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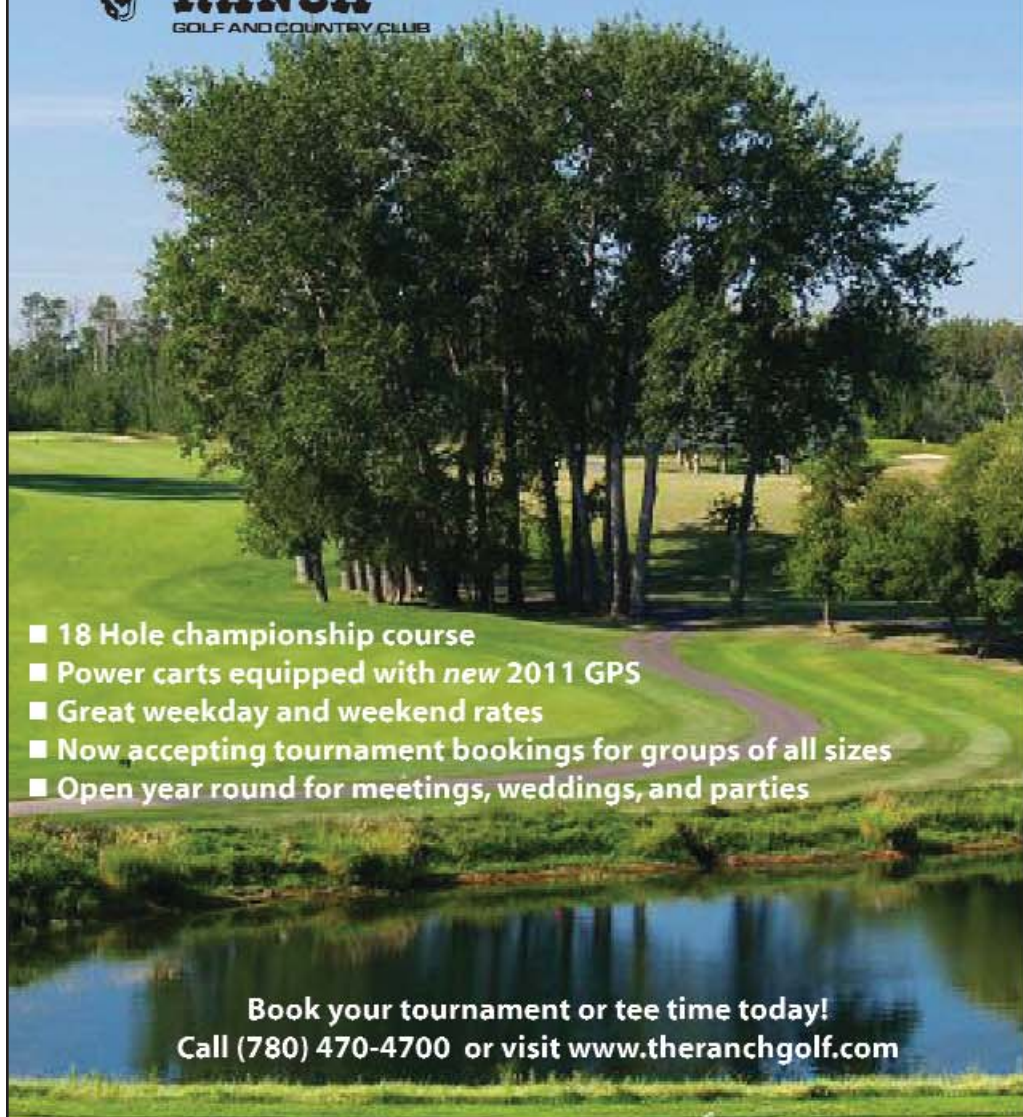
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Editor's Message

By Susan Munro, gSD ~ susan.munro@edmontonbusinessstalk.ca

Boom, bust, echo... did you hear that? If your business is profiting from the demographic shift, then you are interested in where people spend their money, why they spend their money, on what and how to tap into that spending.

We all know that doing business today is different and more challenging than it has ever been. If you have a pulse, you've been influenced in some way by the technological shifts and changes in today's global business environment.

Navigating business trends and opportunities these days doesn't have to be filled with the fear of server crashes and threats of network breaches; keeping up with the latest social media phenomena and changing technologies; changing workforces and information overloads. No, we just need to take a long slow breath and pay attention to the reverberation that keeps us from pulling out our hair or jumping off the nearest cyber bridge to find the answers.

Awareness; now there's the key to pulling it all together. That's what we bring to you in this business focused magazine.

Edmonton Business Talk is a quarterly publication designed to speak to all business and provide insight into the issues that can affect day to day operations.

Each of our magazine columnists have been carefully selected to provide you solid and pertinent information on services relevant to *your* business.

