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"TAG specializes in providing management level responsibility for all the technology in your business. This includes support for your network and working with other hardware & software vendors who's technology you use.

We do this with friendly, proactive & responsive service!

Joe Stoll, President
Technical Action



BITS & BYTES

INSIDER TIPS ON HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS RUN FASTER, EASIER AND MORE PROFITABLY



4 Top Tips For Increasing Your IT Efficiency

If you're like most small business owners, you rely on your computers for just about everything that relates to your business—email, documents, inventory, accounting, and so much more. You want to do everything you can to keep your computers and your network running smoothly and efficiently.

Having a good tech support team on your side is a great start, but there are plenty of other things you can do to maximize the productivity of your team and keep annoying problems to a minimum. In fact, many of the problems our tech team solves every day can be prevented by establishing solid habits that support your systems and your network.

Whether you're experiencing computer issues every day or just want to do everything you can to keep your staff productive, here are our top tips for increasing the IT efficiency of your business.

1. Restart Computers Every Night

If we only had room in this post for one tip

that would make your employees more productive and keep your computers running smoothly, we would say RESTART, RESTART, and RESTART! Not restarting your computers on a regular basis creates many of the problems our techs see every day, from slow performance, to issues with applications that just don't work right.

Often when we review the logs for a computer that is experiencing problems, we find that the computer hasn't been restarted for weeks! Computers need to be restarted to clear their internal memory and take care of general housekeeping tasks. Not restarting actually makes your computer work harder and shortens its useful life.

That's why we recommend that you institute and enforce a strict "restart every night" policy with every computer in your organization. It only takes a few minutes at the end of the day and the payoff is well worth the effort..

2. Replace or Upgrade Outdated Hardware

Computer software changes so often today

that it's hard for even the best computer hardware to keep up. If you or your employee are frequently frustrated by slow computer performance, your hardware may be struggling to keep up with the demands of the latest software.

As a general rule of thumb, plan on upgrading or replacing computer systems, that are used on a full-time basis, every 3 to 5 years to optimize speed and reliability. You'll also want to create a similar schedule for upgrading your servers.

3. Harness the Power of the Cloud

You can save computing power and wear and tear on your servers by running many of today's most popular applications from the cloud. Cloud applications also give you the opportunity to streamline your processes and reduce duplicate entries across the company. Cloud applications are also a great solution for teams that work remotely, since they can be accessed from anywhere that an internet connection is available.

We recommend starting with cloud-based applications like Office 365 or GSuite to handle document creation, email, spreadsheets and more. These applications are available on a monthly subscription basis and the latest updates are available immediately, so you won't need to worry about replacing outdated software. Plus, you only pay for the number of users you have, making it easy to scale your software needs to the size of your team and add new users as you expand.

Beyond Office 365 and GSuite, there are many cloud-based business-class software options for almost anything you need to do from graphic design and web development, to accounting, database administration, inventory tracking and much more.

4. Review Your Backup and Recovery System

Losing precious files or data will bring your productivity to a grinding halt. That's why it's so important to have a solid backup system in place to easily restore accidentally deleted files or recover from a server crash, cyber-attack, fire, theft or flood.

If you are still using backup tapes, we can't stress enough the importance of upgrading to a more reliable method for backing up important data. Tape backups fail nearly 100% of the time, are cumbersome to maintain, and slow to restore. Note that portable USB devices should not be used as the primary method of backup either, as you run the risk of the drives being destroyed or damaged.

The key to an effective backup system is determining how long your business could sustain a loss of critical data and plan your backup and recovery system around that timeframe. For example, if your business could not sustain a loss of data for more than a few hours, you'll need a more comprehensive backup system than a business that could survive a few days or a week without your critical data.

At Technical Action Group, we offer a number of backup plans that combine onsite backup with cloud-based storage to maximize recovery time for each client's needs.

As you can see, the key to maximizing your IT efficiency comes down to careful planning and establishing some very simple habits. Restarting your computers every night, making sure your computers and servers are upgraded regularly, harnessing the power of the cloud, and establishing a reliable backup system can all go a long way to reducing computer problems and increasing your overall productivity. If you have any questions about the items we've covered here, the [Technical Action Group](#) is always here to help. Just give us a call at 416-489-6312 to learn more!



Shiny New Gadget Of The Month



4K HDR Projector Can Beam A 150-Inch Picture Onto Your Wall

A 65-inch OLED TV is a beautiful thing. But can it compare to a crisp, bright 150-inch display in the comfort of your home?

That's what LG is offering this year with its new 4K HDR projector, the HU80KA. Clocking in with a 3840 x 2160 resolution, 2,500 lumens and a stunning picture, the portable device is an attractive offer indeed.

The device is only a few feet tall, but it looks like it will be the ideal piece of equipment for home theater enthusiasts. It's the closest you can get to the big-screen experience, and you won't even have to plunk down 20 bucks for a tub of popcorn. It remains to be seen, though, whether it'll be worth the price tag. At the time of writing, the price has not yet been released, but bulkier, less portable competitors cost a little under \$2,000.

