



What's New

If April showers bring May flowers, what do Mayflowers bring? (*Pilgrims*). I love that one!

Welcome Spring! Longer days, flowers start blooming, and we can enjoy more outdoor activities. We held our full-remote Mid-Year State of the Company with all of our teams. Our theme this year is Integrate: New Products, New Team Members. We all received themed Lego sets (mine is 600+ pieces)!

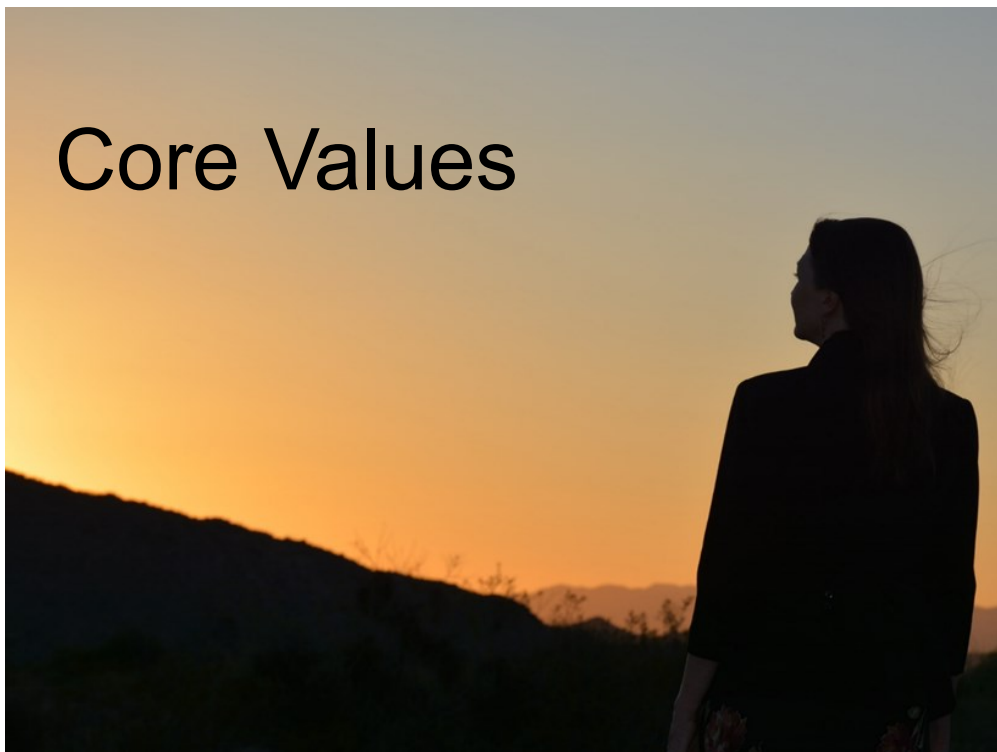
Many of us are traveling in the coming weeks – Microsoft conference, Empower, CFMA, FCIA presentation. If you have a request or need to schedule a meeting, please contact the office so we can make arrangements and reserve the time. - *Catherine Wendt*

In this Issue

Core Values.....	1
Book Review.....	2
Jobsite Cameras.....	3
Shiny New Gadget	3
Vendor ACH Security.....	4
Microsoft 365 Focus.....	5
How Did They Do It?.....	6
Events Calendar	6

April 2025

Core Values



About a year ago, we ran an article about our Trust Accelerators. We had identified nine (9) behaviors that if practiced with each other, would accelerate trust within our working teams. Our list included Patience; Honesty without paying a price; Grace; Be Direct; Assume the Best; Keep your commitments; No meetings after the meeting; Deliver the mail to the right address; and Confidentiality. We added one more as suggested by Jacob – Be Present Mentally. After developing this list and adding some context to each item, we've rolled this out to all new team members, sharing the history and the importance of committing to these behaviors, and in addition, holding each other accountable when they're missing. It's a tall order that has truly helped our teams with their communication and levels of trust.