Here you will find tips on how to operate an electronically driven business safely and securely; you will learn the keys to running an environmentally conscious enterprise; you will garner human resource strategies, tax strategies and data protection strategies essential to your success. You will learn how to protect your business from the 'bad guys' in cyber space and become acutely aware how they can wreak havoc on your network. Our commitment is to help build better sales forces and expose creative ways to capitalize your business.

We are committed to listening to our readers and responding to their needs. Our focus is you, the reader. I sincerely hope you enjoy this issue of *Edmonton Business Talk* magazine. Please let me know what you think.

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Local Businesses Embracing “The Cloud”

By Graham Aberg ~ gaberg@f12.net

You’ve probably heard a lot about the cloud recently, and that’s a good thing for technology players like Microsoft, Google and IBM. The recent advertising push from companies like the aforementioned trio has been to move businesses toward the hottest industry trend to hit the technology front in years, that of cloud computing. But what is “The Cloud”?

The cloud is actually not a new concept; simply put “The Cloud” is the internet and “Cloud Computing” is a general label used when describing internet-based services. Popular examples of cloud-based services include Salesforce.com,

Google Docs, Netflix, Facebook and Microsoft’s highly promoted BPOS (Business Productivity Online Suite) and Office 365. We’re familiar with many of these names, but what place do these have in your business? Let’s take a look at a few common traits cloud services deliver to companies around the globe every day.

Pay for what you use. Cloud services are incredibly scalable and are often billed based on what your business consumes in a given period, most popularly month to month. Storage, processing power and even the licenses your staff use to access many cloud services can be di-

aled up and down on demand. Increasing staff or making layoffs? Paying only for what you use is a concept many businesses love as it frees up budget for use in other critical business drivers.

Free up IT resources. Whether you’re looking to keep your business nimble during a growth spurt or want to concentrate business investments on a different asset pool, look to the cloud. Often, moving all or portions of data or services to the cloud reduces strain on an already overworked IT staff and helps alleviate costly expenses on unplanned IT purchases (like that server that unexpectedly crashed). Migrating physical

servers to the cloud can also reduce your requirement for full featured desktops and notebooks in your business, allowing you to replace your aging fleet of PC’s with low cost Thin Clients and netbooks that can perform the same work functions as their predecessors at a fraction of the price.

Upgrades, upgrades, upgrades! Using software residing in the cloud like Microsoft’s Office 365 means that you’ll never have to shell out thousands of dollars to upgrade software versions you would traditionally purchase all at once in previous years. Most cloud offerings provide all the

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Ready to take your business to the Cloud?





Social Media & Business

By Susan Munro, gSD ~ susan.munro@mehco-inc.com

There are corporate giants that have marketing budgets the size of the GDP of some third-world countries so how are *you* going to work your marketing magic with social media as a small business?

Social media has been coined as “word-of-mouth advertising for the 21st century.”

Since word-of-mouth is the best type of advertising, social media should grasp your attention enough to want to experiment with this growing marketing strategy. Access to social media portals is everywhere, from smartphones to PC's - it is managed real-time and kind of fun, too.

Let's take Twitter for example. There are over 75 million users who send out more than 50 million “tweets,” or real-time updates, daily and those numbers are growing exponentially. These messages, or tweets, can be up to 140 characters long. Tweets can be forwarded, or ‘re-tweeted’ to any number of followers and then on to their networks. The marketing reach potential is mind-blowing.

Twitter doesn't cost anything to participate in (except your time) and it is totally risk free. It is an essential component to the marketing mix of any modern small business because it allows you to build a community among people who share your interests. It can effectively be used to build brand awareness, which turns into trust, which, yes, converts to greater sales potentials.

The beauty of Twitter lies in its ability to be a true two-way communication portal that allows followers to react to your message physically, or provide instant feedback regarding your product or service. This allows you to test the interest of new products quickly.

As long as you are connected via smartphone or internet, you can use this powerful and effective social media tool anywhere (except while driving). Compose your messages thoughtfully as you only have a micro-blogging moment to capture audience interest.

You can go to twitter.com now, using the smartphone in your pocket, sign up, and start engaging the audience awaiting you.

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Leading Change - Breakthrough Results

Catharine Wright ~ cwright@wright-group.ca

Change cannot be avoided. It occurs whether you manage it or not. It takes hold even if you aren't aware of its undercurrent - inch by inch, day by day and month by month. It is a fact of

business and something that happens to you if the driver's seat isn't quickly taken. In spite of many honest attempts at leading change, results are dismal. Approximately 70 percent of all change initiatives fail to meet expectations.

The bad news is that too few people understand the "secrets" behind successfully leading change. The good news is that those that do and are able to marshal the requisite resources, consistently exceed their goals. The better news is, it could be you. Building your capacity and capability to drive strategic change will indeed prove to be your competitive advantage in 2011 and beyond. Expand your capacity in this area and make sure you zero in on this overlooked area of expertise.

To avoid failing miserably at achieving extraordinary business results, embrace the need for change, plan accordingly and understand the human dynamics involved. The key words here are "human dynamics." It's only with an understanding of them, and a well orchestrated execution of it, that you will unleash the human potential required to achieve a breakthrough in performance.

