



What's New

We made the list! Which one? The Inc. 5000 Fastest Growing Companies in 2024 list! These last three years have been very focused, so this is very exciting to all our teams. We have the most amazing clients and we continue to be in awe of our team members!

Chris just got back from Argentina where he presented to our partner Santex (also an Inc. 5000 Fastest Growing 2024 company) on Cyber Security at their special three-day event. Then he spent several days at Microsoft Ignite. And he's engaged!

If you don't have your scheduled payroll close appointment, please reach out to Liz to get on the calendar. Lots to consider this year! - *Catherine Wendt*

In this Issue

Banking Has Changed.....	1
Book Review.....	2
Code 2 for Email Signatures.....	3
Shiny New Gadget	3
S100C v26.2.....	4
Microsoft 365 Focus.....	5
How Did They Do It?.....	6
Events Calendar	6

December 2024



A Level Playing Field? Banking Has Changed!

Many of our clients across the United States have either started a non-profit to meet a specific need, or support one or more non-profits on a national and/or local level. Small to Medium sized businesses (SMB's) are the backbone of our country, building our communities, providing employment and benefits, serving local organizations through boards and committees, hosting fund raisers and food drives, and so much more. I have found our clients to be generous in so many ways! And every one of these businesses and organizations needs a bank account!

I was shocked to read a report by Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) regarding a new trend in

the Marketplace, de-banking. According to this specific article, Bank of America (BoA) recently de-banked a non-profit group founded in 2015 and based in Memphis Tennessee. This non-profit serves impoverished people in Uganda, including widows, orphans, prisoners, and single mothers. The organization received a letter from BoA saying the bank was closing their deposit and credit card accounts within 30 days; that's it. Around the same time, Steve Happ, the founder of the Uganda ministry, also received a letter from the bank that it was closing the account for a local church that occasionally supported the same ministry; odd timing.

Continued pg.2

(continued from page 1)

The article explained some of the fall out to those in Uganda who were expecting the funds. The organization reached out to the bank to find out what on earth happened. They were shuffled around quite a bit with responses like BoA no longer works with their 'business type' and that the ministry 'no longer aligns with the bank's risk tolerance.' Since they were stuck, the organization reached out to Alliance Defending Freedom to file a consumer complaint asking the Tennessee Attorney General to investigate why their account was cancelled.

This new phenomenon is called 'de-banking' and we support this non-profit and ADF in their efforts to get to the bottom of this. BoA is not alone. There are several similar stories involving JPMorgan Chase, including the incident in which Chase closed the account of the National Committee for Religious Freedom without explanation. Nebraska State Treasurer John Murante has

called on Chase to be "accountable and transparent, and to treat all customers equally, regardless of their religious or political points of view." In Mr. Murante's article, it's pointed out that Chase received a rating of 15% on the 2022 Viewpoint Diversity Score Business Index, 'the first comprehensive benchmark designed to measure corporate respect for free speech and religious freedom.'

Do you support non-profit organizations? Should the banking industry decide which organizations can have bank accounts? Should the Donor Advised Fund sponsors decide which funds you can select, while removing others that qualify? Should Salesforce decide which companies can use their CRM based on the non-profit's mission and beliefs? "We cannot live in a free country if access to the marketplace depends on our political or religious views." Jeremy Tedesco, ADF Senior Council. — CMW

Cathy & Larry Sightings



Catherine attended several Symphony concerts and visited Red Rock in Nevada.

Larry spent a weekend smoking Salmon, Trout, and Pork, then had hip replacement surgery!



"Terrorists have to be successful just once, while the defender must be vigilant 100 percent of the time."

— Condoleezza Rice

No Higher Honor, Condoleezza Rice

Although this book is over 700 pages, I would very much encourage you to read it! Condoleezza Rice has served our country in several capacities, culminating in her position as Secretary of State under President George W. Bush. This book walks through her journey, but more than that, she shows us the intricacies of our country's role in the world. She also shares some events in Birmingham Alabama, her parents' influence, and other things that shaped her character and distinguished career.

