

March
2016

Technology Update

by B4 Networks

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

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Know Someone That
Needs Computer Support?
See Page 8 For More Details!



“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,
B4 Networks Inc.

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

Is Hope And Luck Your IT Strategy?

This article is similar to an article I published last year, but I felt it was so important that I would re-publish a revised version.

This might sound harsh, but it’s the truth. **Just Because You’ve Been LUCKY Enough To Avoid A Cyber-Attack Doesn’t Mean You’re Not At Risk.**

I’ve personally never been in a serious car accident, yet I put on my seat belt every single time I enter, not because I expect to get into an accident, but just in case, I want to be protected.



If your business hasn’t been the target of malicious intruders or cybercriminals, consider yourself lucky, but take action now. Hackers are a relentless bunch and **they want your digital gold:** information and access they can use to exploit loopholes in your business’s Internet security. This past year has been especially hard on companies all across the globe. And these cyber-breaches aren’t going to stop simply because the “damage has been done.”

Imagine walking into your office one morning to discover your computer network was breached by a hacker, exposing not only YOUR company’s data, but also all of your client records and private communications. Imagine the embarrassment of having to notify your clients and vendors that, because of you, their private and possibly personal information may now be in the hands of cybercriminals. And hopefully that’s the only damage done...

Your operations could be halted or severely limited for days, possibly weeks. Your data corrupt to the point of being useless. Clients lost. Potential lawsuits. Exorbitant emergency IT fees to get everything restored to working order fast.

For cybercriminals, there is no end game. All too often, small business owners assume they are outside the firing line and hackers aren’t interested in them. While the media focuses on the big cyber-attacks,



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Get More Free Tips, Tools and Services At Our Web Site: www.b4networks.ca

Top 5 Web Design Guidelines

Written by: Myles Calvert of Tenpine Web Development

With enough experience, I've developed the ability to look at a website and know quickly whether it needs a full re-design, just a tune up, or if it's good as is.

As experienced internet users, we all have a sense of which websites we like to browse through, and which websites send us running back to the Google search results faster than when shareholders bailed from MySpace.com. Yet do we know why exactly this is?

I believe there are 5 standard web design principles that every website should follow in order to give their visitors a pleasurable browsing experience.

Let's take a look...

1. Consistent layout & structure.

I put this one first because it's a pet peeve of mine, both as a web designer and as a visitor. To be browsing through pages of a website only to be introduced to a different look for each area of the website is irritating and confusing. The colours may be different, the navigation may be in a different spot, and even the basic alignment may be totally revised. Any one of these (sometimes several combined, *shudder*) really make for a lousy viewing experience and likely won't keep visitors around for long.

2. Organized, clean, readable text.

This is a basic print design principal that should be applied to a website, yet seems to be ignored by some designers. Picture yourself being handed a business card or a brochure. You should be able to quickly find and read the most important information within the first several seconds. If you're not able to, it's human nature to become less engaged. The same thing happens when you land on a website. If a viewer is confused as to what to read first, or has difficulty following what the site is saying, you've lost them!

3. Proper home page length.

Let's face it, as a society we're becoming less interested in reading or spending much



time finding what we came to see. If there are many paragraphs of text on the home page our eyes glaze over like a child listening to grandpa's button stories and we start scanning for the nearest exit. The text on the home page should merely act as a brief synopsis of the company (typically 2-3 sentences) and usually accompanied with a 'read more' link that brings the visitor to a more complete 'about us' section. This is where you're free to be text heavy since the visitor has chosen to read more in depth about the company and services.

4. Descriptive title tags on each page.

This is one of the basic search engine optimization principals as well, but even if that's not a consideration, having descriptive title tags is a must! So often I still see people using just "home" as the title tag for their main page, "about" as the title of their about page and so on. The title tag has many uses such as being one of the key elements search engines review when deciding where to rank your website, and

it's also the key piece of text that appears whenever someone shares your website link on a social networking website or places it in the favorite list on their web browser. In several ways, your title tag is used to give someone a first impression of your website and ultimately your business. Consider it an online handshake, and make it firm.

