Syscon U

What's New

Hard to believe, but this month Larry and I celebrate 40 years of marriage! This company has been a huge part of the journey for Larry and I. We are blessed to have the support of friends, family, and our work teams over the years. We have many stories and look forward to new adventures. Who out there has us beat?

I've been blessed with many amazing father figures in my life, not all of whom were fathers themselves. My thanks to Larry for his gifts to our children and those we've mentored over the years. My thanks to the many wonderful men who have cared for and nurtured me, my family, and our staff over the years. Happy Father's Day! - *Catherine Wendt*

In this Issue

June 2024

The Loneliness Epidemic:
What is Tech's Contribution?

Whether an introvert or extrovert, human beings are wired for connection. Study after study has shown that newborn babies thrive when touched, held, talked to; and **don't when left physically alone even** though all needs are met. Historically, we live(d) in tribes, communities, neighborhoods, and of course the core **family. We've identified ourselves with** others in worship communities, colleges, social groups such as the VFW, Shriners, Masons, even our profession and associated groups, sports teams, and so many more.

During the 1930's and 1940's, many immigrants to the US lived in neighborhoods and had social clubs to help with the changes and transitions **in the 'new world' while they** navigated a new language and culture, often times cut off from those back home. For nine (9) years I directed a **German Men's Chorus in Elmhurst IL.**

I had the honor to direct their 100th **Annual Concert! I met the members'** children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. They shared their stores, supported each other, remembered their heritage, and fiercely supported the United States.

Technology has been a game-changer when it comes to connections! Our 97-year-old Aunt can call Germany from her cell phone and talk with her cousins and other family members. When she returned to the US at age 18, all alone, the only options were sending letters which took a long time to arrive. Later, long-distance telephone, which was expensive. We actually have had Teams meetings and Go To Meetings with our Argentina team members for years now, all through the web! Many people enjoy FaceTime and other quick-connect tools. When I travel, I constantly

see people checking in with their **spouse and children, sharing a 'miss you' or 'love you' face**-to-face on their devices..

So why the topic of loneliness? It also turns out that the suicide rate for young people is at an epidemic proportion! One of the most technically connected generations in history is lonely, so much so that they choose to end it all; such a loss to all of us. Other generations are not immune.

At the CFMA annual conference in Texas, one of the speakers shared the top five industries with the highest suicide rates and Construction came in as number two! As businesses in this very industry, that should be quite alarming and definitely a wake-up call. As part of our tech-savvy generation with many ways to stay connected with friends and family, why are our team members, our children, our co-workers, so alone?

I'm reminded of the saying that 'quality time' versus 'quantity of time' with our children is so critical. It seems the answer may lie right in

this statement. Spending time surfing through pictures, sending emojis in response to short messages, spending **the friends' night out taking pictures** with our phone instead of engaging, **doesn't actually help us feel connected, it doesn't fuel our core need to be** seen, to be heard, and to be under-**stood. It's like a bunch of billboards** with slogans and pictures, but no content, and certainly no reciprocity!

Technology has definitely connected the world. Sometimes it feels like a small world! Yet it also resulted in more shallow and superficial exchanges. We may feel elated when we look at our Likes or LinkedIn connections; then dejected when an im-**portant post doesn't seem to have** any traction. When people share their **'life' on social media, we often don't** know the whole story. Then we may **feel our own life doesn't 'measure up,' further isolating us from others, thinking we aren't 'enough.'**

Brené Brown said, "Technology, ...has become a kind of imposter for **connection, making us believe we're connected when we're really not—at least not in the ways we need to be."**

Seems the 'not' connected would be the shallow comments, the number of followers and similar. These are more likely to make us question our value and self-worth than to bolster it.

So where can technology *help* this situation? Connecting with cross-country or out-of-country family over video and phone is absolutely one of them! Teams meetings with video helps our teams stay connected, and we can notice changes in body language and reach out. Dig into a book! This might be a topic of interest, a self-development book, or a fun read; invite others to join you **online to discuss what you're read**ing. Check in with someone you care about, randomly, for no reason **(don't share anything!); how are they? Tell them you're thinking** about them and sending good vibes. **We'd love to hear YOUR ideas!**

A final thought: in a room full of **people, it's possible to feel alone.** You are probably not the only one! Go out on a limb! Smile! Introduce yourself, ask a question. You might help <u>two </u>people!! - *CMW*

The 6 Types of Working Genius By Patrick Lencioni

Book Nook

There are quite a few assessments out there: Meyers-Briggs, DiSC, and more. It seems Mr. Lencioni has taken this up one more level.