Looking even further back in time, we

worked through choosing our Core Values. These personify who Syscon is and how we look at the work we do on behalf of our clients, with each other, and as we take care of our own house! All new employees receive a small picture frame that includes these six (6) values. They're on our website, too. And each mid-year and annual State of the Company meeting, we remind each other of the list. For all team member reviews, we use the 'Get it, Want it, Capacity to do it' format from Traction and we have added columns for each of our six values. This has been a great tool for discussion and SMART goal setting.

Integrity Matters – At the business level, we work with our clients to help them run their businesses efficiently using technology. How and what we recommend has to start with integrity; honest assessments with viable solutions. Engaging with each other,

Continued pg.2

(continued from page 1)

our vendors, as well as our desire to have a successful company requires integrity at all times.

Take Care of Each Other – We all belong to a team and the teams make up the larger company. Having kind and caring people is important. As a full remote company, we don't have a chance to pop into each others' offices to stay connected and check in with each other. We are very intentional in our daily stand ups, company shout-outs, special occasions, listening for what's going on and what we need, both within our roles at Syscon as well as in our personal lives. We're certainly not inserting ourselves, but it is important to take care, and to do that, we need to know who we're working with and what's going on!

Small Details are Huge – This one is tough, but there's no escape! If one letter is wrong when setting up a new user, it doesn't matter that all the other steps are perfect. If there's an extra comma in the code, the program doesn't run. Missing a step or a small detail is huge in our world. It's

a tough bar for us to reach, but it's the nature of our work.

All Roles are Critical – Many years ago, we had a network tech who commented to me that he wished he had our marketing position so he could just sit there all day. I was shocked! Marketing does a ton of work and might have felt the tech was just sitting there taking calls! Every role at Syscon is important, supporting our service offerings, each other, our clients, and even our vendors. If someone doesn't know what another person does, we recommend they get curious, ask questions, and learn how that role supports the rest of the company.

Think Like a Customer – As problem solvers, it's easy for us to get absorbed in the problem itself and forget to provide updates to our client! Sometimes, we might need to offer a different solution that's more cost-effective. Our clients want and need acknowledgement of the request, updates during the work, recommendations, and options.

Be Quick, but Don't Hurry – When

our clients need help, they need the solution or resolution right away! We need to be quick to respond and do our best to dig in quickly, but it's very important we don't hurry through the work. We strive to make sure we understand the core request, gather the accurate details, work through the problem, then test to be sure it's fully resolved.

That's it! Bringing our conversations back to these values has helped us stay focused. Whether it's a new product or service, a team member, or a vendor, we can filter the discussion through these values. – CMW

"A lie doesn't become truth, wrong doesn't become right, and evil doesn't become good just because it is accepted by the majority."

– Booker T. Washington

The Six Conversations by Heather Holleman

Dr. Holleman is an associate teaching professor at Penn State, a speaker, and an author. In her introduction, she mentions her research on happiness and well-being, not only for herself, but to see others thrive. She starts with her story as a young girl, always asking questions and talking, often to the extent of frustrating those around her. If they wouldn't listen, she would talk out loud to herself!

Primarily, this book is about the art of conversation. She references studies on the epidemic of loneliness on college campuses. A Harvard study indicated 61% of young people report feelings of 'serious loneliness,' made worse during COVID-19. How do we reconnect? It seems many



Book Nook

people of all ages don't know where to start the conversation and may even wonder why they should.

To spark this revival, Dr. Holleman cites Four Mindsets for a loving conversation: Be Curious; Believe the best; Express concern; Share your life. She then dives into these four, sharing stories and great examples.

Throughout the book, she provides very practical conversation starters, questions to ask, what to look for during the conversation, and how to be encouraging. Simple things like asking questions about what someone is celebrating or what they're thankful for. Rather than giving advice, ask what they think they should do!

