



Volume 1, Issue 9
December 2009

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The Tech Insider

Why Spending More On Computer Support Can Actually Save You Money

According to BusinessDictionary.com, a **Hidden Cost** is defined as, "Expense not normally included in the purchase price of an equipment or machine, such as for maintenance, supplies, training, and upgrades." and typically computer service is loaded with them. Many of these types of expenses can pop-up in the form of unexpected computer problems that lead to major downtime. And, as all businesses know "**Time is Money.**" If your systems are down, that means you are paying your whole staff for an entire day with little productivity.

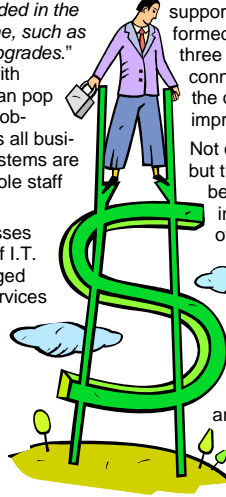
It is for this reason, many small businesses are now switching to a fixed-price model of I.T. Services (commonly referred to as "Managed Services"). The approach to Managed Services is to focus on preventing issues from happening as they come up ("proactive"). While paying by the hour may seem cheaper on the surface, the cost of being down far outweighs the potentially higher investment of preventing issues.

It has been our experience that the I.T. industry recognizes this situation and has effected the proverbial "paradigm shift" to adjust for the change. The most impact on the industry has been the advent of higher Internet bandwidths. By virtue of having the ability to transfer large amounts of data reliably and quickly over the current infrastructure (e.g., cable, DSL and FiOS), most prospective clients have

the resources to enable constant monitoring, remote support and unattended offsite backups. This has transformed the offerings from only being able to assist two or three clients per day (with travel time) to immediately connecting to the target desktop within seconds. Even the quality of the video that the technicians see has improved dramatically.

Not only do the technicians provide remote support, but the end user is now "empowered" as well. It has become a common thing for a staff worker to remote into the office from home—even these services are offered by "Managed Service Providers" (MSPs) to their clients to "sweeten the pot" when they present their products and packages.

It is true that computer technology has come a long way. You may feel that your computer is a self-sufficient machine with its auto-updating antivirus and automatic download of Microsoft Updates...the fact is that there are a tremendous amount of additional controls and tasks that can now be performed remotely and regularly by your "Network Support Professional" or "Computer Guy" to keep your computers and networks optimized, secure, fast and stable.



As counterintuitive as it may seem, investing in your computer support can save you substantially in the long run by reducing your downtime and lost productivity.

When you consider the comparable cost of hiring an IT person to be on staff, one sees that the benefits are clear: No salary, no training, no insurance, no vacation, no missed backups, no out-of-the-office times and, most of all, no office space. It is done remotely, regularly and at a lower cost.

Why can't I ever get anything accomplished at work?!

Living in the electronic world has introduced a level of access that was never experienced by our ancestors. We are constantly bombarded by interruptions at work and at home. How do you get work accomplished if you can't find time to focus on your task at hand? We have some ideas that you may find helpful...

Make yourself a To Do List and set priorities within it. People like to feel a level of closure in their day. Doing easier tasks allows one to feel that more is completed, BUT is it in your best interest? We recommend that you **PRIORITIZE** your list. It is similar to hospital *triage*: Identify the cases or items that require the highest priority and address them



first. For example, you have three items to do today: write a thank you letter to a client, make a call to a cold lead and work on your monthly newsletter. Let's say that we are at the beginning of the month, so the newsletter can wait. Now, let's address the other two items...since you already have a relationship with the client, write the letter. That would allow you to strengthen the rapport with them, hopefully, leading to new business down-the-road. Once the letter is written, then contact the cold lead. If, however, it was not a cold lead, but a hot prospect, the order would change to make the call the highest priority, then you would write the thank you. If you

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Quotations

"If fifty million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing."

Anatole France

"Change your thoughts and you change your world."

Norman Vincent Peale

"Let me tell you the secret that has led to my goal. My strength lies in my tenacity."

Louis Pasteur

"But the fact that some geniuses were laughed at does not imply that all who are laughed at are geniuses. They laughed at Columbus, they laughed at Fulton, they laughed at the Wright Brothers. But they also laughed at Bozo the Clown."

Carl Sagan

"We make all of your computer problems go away without the cost of a full-time I.T. staff"

Ask us about our fixed price services HTS Insight Hassle-Free Agreements—Computer Support at a flat monthly fee you can budget for just like rent!



