"In the coming months, all of our FIT System clients will move to the new My Day time entry page."*

thinking about it are always welcome at our monthly webinars where we review the product, do a 'live' demo, and wrap up with Q&A. Consider joining us! - *CMW*

TUG Article: Third Party Payroll

I've known Kathy G for many years. I can appreciate the many requests she's probably received for S100C clients who use a third party payroll service but don't want to spend the time to tie out the payroll records to the payroll service—I think her end process recommendation is a mistake.

Ultimately, YOU are responsible for the payroll! You will be accountable for the wages reported, by employee, the accuracy of the reports filed each quarter/year, and what was paid on your behalf. Payroll services make mistakes. We've been in the middle of cleaning these up on multiple occasions!

Many—and I mean <u>many</u>—times, a client who moves to Sage 100 Contractor and uses a payroll service will ultimately make the decision to bring the payroll in-house. If the records are detailed by employee, you can make arrangements to bring the payroll in-house at a quarter, and pick up the rest of your payroll year without them. This

has been a HUGE money saver and has reduced a lot of headaches, not to mention flat out errors!

And for those of you with unions or prevailing wage work, you'll want all the benefits by person with the right rules (add/deduct, hours worked versus hours paid, etc.). And of course all of this flows through to Certified payroll, as well.

If you dial in the calcs and make sure the payroll service is correct, processing payroll will come down to Fed and State withholdings. And if you've dialed that in, perhaps bringing payroll in-house would bring you the big Cost Savings it's brought to several of our clients!

Afraid of the actual report filings? Aatrix is a great alternative and fully integrated with Sage 100 Contractor. It's also a LOT cheaper than a payroll service and YOU get to confirm accuracy, and they're responsible to have the latest report forms. -*CMW*

Temp Labor and Job Cost Details

Sticking with this month's Payroll theme, thought I'd mention the Temp Labor trend. Usually these are individuals through a Temp Agency to whom you pay an hourly fee that covers all expenses.

Since these folks are usually working on specific jobs or projects (including the Shop), it's important to capture hours by person, by job or project. Using the payroll module is an excellent way to have detailed labor reports and use the T&M Module for billing. When setup correctly, you'll have hours reports (by Employee Position) to report to the agency, too.

When posted, the costs hit the job/project and are set aside in a liability account, ready to pay the service. If this sounds like something you could use, let's get on a call and talk it through! -

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S100C Upgrades

Many of you have already been upgraded to the latest version of Sage 100 Contractor. We expect a few more updates that will be focused on State-specific changes. If your state is on the Release Notes, give us a call and we'll upgrade again!

M365 Education Station

6 Cool Things You (Probably) Didn't Know About Outlook

1

Forget to attach a file?

Outlook can stop you from sending an email without an attachment. If you write a new email and type the words 'attachment' or 'attached,' then try sending without including the attachment, Outlook will remind you that you might have forgotten to attach a file. You can go ahead and attach your file before sending your message!
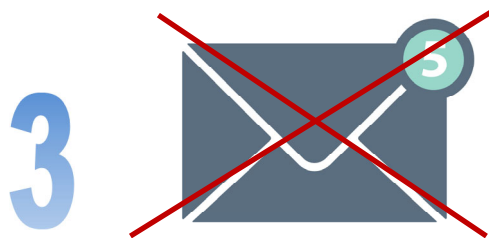
2

Travel reservations auto-save!

If your flight, hotel, or rental car reservations are sent to your email, Outlook will automatically add these to your calendar, plus the associated information like confirmation numbers and links.

3

Ignore an email thread!

If you've found yourself on the receiving end of an email thread that you don't need/want to be on, you can 'Ignore' the entire conversation instead of deleting every message in the thread as it arrives. Right-click the message in the thread you want to ignore, then select 'Ignore' (towards the bottom of the menu). Poof! Messages will be deleted.

4

Don't miss important messages

On the lookout for an important message, but you can't keep staring at your inbox waiting for it? Customize your alerts so you'll get a notification about your critical emails. Right-click the email, then select the 'Rules' option. Click 'Create Rule,' and check the boxes for the options you want!
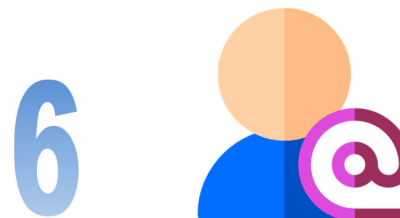
5

Clean up a folder

Got multiple threads with dozens (or hundreds) of emails sitting in your inbox? Use 'Clean Up' to help you clean up your inbox (or other folder). Select the message, then click the 'Delete' button at the top (next to the New Email button). Select the 'Clean Up Conversation' option – poof! All clean!

6

@ Mentions

Sometimes you need certain people to respond to your email. You can type @ in front of their names and then 3 things happen:

- Their name is automatically added to the To line of the email message.
- Their name is highlighted in the message body.
- When they receive the message in their inbox, they'll see the @ symbol in the message list, indicating they're mentioned by name.

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How Did They Do It?
Post Road Iron Works

I had the opportunity to visit their office recently. The little store front window has a custom 'Tree of Life' glass and iron table with the forbidden apple hanging from the tree, right in the front window—very creative. When walking in off the street, the small store front is deceptive. Walk through the doors and continue back to the huge shop, trailers for the design and project management team, and an extensive yard for materials.

Peter G is the fourth generation. Back in the 1930's or so, the Gasparrini family was well known and respected for their beautiful ironwork as blacksmiths. As his brother-in-law Peter J Carriero joined the family, these two men laid the groundwork with their craftsmanship, reputation, and family legacies, heavily invested in the Greenwich community. Their artistry was expressed in chandeliers, lamps, and beautiful railings, to name a few examples.

As a union contractor, they have some pretty amazing special projects including the New Yankee Stadium, the National September 11 Memorial, Revson Fountain at the Lincoln Center for the Arts, the New York Presbyterian Hospital, and many more.

They attribute their growth to an amazing team, from the shop to the field, the Project Managers to the Estimators. Even with these huge projects, they continue to create beautiful custom pieces, and some you can buy right from that store front window.

Peter G Carriero, Fourth Generation

As they've grown over the years, they also brought in Sage 100 Contractor. With Syscon's help they have the special reports and custom programs to meet the needs of the office as well as running the field. During this recent visit, I worked with the accounting team, some of whom are new to the company and the software. We had fun, worked hard, and they were gracious hosts while I was with them. Wishing Peter G and his family continued success! – *CMW*

Fast Facts

Location: Greenwich, CT
Specialty: Structural & Ornamental Metalwork
Founded: 1927

(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

Teams Voice—What it is (and isn't)

Date: Thursday, **Feb 16th**

Time: 1:00 p.m. Central

Register: www.syscon-inc.com/events

Field Time Collection the Easy Way, webinar

Date: Thursday, **March 2nd**

Time: 1:00 p.m. Central

Register: www.syscon-inc.com/events

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