



“Enabling People to Provide Great Products and Services - Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere”

- Rick Johnston
Information Mgmt. Systems

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Technology Times

“Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably”

3 Technology-Specific New Year’s Resolutions You Need To Make

Ahhhh! A brand new year, full of promise, hope and a fresh start. If you’re like most people, you’re making the usual resolutions to exercise more, lose weight, pay off debt, etc., etc., etc. Essentially, it’s a time of year when we momentarily take stock in our lives and think about all the things we “should” be doing more of, but don’t. So while you’re in the goal-setting mode, we thought we would tack on 3 things that probably aren’t on your list, but should be. Especially since these all fall into the “important, but not urgent” category.



1. **Offsite backups.** Can we beat this horse to death anymore? I know MOST of the clients reading this newsletter are smart enough to have this already done, but many still don’t and are relying on undependable (and outdated, I might add) tape drives, Carbonite or other volatile backup solutions. If that’s you, don’t let this be another year where you gamble with everything you’ve worked so hard to achieve. Get a better backup!!!!
2. **Write A Disaster Recovery Plan.** Pop quiz: If you woke up tomorrow and discovered that you couldn’t access your office building due to flooding or a fire, what would you do? Or what would happen if a key executive—one who holds the “keys” to critical processes or applications—fell sick or (God forbid) died? Or what would happen if a disgruntled employee or hacker gained access to your web server, line of business application or file server and deleted everything—particularly if the data was hosted on the 3rd party cloud provider’s web site? These are all very real scenarios, and without a plan in place, you could be facing serious downtime and financial losses.
3. **Develop A Stronger Cyber Security System That Goes Beyond A Firewall And Anti-Virus.** With more and more information about us being stored electronically, and with State and Federal laws becoming more strict, you MUST take cyber security seriously. Simply having a good firewall and anti-virus isn’t enough these days to keep the highly motivated and technically sophisticated criminals out of your network. The HUMAN element is the biggest threat—employees who accidentally click on links in e-mails or download files that introduce viruses to your network. Employees are also using social media sites more frequently, and they can intentionally or accidentally post something that could harm your company’s reputation or leak confidential information. Therefore, your security plan must also include employee training and policies so they know what is and isn’t acceptable when

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Shiny New Gadget Of The Month MagicFuture.com

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Have you ever wondered how much money you need to have in order to quit work forever? Well wonder no more!

Thanks to a new online tool developed by a veteran financial advisor to multi-millionaires, Stefan Wissenback, this site will help you determine what your “magic number” is, or more specifically, the exact amount of money you need to have so you can quit working forever.

Unlike many retirement planning calculators, this tool will factor in a number of factors such as the type of vacations you want to take every year, what type of legacy you want to leave your children and even the monthly cost of your favorite hobbies. Then, based on WHEN you want to “retire” so work is optional, it will tell you how much money you need to invest or save in order to attain your goal.

Unlike other sites, it won't try and sell you anything—and you can try the tool out for 21 days at no cost. We definitely recommend giving it a try—you might be surprised to find out the amount of money you thought you needed is actually a lot lower and very attainable!

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handling data and using company resources (Internet, computers, etc.).

If you don't know where to start in creating any of the above, we're here to help! Be the first 5 companies to call us at 701-364-2718 for FREE we will discuss how we can do all of this for you and take the work and worry out of these New Year's resolutions (\$395 Value)!

The 4 Best Gadgets To Help You Lose Weight And Get Fit This Year

Getting fit is going high-tech these days, with new gadgets that are actually cool to wear instead of looking like the beeping hunks of junk your grandma wears when mall walking. Plus, they're going very social with online workouts and apps that track your progress and allow you to compete against your friends. Here are four new high-tech gadgets that may help you get in beach-body shape by spring:

- 1. Nike+ FuelBand.** This new wristband tracks your activity throughout the day and converts it to a metric of activity. Using their mobile or online app, you can set a goal for each day and then work to beat it. At \$149, it's cheaper than a personal trainer. We think this is Nike's answer to the Fitbit, which comes next on our list. www.nikestore.com
- 2. Fitbit Ultra.** The Fitbit is an altimeter, which can track how many hills or stairs you've climbed, and a motion sensor to track calories and activity levels throughout the day. If you love charts and graphs, you'll love the Fitbit. www.fitbit.com
- 3. GymBoss.** This tiny clip-on interval trainer is the lowest-tech item in this list, but may be the best at getting you to lose those last stubborn pounds by doing short, high-intensity intervals. If you want a free workout to follow that uses the GymBoss, check out www.bodyrock.tv. Warning! These workouts are not for the faint of heart! www.gymboss.com
- 4. Endomondo Sports Tracker.** This is a great option for those of you who are all tapped out from holiday shopping. Endomondo is an app that you can download for free to your phone to track miles running, cycling or in other sports using your phone's GPS. You can make any workout a race against your friends or against your own personal best. www.endomondo.com

Star2Star Wins Internet Telephony Product of the Year Award

Star2Star Communications, makers of "The World's Most Reliable Internet Communications Solution", announced that Internet Telephony Magazine has named the company's flagship Business Internet Communication System as "Product of the Year." The award follows a year of intensive development that brought new features and functionality to the Star2Star solution. This is the sixth consecutive win for Star2Star.

About Star2Star Communications:

Founded in 2006 in Sarasota, Florida, Star2Star Communications develops and delivers Integrated Communication and Collaboration solutions that connect and enable Productive Business People. Star2Star's award-winning, patent-pending technology overcomes the reliability and quality limitations of other Internet communications technologies.

Star2Star achieved 100% network uptime in 2011. The readers of Channel Partners Magazine also voted the company as one of the Top 50 Channel Programs for the third straight year.

Star2Star products are sold through a diversified international network of distributors, master agents, and certified installing dealers. Available across North America, Star2Star Internet communication systems are installed in tens of thousands of businesses and in many large national retail and restaurant chains.

Want more information on Star2Star and how it can benefit your company? Email us at info@imsnetworking.com.



North Dakota Humor

His name was Ole, he was from North Dakota ... And he needed a loan. So... He walked into a bank in New York City and asked for the loan Officer. He told the loan officer that he was going to Paris for an International hick festival for two weeks and needed to borrow \$5,000 and that he was not a depositor of the bank.

The bank officer told him that the bank would need some form of security For the loan, so the hick handed over the keys to a new Ferrari. The car was parked on the street in front of the bank. Ole produced the title and everything checked out. The loan officer agreed to hold the car as collateral for the loan and apologized for having to charge 12% interest.

Later, the bank's president and its officers all enjoyed a good laugh at the hick from ND for using a \$250,000 Ferrari as collateral for a \$5,000 loan. An employee of the bank then drove the Ferrari into the bank's private underground garage and parked it.

Two weeks later, Ole returned, repaid the \$5,000 and the interest of \$23.07. The loan officer said, "Sir, we are very happy to have had your business, and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a little puzzled.

While you were away, we checked you out on Dunn & Bradstreet and found that you are a Distinguished Alumni from North Dakota State University, a highly sophisticated investor and Multi-Millionaire with real estate and financial interests all over the world. Your investments include a large number of oil wells around Williston, ND. What puzzles us is, why would you bother to borrow \$5,000?" The good 'ole boy replied, "Where else in New York City can I park my car for two weeks for only \$23.07 and expect it to be there when I return?"

His name was Ole... Keep an eye on these ND people! Just because we talk funny does not mean we are stupid.

"Super Wi-Fi" Coming This Year Promises An End To Dead Spots



Get ready for a new type of Wi-Fi coming online in 2013 called, "Super Wi-Fi." What is it? As defined by the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), it's a stronger, more powerful wireless networking connection that uses the lower-frequency white spaces between television channel frequencies instead of the 2.4 GHz radio frequencies of the Wi-Fi we all know and love. These lower frequencies allow the signal to travel further and penetrate walls better than the radio frequencies used in Wi-Fi today.