HERE IS ONE KEY SECRET TO TRANSFORMING YOUR CULTURE AND YOUR RESULTS:

Achieving a breakthrough in performance outcomes requires a full-out unleashing of human potential. To do that, while building your strategic

change capacity you must get inside and understand your employees' minds; what motivates current levels of performance and resistance to change. Increasing understanding of individual and collective mindsets starts with self awareness.

If you are like many business leaders, you've mastered the ability to manage the content side of change, and some of the process side, but you haven't a clue about how to manage the human dynamics at play. Building your mastery here will be like spinning gold. Driving and leading change successfully today requires a new approach.

Deploying typical project management techniques may serve your purpose if it is day-to-day, incremental change you are after, but not if it is transitional (new approaches to doing business) or transformational (breakthrough, organization-wide culture and results transformation).

In an era where transformation is the name of the game - both at organization and industry levels - you better know how to shift the minds and align the hearts of your people. That requires understanding the essence of "transitions" which is the emotional process that every single person (including yourself) affected by change experiences. If you don't understand the process you will try to rush it, which will only further delay progress.

As a leader of change, make change management a key strategic competence. It will become your competitive advantage and secure your position at the forefront of your marketplace. Change management is about the people side of change. It is messy. It is difficult. Executed well, it is ripe with opportunity to create breakthrough results. Get informed - now.

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Franchise Leader, Walter Heuvingh

ENTREPRENEUR PROFILE. Written by Ingrid Schifer

After 16 years at Ford Motor Company, Walter Heuvingh knew it was time to “pursue the dream” of having his own business. Admittedly doubtful at first, his outlook quickly changed as he realized just how much he enjoyed “meeting new people, networking and giving back to the community” through the Coffee News venture. Their ‘What’s Happening’ section provides local not-for-profits event promotion at no cost, and the effective advertising allows local businesses in turn to support these not-for-profits. Coffee News provides work opportunities to clients of 8 different Programs for Persons with Developmental Disabilities.

A genuine family man, Walter says he loves the flexibility in his days allowing him quality time with his kids. “...almost never missed a game!” he states proudly. How admirable considering he runs 22 franchises for the Coffee News making him the largest Coffee News franchise owner in the world! (Franchisee average is three). At the 2010 Annual International Conference for Coffee News, he was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award for his efforts.

A patron of the coffee shop we’re at nonchalantly picks up a copy of the Coffee News from our table as he strolls out. Walter chuckles softly. It is obvious people love Coffee News and it is worth mentioning that their content is “all positive news”. The publication is designed to be read within a half an hour at most, allowing readers the ability to catch up on the news while waiting in a line up, over the lunch hour or enjoying their favorite Cafe’ Latte or Mochaccino.

Interested in his entrepreneurial journey, I asked Walter what he has learned thus far. “So much about marketing!” he replied. “The need to be consistent and incorporate different avenues of advertising.” Coffee News pricing is affordable enough to use them for long periods of time; not your typical “spray and pray” marketing campaign. One Coffee News client defined the advertising traction from the publication as a “marathon, not a sprint”. Walter has developed such loyalty amongst his clients with some of them advertising in Coffee News for over five years. His Coffee News franchises strongly support local amateur sports teams including the St. Albert Steel, Spruce Grove Saints, Drayton Valley Thunder, Morinville Jets, Whitecourt Wolverines and West Edmonton’s U-14 Soccer, to name only a few.

Coffee News started in Winnipeg in 1988 as a community oriented publication offering readers a “light hearted positive spin” on the news. Coffee News is distributed to over 1500 locations in Alberta and with Walter’s passionate direction, they are forecasting growth to over 2000 locations by 2012. What an outstanding success story!

Look for a copy of the Coffee News next time you stop for a sip!

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Your next company get-together starts here!

ENTREPRENEUR PROFILE. Written by Ingrid Schifer

When you take Century Road north off Yellowhead Trail and follow for 1.5 km, on your left hand side you will see the rolling hills of the Putting Horse Ranch in Spruce Grove's countryside, and a haven for those seeking family friendly recreation.

Chris and Liz Poburan greet me at the door of their beautiful ranch style home. Located on over 5 acres of impeccably looked after terrain including a waterfall surrounded in white crystal rock, a swan speckled pond, and the gurgling, naturally fish bearing Atim Creek, the place holds rich history for the Poburan's. It is the tapestry into which over the years they have merged the raising of a family, the growth of a business and the pleasure derived from passionately achieving your dreams. The Poburan's have successfully made The Putting Horse Ranch a perfect venue for any corporate team building event, employee appreciation get-together, or family party. Boasting a fire pit, barbeque facilities, event tents and catering arrangements, the putting course which was "designed to mimic an actual round of golf" is a par 70 with holes varying from pars 3 to 5.

