Syscon U

What's New

We sent our entire Biz Apps team to the Microsoft Power Platform conference. It was amazing! They had some time together and came back with great ideas, new insights, and some exciting goals.

We've also been busy booking Payroll Close appointments and getting read for our two big webinars, Closing the Year, and How to Prepare for 1099's.

November was our Sys-Fit Challenge. We tracked our daily exercise to earn a point a day while focusing on our physical health. We had a fun PowerApp to log it all, some darling Gus images, and a lot of fun encouraging each other. Waiting to see who had the most points! - *Catherine Wendt*

In this Issue

December 2025

CMMC Enforcement—It's Here (but are you ready?)

Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) 2.0 has been six years in the making and the source of much controversy and confusion along the way. An Amendment to the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement went into effect mid-November, officially mandating that all Defense Department solicitations and contracts include requirements for CMMC 2.0.

CMMC 2.0 is a three-tiered cybersecurity framework requiring defense contractors working with Federal Contract Information (FCI) or Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) to have specific security controls in place based on the sensitivity of the data. When bidding on new contracts, contractors will have to prove that their networks, including their entire supply chain, meet one of the three levels of compliance. This includes data in the cloud, including servers and M365 tools, and other cloud-based software that might have, use, or house this type of data.

The program was created in 2019 by the first Trump administration to ensure defense contractors are safeguarding the Pentagon's sensitive data, keeping it away from our adversaries (enemies!). With all the controversy, many companies decided to 'wait and see,' wondering if this program would ever get off the ground.

In 2024, the Defense Department posted the final rule change for CMMC 2.0 establishing the program into federal law. The cybersecurity standards are to be enacted by the end of 2025 (which is now!). In September, the Pentagon published the rule amending the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement

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(DFARS), requiring contract solicitations to include CMMC with verification as a condition to win awards. That rule was enacted which began Phase I of the three-year implementation plan to introduce CMMC.

In Phase I, vendors are to complete a self-assessment of their cybersecurity compliance under CMMC Level 1 and Level 2. Phase II begins in November 2026 and requires contractors to prove Level 2 compliance with a certified third-party assessor (C3PAO). Phase III will introduce CMMC Level 3 requirements starting in November 2027 for those handling the most sensitive data.

This opens a whole host of questions: Who is a Certified third-party assessor, and how much does that cost? How often does a contractor need to be certified? Are there any companies out there to 'assess' compliance and are there enough of them to get these done in time for contract finalization? What happens if your company is certified, but you have those in your supply chain that can't or won't (which means you aren't)?

It sounds like some contractors think this is 'new' but it's been around a while. "You can say a lot of things about CMMC, but you can't say you didn't see it coming," Ryan Heidorn, Chief Technology Officer for C3 Integrated Solutions. The CMMC program is the tool to prove contractors are following the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) cybersecurity regulations that have been in place for almost ten years. "People have had these cyber requirements in their contracts since 2013, the existing set of cyber requirements in DFARS hasn't changed at all since 2016," Horne said. "It wasn't until a verification mechanism came around that said you have to prove to us that the thing we're paying you for is getting done."

The next big takeaway is that most contractors think this is about spending money on cybersecurity. True, some have antiquated and vulnerable tools; some haven't taken basic steps yet. More often though, it's a question of a policy or procedure that needs to be in place to meet the compliance requirements, which usually involves two pieces of evidence for each control. Complaining about the high cost of compliance is going to fall on deaf ears. The DOD's position is that contractors have been signing contracts with this wording for years and getting paid. Are they now saying they were in violation? Not a very strong place to stand.

The bottom line is that those contractors have data that can negatively impact our national security and make our country vulnerable. For the contractors to do the work, they need this info which means they need to keep it safe and secure. The systems will need to be in place and compliance will need to be tested. For many with unique 'boutique' skills, contractors further up in the chain may need to extend an umbrella over them so they can work.-*CMW*

"Adversity gifts us perspective."

