

In this issue

What The Heck Is Cloud Computing? (And Why You Should Care) P.1

4 Ways To Use LinkedIn To Generate More Appointments And Clients. P.2

Get Rid Of Your Touchscreen Funk. P.2

Monthly Tek-Tip P.2

Client Spotlight P.3

Guest Article

Knock Down The Walls That Block Communication P.3

That's "No Picnic" P.3

Trivia Challenge P.4

Get To Know Us P.4

How Much Has Technology Changed In The Last 9 Years? P.4



"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 finally and forever!"

Bryan Lachapelle, President

B4 Networks Inc.
1462 Pelham Street
Fonthill, Ontario, L0S 1E0
Tel: 905.346.4966
www.b4networks.ca



b4 networks

What The Heck Is Cloud Computing? (And Why You Should Care)

Cloud computing is a concept that could save your business quite a bit of money on software, hardware, upgrades and services.

Instead of purchasing hardware and software for your office, you can use cloud computing to put your programs on a highly secure "super server" online. All you need is an Internet connection to your office and you're in business.

There's a good chance that many of the software applications you use every day are now "software as a service" applications. In other words, you don't have to install them on your server or PC – you simply access the software as a pay-as-you-go model for only the licenses, space and features you use. This gives you the ability to access highly sophisticated software and functionality at a fraction of the cost – or even for free – and without long-term commitments.

For example, Google is a massive, free cloud application – the power required to search billions of web sites and content in seconds and deliver the relevant results to your screen far exceeds the capacity of your PC. Facebook is another free cloud application that allows you to post pictures and connect with your friends in real time without having to install any software on your computer. Of course, there are also applications such as Salesforce, Constant Contact, SurveyMonkey, etc., that you pay to use.

It is quickly becoming unnecessary for some businesses to purchase and maintain an on-site server. Now companies can host one or more of their applications, data, e-mail and other functions "in the cloud." That simply means it's stored off-site in a highly secure, high-availability "utility" company that has far more computing power and resources than you could ever logically have on-site as a small business. And with devices getting cheaper and Internet connectivity exploding, cloud computing is suddenly a very smart, viable option for small business owners.

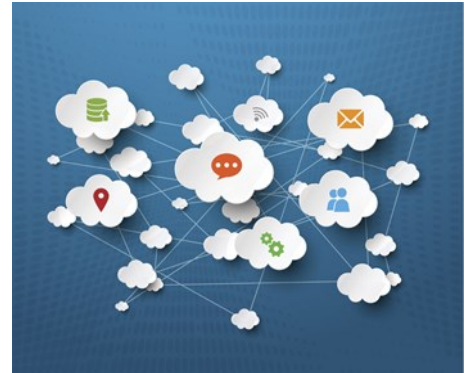
Is Cloud Computing A Good Fit For Your Company?

While there are a ton of benefits to cloud computing, it's NOT right for every company. Some applications don't play well in the cloud. You do need commercial-grade high speed Internet connectivity, which is not always available especially in some parts of Niagara. And some functions, like working with big graphics files, are better kept local or the slowness will make you crazy. However, in almost every case, parts of your computer network (some functions) can easily be put in the cloud to save you money and give you better service. So before you donate your server and sign up for Google Apps or Office 365, it's important you talk to someone who can honestly assess your unique situation and tell you the pros and cons of making the switch to cloud computing.

Want To Find Out If Your Business Is "Cloud-Ready"?

During the month of May we're offering a FREE Cloud Readiness Assessment to any Niagara based business with 10 or more PCs and a server. At no cost or obligation, we'll come to your office and conduct a complete review of your computer network, data, software, hardware and how you work. From there, we'll provide you with insights and helpful answers as to how you could benefit from cloud computing.

To claim your free Cloud Readiness Assessment, simply e-mail us at bryan@b4networks.ca or give us a call at 905-346-4966.



CLOUD COMPUTING
"I'd prefer it if they stored their stuff someplace else!"

4 Ways To Use LinkedIn To Generate More Appointments And Clients



LinkedIn is one of the best social media sites for generating QUALITY leads and new clients. Although it may not deliver a flood of business, if you're going to spend time on social media, you'll want to put your focus on LinkedIn, especially if you're selling business-to-business services. Here are four ways to use LinkedIn:

1) LinkedIn Ads (www.linkedin.com/ads). These are a lot like the ads you see on Facebook running down the right column. It IS passive advertising, which means prospects aren't necessarily SEARCHING for your services as they do on Google, but the quality of a prospect going there is much, much

better. To maximize your results:

✓ **Target your ads to your specific prospects.** Job title, location, company size and industry are some of the selections you can use for targeting WHO your ad displays to.

✓ **Test different headlines and offers.** Always split-test at least two ads at a time, varying the headline, image and the offer. I change our LinkedIn ads every two weeks, eliminating the lowest-performing ads with a new test. Believe it or not, the headline "Killer IT Sales Videos" has been the top-performing headline for almost a year now, even though Robin hates this headline. Results and not opinions are what matter.