Chris laughs as he recalls how much fun guests have when playing, saying it gets quite competitive once golfers get into it. "It's all about getting people outdoors." 2011 will bring the addition of a full driving range to be seeded this spring, and golfers will be hitting off the grass with a proper tee box. By the end of August golfers will also be able to try out the 120 yard hole which will be a full Par 3 and fully illuminated at night. After play, golfers will be able to enjoy a brew or two at the open air Putter's Lounge and Grill.

For some the immense appeal of The Putting Horse Ranch lies in the fact that they are home to some of Canada's (if not the world's) best trained horses, sired by famous stallions and providing

visitors of all experience levels the opportunity to enjoy a scenic and safe trail ride among the visually breath taking landscape. Wildlife such as geese, deer and even a blue heron with a wingspan of over 6 ft are frequently spotted by guests.

Liz having a colorful equestrian background and a huge heart, lends both her time and expertise charitably with the Hooves of Hope, a mentorship program catering to children with disabilities and children 'at risk'. Liz previously ran a 'persons with disabilities' riding program in BC, and says "It has been a journey... and really rewarding" to see change kindled amongst the program's participants. Mark your calendars for a charity concert on August 4th in support of Hooves of Hope.

Recognized with the 2010 Spruce Grove New Business of the Year award, Chris and Liz welcome you to a first choice, top notch, world class destination. A place where families and businesses come to strengthen their unity, enjoy wholesome fun and fresh air.

Visit putting-horseranch.com for a gallery of pictures, calendar of events, and to book your next company event. You will be happy that you did!



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Green Business

By: Frankline M. Agbor ~
frankline.agbor@greencrusader.ca

In a world of growing environmental awareness, you will have noticed that businesses use the *green* angle to market their product and service in an effort to demonstrate their commitment to protecting the environment. Consumption of eco-friendly products will drive the eco-race for suppliers to get their

eco-comparable products to the market first.

Statistically, 90 percent of consumers will buy green products when offered green choices of equal quality and price while 87 percent of consumers will buy from companies committed to environmentally friendly practices. This makes the 'eco-angle' a star for marketers.

This so called "green orientation" of consumers has driven companies to position themselves as environmentally responsible. The targeting of these environmentally conscious consumers has given rise to the concept of "green marketing" - sometimes falsely represented.

Some businesses pitch as green but fail to implement any sustainability plan, green program, or plan of action. Some businesses falsely mislead the public into believing that they are environmentally conscious, that is, they "greenwash" consumers. More and more companies are moving beyond just actions and have begun to look at 'greenpacts', which are the impacts of their actions. They realize that if they simply focus on individual actions, without taking into account the combined impact of those actions, they could inadvertently or purposefully greenwash consumers through marketing ploys.

Many businesses see going green as a social responsibility. Reasons to go green include: improved sales and profits; access to a green conscious customer base; credible green reputation; improved and sustainable corporate green culture.

Any business, no matter how big or small can implement a customized sustainability plan that will lead to honest effective green marketing.

Next issue: Making true green claims that benefit your organization.

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ENTREPRENEUR PROFILE. Written by Ingrid Schifer

It was a sunny Friday in Edmonton the day I met the friendly and enthusiastic team at Create by CBS for a profile interview with Audrey Charles, Tom Davies and Karen Kam. The atmosphere in the sunshine painted office was inviting. To the soundtrack of classical music with undertones of ocean waves, Audrey begins. "Our company is a design and marketing and media company. We are unique because we offer both design and programming services." Tom added by explaining why CBS stands out. "We have skills in design and making things look beautiful and if there's any sort of interactivity or functionality on the website, we have the skills to provide the engine"

I was curious to understand how the team came together. Audrey explained how her background in the company actually started while she was living in Japan. "That's where I learned design and programming. It was a great learning experience. It was nice to bring those ideas to Canada and see them implemented."

For Audrey, it was important to find a programmer who understood the importance of the design side. Tom's background is programming and he described it as something that "comes naturally" to him. "There's a lot of programming needed in website design...that's why we work well together in this company; we complement each other. For larger website projects to look professional I needed help with the

graphic design so we joined forces, essentially."



Having a passion for anything related to the arts since she was young, Karen felt "the natural thing to do" was to get into design. "It was actually quite difficult to break into and to be a designer. Right when I got my foot in the door, luckily I bumped into Audrey. We knew each other for many years and she gave me a great opportunity to get into the field and expand my knowledge within design."

As we began to touch more on the client aspect of their work Audrey relays how important it is for the team to speak with clients directly. "...because when our clients come to us, they know they need the end result." The team described their ideal client as "somebody open to ideas".

When asked what advice the team at Create by CBS would give to a company looking to change

their branding and web presence Audrey replied: "First you have to evaluate if there are other things you can do to maybe refresh the material they already have." Tom comments: "...they may not appreciate that their current brand actually has value."