An *ad hoc* meeting is one example of poor time management. Try to schedule only essential meetings where your presence is required. If you get an unexpected visitor, meet that person at the door to help reduce time spent on critical issues; otherwise, set an appointment to meet when it is mutually convenient.



Saving money through "Managed Services"

(Continued from page 1)

When assessing your situation and needs, it is easy to overlook other hidden costs such as the staff downtime if the network, server or computer is down, the lost sales revenue when people are unable to access company databases, and the inconvenience of not being able to pay or process the daily receipts. For a more in-depth view of these considerations, visit our blog article **"Why Use A Managed Services Contract When Calling You When I Need You Is So Much Cheaper?"** (<http://insightsforsmallbusinesses.blogspot.com/2009/11/why-use-managed-services-contract-when.html>).

There are very few pre-requisites to have this service: the office must have a broadband connection—typically, a cable, DSL or FiOS connections (T1 and T3 will also work); you must be willing to let the Managed Service Provider install an agent on each of your machines. Most machines in use today will be no older than Windows XP, so unsupported platforms are not an issue. It is easy, painless, and the agents will usually occupy a nominal footprint in your



Beware The Latest Malware Threat — Fake AV Alert

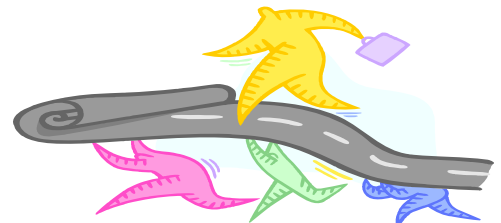
You are sitting at your desk. You've been on a few websites, retrieved some e-mail from people you know, then you notice a new icon in at the bottom of your computer screen. The image strongly resembles a shield that you've seen before, but it's a little different. Suddenly, a pop-up message appears at the center of your screen advising you that your computer is infected by a multitude of at risk programs including Trojans, keyboard loggers, spyware and other forms of malware. You are then informed that you must first pay for this program if you wish to have the program clear out these threats.

Well, you may have the *Fake AV Alert* installed on your computer. You may see the name as **Personal Security**

system's memory and hard drive, so it's not a concern.

To find out if your company is at risk for downtime, call us at (201) 797-5050 or visit www.tech4now.com/offer for our free report: **"What Every Small Business Owner Must Know About Protecting And Preserving Their Company's Critical Data And Computer Systems."**

This report will show you just how important this decision may be for your business' future viability.



Sometimes, you need invisible hands to support your daily progress...and Managed Services provide just that!!

or **2009 Antivirus** or a different name...either way, you have malware installed on your computer. *"But I have Norton/McAfee/Trend Micro, why didn't that stop it from installing?!"* Welcome to the world of malware. **Malware** is described in Wikipedia as "short for *malicious software*, is software designed to infiltrate or damage a computer system without the owner's informed consent. ...a variety of forms of hostile, intrusive, or annoying software or program code." In other words, it won't play fair. If you get such an alert, the alert will not go away nicely. It is advisable to contact your local computer professional to remove or address this matter. If you need our assistance, feel free to contact us at (201) 797-5050.

Too many distractions...

(Continued from page 1)

can envision yourself prioritizing FIRST, then implementing, you can save a lot of time. Then, as a new item presents itself, incorporate it into your day.

By spending 10 to 15 minutes a day sorting and prioritizing your schedule, you can save time in the long run. Try it early in the day if you are a *morning person*; whereas, if you are a *night person*, do it before you retire for bed.

I lose too much time with my e-mail...

Screen suck and **e-mail** are two of the biggest distractions to both the home and office worker. Try to set aside discreet time slots each day to address e-mail or "surfing." By controlling these activities, you should be able to squeeze more into your day. If you feel compelled to work on e-mail frequently, try adding a note in your *signature* that informs those you correspond with that you only check your e-mail at noon and at four. If you wish to check it more often, that's your concern, but others will be alerted not to expect an immediate response from you. This controls their expectations and frees you to do more activities at your own discretion.

Save even more time!!! After you process your

e-mail messages, determine if you want to delete them, categorize/file them or forward them. Once you process them, you do not want to repeat the process. Remember: Do it once and finish the job.