This is an amazing history recap with great insights into the people involved at critical moments in our history. September 11th figures prominently and she shares details about that critical day, the many considerations, and the subsequent



Book Nook

fall out on various levels. There's a section about the small pox outbreak and the difficult decision regarding who should get the vaccine and what the risks would be. I couldn't help but think of the COVID-19 event, decades later, as I read this story.

Ms. Rice has traveled the world, representing the interests of the United States. She is also a professor at Stanford University. During a recent Global Leadership Summit, she participated in a 'live' video interview, speaking on many topics. Her character, wisdom, and experience were very evident throughout the interview. She also spoke about her students and their futures, as well as her confidence in their future leadership. Her service to our country was truly a blessing, and her contribution to our future leaders is so important! - CMW



Windows App is Coming...

Azure Virtual Desktop is the icon you choose from your computer to log into the Azure virtual environment. This replaced the old blue Remote Desktop Program (RDP) icon many of us had to access our hosted servers prior to the move to Azure Hosting.

Windows App is available right now and we've been testing it. Instead of the red icon, it's a blue icon with a white 'windows' image. This is where you would choose your Cloud Desktop or Sage Server (for those of you with this level of access). Once you launch the program, the rest of the log on process looks exactly the same. We're pretty sure Microsoft will 'encourage' people to move to this new icon in the coming year or so.

There's a third icon – Azure Virtual Desktop App from the Microsoft store. This will be end of life this month and end of support next month. Very few of our clients are using this specific app. This one is specifically from the Microsoft store. It's kind of confusing. For now, as new clients join our Azure Hosting environment, we'll roll out the Windows App – Matt's loving it! –CMW

Code 2 for Email Signatures

We've always rotated our email signatures to share our fun, seasonal logo images, and to update links to timely video blogs on important topics. We've incorporated some of our important vendor relationship logos along with our own. All of this takes some management! Then each month, we have to send the

new one out to everyone and follow up to be sure everyone has made the change.

Well, not any more! After keeping our eyes peeled for a solution, we've come up with Code 2 and we've been testing it ourselves. Basically, we put together the signature for that month, update it through Code 2, then push it out to everyone – seamless!

Several of us have an alternative message that goes out for email responses (I've collected quite a few quotes over the years.). Code 2 allows those to be updated, as well.

If you're interested in learning more, Matt's done some testing and we have the details. The pricing is quite reasonable, too. We can help you sign up, set it up, and you'll be off and running. - CMW

CrowdStrike—The Fallout

You might recall the world-wide outage experienced by businesses and individuals when CrowdStrike had a botched update in July this year that brought down computers running their services, completely. Fortunately, we were not impacted by this event since we do not use CrowdStrike for our cybersecurity platform.

When the computers are in this failed state, Blue Screen of Death (BSOD), a technician cannot remotely log into them to make the necessary changes. This unfortunate event highlighted a vulnerability – virtual computers and physical computers cannot be remotely accessed after an event at this level.

We have made some changes in our platform that would allow us to access virtual servers as well as remote computers with sufficient rights to troubleshoot and resolve this type of failure. Our LAPS solution through InTune gives us everything we need.

This is further confirmation that our strong recommendation to use M365 Premium level (or higher), products that have InTune security, is more critical than ever! - CMW

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Omni 2K Work Light

At least one of the techs is making this a Christmas gift for his son-in-law and travels with it himself! This good looking light is powerful and very versatile.

It's magnetic so it can easily shine the light exactly where you need it. Or use the sturdy base to illuminate the work shop. When open, it has a 2000 Lumen Dual C.O.B. output. It even has a dimmer so it's the right amount of light in any space. Rotate (bends in the middle) and the light covers even more of the room.

It's only half a pound in weight, rechargeable with the USB-C cable included. Folded up, it's 4.8" high by 6.25" wide and 1.875" deep. It has a non-slip rubber coating, too. At \$54.99 this could be a great gift (or maybe you want one for the garage!).

