



What's New

It's officially Spring, the days are getting longer, flowers are coming up everywhere and the temperatures are on the rise.

We had our Mid-Year State of the Company presentation with several updates including our theme for the year, Reputation, and some fun. We're celebrating 40 years in business, so everyone received cake mix, frosting, sprinkles, and candles. We should have some fun pictures coming in soon!

We're also continuing our Hosted App Server upgrades, so watch for your day and time.

Of course this also means it's the end of the first quarter, and personal taxes are due April 15th!
- Catherine Wendt



Flawsome! A New Perspective

It's interesting... Many of our clients are reaching decade-milestones in their businesses. One company just celebrated 90 years! We're watching a new generation of leadership stepping into new roles, bringing new ideas, opening up new opportunities. We're watching the 'mature' generation passing knowledge and expertise, sharing words of wisdom, all while learning to let go and encourage growth and ownership. During this process, some amazing things transform in front of their eyes. It's so encouraging to see these efforts come to fruition.

But this is a process! It's not a constant line moving up on a chart. It's usually quite jagged with many ups and downs, all while people are working hard to do their best, keeping an open mind, reaching out

to mentor or be mentored, all good things. Some days will go better than others. Some seasons may be rough while others are exhilarating! So how can you weather this adventure and make sure the trend is in the right direction?

We've watched a lot of companies over our many years in business, watched other community organizations we participate in, too. They have a lot of similar challenges. We've weathered some of these ourselves. Not only do we have quite a few years behind us with some unique knowledge and skills, but our industry changes so quickly! Finding an expert with a certain number of years in a specific technology is not only difficult, but in some cases, just can't be done because of how new it is!

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On the other end of the spectrum, some of our most experienced team members have certifications in things that don't even exist anymore.

The multi-generational work force has been a topic of several webinars, seminars, and articles we've prepared and presented. We want our experienced team members to share knowledge with the newbies, and we want the newbies to drink it all in. In a mentoring situation, especially in the trades, the attitude of BOTH parties has to be one of respect, open communication, a sense that everyone is doing their best, and that neither party probably has all the answers.

Whether it's a generational mentorship, an apprenticeship, or just new members joining an excellent team, we recommend adopting the word 'flawsome.' You've hired these people for their special skills. You chose to mentor someone because of their potential. That means they're already awesome! But guess what, they're also human and we all know 'life

happens.' That means there will be times when the flaws also come through, despite everyone's best efforts. And we all know that there are some excellent learning opportunities that only come around AFTER you've made the mistake!

So, what about you? Are you doing the mentoring, or being mentored? Are you showing up and expecting the best while putting your best effort forward? Are you making the effort to see things from others' perspectives? If so, that's amazing. Now what about the people you manage?

Lastly, we're in this season as well. We have amazing, awesome team members who bring awesome skills to our teams. Some of the work our people are doing didn't even exist a few short years ago! They're also regular people just like you and me, with families, pets, health concerns, dreams and aspirations for the future of their families, their careers, and as individuals. They sincerely love their work and love our clients. They want the best for you and your team. Are you willing to join me in celebrating 'flawsome'? - CMW

Cathy & Larry Sightings



Catherine attended the Outstanding Women in Business Awards event in Phoenix.

Larry spent time in Illinois celebrating our client achieving 90 years in business. He also took this opportunity to visit several other clients in Illinois, taking a trip down memory lane.

"The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you."

— John E. Southard

Unbreakable Sole by Missy Moss Wright

This book came highly recommended by Darren Hardy, so I ordered it. Missy is on Darren's A Team, so when she shared her book for his feedback, he was more than happy to read it through. Darren said he was truly moved, even bringing tears at times.

Missy is a marathon runner. Throughout the book, she uses the analogy of the 26 Miles to share her story, life's lessons learned, the struggles and the joys in her life, as we all run the marathon of life.