Why do I say, "As defined" by the FCC? Because it's not really a form of wireless networking; therefore, the name "Super Wi-Fi" is being questioned and criticized by organizations who feel it's a copyright infringement on the Wi-Fi name. Politics!

Whatever it ends up being called, this new wireless connectivity could make it a lot easier (and faster) to get online. As you might expect, it's being championed by the likes of Google and Microsoft who have heavy investments in cloud computing and wireless networking. Until now, there have only been a few beta networks where people can use it. But like any new technology, the delivery will get cheaper, faster and more ubiquitous, particularly in rural areas and other dead spots where broadband wireless isn't available. Essentially, if you can get a TV signal, you'll be able to get high-speed Internet access. Of course, as your technology leader, we'll continue to keep tabs on this and let you know about your best options for getting and staying connected!

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It's National Clean Up Your Computer Month



I didn't believe it either, but after some research it's official...an authority no less reputable than "The Vinegar Institute" declared January as a national holiday to clean up your computer.

In light of this holiday, I thought I'd take the time to answer a small but nagging question, "How do I get those smudges, dust, and fingerprints safely off of my flat screen monitor?"

Although each monitor manufacturer has its own special instructions for cleaning, there are some common guidelines you can use to get your screen looking like new in no time.

- **Turn off the monitor.** It's not required, but it makes smudges and smears easier to see.
- **Use a cotton cloth** or compressed air to get rid of light dust buildup. Never use a rag or paper towel to clean since they can scratch the screen.
- **Don't use products with ethyl alcohol or ammonia-based products.** Products like Windex can yellow flat-screen or laptop monitors.
- **Use water or a homemade mix to clean grungy surfaces.** If water is not enough, concoct a cleaning solution of 1 part water, 1 part isopropyl alcohol, and 1/2 part vinegar.
- **Lightly moisten your cloth with the cleaning solution.** Never apply the liquid directly to the screen.
- **Wipe the cloth in one direction** – from top to bottom. This method will ensure grime and dust move to the bottom of the screen surface where it can be wiped away.

5 Reasons to Renew IT Service Plans

Many countries' economies are facing uncertain times. Growth in China has slowed, the US is facing a fiscal cliff that could ruin the US economy and any reliant economies associated with it. It's in these uncertain times that many companies are doing more with less and when it comes to IT, this means budget cuts. When these need to be made, many companies will look at cutting service contracts, something that may come back to haunt them in the future.

Below are five of the more common issues businesses face when they decide to allow IT service contracts to lapse.

1. **Increased response and resolution time** - The way almost every company works is they provide support to paying customers before they provide support to others. If your systems bought from a vendor three years ago crash, and you didn't renew the support contract, you will be facing prolonged downtime and potentially high replacement costs which could be detrimental to your business.

2. **Poor implementation of updates** - One of the main jobs of the IT provider is to ensure that all systems are up-to-date, or at the very least are running the same version of software as other systems. Without this valuable service, it is almost guaranteed that users will be running different software versions which could pose security and integration risks.

3. **Lack of diagnostic and analysis tools** – IT providers often utilize robust diagnostic and analysis tools that can help determine what issues are causing problems. On the other end, many IT service companies are set up to be proactive, and will usually look for and fix potential problems. This business model minimizes downtime, which can be hard to do without a costly internal IT department.

4. **Reactive support** - The proactive nature of many IT service providers really helps, but when you don't renew contracts, your service will likely go from proactive to reactive. Meaning you likely won't know anything's wrong until it really goes wrong. So instead of systems being down for an hour for monthly maintenance, they could be down up to a week or longer. This is something no business wants.

5. **Increased hardware overhead** - With a good service provider, your systems will last longer. This equates to lower hardware overhead over a longer period. Without them, companies will often see higher overhead due to having to replace equipment more often.

Yes, we agree, it can be hard to justify paying what seems like a high monthly fee to keep your systems running, especially in this difficult financial climate. However, the potential of both lost revenue from crashed systems and replacement costs often make IT service providers an integral and valuable part of your technical systems.

If you're facing budget cuts, why not talk to us, we may be able to work with you to develop a plan that meets both your needs and budget.

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