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Inside This Issue...

it's simple, it's service

Technology Times

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

Are You A Manager... Or A Leader?

Modern leadership guru, Warren Bennis, said, "Managers are the people who do things right and leaders are the people who do the right thing." To run a business well, you need both. Employees, finances, sales, marketing, operations and, yes, I.T. need BOTH a manager AND a leader. But that doesn't mean *you* should be the one doing both.

Why Leadership Is Your #1 Job

Bennis' idea is this: You need management. True. Managers budget, organize, react to situations and solve problems. They ensure things get done, monitor the day-to-day, and enforce the rules. They are the tactical part of your business. You probably do a fair amount of managing things now. But just like everyone else, you only have 24-hours in a day. So some management tasks can and should be delegated, hired, or outsourced.

Bennis, who was cited by Global Gurus International as one of the top 30 leadership experts in the world, defines leadership differently. Leaders establish direction, align people, and motivate and inspire to *prevent* problems. Like it or not, *everything* in your business – good and bad – ties back to the leader. Unless and until you grow leaders inside your company, the leader is most likely you.

5 Ways To Differentiate A Leader From A Manager

Are you more of a leader or manager? Here are 5 leadership traits adapted from two of Bennis' books, *On Becoming A Leader* and *Learning to Lead*, to help you decide...

1) Managers set standards for performance; a leader sets a benchmark for excellence. Do you dictate a status quo or do you paint a picture of what the "ideal" is? Do you merely communicate what's "acceptable" or do you encourage "exceptional"?

2) Managers want employee compliance; leaders seek employees' commitment. Let's say you decide to streamline a process. To do so, you purchase new software. Do you just provide training on how to use the software or do you work on communicating the reasons why you're doing it so employees willingly and happily dive into training?

3) Managers have subordinates over whom they have formal authority; leaders have followers who are inspired to perform at their best. Leaders recognize that continual improvement in ALL aspects of their business is critical to their success.

4) Managers try to avoid risks or minimize them; a leader looks for opportunities. Maybe it's an investment in a new technology, or a decision to expand your business. Whatever the case, managers will tell you why it won't work. Leaders will tell you why it can.

*Want to Lock-in your IT Costs for the Next **THREE** Years? Sign up for IMS Total Care Services **TODAY**!*

Shiny New Gadget of the Month

The HoodPC

It's a hat. For your laptop. If you've ever tried to work outside on a bright sunny day, you know there is one factor that makes it nearly impossible to see the screen – the glare.

As you might try to angle or maneuver your laptop, you just can't see the darn thing when the sun is beating down on it.

The solution? The HoodPC. For under $40, this little laptop hood is the solution. It blocks the sun's glare so you can easily view your laptop screen, even when outdoors. Here's how it works...

Right out of the bag, the HoodPC pops into shape and fits a 16" laptop. With the help of 2 sets of snaps, you can secure the HoodPC to fit either a 15" or a 14" laptop as well.

Spring tension in the HoodPC keeps it in place. When you're done, the HoodPC folds flat in a few seconds. Tuck it back into its convenient travel case – and that's it.

Think your laptop will look silly with a hat on? Maybe. But if it means you get to enjoy the great outdoors while taking care of business ...who cares?

More information about the HoodPC can be found at
www.hoodmanusa.com

5) Managers enforce rules and policies; leaders challenge red tape and bureaucracy when necessary. Sure, you should have and enforce an acceptable use policy for your computers. But if any of your policies prevent someone from helping a customer or generating sales, put on your leadership hat and throw that rule away.

One Management Task You Can Take *Off* Your Plate

Your computer network, phone system, software and all things I.T. can suck up your time and resources and be a royal pain – IF all you do is manage it. Checking backups, maintaining critical patches on the computers, updating anti-virus software and firewall protection, and dealing with issues that arise; these are all management tasks that can be outsourced.

As a leader, you can deal with I.T. differently. You look for opportunities to improve your company with technology; you use it as a way to help propel the vision for your company; you deploy it to reach your goals. Then you hire someone to handle the rest.