19 Ways To Live Well And Sanely In Crazy Times

There's no discounting the fact that we're living through some crazy times. With political upheavals, game-changing social media movements and chaotic world events, there's a lot going on. I'm not about to overlook the tremendous opportunities that exist these days, but with spring cleaning right around the corner, I've been focusing on this question: How can we live well in these crazy times?

- 1. Don't add to the craziness.** Be civil to those with whom you disagree. Balance your heart and your head so emotions don't outweigh reason.
- 2. Separate fact from opinion.** Don't get excited about things that either aren't true or are wildly exaggerated to get attention. Daniel Patrick Moynihan said, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not to their own facts."
- 3. Act with integrity even when others don't.** Just because others are behaving badly doesn't mean you should too.
- 4. Slow down.** The longer I live, the more convinced I am that you accomplish more of real importance by slowing down. Speed is necessary at times, but make sure you're not chasing rabbits when you could be tracking the big game.
- 5. Eat slower.** A friend's father-in-law was a doctor, and when asked what was the most important thing a person could do to improve their health, he said "Chew more."
- 6. Get enough sleep.** Lack of sufficient sleep is a major influence on poor health, both mentally and physically..
- 7. Read for education and entertainment** The best novels aren't just engaging, they teach us something about the world and about ourselves. In addition, read about current events and personal development to keep well-rounded.
- 8. Limit your news intake.** Being saturated with more of the same, day in and day out, can be fatiguing and frustrating. Be informed, but not inundated.
- 9. Exercise.** It's as simple as that.
- 10. Have deeper conversations with friends.** Go beyond, "How's it going?" to "What are you thinking?" Move past the superficial and really connect.
- 11. Take a trip.** The best way to enlarge your perspective is to travel abroad. But if you can't, for whatever reason, visit a city in your country or spend time in a museum.
- 12. Be civil.**
- 13. Be kind.**
- 14. Count your blessings every day.** To be precise, list at least three. No matter how bad it gets, there are always things to be thankful for.
- 15. Spend less than you make.**
- 16. Invest more in experiences and less in stuff.**
- 17. Live intentionally.** Be specific about what you want to accomplish each day. Don't sleepwalk through your life.
- 18. If you can't take action to deal with something, don't worry about it.** And if you can, then do it and stop worrying!
- 19. Tell people you love that you love them.** You'll rarely regret telling someone that you love them, especially when you no longer have the chance to do so.



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■ Here's The One Reason You Need So Many Passwords



Thinking up passwords and managing them is a big pain, no two ways around it. One website requires a symbol, and another requires 14 characters. Meanwhile, your bank requires 10 characters, four PIN numbers and the answer to a secret question. In the midst of all this, it's easy to just use the same three or four passwords for everything — after all, that's more secure than a single password, right?

But imagine this. Say you use the same password for your Gmail, your Amazon and the account you use to order gift cards at a 10% discount for client gifts. One day, the gift card website is hacked. Not only do the crooks get your credit card info, they also get the list of all the website's users and those users' passwords. Then, they publish these freely on the internet.

But if you use different passwords for all your accounts, you're safe despite any crisis that may arise. Make sure you practice good password security.

■ 4 Ways To Improve Customer Satisfaction And Increase Your Profitability At The Same Time

1. **Host an event.** In B2B companies and small businesses that have a highly specific and local customer base, a big appreciation event can go a long way. Just make sure to view attendees as friends rather than customers you're trying to close on.

2. **Personalize your services.** If you're able to tailor your offerings to your customers' desires, that extra effort can really impress the people you serve. It doesn't have to be complicated. Get creative and add that little bit of human touch to your product.

3. **Send handwritten notes.** E-mails, social media and phone calls are great, but if you want a thank-you card or customer appreciation note to stand out, it's best to write them by hand.

4. **Launch a loyalty program.** These programs can increase profits for you and your business, but they'll also have the benefit of making your most loyal customers feel engaged and appreciated.

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■ Is That Email Request Really From The Boss?

A common scam going around requires everyone to be on their toes. Here's the situation: An e-mail comes in from the boss asking you to e-mail a copy of employee pay stubs, tax information and files with confidential data such as social insurance numbers in them. In another example, the boss asks for a transfer or online payment to a vendor or a different bank account. The problem: even though it has the boss's e-mail address and name, and appears to come from the big boss...it is still a scam. To compound problems, a lot of bosses DO legitimately send these types of e-mails.

If you get a request relating to personal, confidential information or a request for banking transactions from someone in your organization, you must double-check that it really came from that person. In lots of cases, a quick text message or phone call (NOT a reply to the email) is an easy confirmation. And even if it's a legitimate request, never send confidential information like social insurance numbers or bank accounts (or attachments with this information inside of them) without taking precautions to password-protect and encrypt the message first. If it doesn't feel right, it's probably not right.