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Announcements

• Please join us 11am-5pm Friday, September 11th for our 20th Anniversary celebration!

• Did you know we will pay you $100 cash for qualified referrals?
Find out more at www.bssconsulting.com/referrals

• Thanks to the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce for voting us March 2015 Small Business of the Month

Who We Are

BSS is your IT Partner providing **Total Care** support for all your technology needs with exceptional **Customer Service** and the best IT Solutions to make *your business* more productive and profitable!

(765) 742-3440
www.bssconsulting.com

How To Avoid Runaway IT Projects That Empty Your Wallet

In 2002, McDonald's decided to implement a system to provide their corporate executives with a bird's-eye view of their 30,000 stores, to track, measure and monitor everything from profitability to cooking-oil quality. The project, named "Innovate," was a massive five-year project with a billion-dollar budget. Two years into its implementation, McDonald's executives abandoned the project and wrote off the $170 million invested, saying they needed to reduce capital expenditures.

Even though YOUR business isn't a McDonald's with a billion-dollar IT budget, chances are you've had at least one failed IT project that derailed, emptying your wallet and leaving you with nothing other than a grudge. And if you haven't had that happen yet, chances are, as you grow, you will. So how do you avoid going down a rabbit hole of spending on an IT project? Here are five key strategies to keep you on track:

1. Begin with the end in mind. The clearer you are on what "success" is for the project, the more likely you are to achieve it. Take the time to sit down with your executive team and decide exactly what the new system LOOKS like (including the interface, if you're developing one), how it performs, what it does and how it works.

2. IT projects need to be driven by an executive who understands the business need and outcome, NOT the IT department. If you and your executive team aren't going to be heavily involved with the process, decisions and management of the project, don't start it.

3. Think in smaller, "bite-sized" projects. One of the problems with the McDonald's project was that it was so complex, affected multiple business systems and had such an enormous scope, it was almost guaranteed to fail. If you have a major system to build or overhaul, break it into smaller, manageable chunks so that problems are contained and costs controlled.

4. Manage the project hours. Scope creep is the biggest challenge to keeping your project on time and on budget. If your project starts to take on a life of its own and goes over your budgeted time frame and your budget by more than 10%, it's time to start re-evaluating what's going on. Excessive overtime is a red flag that the project was not thought through properly, that you have the wrong team working on it or that it's being grossly mismanaged. Don't ignore it.

5. Missed milestones are a red flag. While it's normal to miss a few milestones by a small margin, your IT team should not be allowed to consistently miss key milestones in the project. We recommend setting clearly defined milestones every two weeks or monthly versus monthly or quarterly. This allows you to keep a tighter control on the budget and deliverables

Rocketbook: A Super-Convenient Way To Store And Organize Handwritten Notes

If you're like me, you still like taking notes with a pen and paper. Problem is, note pages can pile up, get lost and be a pain to organize. But thanks to a special notebook called Rocketbook, you can still take notes the "old-fashioned" way of pen and paper, but then file, organize and store your notes digitally for quick access and retrieval!

Rocketbook looks like an ordinary pad of paper. To use it, simply take notes as you would on any pad of paper, using the Pilot FriXion pen. When you're done, the built-in app creates a high-quality JPG image of your notes and files it to the folder of your choice inside Evernote, Dropbox, Google Docs or OneNote. You indicate which folder each note goes to by marking clever little icons at the bottom of each page.

When the pages are full, simply microwave the notebook for 30 seconds to completely erase and reuse. Rocketbook currently comes in two sizes and is available at indiegogo. Just search on, "Rocketbook."

Do You Keep Your Server In A Closet?
If So, You Need To Read This Important Summertime Warning

Confusion. Dizziness. Fatigue. Muscle cramps. These are some of the first signs of heat exhaustion in humans. But did you know that your SERVER can also suffer from heat exhaustion and "meltdown," causing slowness, blue screens, random reboots and complete meltdowns? If you keep your server in a closed closet or other small, confined space, here are three things you need to address during hot summer months to avoid premature loss of your equipment and data.

Room Temperature. Server rooms should be kept between 68° and 72° Fahrenheit (20°-22° Celsius). If you keep your server in a closet with a closed door, the heat emitted will quickly elevate the temperature to levels that will damage hardware. Consider opening the door or putting in a good exhaust fan to pull the hot air out.

Ventilation. Good airflow is critical for maintaining a safe room temperature and reducing dust, the next culprit that causes damage to electronics.

Dust. Perhaps more dangerous than room temperature is dust. Dust acts as insulation, and traps the heat generated by your computer components. A regular maintenance routine to keep your components clean and dust-free is essential.

Computer hardware is expensive, and unexpected downtime is incredibly frustrating. If you want to extend the life of your equipment and avoid the sudden meltdown, make sure your server closet is set up correctly.

If you need help, give us a call for a FREE Summer Server Room Check at 765-742-3440. We'll be glad to do a free evaluation on your server closet or room and let you know if you're at risk of heat exhaustion and dust damage.

Call us NOW at (765) 742-3440
or email Bill@bssconsulting.com

"One of the reasons that we did go with BSS was they had come highly recommended by a friend of ours in town with his own business. So we had first hand knowledge of how BSS responds to the needs of it's customers. They quickly respond to all of our needs, as when we have an issue with a file, we may have an employee standing around waitng on a file to be re-instated. They have never failed to meet our needs."
-Deb Browell, Custom Machine Shop

Fact File

- Russia has a larger surface area than Pluto.

- Oxford University is older than the Aztec Empire.

- France was still executing people by guillotine when Star Wars: A New Hope hit theaters.

- Nintendo was originally a trading card company.