FREE Business Advisory Guide:

16 Critical Questions Every Small Business Owner Must Ask Before Hiring Any IT Company

Ready to offload the management of your computers and network? Do not hire ANY computer consulting company until you read this. You'll discover:

- How to avoid the single most expensive mistake most business owners make when hiring an IT company

- The surprising reason most small businesses fall victim to substandard support

- An easy way to help you find the right IT expert for you

Email us for Your FREE Copy :info@imsnetworking.com

Poor Patching Is The #1 Security Threat For Business PCs

According to Symantec's 2009 security review, the biggest single threat to computer security is a user's failure to apply new security patches when they become available. A "patch" is simply a software fix to a known security bug in a software program. Once a vulnerability is discovered, software vendors scramble to develop a patch to prevent hackers from using this to access PCs – but their release of a patch is also a "go" sign for hackers who then scramble to write viruses designed to exploit PC users who haven't gotten around to patching or updating their system.

As you might expect, online criminal opportunism is at an all-time high. One well-written virus can spread and attack millions of PCs in minutes, giving these cyber criminals access and control over your PC - often without YOU ever realizing it until it's too late. And since most of us are storing and using our PCs for banking, making purchases, and storing other sensitive information, it's a fast-track break-in that's irresistible.

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The Lighter Side...
A Cold Lesson

A family owned a parrot that had picked up some naughty words and squawked them at the top of its voice. Nothing seemed to shut it up.

One day the minister was due to visit the home. The mother, in a panic, stuck the parrot in the freezer (after making sure to adjust the temperature so it wouldn't freeze). After the minister left, she went to let it out.

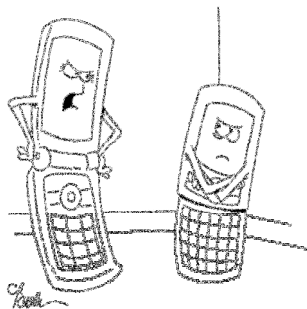When she opened the door, the parrot hopped out.

"Learned my lesson," it squawked. "No more cursing."
"Thank goodness," said the mother.

The parrot cocked its head. "One question?"

Puzzled, the woman said, "Go ahead."

The parrot leaned its head forward, gestured toward the freezer, and whispered, "What did the chicken do?"

"Don't use that ring tone with me, young man!"

The Two Most Common Applications Attacked

Surprisingly, PDF-based download exploits rose to account for 49% of online attacks. Internet Explorer was the second most attacked application, accounting for 18% of web-based attacks. Incredibly, the Internet Explorer vulnerability in question is the Microsoft Internet Explorer ADODB. Stream Object File Installation Weakness that first came to the world's attention in *August 2003*, and was patched the following July – and that means that a whole lot of people AREN'T patching their computer regularly.

Your PC Isn't A Toaster

The main reason systems get attacked is because too many people treat their computer like an appliance: they turn it on and conduct ZERO maintenance. While it's important for everyone to keep their network secure, it goes double for you as a business owner because the costs of restoring a compromised network escalate quickly when compounded with corrupt data, downtime and possibly the embarrassment of notifying your clients their information was compromised by a hacker under YOUR watch. If you are currently an IMS Total Care Services customer, you have nothing to worry about. But if you're NOT on this plan and you don't have someone updating your firewall and security settings DAILY, it's only a matter of time before your system gets compromised.

Let Us Protect Your Business

For more information on how you can completely offload the worry of maintaining your network to a true team of professionals, call us today. We have various plans for all budgets and needs: 701-364-2718.

IMS BCS Saves the Day for
Trogstad Engineering!

Hardware failures happen; it is a fact of life. On a recent Monday morning, Brian Mullenberg of IMS was reviewing the backup status for one of our BCS clients. He discovered that the server at Trogstad Engineering was down at 7:45 am and immediately contacted Mark Trogstad on his cell phone to let him know their server was down.