Make an appointment with yourself

An office setting may lend itself to people "dropping in" on you. Those interruptions take more from your day than you may realize. Next time it occurs, suggest that you set an appointment at a time that is mutually agreeable to both of your schedules. In the meantime, you are can set yourself up with some quiet time to get your own work done. If the issue is time critical, hold the "meeting" standing up and at the door. This will maintain a level of urgency to the meeting and keep the interruption minimized. **Remember, don't just plan your time, write it into your calendar.**

Constant interruptions may cost you over 25% of your day's productivity. It is crucial that you **avoid multitasking**—address one task, complete it, then begin the next. Each time you switch tasks before completing them, you break your concentration and have to refocus, thus losing valuable time. If you need a tool to get you more productive, give us a call at (201) 797-5050. We can help you install Outlook or a CRM package that incorporates scheduling, contact management, and e-mail in one package. Don't waste your time, act now!

Thoughts to Ponder...

The Internet offers us insights to the twisted thoughts of others...

- ↳ The journey of a thousand miles begins with a broken fan belt and a leaky tire.
- ↳ It's always darkest before dawn. So if you're going to steal the neighbor's newspaper, that's the time to do it.
- ↳ Never test the depth of the water with both feet.
- ↳ It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
- ↳ If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of car payments.
- ↳ If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything.
- ↳ If you lend someone \$20, and never see that person again; it was probably worth it.
- ↳ Some days you are the bug, some days you are the windshield.

- ↳ If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
- ↳ Never ask a barber if he thinks you need a haircut.
- ↳ "To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world.
- ↳ A coincidence is when God performs a miracle, and decides to remain anonymous.
- ↳ Sometimes the majority only means that all the fools are on the same side.
- ↳ Life is like an onion; you peel off one layer at a time and sometimes you weep.
- ↳ Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.
- ↳ Following the path of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked.
- ↳ Life is 10% of what happens to you, and 90% of how you respond to it.

We wish all of our clients, friends, and readers a happy and healthy holiday season.

Client of the Month—Pagano Real Estate, Inc.



Michael A. Bsales, V.P.
Pagano Real Estate, Inc.

This month, we are proud to feature **Pagano Real Estate, Inc.** of Glen Rock, NJ. The firm is a Real Estate Development company that focuses primarily on building commercial and retail properties. Michael Bsales is the V.P. of Facilities Operations, has been with the firm for 7 years. The

highlight of his position is watching something that was nothing turn into something that is an asset for the community.

Mike used to maintain their network, but found it too distracting from his real job, that's when he found us through a friend's referral. He noted, **"That wasn't the way to operate and spend my time. That's when you came in, made my life easier, and saved us lots of money."** We asked him why he continues to use our services... **"To be**

quite frank, you don't nickel and dime me. You solve my problems as quickly as possible.... The fact that you do your job well is positive and you always pick up your phone. I don't have to chase you down for hours, let alone days!"

Last, but not least, Michael reports the single biggest benefit of working with us has been ... **"Hardly any downtime. I used to go hours—days!—without being able to be productive."** We follow the same motto as Rob Pagano, **"Don't leave something lying around. Respond to it immediately."** It's a system and it works!

If your business is looking for new retail space—new lease or new business—give Pagano Real Estate a call. They have convenient space for both retail and office use. For more information, visit the site www.paganorealestate.com.

Next month, we will introduce you to another of our *Clients of the Month*. If your company would like to be considered as a candidate for *Client of the Month*, drop me a line at fred@tech4now.com.



Quick Tech Productivity Pointers

Documentation is a vital component to any businesses processes. Whether you are writing up a manual to instruct new employees how to use applications or need to capture a critical document as seen on the web, screen capture is a useful tool to have and use.

Windows provides native tools in addition to the commercially available applications such as **Snagit**. Most versions of Windows prior to Windows 7 were dependent upon the **Ctrl+PrtScrn** or **Alt+PrtScn** key combinations to capture either a full monitor screen or only active window to the clipboard (respectively).

With the introduction of **Windows 7**, a new tool has been introduced call the **Snipping Tool**. The Snipping Tool allows the user to select a more controlled selection of screen real estate to capture. It also gives the user an option of the format that the image may be saved with (e.g., GIF, JPEG, or PNG). For those



fortunate enough to have a copy of Microsoft **OneNote**, there is a built-in tool provided with that software that not only captures the screen image, but will actually record the location where it was found if clipped from a website. To use that tool, the **OneNote** tool must be active and appear in the System Tray. You will see this icon  when the program is running. At that point, simply press the  (Windows key) with the letter "S" combination and OneNote will open with your Screen clipping shown on the screen. Paste the image into the program of your choice (BTW, you cannot paste any image into **Notepad**) and you're on your way.