✓ **Drive visitors to a landing page on your web site, not just your home page.** You should have a specific landing page for LinkedIn visitors so you can track results back to the source. It can be a landing page with the offer from your ad OR a replica of your home page, if that's appropriate.

2) Join LinkedIn groups. Participation in discussion groups is a great way to get involved in a niche. Post when you have something of *value* to add, not just a sales pitch, focusing on building your credibility with the other members of the group.

3) Get Referrals. Look up your clients on LinkedIn and see who THEY are connected to – then ask them to make an introduction. Make sure to connect with all of your clients, warm prospects and business friends on LinkedIn to increase your 1st- and 2nd-degree connections and give you yet another way to communicate with them.

4) Build or scrub your list. Depending on your LinkedIn member level, you can search within groups, by industry, location, job function, seniority level, company size, interests and more. If you're not a premium paid member on LinkedIn, then your search parameters are going to be somewhat limited, but you can use LinkedIn to better prepare for the telemarketing calls you are already making. Some companies have all their employees listed, giving you a snapshot of other key influencers in the organization who you may want to include in your marketing efforts (like the IT manager, office manager, etc.).

Like anything else, LinkedIn can be a huge distraction if you're not using it with a goal and a focus. Use the above strategies to enhance your marketing and, when possible, see where you can systematize and delegate these tasks to someone else in your company to better leverage your time as the CEO.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

PhoneSoap Touch Screen Polish



All this touch-screen technology is convenient, but it's also messy. Not to mention a little unsanitary when devices are shared amongst others. If only there was a way to keep your screen clean and bacteria-free... Lucky for you, now there is.

Introducing the anti-fingerprint PhoneSoap Touch Screen Polish. This is a premium, all-natural, antibacterial polish specially formulated to kill bacteria and help prevent fingerprints and smudges on smart phone and tablet touch screens.

Now you can clean, sanitize and share your device without worry or smudges!

Get yours at: www.SkyMall.com

Tek Tip of the Month



Alternatives to Internet Explorer

Are you still using Internet Explorer? With all the security warnings coming out as of late for Internet Explorer, we felt diving into alternatives would be a good topic to cover in this Tek Tip of the Month.

There are many alternative browsers out there, however our favorite is Google Chrome. Why use it?

It boasts a simplistic user interface and it's lightning fast. Our favourite feature is its syncing capabilities, just sign into your google account on a computer and sign into another computer or a phone and all of your settings (favourites, bookmarks, passwords, etc.) sync over. Download it here: <http://www.google.com/chrome>

Firefox is also great alternative, with many add-on's available, it is highly customizable, loads websites very fast, and is maintained as an Open Source project, making it one of the most secure out there. <http://www.mozilla.org/>

Note: Simply using another browser will not guarantee your security. For full details on how to keep your network secure, download our free report on network security from our website. <http://www.b4networks.ca>



Steve Lamarre
Service Manager

Need Help Right Away? Call our team 24/7 at 905.346.4966.

Client Spotlight

The Resort Cottage Experience

Great Blue Getaways' boasts Ontario's favorite cottage resorts. With the sun on your face and the smell of BBQ in the air the sound of happy kids playing in the great outdoors. That's a Resort cottage experience.

Great Blue Getaways' family Resorts are located in some of the most beautiful and fun places in Ontario from the great beaches of Sand Banks to the Theaters and wineries of Niagara on the lake, they have that perfect mini break or summer vacation for the whole family.



A safe secure environment in beautifully maintained Resorts.... That's what they offer... and they've kept the prices as affordable as ever. Call today and let one of their Vacation planners help you book your next great family getaway.

<http://www.greatbluegetaways.com>

1-877-841-4141

If you would like your company highlighted here in our "Client Spotlight"? Then give us a call today at 905-346-4966.

Guest Article - by: Dr. Nido Qubein Knock Down The Walls That Block Communication

To be a successful executive you must know how to knock down walls. I don't mean the walls of brick and steel that hold up buildings; I mean the bureaucratic barriers that hold up communication.

In many companies, communication flows through narrow channels, usually from the top down — chimneys of power, they're called. People walled off from these chimneys are left to work in an information vacuum.

Today's successful corporations have demolished the walls that prevent the lateral flow of communication. With the walls gone, information permeates the organization.

Such organizations find it easier to achieve the "Four F's" that management expert Rosabeth Moss Kanter tells us are essential to business success. A successful company, she says, must be focused, flexible, fast and friendly.

- You can't focus the efforts of your entire workforce if your organization is crisscrossed with walls that impede the flow of information.
- You can't be flexible if you have a rigid corporate structure in which every division and department is a closed information loop.
- You can't be fast if information has to seep slowly through layer after layer of management.

- And you can't be friendly if your people don't talk to other people inside and outside your organization.

If you look around, you may see plenty of boundaries in your own company that need to be removed. One of them may be the door to your office that remains closed to input from your employees. Another might be a rigid boundary between hourly and salaried employees that keeps people in one category from talking freely with people in another. Or it could be a boundary that shuts out ideas that don't originate in your own organization.