For such a young lady, Missy has had several major life events. Throughout her journey, she credits the unconditional support and encouragement from her parents, especially her Dad



Book Nook

who helped her with her first marathon.

Some of the chapter headings that weave the marathon with life include the importance (and risk) of having a pace runner; Veyo Hill (grueling and steep); silver ballons (mile markers along the way); the sick wagon (choosing if your body needs this or if you are mentally checking out); solitude (head talk); and many more. Although there are lessons throughout these 'miles,' this is a very personal story that includes several major life events that most of us will never experience.

We cannot control what life might throw at us, but we always have the opportunity to choose how we respond. How we train for the marathon of life has a big impact on how we show up in these moments. Read this book! - CMW



How Saving \$110 Cost \$720+

Many of our clients have a person on staff that's fairly tech-savvy and often works as our 'hands' for specific tasks. This person is sometimes the first call for day-to-day issues since many problems are similar at each company.

One of our clients had a new laptop that needed to be upgraded to Windows 11 Pro. However, they didn't want to spend the \$110 for the upgrade. So they decided to use AI to hack the new laptop and try to do the upgrade anyway. This is NOT how we recommend using AI, BTW.

The result was that the computer license was completely deactivated. By the time they called us, we had to factory reset the laptop to get it working again, then we could begin the setup work.

That's 4 hours @ \$180/hr for a total of \$720 out of pocket, and lost time for team members waiting for the equipment. Lessons? Spend the \$110 for the upgrade; don't use AI to try to hack into anything; call us for support so we can give you guidance. - CMW

AI is NOT Perfect!

With the arrival of the World Wide Web, people could look things up online and they would treat them as if they were facts found in an encyclopedia! If it was right there on the web, it had to be true!

We all know that we need to be more cautious than this, trust but verify as they say, and AI, no matter what flavor you're using, is NO exception!

Simple things like researching the end-of-life date for a Microsoft product can return the wrong date info; and that was using Copilot. An attorney who took his case citations from AI and didn't check the results found out all the citations were fake! The judge was furious.

Larry offered to put together our Gadget of the Month and asked AI to find the last time he did that kind of thing for me. He got back a wonderful article referencing all kinds of things on our website and things we've posted, but nothing like our Gadget of the month, and certainly no previous example! When challenged, AI admitted it didn't have the right answer so it did some research and presented something else!

More recently, a client asked AI for help with a computer, and the information was WRONG causing a lot of headaches. AI is a tool that needs to be vetted like anything else you rely on. If you want legal expertise, do your research then go to your attorney. If you want tax expertise, do your research and go to your CPA. If you need help with the computers, do your research, then call us BEFORE you take next steps! -CMW

Cyber Insurance Applications—Don't Fake It!

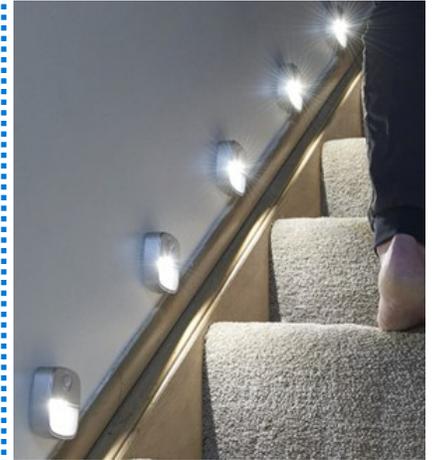
We strongly recommend having Cyber Insurance and we've run articles on things to look for, things to ask about, and the importance of reading the fine print.

In this section, we'd like to ask that you let us help you fill out the questionnaires when you get them. I often bring specific questions to Matt so I have the exact details and the right product names, and I work with this stuff every day!

The biggest warning is that if you 'guess' at the answers and you're wrong, or you say you have things in place that are not in place or you cannot prove, any claim you may file could be completely denied.