So what makes a designer? Audrey acknowledged there are a lot of design tools that people are learning to use. Karen agrees that because of this there are many novice designers out there. Businesses in need of a website may have trouble determining who is best qualified to take on their project. "Some of our clients come to us because they had bad experiences with a novice or part time designer." Audrey added. The website may not have ended up looking like they wanted or may contain fundamental issues. Tom also added that novice designers may miss some important steps in website creation such as doing the appropriate amount of research and making sure that the appropriate rights are being obtained.

So what is around the corner for web design? Audrey mentioned that there is talk of 3D websites on the horizon leading to an intrinsic need to keep track of trends. This

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way, when a client makes the request for leading edge design involving 3D they are prepared. It struck me as remarkable that Create by CBS has begun strategizing for a 3D website market; evidence that they are seeking out the frontiers of design technology.

The team's most innovative idea thus far has been their unique customized project and invoice management system created from scratch. "It is a way for us to stay organized on any project we are working on, [and] offer transparency to our clients." In two words Tom describes what draws a client to Create by CBS ahead of their competition. "Professionalism and creativity," he proudly replied. It is that very same creativity behind Attic Fox (www.AtticFox.com), an online gift store with a plethora of products ranging from apparel and jewelry to stationary. This is where Audrey and Karen display their talent for design and create products in the name of sheer fun.

The cover art is perhaps the best representation of the team at Create by CBS. Their creative personalities shine through the Alice in Wonderland tea party



theme.

They genuinely love what they do and it is evident in the way they interact with one another, their work environment and their out of the box approach. Taking each and every client's project personally and working diligently to understand their business and the competitive landscape is only part of the wholehearted dedication executed by these three continuously in order to achieve where they are today. "That collective sense of accomplishment is the best part."

The team at Create by CBS, having a branch in Tokyo, would like to express its sadness for the events that have recently taken place in Sendai, Japan. The effects have

been felt throughout the country. If you'd like to support the relief efforts from Red Cross, please visit www.CreatebyCBS.com and click on the donation banner. While Tokyo hasn't been a direct target, life there has certainly changed. Create by CBS will be sending staff from its Edmonton office to Tokyo in the coming weeks. Follow their journey on twitter at @createbycbs.

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“You’re Racist!” How should you respond?

By Jeanne Martinson, Martrain ~ watertiger@sasktel.net

“You’re racist!” How should a manager respond? Being called a racist, sexist, ageist, or homophobe is every manager’s nightmare. The two most common responses are either an over-reaction

or a defensive one. An over-reaction may involve avoidance followed by furtive conversations with other managers or human resources to get advice on process and the legal consequences of the claim. A defensive reaction might involve an immediate hostile conversation with the claimant where the manager denies the charge, even turning the tables on the claimant, inferring the claimant is a troublemaker or difficult employee. Although common, these two choices are not useful in repairing workplace relationships, working towards a respectful work environment, or maintaining productivity.

WHAT ARE THE KEYS TO DEFUSING AND SOLVING THESE SITUATIONS QUICKLY?

One: Immediately, ask “I am curious, what did I do or say that would lead you to believe that about me?” Although it takes courage and personal leadership skills to uncover the specific behaviour that triggered the claim, it is essential to define what behaviour the claimant is referring to. Asking what you specifically said or did that the claimant interpreted as being racist or sexist is neither easy nor natural. Our first inclination is to attack back or to avoid the situation. However the quicker you respond to the comment in a problem solving way, the quicker it can be resolved.

Two: It is important not to assume the intention behind the claim until you have explored further. Some possible motivations are: the claimant may be using the comment as a counterbalancing re-

sponse to negative feedback from you as a manager regarding their own performance. Or, the claimant may see that any negative comment directed their way is based in your prejudgment of their abilities based on the diverse group they belong to. Or, the claimant may legitimately believe that your comment was racist or sexist and is attempting to change the workplace relationship to be more respectful.

Three: It is possible that your truth of the situation is different than theirs. We interpret other people’s behaviour through the window of our own intention and interpretation. Therefore the math works like this: your behaviour + their interpretation of your behaviour based on their belief and value system = what they think is reality in the situation at hand.

Four: Your behaviour might not reflect your true intention. Were you unaware that your comments might be interpreted as offensive? Were you attempting to be funny? Even if it was not your intention to be offensive, clarifying your intention alone is not sufficient to rebuild or move the relationship forward. Try “It wasn’t my intention to be offensive. I didn’t realize that my actions could be interpreted that way. But now you have brought your interpretation of my behaviour to my attention. Thank you.”

Although some situations cannot be resolved easily or quickly, employing the above four Keys can immediately begin the clarifying process. Once you are clear on what you did or said that inspired the claim, you can begin to unbundle your intention and the interpretation of the claimant. Once you are both clear on what you did and why, you can decide what steps are necessary. Sometimes the clarity alone resolves the situation.

Next issue: Generational Differences

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Network Security Tips

By Barry Kokotailo ~ uberhack@shaw.ca

Business is concerned with making money. In today's environment that means computers, network devices, wireless access points, and that thing called the Internet.