- Sebastian Terry

Book Nook

The 5 Apology Languages by Gary Chapman

I've heard Gary Chapman speak and have enjoyed his books. This one is co-authored by Jennifer Thomas. How can someone write a whole book about apologizing? Well, turns out it's a little complicated and we don't all hear or feel apologies the same way. Starting at the beginning, a sincere apology means we may feel some guilt or shame, so offering an apology can help us, as well as the person we wronged. The one receiving our apology has a choice to accept it or not. This is where our language choices come in.

Some people want to hear the words, 'I'm sorry.' Others want to know that you'll try to make changes so it doesn't happen again. Others want to be asked to accept the apology; it's complicated! The book does a nice job of sharing these different points of view and how a little thought on our side can help the person hear and accept our sincere apology. We can express regret, accept responsibility, make restitution, share our plan to change, and request forgiveness.

There's a chapter called 'What if you don't want to apologize?' Maybe you think it's not worth trying, it was their fault anyway, or it will be difficult to say and hard to admit. There are some great examples that will challenge you to dig deep! Next up? The wronged person now has a choice to forgive. 'Learning to Forgive' is a great chapter with an interesting story about a young man who also had to learn to forgive himself. There's an assessment to learn your language. Recommended!

Recurring Email through Power BI?

Power BI is typically used to see beautiful and functional dashboards. These are viewed in a browser only. We had a client who wanted to share them through email, as an attachment, instead.

Our Biz Apps team created a new report in Power BI and added a tool called Power BI Report Builder. This tool allows the report to be converted, built in a printable format, aka 'Paginated report.'

They converted the Power BI report to a Paginated Report then published it to the Power BI service. Then they used the 'Subscribe' feature which allows a user to setup recurring customized emails with the attached printable report.

The recipients of the email need to have a Power BI Pro License assigned to their M365 account with some exceptions for Premium Capacity licenses. There's a nice article in Microsoft Learn entitled 'Email subscriptions for reports and dashboards in the Power BI service.' - *CMW*

What To Do When You Have a Suspicious Email

Matt noticed that many users, many of our clients, don't know how best to handle potential, or obvious, phishing or malicious emails. Some users forward them to us—but those just end up in our quarantine blocks at best, delaying when or if we'll actually see them or exposing our systems to the bad payload. The other risk is that Microsoft may think the email is legit since it's being interacted with.

So what should you do? Anyone on your team, when they see a suspicious or obvious malicious or phishing email should definitely let us know. Don't forward it or interact in any way. You can take a screen shot and email the image to us and let us know your question or what makes you concerned that it's not legit. You can also flag the email as phishing or junk, then delete it! Use Shift-Del to permanently delete it rather than just sending it to your Delete folder.

If you're not sure, you're always welcome to call us—we answer our phones 'live' during the work day—or send us a 'clean' email to CustomerSupport@syscon-inc.com and we'll jump on with you and take a look. -*CMW*

Fake Expense Receipts

According to Ellen Jennings-Trace, a staff writer for TechRadar Pro, there is a significant rise in AI-generated fake receipts which are being turned in for employers to reimburse. These are very hard to spot since receipts aren't very complicated to begin with, now accounting for 14% of fraudulent documents submitted in Sept 2025, up from 0% in 2024, according to AppZen.

Ramp claims to have flagged over $1 million worth of fraudulent invoices in the last 90 days.

Apparently these fake receipts are really 'good' making them difficult for humans to identify them. The article talked about additional software (another expense!) businesses may need to scan the metadata of the receipt, although we don't see how that would help given the many places from which receipts can originate.

The new image generation models from Google and OpenAI have led to this wave of AI-generated receipts according to the Financial Times (FT). They cited some of the same names, AppZen, Fin Tech Ramp, with a quote from Chris Juneau at SAP Concur.

With AI creeping into every area of our life, business and personal, it's more and more likely that this trend will continue. Wonder if we'll go back to old school with pen and paper or physical receipts to prove they're real! -*CMW*

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Rechargeable Wine Opener

This gadget from Sharper image uncorks bottles and is rechargeable. On a full charge, it can uncork 30-40 bottles, more than enough for a fun holiday party! It works with all standard size and most oversized ones. The corkscrew is motorized and pulls the cork out in seconds. It has its own charging base, plugging into an AC outlet to recharge. The charging light is LED and it has a 1-year limited replacement warranty.

