Bits & Bytes

Insider Tips On How To Use Technology To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably

Technical Action Group Inc

TAG
we're I.T.

"As a business owner , I know you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems forever."

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Inside this issue:

Don't Let It Happen Again This Year...
Three New Year's Resolutions To Make (And Keep!) In 2014

At Technical Action Group, we had a wonderful and busy 2013. We understand that, in large part, it's due to the relationships we've forged with our clients. From everyone at TAG, we'd like to extend a happy and healthy New Year and prosperous 2014 to everyone that has made our success possible.
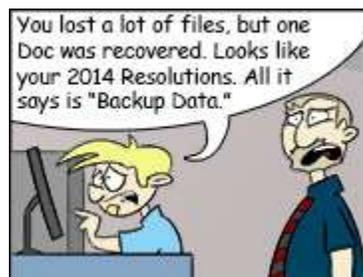
Besides resolving to spend more time with family and friends, getting fit and getting organized, have you made any New Year's resolutions for your business? Looking at your current computer network and reviewing your past year's network support and services, are you saying to yourself, "I'm not going to let this happen again in 2014!" Do any of your New Year's resolutions include dealing with continually pesky computer network issues?

Do Your Resolutions Look Anything Like This?

⇒ **RESOLVED,** double pinkie shake, I WILL get my critical company data automatically backed up offsite daily. Whether through fire, natural disaster, tape failure or just human error, I might lose all of my company data, which will cost me plenty.

⇒ **RESOLVED,** I will take a serious look at cloud computing and all of the business benefits and potential savings the cloud offers for my business.

⇒ **RESOLVED,** I will not tolerate subpar security policies or procedures for my company that put it in a high-risk category for being subject to cyber attacks that could cripple or completely wipe out my business.

FREE Technology Business Review Gets You On The Road To Keeping Your Resolutions And Eliminating Your Computer Headaches.
To schedule a Technology Business Review today, simply call Joe Stoll at 416-489-6312 x 204 or JStoll@TechnicalActionGroup.com

You lost a lot of files, but one Doc was recovered. Looks like your 2014 Resolutions. All it says is "Backup Data."

Shiny Gadget Of The Month:

The iPhone / iPad Pocket Projector

Now you can share the latest YouTube sensation, share that adorable video of kitty doing her tricks or watch a movie on the big screen, all from your iPhone. With the iPhone/iPad Pocket Projector, your iPhone's screen can project an image reaching up to 85 inches diagonally and from as far as 10 feet away. It's simple, easy to use and super quick to set up this mini-device.

The projector weighs less than 5 oz. and is smaller than a smartphone. The iPhone/iPad Pocket Projector can turn your ceiling, tent, blank wall or even the side of your house into a movie theater. The projector's 640 x 480 pixel resolution ensures a nice picture, and a manual focus wheel enables you to "dial up" sharpness and clarity. (The sound still comes from your iPhone speaker, so for the best quality, you may want to invest in some new speakers to stream the audio.)

A free app enables you to magnify or rotate images and project everything from videos to a four-hour search for the perfect shoes. The internal battery provides two hours of projection and recharges via USB with the included cable. This device is compatible with most iPhones/iPads, except the iPhone 5, the new iPad with Retina Display and the iPad Mini. Get one today at www.amazon.com.

Social Media Trends In 2014

Social media is now so common that it's expected that a company has a presence on at least one network. Because of the high level of use, sites have started to enter a more mature phase, where users are finding other ways to leverage the services. We will undoubtedly see a change in the way businesses use social media platforms in 2014 and new trends emerging which companies will be acting upon.

Here are five social media trends we believe businesses should track throughout 2014.

Successful content will become more helpful

One of the key rules of marketing is that you need to create content that is relevant to your target audience. If you can't show how your company, service or product will help the customer there is a high chance that they won't invest, or will look elsewhere.

Throughout 2014, we should see a shift of strategy with companies using social media to engage with customers to leverage data and create content aimed at being helpful to 'fans' and followers. This might include tips on how to use products and visual images that show fans how to use products, etc.

The key idea business owners should grasp is that they should not be using social media to promote their company, but rather using social media to help. When you can help your followers, you will see more positive association with your brand and possibly even more sales.

Planning ahead will become increasingly important

It used to be enough to simply have a social media account, but now you need to also be active. As more companies break into social media, you will need to post more content on a regular basis.

Because many managers and business owners are busy, they often lack the time to concentrate on social media, especially as demand grows. This means that companies will have to start planning ahead if they want to be successful on social media. What this means is likely hiring a new employee, or appointing a staff member, to run your social media activities. You will also need to schedule posts and content well ahead of time, as well as set budgets.

If you just post occasionally now, or have a profile that isn't that active, the first step you need to take is to schedule a day each week where content goes out. Take a look at older posts and see what worked well with your audience and create similar content. Schedule the content to be posted at roughly the same time each day. Over time, ramp up when you post – try posting new content on different days to see how reactions and interest changes. The key is to stick with it, and you will begin to see some positive returns – likely an increase in Likes, Shares and Comments.