Your IT department is primarily concerned with connectivity. Network security is secondary and the "bad guys" know that, so, if they

turn their attention to your network, they will likely succeed in breaching it and having their way with your data - unless you're protected.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

All a hacker has to do is remove the hard drive and it's game over, so it is important to store company data on a server, not the individual work stations. Secure all your computer equipment to ensure it can't be physically removed. Control access to your servers via locks or access cards and keep systems away from visitors or the general public. Install video security systems to monitor human traffic.

SECURING WORKSTATIONS AND SERVERS

Security comes in the form of software, password protection and disallowing peripheral access. Always install antivirus software, I use *Avast* and/or *Viper* - find them online. Install antimalware software, I use *Superantispyware* and *MalwareBytes*. Automate system updates to ensure they are done religiously. Reduce the risk of viruses by installing minimal software on the workstations - use your network. Disable the ability to boot from USB, or CD drives, AND password protect your computer stations!

WIRELESS SECURITY

Everyone uses wireless these days. It's inexpensive and convenient. Just turn on your computer and you're Live! The bad guys love this. They have two reasons to use your access points. The first is to gain access to your internal network and the second is to use your organization as a launch point to attack other businesses.

To secure wireless connections, you need to authenticate secure certificates. They ensure you have the right of passage - like a passport - to access the server, thus, your wireless connection. Never broadcast the name of your access point (SSID) to the world, rename it to something like "bob." Log all attempts to access your network and report this to the administrator. Alternatively, you could just watch for the guy in your parking lot with a laptop and a big grin on his face.

Next issue: Employee monitoring - Big Brother Comes to Stay.

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Barry Kokotailo CISSP, CISA, CEH, EnCe, ACE, RET

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Tax Smarts ~ Start Up Smart

By Daniel Proehl, B.Comm, CMA ~ accounting@danielproehl.com

At each stage of the life cycle of a business: start-up, growth, maintenance, and retirement - there are unique opportunities for tax savings. In this issue we'll cover part one of this four part series - the start-up stage.

Like most businesses at the start up stage you're probably finding that cash is tight and more money is going out than coming in. Don't miss out on tax advantages that will turn these problems into opportunities.

Find the hidden write-offs:

Here's the trick, don't go spending money to create write-offs. You're just spending a dollar to save fourteen cents - at the corporate rate. Instead, focus on keeping all your receipts and think objectively about the real costs of your business. Did you: provide all the steak for the employee BBQ, or go to a trade show on the weekend, or pick up coffee for your clients? These are all expenses that many business owners may neglect to track and can really add up to save tax dollars.

Shareholder loans: You may have used your personal money to purchase office supplies, tools, equipment, etc. for use in the business. You probably used your personal vehicle to make deliveries. Keep track of these items and expense or capitalize them in the company even if it can't repay you at this time. You can be reimbursed at a later

date, tax free, for any expenses incurred on behalf of the business.

Pay yourself: At the start-up stage your business may struggle to afford the wages you expect long-term. Know that this is temporary but make sure you declare enough income for yourself to at least take advantage of the low to no personal tax rates. Credit your shareholder loan account so you can take the cash out of the company when it's available. The company benefits from the write-off and you pay little to no tax.

Expense your interest: If you borrowed funds to purchase the shares of a company you can write off the interest on your personal tax return. If you started the company and personally borrowed money to purchase equipment or inventory, the company can reimburse you the interest tax-free and the company gets the tax deduction.

Losses: Whether you are incorporated or not, your losses are not lost. Any year your business incurs a loss you can apply that loss to reduce future taxes or claim them to reduce tax for any of the past three years. For proprietorships you can apply your losses to other personal income as well.

Share structure: Your business is likely to have little marketable value at this time. This is the perfect opportunity to reconsider selling part of your shares to your spouse. When the company has value there are tax implications. This allows sharing the tax burden in the future by splitting dividends and when you sell the company you can each use your capital gains exemption to reduce the tax on the sale of the shares.

Next Issue: Part two of the series will focus on tax issues for the 'growth stage' of your business life cycle.

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Email Etiquette

By Catherine Vu ~ cvu@proactiveit.ca

Are you an email "lover" or "hater?" I am most certainly a LOVER of email! Why? Email keeps me on task, and lets me communicate quickly with people at anytime, without feeling like I am intruding on their time. It's like one big filing cabinet for me. However, like all good things, if it's abused it can get out of control. Regrettably,

a large portion of the populace are not aware that there's such a thing as "email etiquette." Let me share my perspective with you.

Email should be used for simple statements, information confirmations, questions or answers. It's also effective for quick responses and for simple feedback.

Email is not great for ongoing negotiation, instead, discuss some of the terms then summarize decisions in an email, otherwise you will be stuck in a vicious email loop. Email is not great for reaching a consensus either; it starts to resemble spam in your inbox as everyone starts to hit "reply all." Refrain from using the 'reply all' when there is a large recipient list involved. Keep in mind, if the subject matter involves emotion, you can lose your intended 'tone' in translation. That type of correspondence is better done in person.