In addition to identifying how you're wired, where you gain fulfillment, where you can excel, this system also assesses what type of work (personal or business) brings the most frustration, drains you of your energy. You might even have some skill and can rise to the challenge when the work is needed, but the tasks **don't 'feed' you, rather they're draining.**

As in his other books, there is a story-line, a Fable, about an advertising company. As the founder looked back at his career, he started to piece together places and situations

where he had been successful and felt fulfilled in his work, and times where he dreaded Sunday nights, feeling defeated before the week even began! From there, he adds others to the discussion and begins to piece together the strengths of his teams, the working categories of the company, and where they had strength as well as empty roles across the group.

On the Responsive side, there's Wonder, Discernment, and Enablement. On the Disruptive **side, there's Invention, Galvanizing, and Te**nacity. After the story, he dives into what each of these categories mean and how they play **into the overall 'getting the work done' needs.**

I shared the book with Chris and asked for some follow up. Before I knew it, he was inviting our team members to take the assessment! Definitely Recommended - *CMW*

Get More Tips and Topics: www.Syscon-inc.com
630.850.9039

Tech Talk

SQL Express 2014 End-of-Life

This is a very popular platform. The 'Express' part is less expensive and many software programs use this version.

When installing S100C, the default Wizard installs SQL Express. For many years, it installed version 2014. Then 2017 came out, and more recently 2019. SQL Express 2014 is end-of-life next month, July 2024. When you launch the Database Admin tool for Sage 100 Contractor, **there's a section that will allow an** upgrade to the 2019 version. The message in this screen even shows which version is on the Sage server, including patches.

Alternatively, check with your IT team (or us). If version 2014 is on the server, it needs to be updated ASAP. This end-of-life from Microsoft means there will be no more upgrades or security patches as of July 2024. S100C supports SQL Express 2019 and we recommend you upgrade to this. It may require a server reboot, so plan ahead! - *CMW*

Insurance: Cyber Security

So, turns out not all of you have Cyber Security Insurance! In a Fraud breakout session at the TUG event, this was a hot topic. You really need to have Cyber **Security in place. Don't guess at the** answers to the application questions; get the Tech team involved so the answers are honest and accurate. If you ever file a claim and the answers were not accurate and true, your claim will be denied!

Several in the room said that during a Cyber Security event, they were very thankful to have this insurance in place. If **you don't have Cyber Security insurance,** we would be more than happy to help

you fill out the application so you can put it in place.

In the round table discussion, one of the companies who experienced fraud had their claim denied. Turns out that someone other than the client signatory signed the check that was cashed. The **bank's signature card had electronic signatures only (not the signors' signatures). Unfortunately, the company's** policy specifically excluded any fraud if the signature on file was electronic!

Read your policy (I know it's boring) and be sure you know the details, or negotiate a change. The devil is truly in the details!

P.S. There's an interesting Exclusion **clause under 'Identify Recovery** Coverages for Business Owners and **Employees' that I found in our policy. An 'identity theft' that is not reported in** writing to the police, within 60 days after it is first discovered, will be denied! — *CMW*

Snowflake Data Breach

Snowflake is a cloud AI data platform that many companies use for storing, managing, and analyzing large volumes of data. On May 31st, Snowflake indicated it was investigating a cyber incident impacting a limited number of customers.

Snowflake is reporting that the cyber threat is to a limited number of clients. The compromised former employee credentials were only to demo sites that do not contain client data (and apparently **don't have MFA). They also affirmed that** this was not a result of a vulnerability, misconfiguration, or system compromise.

The hackers however boast that they have **thousands of customers' data** information. An Australian cyber Security Center announced that it was aware of successful compromises of several companies using Snowflake Environments. This might be a good time to consider our Dark Web Monitoring **service… -** *CMW*

Construction Corner

Sage Construction Management

Last summer at the TUG event, Sage announced its purchase of CoreCon, a browser-based Project Management software.