At 11.6" L x 7" W x 2.5"H, it doesn't take much counter room, weighing just under 2 pounds. The unit is $99.99, but there were several special deals available. It arrives in 3-5 business days, direct from the manufacturer. There's a 100% satisfaction guarantee if you're not satisfied within 60 days of your purchase.

There's a little product video that shows the smaller piece nicely taking off the foil, and the quick battery powered uncorking of the bottle. I've seen older versions at one of my sisters' houses, but it was not rechargeable. You could consider one for yourself and give as a gift to one of your friends who truly appreciates wine! – CMW

Construction Corner

Quarter Four—Planning Ahead

I stumbled on our article from the October 2021 newsletter on this topic, much of which is still valid today, so here's a recap with some updates.

This is a great time to catch up on bank reconciliations. If there are uncleared checks, you may need to reach out to vendors to see if replacements are needed. Uncleared vendor and employee checks have some rules. According to the Unclaimed Property rules, you are obligated to reach out to the Payees and get them the payments. If you cannot find them, the money is supposed to be sent to the state as unclaimed property, allowing the Payees to petition the state to receive the funds. Yes, this is a real thing!

How about those aging reports? This is a good time to clean up old AP invoices. Contact the vendor(s) for a statement and clean up old items, confirming that your list matches theirs.

AR Aging is another good place for some clean up. Are there penny balances that need clean up? How about old retention that hasn't been received yet—pick up the phone and ask for the check. You'd be surprised how often a quick phone call will result in an old retention balance being paid; sometimes you just need to ask!

A reminder that if you have to get rid of old items, regardless of the reason, do NOT delete them! You will need to make reversing entries and post the clean up records (reversals) to a current posting period.

There are some very handy ways to make AP and AR reversing entries and apply them right away. Use the Reference field in the 3-2 and 4-2 screens to reference the clean up record to the original open record. Put the original Invoice number in the reference field. When you post the reversal, it will give you a message that the original record was, or was not, found. If it was found, hit Yes and the reversal will be applied to the original record; no additional steps needed.

> *"To get rid of old items, regardless of the reason, do NOT delete them! You will need to make reversing entries…"*

Let's talk about Payroll—whether you do your payroll in house or use a payroll service, this module needs the same TLC. Start by running the 5-3-7 Audit report; there shouldn't be any errors. If you run your own payroll, you should be running this every time you run a payroll, and definitely before preparing quarterly reports.

We recommend following the full Payroll Archive process, the original process, rather than the soft close. Either way, if you'd like assistance with the payroll closing process, please call the office to schedule the day and time that coincides with your last posted check dated 2025, before your first time entries for the first check in 2026.

Next, check with your CPA. Will you have yearend entries for key personnel such as personal use of a company car, health benefits to report, or other adjustments. These need to be added BEFORE payroll is closed.

A review of the Balance Sheet is next. Are the liability balances reasonable and supported? Are subaccounts correct for things like Child Support / Garnishments, Employee Loans, Prepaid insurance, and similar?

Time to pull out the calendar. When is the last check in 2025? You'll need to close the payroll after that check is posted, before you create 5-2-2 records for the first check dated 2026. Make sure you have access to the Database Admin tool, as well. We're holding a webinar on Thursday December 4th to review all of these steps; see you there! *- CMW*

We have a few openings in our Syscon Peer Group!

The wealth of experience across this group of similar contractors is just amazing! It's nice to know that others have similar issues and to hear and brainstorm together to find creative solutions. Plus, these are just good people! Interested? Give us a call!

Closing the Year Webinar

Sign up now!

Thursday, December 4th 11:00 a.m. CST

Register at www.syscon-inc.com/events

S100C version 27.2

Slated for release last month, we have a few highlights from the release notes.

Only Ohio has state tax table changes. There are changes to track cross state sick time, focused on pay cals with some new pay calc types. They added a button to check state sick hours before final computing payroll. If a vendor cert is marked Stop Pay, you now receive a warning when trying to pay (that's how it used to be!). For WA, two new State quarterly wage reports that back out sick wages from state unemployment.