The book is broken down into three parts. Very practical and upbeat! Recommended! - CMW



Jobsite Cameras

It seems that every time we're on a demo of software that focuses on construction, the software has embedded jobsite camera views right on their dashboards. Most recently, while reviewing some Construction-specific software, they were using TrueLook on the main dashboard to see the job site.

Keeping an eye on a job site has always been a concern. Larry used to tell stories of all the effort to make the equipment inaccessible, only to arrive the next morning and see that things were stolen anyway! Add in the job site safety concerns and the need to confirm what really happened, cameras have become a necessary part of a job site!

There are quite a few camera offerings out there and they certainly don't have to be integrated with a dashboard. Many of these solutions provide viewing through mobile apps and web browsers.

There are cameras with various types of mounts, some that are solar powered, and for larger sites with nowhere to mount yet, mobile surveillance trailers (although it looks like they could 'walk' off the job pretty easily!). For the solar powered units, there are references to tax credits that might be available.

TrueLook even offers real-time monitoring services. According to the website, they have trained professionals that verify AI-powered motion alerts from the cameras and notify you in case of an active threat. Between embedded views available in some Project Management software and services provided by the product company, seems

like you could have more eyes than ever watching your jobsite. - CMW

EMA

Not that many years ago, we visited our clients' offices to perform maintenance on the laptops and desktops. We all carried our 'Trunk Bag' filled with cans of air, screen wipes, various sizes of patch cables, crimpers, and a spare drive. Some of the most time-consuming tasks included Microsoft and other software updates, as well as the anti-virus software and DAT file updates. It was a lot of tech time, and quite a bit of interruption for our clients who just needed to get their work done!

As more and more of our tech work became remote, we still performed quite a few of these tasks, but could log in remotely, saving travel time/cost. Several of the more critical Microsoft security updates were pushed out automatically using our managed services, so only the most recent updates had to be installed; another time saver.

With our theme of Automation last year, we took the time to look at the variety of maintenance tasks with the goal of automating more of them! Between our Managed Services platform (RMM Tool), the amazing tools available through Microsoft Intune, and the growing number of clients with M365 Premium licensing, we have greatly improved the number and frequency of our computer maintenance. Named EMA – Endpoint Maintenance Automation – the tech team continues to refine and add to the automated maintenance steps, reducing the interruption to your team, while keeping this equipment up-to-date. A shout out to Matt and Darren for leading the charge and having the vision to incorporate these great tools to secure our clients' equipment and reduce downtime! – CMW



Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Luxe 1 Acre Flying Insect and Mosquito Trap

Available through Sharper Image, this device attracts flying insects and mosquitos with its UV-LED light, then uses a power fan to trap them, rather than just repelling the bugs. It's weather-resistant and designed to blend in with the outdoor furniture. It's said to be quiet so it won't interfere with the fun! This unit is designed to cover a large backyard area, up to an acre.

At just over \$200, it comes in Black or Green. It's about 5 pounds, 12" L x 12" W x 14.5" H. They say emptying the catch basket is simple. They have available replacement bulbs and fans.

There's also a half-acre version for about half the price, too. Guess it depends on the size of your backyard area.

You'll find all the details and several consumer reviews at www.sharperimage.com. They're running some specials, too, probably since all the outdoor fun is just a few weeks away!



CONSTRUCTION CORNER



Ever Heard of an I-9 Audit?

In our Client Peer Group meetings, we often have some lively discussions! Since our clients are Construction companies, most of which use Microsoft products, many of which host S100C in our Azure cloud and often use several of our Syscon add-on tools, they have some similar needs and frustrations. This invitation-only peer group forum is a great place for them to hear what others are experiencing, solutions that are working, and talk through changes in the industry.

In a recent peer group discussion, one of the members shared that a contractor in Michigan had Homeland Security show up demanding the I-9's. Even though the owner was out of town, they were not granted any extensions. Another member chimed in saying that these I-9 audits can be intense!