The 'Subject line' is an important part of your correspondence. It lets the reader determine the content and urgency of the email. Crystal clear Subject lines are essential and if action is required, that's a good place to indicate what action you need to take.

The content of your email should cover only one main subject or thought and it's important to get your point across in the first two sentences. Additional items could be overlooked. Use hyperlinks in your email instead of sending large attachments that plug servers.

Use meeting requests to assist in the planning of... you guessed it... meetings. This will provide an attendee list as participants accept.

Whether you are a "hater" or a "lover," I promise, if you implement these email tips and train others how you like to be communicated with via email your life will be a little less complicated.



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- World Stone Inc.



Tough Money Love for ‘Bizners’

By Angela Armstrong ~ aarmstrong@pcclease.com

Ever secretly longed to star in a *Do It Yourself* catastrophe show? Psst...

Here’s my dirty little DIY secret... For five years our family suffered from plywood. Not by design... just a little impromptu reno that inspired me to rip out stained, smelly 20 year old carpet (Okay, I flooded the dining room by accident).

Life’s busy and so we lived with our “designer” plywood subfloor. We almost varnished it and pretended it was ‘eco’ polished concrete. I just told guests: “keep your shoes on... splinters, you know.”

Joining the dining room carpet last year in the waste bin of good intentions, was the main floor tile. All of it.

Our friends joked about a flooring intervention.

We decided to sell in 2010 and suddenly the hammer fell . My handy hubby could easily have completed the renos, given the time. Instead, we paid three times as much to get it done in two weeks. It was tense around our house in March. (No divorce, though.)

My unfortunate DIY habit goes back a long way. In my early biz years I pinched pennies and kept my own books (pun intended). I was introduced as “The girl who emails at 3 am.” I marketed, emailed, typed, data-entered, closed deals, joined groups, took courses, paid bills, reviewed contracts, and oh, answered the phone cheerfully.

‘Trying to do it all’, turned into ‘digging a deeper ditch’. So, I hired a bookkeeper.

Her first question? “Where’s your deposit book?” (I didn’t have one). Cost: Three months wages (mine) to recreate three years of records. GULP - learning fast!

FOUR TIPS FROM A RECOVERING DIY BIZNER.

Good things come to those who tackle the job.

Avoiding uncomfortable parts of your business (such as taxes, or finance) costs BUCKETS more to ‘learn’ later. Fix it now.

Your back-up Plumber needs a back-up

Your customers may go bankrupt owing you money; your supplier’s internal problems may create havoc for products or services you are counting on. Expect the unexpected, and control your results.

Don’t substitute DIY for Data

While you may be expert in your CORE business, you won’t be great at everything . Once you accept this, find experts to advise you on technical or obscure information. Your actions and decisions will be influenced by knowledge, not bravado.

The hammer falls where you swing it

Choose a direction and GO! Be accountable and ready to learn if the financial picture changes. Keep an eye on the results, and change tracks when necessary. Perfect decisions don’t exist.

I’m relieved to report we successfully sold our DIY home, and are happy in our new one. No renos on the horizon, but my hubby did ask for a circular saw for his birthday. I’m going to get him a referral to a good contractor instead; I heard about this handy guy, Mike Holmes...

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Identity Theft

By Lloyd Kenney ~ lckenney@shaw.ca

THE FASTEST GROWING CRIME OF OUR TIME

Jennifer Stoddart, the Canadian Privacy Commissioner, said that the international drug trade is now less lucrative than the trade of personal information. Stoddart also said that cybercrime doesn't get nearly the same attention from police and law enforcement agencies as the drug trade.

What is Identity Theft? There isn't a common definition. Identity Theft happens when someone steals your personal information and uses it fraudulently. In some jurisdictions, simple credit card fraud isn't classed as Identity Theft and there is no doubt there are some grey areas where fraud and identity theft overlap.

THERE ARE FIVE KEY FORMS OF IDENTITY THEFT:

- 1. Driver's License Identity Theft.** Criminals make good use of Driver's Licenses because they are able to replace the photo and automatically create photo ID, enabling them to use the license to get other forms of identification.
- 2. Social Insurance Identity Theft.** Your SIN card is an excellent tool to be used in acquiring other identification, and making it very difficult for you to prove that you are "you" and they are not "you".
- 3. Medical Identity Theft.** Medical Identity Theft can be more than costly, it can be life-threatening. ([www.webmd.com/magazine; search "personal information theft"](http://www.webmd.com/magazine;search%20personal%20information%20theft)). Criminals use this for prescription drugs and it could result in you having their health problems on your health record.
- 4. Character/Criminal Identity Theft.** This is when someone uses your information when committing a crime, resulting in you having the criminal record or vice versa.
- 5. Financial Identity Theft.** This includes bank and credit card information. A common misconception is that most identity theft is in this area, however, Financial Identity Theft represents between 25% and 30% of all ID theft. So, more than 70% is in the other four areas.