You can find more details and other nice tools at Nebo.acgbrands.com – CMW



CONSTRUCTION CORNER



S100C Version 26.2

Earlier this fall, Sage released a major version update for Sage 100 Contractor. When the first number changes in a software release, it's considered a Major revision, and this one qualifies. The full release notes are available, but we wanted to highlight a few specific items for you.

The boring (but important!) stuff – version 26 (and some previous releases) requires Windows 10 or higher for the PC's and Windows Server 2016 and higher for the servers. You might know about your PC but be sure to ask about your server. If you're running Windows 2012 or 2012 R2, the Database Admin tool will not open!

If you're using Sage Estimating version 20.1 or earlier, the integration with S100C will not work. Be sure you have Sage Estimating version 21.1 or higher.

One more – version 26.2 is compatible with SQL Server 2019 Express (nothing higher). If you're running an older version of SQL, when you launch the Database Admin tool, you'll be prompted to upgrade. This should be handled by your IT team, and our techs are available to assist if needed.

Now for some good stuff – On the Compute screen, you have a new option, Undo Final Compute! If you have final

Wrapping up 2024, Opening up 2025

Be sure you're running the 1-6 Change Period routine each month. If you've received an audit error and rolled forward anyway, you'll need it fully resolved before you can roll into 2025. Let's talk!

computed a record(s), you can now 'undo' the Final compute. This sets the record back to status 1-Open and deletes job cost and equipment costs, sick/vacation hours, and similar that are associated with the record. If you use the T&M billing module, there are some conditions/restrictions.

For those of you that have 1099's to issue, last year was a little frustrating since the First Name and Last Name fields didn't line up with the 1099 grid, so they all had to be edited. This has been fixed!

For those who are using SendGrid (Twilio), the release notes say you can delay the delivery of emailed pay stubs for a future check date. I haven't had a chance to test it, but this could be quite

*"You have a new option,
Undo Final Compute!"*

handy. This may require some setting adjustments from the 5-2-4 screen. Choose Options, then Direct Deposit Email Settings to see the new option to delay.

Another update for our SendGrid users – if you don't want to include the sender in the emails, you can clear the new 'Include sender in Bcc' option on the Email and Fax Configuration tab in the 7-1 Company screen. Last time Sage said this was in place, it didn't work. We haven't had a chance to test, but we're very hopeful they have this resolved.

For the union and prevailing wage clients, the payroll check stub can now display up to 28 characters for the paygroup description. If you have a custom check report form (and most of you do), you may need to update the report form; happy to help.

1099 Prep—Here's How

Sign up now!

**Wednesday, January 8th
11:30 a.m. CST**

Register at www.syscon-inc.com/events

Remember when Sage added the message in the Check Print screen to say it is defaulting to the next check number? Well you can now turn off this option!

There are several changes to the 6-8-1 Cost to Complete window. There are some new columns, some options for the types of change orders that are included, and some new reports. If you use the internal Sage Cost to Complete report, it might be worth checking out.

For those of you using 9-5 Takeoffs, items that have the same description but no part number are no longer combined in the purchase order. The PO uses the alpha part number to discriminate between items so they're listed separately on the PO.

I still remember when this came up years ago. In the AR and SR screens they now allow nine-digits for taxable amounts. In previous versions, it was only six-digits, forcing you to break it out on multiple rows; this is resolved.

The last one I'll mention is the custom report forms with logo paths that no longer exist. When moving to a new server, or for those of you with very old datasets, the old logo path is in the report form. When the program sees this, it will give you a message. If an alternative logo path is available, it will tell you so and ask if you want to swap it; just say Yes! – CMW

M365 Education Station

Passkeys in Microsoft Authenticator

Let's start with, 'What's a Passkey!' A passkey is a digital credential tied to a user account and a website or application. It allows users to sign in to websites and apps without entering a username or password. This is different than Password Vaults which typically store passwords and will 'fill them in' for you so you don't type them, but you still have a password.