We're certainly not I-9 experts or former Homeland Security people, but we thought we'd offer a few things that came up in that meeting. We also recommend checking with CFMA and similar groups who have presentations and resources for research.

As you probably know, whoever signs the I-9 for the company has to physically see the documentation. For us as all-remote, we found out that you can have a live Teams meeting with your new hire to view the documents. There's a checkbox on the new form to confirm this has been done remotely. Seems like you need to retain copies of the documents, so if images are emailed, be sure you use a secure method!

Some other things you can check includes the importance of having the I-9 filed separately from any medical documents or applications. There are some guidelines on how long you need to hold on to the I-9 and at what point it should be destroyed.

There's even more guidelines

concerning E-Verify. There are 23 states that require the use of E-Verify for some public or private employers. Several states offer exceptions for small businesses. This is actually a voluntary program, but if you have Federal Contractors or Subcontracts that contain the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) E-Verify clause, you would be required to use it.

An I-9 audit verifies employment eligibility and ensures compliance with immigration laws. So what triggers an I-9 audit? Complaints from employees, job candidates, or competitors, or just random audits by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or ICE. - CMW

Vendor ACH Security and Monitoring

Sending payments to vendors via ACH is very convenient. Sage 100 Contractor can create the file and you can upload it to the bank. From the bank's perspective, this is more secure than writing checks which can be intercepted, names and amounts altered, and other security risks (which is why you want to use Positive Pay!).

When you choose to send payments via ACH, it's important to have policies in place to confirm and verify any requests for changes in bank routing information or bank accounts. This is one of the BIGGEST phishing scams because it's successful! Be sure you have a hard and fast policy that these changes are NOT made without a phone call that you initiate to a phone number you already have, to talk with your regular contact person!

So now the next bit of bad news — one of our clients thinks there might have been changes to the vendor email address where the confirmation is sent and the bank info on the ACH section of the 4-4 Vendor screen. In a great pro-active move, they requested a report so they can stay in front of any changes in the

Save the Date
Thursday, May 1st
11:00 am Central Time
Updating Paygroups
(Unions) Webinar

actual 4-4 screen related to processing vendor ACH payments.

Using our SQL Script Runner tool, we created a report to take advantage of some of the security tracking of field changes in S100C. The overall guidelines are to run a report that looks back about a month looking for any changes to the vendor email address field in the 4-4 screen, or any of the fields on the ACH Payment Setup tab. The customized output can sort by user, by vendor, indicating the fields changed. This can then be run before creating the ACH file that will go to the bank. If there were changes, they can be verified and confirmed before generating the file!

We're so glad this client came to us to brainstorm this issue. Congratulations to them for staying in front of this risk. We are happy to have created a custom tool to give them exactly what they need. This is just one example of the custom solutions our Business Applications and Programming team members have rolled out! -CMW

See You There!

May 17 - 21

Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center, FL

CFMA's 2025 Annual Conference
(Chris is presenting The POWER of Power BI; come join us!)

M365 Education Station

Copilot for Teams: Enhancing Collaboration with Plugins

In January 2024, Copilot for Teams became available. Microsoft Copilot for Teams is designed to streamline teamwork and boost productivity by integrating AI capabilities directly into your Teams experience. One of the standout features of **Copilot for Teams** includes **Copilot agents**, which allows users to enhance their workflow with various plugins tailored to their specific needs.

Microsoft 365 Copilot Agents come in a few flavors

Some agents are built into Copilot, like the **Visual Creator** that lets you generate images. You can use this to create a picture of a cat riding a unicorn in space wearing a construction hat —>.



Another flavor of agent includes prebuilt agents from software vendors. You can easily add these powerful agents by simply hitting the ‘**Get Agents**’ option and selecting from a large list of companies that have built these agents to plugin to Microsoft 365 Copilot. For example, you could add the **Procore** agent to connect Copilot directly to your Procore data, allowing you to ask questions about your Procore projects and receive summary responses and related project information .