Lastly, if you're not using our managed services, this might be a good time to explore adding patch automation, EDR, and some other securities. It could save you some money on the insurance! -CMW

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Motion Activated Place Anywhere Lights

The first picture I saw for this gadget is the one above, on a set of stairs. The lights are easy to install with peel-off adhesive that you can mount anywhere, without cords, plugs, or the help of an electrician. The motion sensors turn them on and off from 9 to 16 feet away with a 120-degree angle of detection, so you're not chewing up power all night long.

The image shows the lights facing down, on to the stairs, while other images show the light pointing upwards. Each light provides 6.1 lumens of gentle white light and has a 15-second auto shut off. You can use the peel-off adhesive or install with screws (hardware not included). Suggestions include walkways, stairwells, and closets.

They are less than 2 oz each and come in a set of five. They use three AAA batteries per unit and should last about one year. With a 1-year limited replacement warranty, they list at \$69.99, although I've seen deals closer to \$50 for the set of five. —CMW



CONSTRUCTION CORNER



Will You Have An Extra Payroll in 2026?

I came across an article by a CPA group on this topic, which caught my attention. Turns out that in 2026, if you paid the first check of the year on January 2nd, you'll start 2027 with a January 1st check date, which is a bank holiday. If you choose to run this payroll on December 31, 2026, bi-weekly payers could end up with 27 weeks, and weekly payers could up up with 53 checks.

For salaried workers, this could mean that their pay in 2026 exceeds their annual salary. It would be considered an overpayment, not a change in the base pay, but there are other implications.

This 'extra' check could impact Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA), Health Savings Accounts (HSA), and retirement contributions, especially those who push to the deduction limits.

For the employer, if you have an overhead budget, this extra pay period means you will exceed the budget, which might impact commissions and bonuses.

Turns out you have a few options. You can do nothing and allow employees to receive that extra salary pay; you can adjust the salary for 27 (bi-weekly) or 53 (weekly) pay periods which will lower the regular weekly salary but result in the right annual amount; or you can do a mid-year correction to salary amounts so the yearend result doesn't exceed the salary.

If you choose to do any adjustments, check in with your state which may have laws about advanced written notice and communication steps. If you choose not to do an adjustment,

you might look at some of those pay calcs and be sure you have them flagged with Max Dollar defaults and amounts so no one accidentally exceeds the 2026 limits. - CMW

Auto Loan Interest Deduction: Rules Have Changed

There's a new federal tax deduction that allows you to deduct interest paid on qualifying auto loans; sounds like a good thing. Turns out there are some significant rules that are more technical and have additional responsibilities for both you and the auto-finance industry.

'This 'extra' check could impact FSA's, HSA's, and retirement contribution limits'

The auto loan has to qualify for deductible interest. This includes the vehicle's eligibility, the loan's structure, who has the first-lien position, and reporting of the vehicle's VIN on the tax return. In fact, if it's missing, the deduction is disqualified.

According to the article, the deduction rules apply for tax years 2025 through 2028 for loans originating after Dec 31, 2024. The recommendation is to follow these guidelines for all new loans.

Car dealerships aren't known for their 'up-to-date' technology, and it seems they'll have some retooling to do. Finance companies, banks, certain dealers, and loan services will have to file information for each qualifying loan if they receive at least \$600 in interest in a year. They'll have to

Save the Date
Thursday, May 7th
11:00 am Central Time
Updating Paygroups
(Unions) Webinar

provide the borrower's name, address, and tax number, the vehicle year, make, model, and VIN, the principle balance on January 1st, loan original date, and if the loan was purchased, the date of assignment.

Next, lenders have to send borrowers a written annual statement by January 31st (which will be easier for us, but not for them).

So what vehicles qualify for the deduction? They have to weigh under 14,000 pounds, be designed for use on public roads, be placed in service by the taxpayer (not a dealer), and have final assembly in the US (an interesting one). Demo cars and lease-to-own may have issues qualifying.