There are Provincial (P.I.P.A.) and Federal (P.I.P.E.D.A.) laws governing the protection of personal information. In the next issue of this magazine, we will discuss key requirements of the Personal Information Protection Act of Alberta (P.I.P.A.)

continued from page 2

versioning upgrades as part of your agreement, so you're never providing your staff with outdated tools. On the equipment front, infrastructure upgrades in your server farm can also become obsolete. The onus for upgrading and purchasing new hardware is completely owned by the provider of your cloud service. It's their multimillion dollar datacenters after all; you're just using a secured, private sliver of it.

Let's get green. There's a solid environmental angle at work here also. Offloading services to the cloud reduces your carbon footprint when you retire portions of your existing server farm. You're using less power, require less air conditioning and consume fewer resources when you replace failed physical equipment with new equipment - you get the idea. And remember those Thin clients we mentioned earlier? They make a difference too, as the little devils sip one eighth of the power that fully featured workstation under your desk gulps to get their job done. People care about the world we live in; companies taking advantage of this show their staff they're serious about it too.

It's pretty clear that the characteristics of cloud computing mentioned above have one thing in common - the positive impact they can have on your business's bottom line. In future articles we'll dig deeper into some more specific cloud-based business tools and strategies, and we'll look at some of the risks inherent to this exciting world. Until then, see you in the sky!

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Keys for Sales Success - Value Proposition

By Ingrid Schifer ~ miss.schifer@gmail.com

Whether a company is big or small, delivering a product, service or both, it is imperative for salesperson's to develop a value proposition, a key for success in B2B calling and the sales cycle in its entirety. Sometimes called a CVP or Customer Value Proposition, it is a statement that effectively relays the message of what your organization does and in turn, why any potential client or consumer should care. Without one of these statements in use by your frontline sales teams, your company runs a high risk of not effectively communicating why someone should do business with your company, thus leaving your-

self, product and/or service undifferentiated from the competition, vulnerable and with affected sales revenues. A value proposition is not to be confused with an 'elevator pitch' which is typically composed with a broader appeal in mind by an organization's marketing team versus a salesperson. As well, an 'elevator pitch' is designed so that should any employee find themselves explaining the purpose of a company's existence, in an elevator perhaps, the same consistent message is coming from all employees.

Building a value proposition requires dedicated time and concentration so that you can truly think about what is the essential offering and the legitimate benefits in store for your prospective client. Quite often, it is beneficial to consult with sales experts to conduct an exercise where a sales team may foster the development of a value proposition together. An important component to remember when building your value proposition is ensuring you include a reason as to how doing business with your company will positively impact a specific outcome in your client's business. Using true numbers, identify a pre-researched industry specific area within your client's business that would directly benefit from your product or service.

Example: Use of Product A has resulted in 15% reduction of paper waste for companies similar to yours in the manufacturing industry. This is a statement a salesperson can then use when speaking to the identified decision maker in a prospect

account, when calling to book a meeting. By taking the time to research your prospect's industry and related field, you have shown you genuinely care about their business. This is critical to building authentic rapport and credibility from the very beginning of your business relationship, and what truly distinguishes the good from the great in the art of sales.

Researching clients otherwise known as 'pre-call planning' allows for the composition of a distilled and clear sales message resulting in an organic and intelligent sales approach that will resonate with relevance from your value proposition and onwards in the sales cycle. A befitting value proposition contains specifics about the prospect, and is never just a statement regarding features and benefits. Investigative research conducted by the salesperson provides the opportunity to identify any current inadequacies known to a client's type of business so that the offer (product/service) will provide a genuine solution and tangible results to their grievance.

Customizing a value proposition and using it not only in your B2B calling to get a meeting, but throughout the whole sales process as an anchor to the defined value your product and/or service is contributing will reap many benefits including increased sales revenues and a more successful approach to your sales cycles, effectively leading to placement amongst the leaders in today's sales industry.

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When: April 21
Where: 11:30 am to 1:00 pm
Time: Mayfield Inn & Suites

BUSINESS MIXER & TRADE SHOW

When: May 19, 2011
Where: TBA
Time: 5:00 pm

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

When: June 14th, 2011
Where: West Harvest Inn
Time: 7:30 - 9:30 am

18 HOLE PUTTING COURSE & BBQ

When: July 21, 2011
Where: Putting Horse Ranch
Time: 5:30 pm (Free BBQ)

WEBA GOLF TOURNAMENT

When: August 4th, 2011
Where: The Ranch
Time: 8:00 am Shotgun Start

PREMIER LUNCHEON

When: TBA
Where: TBA
Time: TBA

MAYORS LUNCHEON

When: TBA
Where: TBA
Time: TBA

WEBA CHARITY GALA

When: November 4th
Where: TBA
Time: 6:00 pm

2011 BUSINESS MIXERS

When: Sep.8, Dec. 1
Where: L1 Lounge, WEM
Time: 5:00 pm

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