The goal of this purchase was to provide better access for Project Managers in the field as an alternative to ProCore. Their hope was a more competitive offering, browser-based, with integrations for Sage Intacct, Sage 300CRE, and Sage 100 Contractor. As of late-May, the S100C integration is now complete!

We have invited Sage to co-host a webinar with us to show and tell us more about this software as well as its integration with S100C.

Join us Thursday June 20th at 11:30 Central time as we welcome Sage to our webinar, specifically to tell us all about this offering. Visit the Events page on **our website, or call the office and we'll get you registered. There's been a LOT of buzz about this, so we're really** looking forward to it!—*CMW*

S100C Tips and Tricks: CFMA and TUG

Having just finished a tour of the US to attend the Construction Financial Managers Association (CFMA) annual event in TX, then the TUG (The User Group, sponsored by Sage) in FL, we have new things to share, reminders of important things that are already in place, and some tips and tricks!

In the 4-4 Vendor screen**, there's a fairly** new field on the Other Defaults tab where you can set a default for the **'usual' method of payment; ACH, check,** etc. This actually shows up in the 4-3-2 screen; very helpful.

In any of the data entry screens, right-click in the grid area to hide unneeded fields. Right-click again to Save the Grid View**. There's also an option under right** -click to auto-fill for sizing the remaining **fields; if you don't like it, re**-size the

ones you want, then right-click one more time to Save Grid View.

In the payroll module, you can create new Pay Types. When you make a new Pay Type (such as Bereavement), you have to choose from the original list of types as the foundation for the new one. A reminder that 9-Misc is taxable, and 8-Per Diem is not taxable. - *CMW*

There are some new options for the 1099 flags; 5-No 1099 is now 7-No 1099. **They've opened up a new one for the Attorney, but here's a clarification. It's** not meant for their regular fees; this one

> *"We have invited Sage to co-host a webinar...**Thursday June 20th at 11:30 CST** ..to share more about Sage Construction Management."*

is meant for any payout you make to them from any judgement you receive/win (I think of it as a commission). **That's what this one is for. Otherwise,** Non-Employee Compensation is the way to go if a 1099 will be sent.

Back to payroll: In the 5-2-2 screen, **under Options, you'll have the ability to** set the defaults based on 40 hours in a week, rather than 8 hours in a day. Could be helpful for those of you that have moved to four, ten-hour days.

Have you checked out the fairly recent 7-7 User Activity screen? This allows you to see where a user has been in the program for a specific range of dates. This is a great tool for new-hires so you **can follow where they've been in the** program and determine additional **training. It's also helpful when someone** is leaving, expected or not. What part of the program have they accessed?

I would add that in the Fraud Prevention discussion at TUG, it was mentioned that if someone entered an AP record, changed the vendor name, cut the check, then changed the vendor

name back, the physical check could say **a different person/company's name.** Tracking these multiple changes for the same vendor number in a short period of time would be a red flag for sure!

Most people who use Daily Field Reports know that it has an Equipment tab (you need the Equipment module to use it). This is a great way to track which pieces of your equipment are on a job and when. Did you know that in the 8-4 screen, you can import this equipment detail? This would allow you to post the equipment to a specific job and offset the contra account, without running the equipment use through the 5-5-1 Daily payroll—food for thought!

The Database Admin tool has some great features. One is the ability to restrict the guidelines for attachments. You can set it so that all attachments are link-only, or copy-only. A reminder that if you link these documents, and if the source location changes, the link is **broken. If you attach a copy, then you've** added to the size of your dataset.

Also in the Database Admin tool, there is an option to see a report of who is overriding warnings during data entry for things like overage warnings, posting period warning. This could be a signal that additional training is needed, or for follow up if the guidelines seem to be outside your standards.

For those of you who use Purchase Orders—**if you've removed the Hot List** default in the 6-6-1 screen but you keep seeing it, check the 4-4 screen for the **vendor specifically. If it's flagged in** there, it will override the unchecked box in the PO screen itself.—CMW

M365 Education Station

How Microsoft Power BI Can Transform Your Business!