Passkeys are a cryptographic key. It cannot be shared, remembered, or written down. At this level, there is advanced security since there's no password to be intercepted.

This type of security is not new. In 2022, many of the 'big guys' were leaders in moving to password-less authentication. The concept is that you enable an 'authenticator' to generate a passkey, something like your smartphone or another device. Some password managers also support passkeys.

How Does It Work

An authenticator, in this case the Microsoft Authenticator, generates two cryptographic keys for each account you create. One key is public and it's stored on the site where you created the account. The other key is a private key and it's stored on your device, the physical device. The 'authenticator' generates a passkey, perhaps from your smartphone, and that becomes your 'log in' pass.

So What's the Catch?

Well now your cell phone or whatever device you used to generate this passkey connection is now pretty critical, since it is the 'key.' If

it's your cell phone, typically Androids are backed up and synced with Android devices that are signed in to the same Google Account, just like passwords are backed up by a password manager. If you change phones, all of the backed up data and credentials go to the new device. You probably already use your cell phone for MFA or bank sites; similar security, but similar problem.

What's the Upside?

The main point is to take away the password! Passwords can be intercepted, stolen, shared (please don't!), all things a hacker is interested in. With the passkey, there is nothing for them to intercept or steal, greatly increasing security for the accounts you've setup on a site or app.

Also, instead of carrying additional FIDO keys (key fob for example, or a key card), your cell phone acts as the 'key.'

Enhanced Security

If your device has an even higher level of security by using biometrics to unlock, such as your cell phone, that would mean that to use your device's passkey, the person would also have to get past your biometric security.

Wrapping it Up

This is coming... Balancing the user experience with the security needs is the tough part. Bad actors aren't going away, so these tools will continue to roll out to us. We'll keep you posted as we test these tools and track the updates. -
CMW



Tip of the Month

Compatible Devices for Passkeys in Microsoft Authenticator

- ◆ Android smartphones and tablets running Android 8.0 (Oreo) or higher
- ◆ iPhones and iPads running iOS 12.0 or higher
- ◆ Windows PCs with Windows 10 version 1809 or higher
- ◆ Mac computers with macOS 10.14 (Mojave) or higher
- ◆ Chromebooks with support for Android apps



How Did They Do It? Trout Glass

Brothers Mike and Jeff Trout came up with a business dream during Thanksgiving dinner. They bought a glass company with a loan from a local bank. Their father had worked in the glazing trade, even serving as a local union president. So with Dad's experience and knowledge, the brothers were off and running in Hobart IN.

The biggest challenge in the last year has been managing recent growth. Sales compared to a year ago were way up. This brought pressure and opportunities for the office as well as the field. They have successfully navigated this last year because they have the right people on the various teams. In the field, trained union labor is important, but their attitude and happiness make the company a success. Trout Glass is fully invested in pouring into these team members, while hosting additional training opportunities with local vendors. For the office and the sales team, the company fo-

cuses on showing its appreciation which results in a happy work place for all. Technology has allowed Trout Glass to navigate this growth. The team is willing to embrace new software and systems to manage the growth.



Lana Reiser,
Assistant Proj Manager

Lana said Syscon's Customer Support has been everything and more than they expected. The service is amazing, the questions are answered, and fairly quickly. The FIT System is just what they needed and more than they were looking for.

Trout is deeply involved in the local community, as well as the Glass trade.-CMW

Fast Facts

Location: Valparaiso, IN
Specialty: Glass, mirror, and architectural aluminum design and installation
Founded: 1977

[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: How to Prepare 1099 data, webinar **Event:** Ditch the Paper Timecards, webinar

Date: Thursday, January 8

Date: Thursday, January 16

Time: 11:30 a.m. CST

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST

Register: www.syscon-inc.com/events

Register: www.syscon-inc.com/events

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.



Did you miss our **AI in Business/M365 Copilot** webinar back in September? It was a HUGE success, packed with relevant information for your business.

If you'd like the link to the recording, reach out to Customer-Support@syscon-inc.com and we'll get it over to you!