Imagine how much time you will now save just because you know how to use this tool. If there are any tools that you would like to learn more about, please drop us a line at fred@tech4now.com.



Anticipation and What Did You Get Me? Syndrome are rampant at the Holidays. Try to think of those less fortunate and share your good will with others.

If your company would like to be featured as the **Client of the Month**, please call us to express your interest. You will get positive press for your use of technology and may even gain a client from the exposure.



If you learn to work the keyboard with shortcuts, your skills as a virtuoso will transform the keyboard into a true instrument of function and delight.

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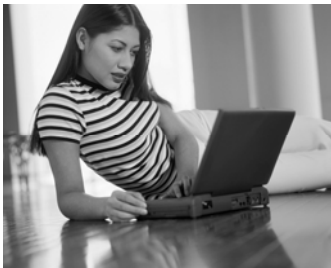


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Feedback & Suggestions...

Is there a topic or feature you would like to include in a future issue? Opinions and feedback are welcome and encouraged. Send me an e-mail or call our direct line.

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If you are new to us and have over five workstations, please visit our website at www.tech4now.com for a special opportunity and a free gift.

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- ✓ Spam Filtering and E-mail Archiving Solutions
- ✓ Storage Solutions
- ✓ System Audits and Network Documentation

"We make all of your computer problems go away without the cost of a full-time I.T. staff"

Ask us about our fixed price service agreements—Computer support at a flat monthly fee you can budget for just like rent!

"If you depend upon software, which we do for our business, it's a no brainer. You do it [enroll in Hassle-Free IT]. It's an investment and it brings back many returns as far as reliability and dependability."

—Steve Braverman, President, *Industrial Firedoor & Hardware Supply*



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The Lighter Side...

Tommy Monsanto...

A man walks out to the street and catches a taxi just going by. He gets into the taxi and the cabbie says, "Perfect timing. You're just like Tommy."

Passenger: "Who?"

Cabbie: "Tommy Monsanto. He's a guy who did everything right all the time. Like my coming along when you needed a cab, things happened like that to Tommy Monsanto every single time."

Passenger: "There are always a few clouds over everybody."

Cabbie: "Not Tommy Monsanto. He was a terrific athlete. He could have won the Grand Slam at tennis. He could golf with the pros. He sang like an opera baritone and danced like a Broadway star and you should have heard him play the piano. He was an amazing guy."

Passenger: "Sounds like he was someone real special."

Cabbie: "There's more ... He had a memory like a computer. He remembered everybody's birthday. He knew all about wine, which foods to order and which fork to eat them with. He could fix anything. Not like me. I change a fuse, and the whole street blacks out. But Tommy Monsanto, he could do everything right."

Passenger: "Wow, he was some guy then."

Cabbie: "He always knew the quickest way to go in traffic and avoid traffic jams. Not like me, I always seem to get stuck in them. But Tommy, he never made a mistake, and he really knew how to treat a woman and make her feel good. He would never answer her back even if she was in the wrong; and his clothing

was always immaculate, shoes highly polished too. He was the perfect man! He never made a mistake. No one could ever measure up to Tommy Monsanto."

Passenger: "An amazing fellow. How did you meet him?"

Cabbie: "Well, I never actually met Tommy. He died ... I'm married to his 'darling' widow."

One Upsmanship

Digging to a depth of 1,000 meters last year, French scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 1,000 years. The French came to the conclusion that their ancestors had a telephone network centuries ago.

Not to be outdone by the French, English scientists dug to a depth of 2,000 meters. Shortly thereafter headlines in the UK newspapers read: "English archeologists have found traces of a 2,000-year-old fiber-optic cable and have concluded that their ancestors had an advanced high-tech digital communications network a thousand years earlier than the French."

One week later, the Israeli newspapers reported the following: "After digging as deep as 5,000 meters in a Jerusalem marketplace, they found absolutely nothing. They thus concluded that 5,000 years ago Jews were using wireless."

Compassion

A new teacher was trying to make use of her psychology courses. She started her class by saying, "Everyone who thinks you're stupid, stand up!" After a few seconds, Little Johnny stood up. The teacher said, "Do you think you're stupid, Little Johnny?" "No, ma'am, but I hate to see you standing there all by yourself!"