Earlier this year, we held a webinar sharing the many ways our clients have taken advantage of this powerful reporting tool. If you'd like the private link, let us know and we'll send it to you. Overall, this reporting tool provides beautiful dashboards with powerful analytics.

What is Microsoft Power BI?

Microsoft Power BI is a cloud-based business intelligence platform that enables you to connect to various data sources, analyze and visualize data, and share insights with your team or organization. Power BI can help you make faster and smarter decisions, improve operational efficiency, and uncover new opportunities with beautiful dashboards!

What are the features of Power BI?

- **Data connectivity**: Connect to hundreds of data sources, both on-premises and in the cloud, such as Excel, SQL Server, SharePoint, Salesforce, Google Analytics, and more.
- **Data transformation**: Use Power Query to easily shape and combine data from different sources, apply custom calculations and transformations, and create new tables and columns. Lots of dashboard views!
- **Data modeling**: You can use Power Pivot to create relationships between tables, define measures and calculations, and create hierarchies and groups.
- **Data visualization**: Incorporate Power View and Power Map to create interactive and stunning chats, maps, graphs, and dashboards. You can also use custom visuals from the Power BI marketplace or create your own using R or Python.
- **Data analysis**: Explore and analyze data, discover patterns and trends, and ask questions using natural language with Power BI Desktop, Power BI service, or Power BI Mobile.
- **Data sharing and collaboration**: Publish and share reports and dashboards with others, either within your organization or publicly.

You can also embed Power BI content into your websites, apps, or blogs (haven't tried this yet).

What are some Use Cases?

- **Business reporting**: Create and distribute professional and interactive reports and dashboards that provide a comprehensive and up-to-date view of your business performance and KPI's. There are a variety of dashboard styles available making it easy to see data trends and outliers.
- **Data exploration**: Use Power BI to quickly and easily explore and analyze data, find answers to your questions, and generate insights and recommendations. Depending on the configuration, you can drill down to supporting data for additional analysis.
- **Collaboration**: Sharing these dashboards and reports with other team members through integrations with Teams and SharePoint is another way to work together. There are security features to make sure the right people have access to the right reports.

Power BI Dashboards

There are a couple of ways to get to these great reports:

- Log in to Office.com and click on the Power BI icon. From there you'll see a list of the available reports.
- From Teams, click on the Power BI icon on the far left to access the reports
- From your phone or laptop, access Power BI reports when traveling or in meetings, or for a quick view of a report.

- CMW and Copilot

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How Did They Do It?
Crystal Pools

In a recent interview with Syscon, Ali Felschow, the owner of Crystal Pools, discussed her journey and the company's success in the pool design and construction industry. Her involvement in the business began naturally, as she joined her family's pool business right after college and has been deeply engaged ever since. She highlighted the significance of a skilled team and ongoing learning as driving forces behind the company's achievements, emphasizing the importance of understanding clients' needs.

Despite challenges, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, she noted the industry's resilience and how the company capitalized on increased demand for outdoor amenities. The company's commitment to personalized service and client satisfaction sets it apart, with a focus on design and artistry to ensure clients feel informed and comfortable throughout the process.

Syscon's support in training and system implementation was crucial for the company's operations, enhancing efficiency and facilitating smoother processes. While acknowledging the learning curve in technology adoption, she expressed optimism about integrating new systems in the future.

When asked about her favorite aspect of the job, she highlighted her passion for the design process, where her background in art shines through. Collaborating with clients to create unique and aesthetically pleasing pool designs brings her immense fulfillment.

Alison Felschow
Owner

Wrapping up the interview, she reiterated Crystal Pools' commitment to investing in quality people and technology to drive business growth. With a clear vision and strategic plan, the company continues to thrive under her leadership. -*RB*

Fast Facts

Location: Columbia, SC
Specialty: **Swimming Pool Contractor**
Affiliations: **PHTA/GENESIS; Int'l Water-**shape Institute; Home Builders of SC

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

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

Our offices will be closed Thursday July 4th. We wish all of you a wonderful holiday.

Enjoy the fireworks and stay safe as we remember and celebrate the historic events that led to the birth of this country!

'Liberty is meaningless where the right to utter one's thoughts and opinions has ceased to exist. That, of all rights, is the dread of tyrants. It is the right which they first of all strike down. They know its power.' -

Frederick Douglass