Other boundaries might be the lines that run between divisions of a corporation. If one division develops a new method or a new technology, does it keep it to itself or does it share it with other divisions? Among the toughest boundaries to dismantle are the ones individual managers erect around the borders of their turf.

In the old days, corporations became overpopulated with people who were promoted to their "levels of incompetence." Armed with the word "manager" in their titles, they staked out their own little turfs and guarded them jealously.

In a corporation without boundaries, advancement means moving into positions in which knowledge can be put to productive use as coaches, advisors or knowledge workers; where expertise is interchanged throughout the organization.



Dr. Nido Qubein is president of High Point University, an undergraduate and graduate institution with 4,300 students from 40 countries. He has authored two dozen books and audio programs distributed worldwide. As a business leader, he is chairman of the Great Harvest Bread Company, with 220 stores in 43 states. He serves on the boards of several national organizations, including BB&T (a Fortune 500 company with \$185 billion in assets), the La-Z-Boy Corporation (one of the largest and most recognized furniture brands worldwide) and Dots Stores (a chain of fashion boutiques with more than 400 locations across the country). As a professional speaker, Dr. Qubein has received many distinctions, including the Golden Gavel Medal, induction into the International Speaker Hall of Fame and as the founder of the NSA Foundation in Arizona. To learn more about Dr. Qubein, go to: <http://www.nidoqubein.com/>

The Lighter Side That's "No Picnic"



It's that time of year—the weather is warming and you want to get out more. What better way to spend a sunny afternoon than on a picnic with family or friends! But what are picnics *really* and where did they come from? Find out here:

- Originally a picnic was a fashionable social event to which each guest contributed some food.
- In the first half of the 19th century, a Picnic Society met in London at the Pantheon, a place of public entertainment in Oxford Street.
- In the year 2000, a 600-mile-long picnic took place in France on July 14 to celebrate the first Bastille Day of the new millennium.
- The French started the modern fashion for picnics when they opened their royal parks to the public after the revolution of 1789.
- The use of the phrase "no picnic" to describe something unenjoyable dates back to 1884.
- The 1955 film Picnic, with William Holden and Kim Novak, was nominated for six Oscars and won two, for best art direction and best film editing.
- Our word "picnic" dates back to 1794, exactly 100 years after "pique-nique" was first seen in French.

Need Help Right Away? Call our team 24/7 at 905.346.4966.

TRIVIA

CHALLENGE

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is **Sherry Ordinario** from **Dr. Raymond Ordinario - Dental Offices**

This month's winner will receive a \$50 Gift Card to **The Home Depot**
This month's trivia question is:

Famous May baby Paul David Hewson is better known to the world as:

- a. Prince
- b. Akon
- c. Mr. T
- d. Bono

To enter, visit the website below or email me: bryan@b4networks.ca and answer the question below.

www.b4networks.ca/trivia

Submit your entry by the 25th of the month, and if your answers are correct, your name will be added to the draw for a \$50 Gift Card.

*See website for full trivia rules

The B4 Networks Family



Top Left: Steve and Sera hanging out at the Grandparents house on Easter.

Bottom Left: Mike and his family enjoying time at the cottage.



Right: Bryan, Nate, and Aiden playing in the back yard at his parents house during Easter Celebrations.

How Much Has Technology Changed In The Last 9 Years?

Technology changes faster and faster than ever. Consider how much technology has changed since this time in 2005, just a few short years ago...

Can You Believe That These Technologies Didn't Even Exist in 2005?

We lived in a world without smartphones, tablets, e-readers, Facebook, in-home WiFi and Netflix. What did we do with all of that extra free time!

- E-readers such as the Kindle and Nook did not exist yet and now 40% of consumers own at least one.
- Smartphones did not exist. Now 62% of consumers have one.
- Tablets/iPads were nonexistent. Now

over 40% of consumers own one.

- Netflix was merely a service to order DVDs in the mail.
- We were still connected to a wall since in-home WiFi had yet to arrive.
- Facebook was a small social networking service on the campus of Harvard.

Dying Technology

In 2005, most consumers owned VCRs and regular mobile phones. How much longer will it be before we only see these items in a museum?

Are These Technologies Here For The Long Haul?

Even with all of the technological advancements, the possession of many of these electronic devices has hardly changed:

Cable TV – Even with streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu and many other apps, the percentage of consumers with cable TV has remained exactly the same (68%).

DVD/Blu-ray Players – Ownership down only 3% over the last 9 years.

Desktop Computers – Down only 8% (interestingly, the ownership of laptop computers has more than doubled during this period).

Services We Offer

- General Computer / Network Repair and Troubleshooting
- Network Design & Implementation
- Backup and Business Continuity Solutions
- Anti Spam & Email Solutions
- Virus and Spyware Protection
- Network Security / Firewall Solutions
- Commercial Wireless Networking
- Fixed Cost Monthly Managed Services
- Remote Monitoring and Diagnostics, Troubleshooting and Repair
- Project Management
- Technology Consulting
- Hosted Exchange Service
- Cloud Services



b4 networks

1462 Pelham Street
Fonthill, Ontario, L0S 1E0
905-346-4966

www.b4networks.ca

We Make Technology Work!