There are qualifying loan rules, too. It will not qualify if there's negative equity, missing insurance, any non-vehicle personal property covered by the loan. Lots to consider before you sign off on the next deal! -CMW

See You There!
May 30 - June 3
JW Marriott, Phoenix AZ
CFMA's 2026 Annual
Conference

Let us know if you're attending. We'd love to visit with you!

M365 Education Station

Cathy Wendt (You) Chat Shared Storyline

M365 User Card

Microsoft 365 has an **M365 User Card** feature to manage and track your contacts. This is quite handy, allowing you to capture the person’s name (especially the spelling!), phone number, email address, and even their availability, recent activity, position in the org chart, and their LinkedIn ‘address.’

Although having these contacts is helpful, the bigger ‘win’ is the quick access through Teams! If you hover over their name in Teams, which is probably open all day everyday for you desktop users, as well as on our cell phones, all this info is immediately available without logging into anything else. Check it out!

Copilot for All—How About a Survey?



Some people can’t wait to start using Copilot; others don’t want anything to do with it. All of them have a variety of feelings, concerns, and expectations that drive these responses.

We have a client who would like all team members to have a Copilot license, M365 Copilot for Business. Knowing that people come with their own pre-conceived notions, positive and negative, they decided to put together a survey to get some feedback. They asked their team members for ideas on how they hope to use Copilot; reservations they may have about using it; what questions they have; and any experience so far.

After some careful thought about the questions to ask, keeping it down to just a handful, they sent them out using Survey Monkey. With these results in hand, they can tailor the training and roll out to build on the excitement while addressing concerns others may have. That’s great Leadership!

Become an Expert!

We took Chris’s two-part webinar and pulled out the very practical tips and tricks, then packaged them in short segments, available on our website.

Check it out! ➔



How Did They Do It? Peachtree Mechanical

Back in the early 1980's, Charlene and Dickey Denney worked for a contractor. Mom thought they could go out on their own together. Dad knew the trade and Mom was all in. They went to their boss and shared their plans then moved forward with about \$500 to get things started. The banker couldn't get behind a woman in construction, but Mom proved him wrong! With their 'can do it' attitude, training through special programs, and Mom's mentorship of other contractors over the years, they have grown quite a bit and enjoy an excellent reputation for their work and work ethic.

Melanie was bored with school and not ready to jump into college, so Dad suggested she work with them. Just like many family businesses, she answered phones, did clerical work, learned payroll from Mom (they still wrote the pay checks by hand), and learned the back office.

Brothers Richard and Preston have grown up in the trade, as well. Even after decades of service, when the job has a looming deadline, they'll grab their hard hats and lend a hand. Even Blake, the third generation, is part of the team.



Megan Jean-Paul, Melanie Denney-Haas

Labor challenges continue to be a focus. They have a quality core group, participate in various locals across states, and support apprentice programs. One of the team members is a teacher at a local hall and is very involved. Add in their great subcontractors, and the results are solid.

When Megan joined, she had never used Sage 100 Contractor and was looking for a resource. She found Syscon and knew we could help her. With their recent addition of the FIT System, things are running very well. Adding Megan has allowed Melanie to move into the Director of Administration Operations role. As a final note, they'd like to encourage others to start and continue in business. Don't let yourself be discouraged by anyone! - CMW

Fast Facts

Location: Fayetteville, GA
Specialty: Mechanical Contractor, GC
Founded: 1983

[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: Goodbye to Paper Timecards and Half-Baked Electronic Time Integrations!

Date: Wednesday, April 22nd

Time: 1:00 p.m. CST **Register:** www.syscon-inc.com/events

Coming Soon—Podcasts!

We're recording some podcasts and plan to request feedback from a beta group of clients. Do you have PM's, Owners, Office staff that just love podcasts and might be interested in checking these out? Please share their names and contact info and we'll be sure to get them on the list!!

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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