- If the sun were the size of a white blood cell then the Milky Way Galaxy would be the size of the United States.

- There are more stars in space than there are grains of sand on every beach in the world.

- For every human on Earth there are 1.6 million ants.

- The total weight of all those ants, however, is about the same as all the humans.

- On Jupiter and Saturn it rains diamonds.

- Ten percent of all the photos ever taken were taken in the last 12 months.

- Shakespeare made up the name "Jessica" for his play Merchant of Venice.

How Great Leaders Inspire Their Employees To Higher Commitment And Performance

It's probably true that most people who work with us will never care as deeply as we do about building our business. If they did, they'd probably be working for themselves! Yet there's a great deal we can do to raise the commitment level and inspire them to peak performance. The operative word here is INSPIRE. You can demand that people who work for you be punctual, or that they perform at a certain production level. Yet real commitment can only be INSPIRED. And inspiring people is what great leaders do best.

How do great leaders inspire others to commit themselves to their goals? It's not just their charismatic personalities, or that they give a lot of high-powered motivational talks. They communicate their vision so forcefully that other people adopt it as their own.

For example, Lee Iaccoca stepped into the ailing Chrysler Corporation and said, "We're going to turn this company around!" With clear goals, a solid plan of action and a strong conviction, he was able to inspire enough commitment from the US Congress that he secured the largest loan ever made to a private company. Then he inspired enough commitment in thousands of Chrysler workers to enable the company to pay back the loan ahead of schedule.

And that's the formula for any leader to inspire commitment – clear goals, a solid plan of action and a strong conviction. Communicate that to the people who work with you, and you'll have the kind of loyalty that makes them go the extra mile – if that's what it takes to get the job done. Of course, it takes more than inspiration to run a successful organization. The people who work with you have to perform consistently at very high levels, and to get that kind of performance, you have to gain their trust. They have to believe that you will always be fair in your dealings with them, and that you are concerned about their best interests.

One of the most helpful insights I ever learned about leading others is that people do things for THEIR reasons, not for YOURS or MINE. So the goals, the plan of action and the strong conviction have to be communicated in a way that directly answers the question "What's in it for me?"

When people honestly believe they will benefit directly from their efforts, and that the more they give, the more they benefit, they perform at peak levels. So it's crucial that you show people how they will grow as they work individually and together to make the company grow, and then back up all your promises with solid actions.

People respond to clear opportunities for personal and professional growth. If I may paraphrase the Hallmark slogan, when people care enough, they'll give their very best!

It takes a lot of patience and effort to build a solid team of people who will share and help you fulfill your vision, but the results will be well worth all you put into it.

How To Back Up Your Smart Phone

You regularly back up your computers (or at least you should), but do you do the same with your smartphone? Given the massive amounts of contact information, photos, videos and other data we all carry around on smartphones, it's critical to back them up or risk losing all that data forever. There are two basic ways to back up your phone: automatically to the cloud or manually to your computer.

To The Cloud. Cloud backups are secured with your password-protected account. They can easily be configured to run automatically so you can "set it and forget it." Apple users can use iCloud to back up photos, contacts, calendars and other data. Turn on and configure iCloud Backup by going to Settings > iCloud. Android users can back up to Google servers in much the same way, using a Google account. Configure your preferences by going to Settings > Backup.

To Your Computer. Both Apple and Android users also can back up data directly to a computer manually. Generally, connecting the phone to the computer by cable is the quickest way to do this. Apple users can also use iTunes WiFi Sync to wirelessly back up phone data to a computer.

Remember, though, when backing up your smartphone to a computer, your data is only as safe as that computer. Be sure to back up the computer regularly as well.

Client Bill of Rights

You have the right to expect us to lead the way in fostering and implementing innovation and creativity in our service offerings through an unyielding commitment to providing the best technology and services possible.

We pledge to provide exceptional technology for your business and will provide the best technical talent to manage that technology and surpass your service expectations.

Last Month's Winners

Congratulations to
Betsy Jones & Debbie Herron!

The question was: "Which kind of animal did Florence Nightingale often carry around in her pocket?

The correct answer was c) Owl
Thank you to everyone who participated!

The contest corner will resume soon!

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20th *Anniversary*

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From Bill's Desk

Wow, 20 years! September 1st we celebrate 20 years in business for Business System Solutions. We've had many changes in staff, location, and service offerings, but I have always focused on Customer Service and the Best Technology Solutions for businesses!

In the beginning I went by the name "PC Solutions" and I worked out of my house for about 6 months. I then moved to my first location at 316 Brown Street in Lafayette in early 1996. In 1998 we incorporated and began doing business as Business System Solutions, Inc. In November of 1999 we went to the other side of the block and began sharing a larger office with Jane Rinehart Accounting. Both Business System Solutions and Jane Rinehart Accounting continued to expand and add staff over the years and we arrived at the point of again needing more space. In May of 2009 we moved to our current location on Robinson Street in West Lafayette.

We began by working on any computer problem we could find. As I have always focused on the details of getting things working right the first time, I was spending a lot of my time keeping things up to date, developing my processes, and looking for better ways to deliver IT solutions. In 2008 we began offering what the IT industry calls managed services. This is like outsourcing your IT where we are responsible for keeping everything in tip top shape. With technology, our processes, and great staff, our clients on our Total Care service now are raving fans!

We now have a total of 8 employees on staff and a full building once again. We are planning a celebration of fun and games, food and snacks, and giveaways on Friday, September 11th from 11am-5pm. We would love for you to join us! Watch for more details on our website and in our September newsletter. And a BIG thanks to all our clients over the years for the opportunity to provide you with great customer service and IT technology solutions!