Executive IT Insider

…The Exclusive Edge to Today's Technology

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Inside This Issue…

A Word From the Owner

"We have now updated our phone systems to support 24/7 live answering. When you call, you will talk to a person, not a machine. Just one way we are upgrading our services to provide better support for our clients."

3 Ways to Boost Productivity with Technology

Does it seem like everyday another PC breaks down? What about the progressive slowdown of your applications? In today's world, technology shouldn't be slowing down your business, it should be speeding it up. If it's not helping you, it's time to admit you have a problem before your employees organize an intervention. Here are three ideas on how technology can blast your business into the future.

Work together from anywhere

With the onset of Cloud technology, it's now possible for your employees to work easily from anywhere – be it Bangkok, Belize or Boston. With Cloud-based suite products, employees can log on and access company files. All they need is a web-enabled device. Cloud-based technology also makes it easier than ever for your staff to collaborate. While many SMBs use public Cloud applications like Google Drive, Dropbox and Evernote, private pro-level options are available, which come with more security and more features.

Identify bottlenecks and upgrade your technology

Facing the facts about your current technology is key to increasing productivity. Yes, we know you love your tablet from 2008. You even named her Susie (after your niece, because they're both so darn creative). But let's face it, Susie is old now and she's served you well, but it's time to upgrade.

And computers aren't the only technology that can slow you down. There are also unreliable internet connections, obsolete software and outdated email providers. The list goes on…

The solution is to take a look at your current IT and see what's keeping your business from reaching its true productivity potential. After you have your list, update your technology accordingly.

Outsource your IT

As the old saying goes, 'out of sight, out of mind'. Whether you have a part-timer or a fully-staffed IT department, the mere presence of tech staff onsite in your workplace can be a distraction. When you're focusing on setting up meetings with potential clients and your IT colleague comes to your office after discovering a glitch in your system, it can take you out of the flow of the task at hand.

On the other hand, outsourced IT departments are proactive in preventing technical issues from popping up in the first place. They'll fix problems without you even knowing they existed, and without distracting you from your core work. All of which means a great boost to your day-to-day productivity – and therefore profitability.

To access more information including free reports, guides, policies and more, visit us online at

www.snecsllc.com

TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT

Logitech Wireless Headset H800

I personally endorse with the Logitech Wireless Headset H800. This headset has great features that makes it stand apart from others.

First, it has a great battery life (6 hours). It can be used while charging as it uses a standard USB cable. I'd love 8 hours but I find just plugging it in before I go to lunch gives it a boost for the rest of the day.

Next, is the comfort. Many people have different feelings about headphones. Some like the full "over the ear" cups while others prefer earbuds. Personally, I wear glasses and always have trouble finding a pair of headphones I can use for hours without discomfort. I find these to have the best design as it is open, over the ear and has soft padding with a snug feel.

Another great feature is the "on the ear" controls. From here you can mute your microphone, raise and lower volume, pause and play audio (or answer a call if connected to your phone).

Lastly, the versatility. This headset can be used in wireless or Bluetooth mode. This means that you can use it for conferencing on your PC or connect it to your cell phone take it traveling for comfortable and easy calls while you work.

This headset can be found online at Amazon.com.

-By Leeanna O'Neill

How to Stay Productive During A Power Outage

It's late afternoon – you're working on your desktop computer, providing live support to one of your clients. Suddenly your screen goes black and your Internet connection drops. Someone down the street hit a power pole. Sometimes disturbances like sudden power outages can impair your business reputation and productivity. Consider applying the following tips to keep your productivity humming during power blackouts.

Install a UPS for each computer

A UPS (uninterrupted power supply), is an alternative, emergency power source. UPS prevents that by running your computer off its own battery. If you're working on a file when a power blackout occurs, UPS is especially helpful. It can only buy your computer a few minutes of time to save vital files and power down. If you need the Internet, try a method listed below.

Find a Wi-Fi connection

Technology makes it possible for you to take your work outside the office. You can resume your business activities and Internet connectivity by using the mobile data plan from your smartphone or tablets, and then access your files via cloud storage and file sharing applications. If you don't have a data plan, then head to the nearest Wi-Fi-friendly place to continue your work.

Finish offline tasks

When no Internet connection is available, you can take the time to clear off any neglected offline duties, whether it's clearing up desks or arranging files and documents. You can even gather a team to brainstorm new ideas for projects, or discuss any ongoing issues within your organization.

Work from Home

If a power outage renders your employees helpless in their duties, then having them work from home won't hurt, if they're able to continue their work from there. There are many ways to keep them accountable without being intrusive and as long as they are making progress in their tasks and staying professional, there's not much to complain about. Cloud based line of business applications and hosted email (like Office 365) can make this possible.

Achieving power-free productivity is possible when you have a plan prepared for the situation.

Unique Uses for Tech

How Ordering a Pizza from an App Saved This Family

A quick-thinking Florida woman saved herself and her children from possible harm when she ordered a pizza from her phone app with a secret message saying she was being held hostage.