A few releases back, there was a new process for tax-exempt Alabama overtime. Don't get too excited; there will be more updates as we head into yearend. - CMW

M365 Education Station

New Modern Icons

The new modern icons are now available for Windows, Mac, Android, iOS, and the web. Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and other trusted tools have new life with Copilot in Microsoft 365, and now their icons will reflect the change.

These are cleaner shapes, vibrant colors, and a connected design system with Copilot's influence. Many of us have already started seeing these new icons. If you haven't yet, they're definitely coming your way!

Classic Outlook versus New Outlook: Key Differences

Modern Design, Enhanced Performance

All software companies want to keep their 'look' modern and clean. Ironically, there are more features and options, but less clutter and visibility to all the options. The minimalist interface with more whitespace is designed to make navigation simpler and reduce distractions. Classic Outlook retains it's ribbon-based design, offering extensive customization and multi-window support.

New Outlook is built on a cloud-first architecture, boasting faster load times and smoother transitions. It also has a tighter integration with Microsoft 365 apps like Teams and SharePoint. Classic Outlook is very reliable, but can be slower, especially with large mailboxes and many add-ins, since it relies on local resources.

Two Features in New Outlook

Snooze Emails: This sounds promising! It temporarily removes them from your inbox, bringing them back at a specified time. This was only available in Outlook Web and mobile. Snoozing helps manage your workload, bringing important things back when you're ready for them.

Pin Emails: Emails can be pinned to the top of your inbox for quick access. This can help keep track of critical conversations and tasks.

Summary

Here's a nice grid that Copilot built for us.

Feature	Classic Outlook	New Outlook
Ribbon Customization	Yes	Limited
Multi-Window Support	Yes	Limited
Snooze Emails	No	Yes
Pin Emails	No	Yes
Cloud Integrations	Basic	Advanced

Microsoft Solutions Partner

How Did They Do It?
Apache Environmental

When talking with Anthony, he says he's 'just a truck driver.' But as the conversation continues, it's clear he's an entrepreneur! As opportunities have come up, Anthony has a 'why not' attitude and is willing to dig in and learn whatever is needed.

While driving a truck, he and some family members managed a furniture store. When it closed after 17 years, Anthony felt discouraged. With five years of service left to qualify for his Pension, his employer decided not to re-sign with the union. He had an idea and called his boss and decided to go into the trucking business. The boss loved the idea and acted as a mentor while Anthony went down this path.

Anthony found someone who just finished a bridge job and had seven dump trucks. He drove out to look at the trucks and decided to buy all seven! He put the financing in place and got to work right away, driving one of the trucks himself, making it to the 25 year Pension goal! Trucking is very competitive and Anthony wanted to diversify. There was a large overseas company doing a big job and it wasn't going well; New York is a tough place to do work. The company wanted to get rid of their Civil division, leaving two young guys out of work, so Anthony recognized they were talented and invited them to work for him!

Anthony Albero

This small but mighty team won some projects and weathered the ups and downs. With projects growing in size, Anthony decided to choose Sage 100 Contractor and is happy with the decision. He and Tracy continue to learn the software and the accounting concepts, leaning on good people, online videos, and other professional service providers.

Anthony shared that he's had a great experience with Syscon, our deep background, accounting skill set, and understanding of the construction business. He loves the newsletter! Anthony believes his tenancity has been his success driver. His biggest challenge has been learning construction accounting, bonding and related business needs. - *CMW*

Fast Facts
Location: New York, NY
Specialty: Civil Construction and Construction Trucking
Founded: 2016

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

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

Closing the Year in Sage 100 Contractor (webinar)

When: Thurs Dec 4th

Time: 11:00 am Central

This annual event is free to clients with a small fee for guests. We'll cover all the steps so you're ready!

How to Prepare for 1099's at Yearend

When: Thurs Jan 8th

Time: 11:00 am Central

Every year we get questions about 1099's, who should get them, how to get a list, forms, and more! We'll walk through all of this so you're ready for the deadline!

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We love this stuff!
We are committed to helping businesses use technology to run their organization successfully

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