The server would not power up. The prognosis was a failed motherboard; even though the server was less than a year old and under warranty. Luckily, Trogstad Engineering is on the IMS Business Continuity Solution plan and has a BCS appliance in their office. Brian virtualized their server on the BCS appliance and had their office up and running less than two hours after he went onsite to troubleshoot the failed server! The next morning we received the replacement motherboard for their server, repaired the server and that evening restored their live data from the BCS appliance to the repaired server; so as to not experience more downtime.

"I am very impressed with how quickly IMS was able to get our office working again. We are very thankful we had signed up for the IMS BCS plan, so we could be operational in a couple of hours instead of a couple of days," explained Mark Trogstad.

Hardware will fail and often without warning. Don't let your company risk significant downtime and lost productivity; sign up for IMS BCS today!

Call us at: 701-364-2718 or email us at: info@imsnetworking.com

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5 Ways To Keep Your Laptop Running – Without Plugging It In

On the road, in the airport, at a client's site, or simply at home on the couch. These are places you can't – or don't want to – plug your laptop in. Want to keep your laptop running as long as possible without searching for an outlet? Here are 5 tips to help:

1) Keep your screen dim. A laptop's backlight requires a lot of power. Reducing the brightness conserves battery life.

2) Turn off unused hardware. Your Bluetooth and your Wi-FI receiver can both be turned off if not in use. Unplug your external mouse or other device. And mute the PC's sound system. Not only will it save power, it avoids annoying everyone else around you.

3) Don't multitask. Run as few programs as you can get away with. Stick to one application (word processor, browser, or whatever) if possible. (If online, keep your antivirus and firewall on in the background.)

4) Avoid multimedia. Save your photo editing and video watching for when you have AC power. These tasks suck up immense battery life. To listen to music, use your iPod (or similar device).

5) Sleep, standby or hibernate. Sleep mode (a.k.a. "standby" in XP) keeps your PC on. It still uses power, just less than normal. Hibernate uses no power initially, but a lot of battery life to start back up.

What is PCI Compliant? AND What Does it Mean for YOUR Company?

Are you a vendor who accepts credit cards for payment from your customers? If so, did you know you are required to be PCI Compliant? What is PCI you ask? PCI stands for Payment Card Industry. PCI has Data Security Standards that merchants are required to follow to protect your customers from credit card fraud.

Now more than ever, there are criminals on the lookout to capture personal information and credit card numbers.

Are you sure your customer's credit card information is being kept safe from cyber criminals? PCI compliance means that your customer's personal information is safe and secure when you are processing their credit card. Proof of PCI compliance is required for all merchants who accept credit cards.

How do you become PCI Compliant? Merchants are using PCI Compliance certification services like Security Metrics to make sure they are certified.

What is site certification? Site certification verifies merchant credit card handling processes and-if applicable–tests merchant Internet systems to determine if they comply with PCI Data Security Standards. The SecurityMetrics Site Certification test is accepted by the following credit card companies: Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover and JCB.

Is being PCI Compliant required? Yes, proof of PCI Compliance is required of all merchants who accept credit cards. There will be fines and deadlines for non-compliance vary depending on the acquiring bank and credit cards you accept.

How do I get started? Go to www.pcicompliance.org.

PCI Requirements You Should Be Aware of to Build and Maintain a Secure Network for Accepting Credit Cards

1. Install and maintain a firewall and router configuration to protect cardholder data
2. Do not use vender-supplied defaults for system passwords and other security parameters
3. Protect stored cardholder data
4. Encrypt transmission of cardholder data across open, public networks
5. Use and regularly update anti-virus software or programs
6. Develop and maintain secure system and applications
7. Restrict access to cardholder data on need-to-know basis
8. Assign a unique ID to each person with computer access
9. Restrict physical access to cardholder data
10. Track and monitor all access to network resources and cardholder data
11. Regularly test security systems and processes
12. Maintain a policy that addresses information security for employees and contractors

For more information on being PCI Compliant contact IMS today at info@imsnetworking.com or 701-364-2718.

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