Being a regular at the local Pizza Hut, Cheryl was a familiar face (and delivery address) to the employees. However, one day a strange order came in from her.

Her order for a small, hand tossed, classic pizza with pepperoni had very specific instructions for the crew. "Please help, Get 911 to me." and "911 hostage help!" was all the extra information she provided. Of course, being a pizza place, they had her address on file as it was linked to her account through the app.

When the order came in, the crew called the local Sheriff's Office to investigate the strange order.

Police arrived at her home and Cheryl opened the front door holding one of her 3 children in her arms. The deputies escorted her away from the home and proceeded to negotiate with her boyfriend, who was holding the other 2 children hostage. After 20 minutes, the two children were rescued unharmed and the boyfriend was arrested.

The police report showed that Cheryl and her boyfriend had been arguing all day and finally, things escalated to the point that he took her phone away and began to threaten her and the children. Cheryl was able to convince him to let her order a pizza. Using the app, she was able to insert her secret message without him knowing. After the order was placed, he took the phone away from her and she had to just wait for help to come.

Thanks to her quick thinking and the follow-through of the Pizza Hut crew, Cheryl and her family was able to escape a very dangerous situation.

Securing Your Company's Data

There have been many security breaches to big-name companies over the past few years – eBay, Adobe, Home Depot, and Sony Pictures to name a few. While large enterprises are primary targets for hackers, small and medium-sized businesses are also vulnerable. More often than not it is impossible to undo the damage caused by hackers, but you can take steps to prevent it. Applying these simple security tips can help protect your company's data.

Get rid of using only passwords

We are all used to setting passwords to our online accounts, and the tip is always the same – set strong passwords, and change them regularly. But the problem is that passwords can be used with any computer. Using two-step verification (like Google Authenticator) whenever possible adds an extra layer of security by requiring a time sensitive code after your password input.

Encrypt all data

Encryption is a great obstruction to hackers, since it scrambles and descrambles data each time someone tries to read it. This will protect your business data from being read if leaked into the wrong hands.

Keep systems up-to-date

The technology world is moving at a fast pace. Hackers are always upgrading their tools to take advantage of outdated security systems. Companies in turn, provide updates to protect their valuable resources. If the update intends to close security loopholes, delaying an update exposes you to external attacks. So install software updates as soon as they come out in order to give hackers no reason to penetrate your systems.

Back up frequently

Although you've implemented several security layers to your data, sometimes hackers can find their way in. This is why you need to back up data frequently, whether it's on-site or off-site by way of cloud backups. In the worst-case scenario if your systems do get infiltrated, you can restore lost data from those backups and quickly strengthen security.

It's much more expensive to fix a data breach than to prevent one.

Kickin' Back

Riddle Me This?

What falls but doesn't break, and what breaks but doesn't fall?

(Answer at Bottom of Page)

Joke of the Month

HA HA

I decided to make my password "incorrect" because if I type it in wrong, my computer will remind me, "Your password is incorrect."

Trivia Time!

Answer correctly for a chance to receive a $25 Gift Card to Bertucci's.

Question:

How many Oscars did Alfred Hitchcock win?

E-mail your answer to
sales@snecsllc.com

All correct answers will be entered into a drawing. The winner will be announced in the next issue. Deadline is the 20th of each month.

Riddle Answer: Night and Day

Office 365's Nifty New Email Policy

It happened so quickly in a moment of passion. You just got back from vacation to find over a hundred emails in your inbox. Determined, you take a shot of espresso and set out on email deletion rampage. One trashed email quickly turns into dozens. Now, months later, you're regretting the reckless actions of a few fleeting moments of productivity – you deleted a vitally important email. If this situation sounds all too familiar, Office 365 has the answer. They just released a new policy that allows emails to be recovered indefinitely.

If you're a regular user of Outlook 365, you're likely aware that you can only recover an email that was deleted 30 days ago or less. After that, it's gone for good. Office 365 has now made a change that allows emails in the Deleted Items folder to be accessed indefinitely. However, if an end user makes the effort to empty the Deleted Folder, those items will still be unrecoverable.

But what if you don't want to indefinitely recover email?
Believe it or not, indefinite access to emails may come as bad news for some. It can create industry compliance issues for some and can also affect offline storage as deleted emails pile up.

Not to fear. Along with this new policy, Office 365 also allows you to customize the retention policy. To do this, click on the following:

1. Office 365 Admin
2. Exchange Admin Center
3. Compliance Management
4. Retention Policies

From here you can modify the retention time span one that works for you.

Customer Center Stage

This month, Lori Viner is in the "Center Stage"! Lori is the Operations Director for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State and was thrilled when we took over the IT at BBBSOS. Recently, they had their annual "Big Night Out!" event. It was a huge success raising over $37,000 towards providing professionally supported one-to-one relationships to children facing adversity to change their lives for the better. Thank you for everything you and everyone at BBBSOS does for our community!