Content will need to be mobile

It's not difficult to see that the mobile device – smartphone and tablet – has become the gadget of choice for many social media users. Some have even gone so far as to stop using social media on their computers entirely. This trend will grow throughout 2014 and what this means for businesses is that they need to be creating content that can be viewed easily on mobile devices.

Because mobile screens are smaller, and many companies are starting to create mobile oriented content, we should see some more visually oriented posts, including both movies and images. At the very least you should ensure that your content posted on social media platforms can be easily viewed by users on mobile devices and your other social related sites, like your blog, can also scale to fit on smaller screens.

Social data will play a key role in company strategies

As the number of users on social media continues to grow, we are starting to see a trend where many users are basically using social media for everything. Because these systems are online, data regarding nearly everything is being tracked and made available to companies and users. This social data can be a huge help if leveraged properly. For example, it allows you to see what users like and dislike, and the content that works best in certain regions, and different dynamics, etc. You can extrapolate this information to your products or services e.g., if post on how to use your product is liked more than other posts, you can assume that the product is seen to be good.

Social integration is the next step

The first step in social media was to get users, including businesses, online and interacting. Now that this is happening, it's time to move onto the next step. For businesses this means integrating social media into their company. In 2014, that's what we predict we will begin to see businesses doing in larger numbers.

This trend has already started with businesses linking their websites to social media profiles but we predict it will go even further with companies integrating social data and plans into the organization as a whole. This will likely be the connecting of social data with other streams of data to make marketing and overall business decisions. In other words, social media will become an integral part of business.

Still Using Windows XP In Your Office? FREE Microsoft Risk Assessment And Migration Plan Shows You The Easiest, Most Budget-Friendly Way To Upgrade

During this assessment, you will receive:

A **Customized Migration Plan** that will show you how to painlessly upgrade your old Windows XP machines in the most efficient manner.

A **FREE Analysis** of your computer network, aimed at exposing any security risks and issues you weren't aware of and also at finding ways to make your business FAR more efficient and productive.

To secure your FREE, NO OBLIGATION Microsoft XP Risk Assessment And Migration Plan, contact Joe Stoll at 416-489-6312 x 204 or JStoll@TechnicalActionGroup.com

Business Productivity Apps for iOS & Android

Audio Memos

What It Does: Turns your smarphone into a high-end audio recorder that can record meetings, voice notes, anything. Then send your recordings by email or upload them to Dropbox.

Available on: Android and iOS

Price: $0.99

CloudOn

What It Does: There are a few apps that run Microsoft Office on the iPad and Andoird tablets. CloudOn has a lot of fans because 1) it's free, 2) it supports many of Office's more advanced features 3) it's designed to work on a touch interface.

Available on: Android & iOS

Price: Free

Evernote

What It Does: It's a must-have note-taking app chock full of features and 3rd-party add-on apps. You can take notes, clip web pages, store images, take audio notes, and then share them across devices and among coworkers. Once you start using it, you can't live without it.

Available on: Android, Blackberry, iOS, Windows, Windows 8, Windows Phone 8

Be A Great Client To Get The Most Out of Your Vendor Relationships

There is a lot of truth in the cliché "You'll attract more bees with honey than vinegar." This is especially true when working with professional consultants.

Quite often, business owners take an adversarial approach to working with their vendors. Since they are paying the bills, they believe they have the right to be demanding, difficult and even hostile. What they don't realize is that vendor relationships can make or break a company, and maintaining a good working partnership with all of your vendors is critical to your business success.

The more respect and appreciation you give your vendor, the more they will want to do a great job for you. Keep in mind that you might need them to do you a favor, or pull you out of a big mess, somewhere down the road. If you've developed a good working relationship based on mutual trust and appreciation, they will be far more willing to go the extra mile and help you out when you need it most.

Here are three ways to make sure you become a "favourite" client who receives special favors and extra attention:

⇒ Pay all bills on time or early.

⇒ Express your gratitude for the work they've done. Everyone likes to know that their efforts are appreciated.

⇒ If you have a complaint, don't jump to the conclusion that your vendor was trying to harm you on purpose. Let them know about your complaint and give them a chance to make it right before you get angry or take action. It may have been a simple mistake, or even an oversight, on *your* part.

Overall, clear communication is your best tool to ensure a great working relationship with every vendor. In most cases, I'm sure you want to find someone you can partner with long-term who will take an active role in making your business profitable and successful. That requires mutual respect on both sides.

Free Microsoft Office 365 Cloud Software For Non-Profits?

As part of its "Technology For Good" program, Microsoft has recently announced that it is giving away Microsoft Office 365 software licenses for free to qualified nonprofit organizations. Office 365 is Microsoft's cloud-based software solution that allows users to run office applications, e-mail, calendars, video conferencing and more all through the web.

The Office 365 donation program is part of Microsoft's larger giving program where it hands out $2 million worth of software each and every day to nonprofits around the world. This specific program donates the "cloud only" Web Apps version of Microsoft Office 365, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint, online cloud storage and more, to qualified organizations. Nonprofits can upgrade to the cloud/desktop hybrid version of Office 365 for a reduced rate of over 75% off the normal price.