The last flavor of agent includes agents that you can build yourself using **Copilot Studio**. When you build your own agent, you can set it up to handle specific tasks, look up data from specific sources, or interact with outside data sources. For example, you could build an ‘HR Agent’ that is connected to a PDF of your employee handbook so users can ask questions like ‘What is our vacation policy?’ and you can be confident it will pull the answer from the correct source.

Brief Summary of Copilot Overall

Microsoft Copilot is an AI-powered assistant that helps boost productivity and streamline workflows by offering contextual assistance, automating tasks, and analyzing data. Copilot combines the power of **large language models** (LLMs) with your content in the **Microsoft Graph** and **Microsoft 365 apps** to turn your words into the most powerful productivity tool on the planet.

With Copilot, you can enhance your productivity and creativity across the Microsoft 365 suite of applications. For example, you can use Copilot to add animations to a PowerPoint slide, summarize your inbox and prioritize your emails, create a proposal from your meeting notes, and summarize a Teams meeting you missed to get the key takeaways. Copilot is not just a tool; it is a partner that understands your needs and preferences, offering personalized suggestions and solutions.

Whether you’re drafting documents, analyzing data, managing projects, or communicating with your team, integrating Copilot can help you work smarter and more efficiently. Here are four ways to use Microsoft 365 Copilot:

- Synthesizing and Summarizing Documents:** Copilot for Teams can quickly synthesize and summarize documents, making it easier for users to understand the key points without having to read through the entire content. Imagine using this to consolidate contract requirements, summarize insurance guidelines, or other lengthy documents!
- Asking Questions About Content:** Users can ask Copilot questions about specific content within their Teams environment, helping them to quickly find answers and insights.
- Drafting Responses to Emails:** Copilot can assist in drafting professional (or fun!) responses to email threads, ensuring that the tone and content are appropriate. Ask Copilot to sound professional, make it more personal, or add humor.
- Summarize Meetings:** Copilot can summarize Teams meetings that users missed, providing key takeaways and decisions made during the meeting, or see where their name came up in the conversation! - *CMW, Copilot*



How Did They Do It? Callen Construction

The Callen Construction journey started in 1986 when Tom decided to start the company as a Siding contractor. Tom invited his brother Phil to join as a sales person, adding windows, roofing, porches, anything for the home exterior.

Through all these years, Callen's 'secret sauce' has been how well they treat their team members, providing quality craftsmanship, and their exceptional customer service with clients. Tom had retired by the time Craig joined them seven years ago, but he worked closely with Phil before his retirement, and with Mike, a long time employee who is now the owner.

Callen is proud to have team members with over 20 years of history with the company, including the owner, Mike. This has helped the transition but also introduced some challenges as they refocused on growing the business. With great communication, the teams have been able to navigate these culture changes.

A homeowner replaced all their windows. With the Low E tint and the greens in the paint and shutters, the slight green tint on the windows was

accentuated, making them look green! With the help of the manufacturer and a lot of talking, Callen replaced all the windows!



**Craig Kazmierczak,
Director of Finance**

Craig enjoys the Syscon newsletters, learning more about the S100C capabilities. During their Fiscal Yearend change project, Craig enjoyed working with all the Syscon team members. He felt everyone was easy to talk to, set clear expectations, and responded quickly to questions.

Craig's background includes a degree in accounting and several years in public accounting, focused on construction and real estate clients. Craig left public accounting to work for a restoration contractor, then Callen. As events turned out, Craig grew up a few blocks away from the Callen office! It's a small world. - CMW

Fast Facts

Location: Muskego, WI
Specialty: Exterior Residential Construction
Founded: 1986

[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: Updating Paygroups, webinar

Date: Thursday, May 1st

Time: 11:00 a.m. CST

Register: www.syscon-inc.com/events

Event: Ditch Paper Timecards, webinar

Date: Friday, May 16th

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST

Register: www.syscon-inc.com/events

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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 Inc.