5. Consistent branding to match other company material

I can't believe this one is all the way down on number 5, because it's one of the first things I consider when starting a new project. The entire branding of a

company should be consistent across all mediums and should all build off of the logo. A lot of time and care should go into creating the most representative and attractive logo possible for the company.

The logo will establish the overall vibe of the company as well as the font and colours associated with the business. This should then be applied to all print material (business cards, brochure etc.) as well as any online presence (website, social media, directories.) When someone logs onto your website after seeing you on Facebook, or receiving a business card or seeing an ad in the community, they should instantly recognize the colors and branding of your company.

There are certainly other variables that affect the level of attractiveness and usability of a website, but if your website follows these 5 basic principles you're ahead of the game!



Is it time for you to re-evaluate your website? Email myles@tenpine.ca or call 905-401-3685 to speak with Myles at Tenpine Web Development. Tenpine is a full service Web Development Firm located in Niagara.

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

News From The Web

Is Google siphoning off worker productivity?

Your employees *may* be doing work-related searches online. Or they may be checking out a hot new vacation package, or the next episode of their favorite TV show. It's tempting to think of personal browsing on company time as stealing from the company. Yet cracking down can backfire on you. Instead, focus on personal work outcomes. If employees get all their work done on schedule in spite of wasting half the day, it may be time to add more duties to their job descriptions. On the other hand, if productivity is in the pits, a focus on discipline rather than policing minute-by-minute activities will likely yield a greater payoff. *-Inc.com*

Clutter to the rescue!

E-mail management tool Clutter which is built into Office 365 makes it easy to keep your e-mail under control. It looks at the email you regularly ignore, and drops those into a folder called "Clutter" leaving your inbox free of well clutter. You can choose to ignore the folder, or

review it once a day to see if it picked something up it shouldn't have. You can move it back to your inbox should it be something you need.

Wake up your web site with these 3 simple steps.

Does your company web site reflect its current success and position it for future growth? To be sure it does, do this:

- 1) Focus your main message on customer needs. The only thing visitors care about is what your company can do for them. Make that clear upfront and they'll stay and engage.
- 2) Delete the self-praise and let your best customers speak *for* you with testimonials.
- 3) Create a single call to action. Don't just let visitors wander around. Entice them to take action by offering a low-risk, high-value item, such as a free e-book, webinar, resource list, etc., in exchange for their contact information. Now you've got a web site that works! *-Inc.com*

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Track Expenses Like A Boss



As a small business owner, I found it very difficult to keep track of all the purchases I've made while out of the offices, and often those tiny receipts I received would get lost, dirty, or would fade away by the time I went to enter them into my accounting software.














In comes Receipt Bank to the rescue. Now with an app on my phone, all I do is snap a photo of the receipt. Receipt Bank will not only keep track of it, but also read the receipt, and extract key information such as HST, total amount, date, vendor, etc., and transmit that information to my accounting software (Xero Accounting).

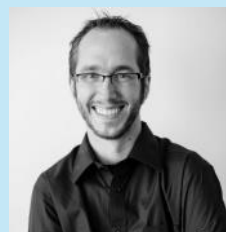
Receipt Bank will even process invoices I forward to it via email, and process those to be exported to my accounting package. Now I don't miss a single receipt or expense, and it's as easy as snapping a photo.

www.receipt-bank.com

Tek Tip of the Month

Windows Quick Key Reference Cut Out

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Show or Hide Desktop |  + D |
| Maximize Window |  +  |
| Minimize Window |  +  |
| Switch Programs | Alt + Tab |
| Snap Window To Left |  +  |
| Snap Window To Right |  +  |
| Move Window To Left Monitor |  + Shift +  |
| Move Window To Right Monitor |  + Shift +  |



Alex Vandersteen
Network Administrator

Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery

This is probably one of the biggest and most costly misconceptions that many business owners have. Usually this is because they've been fortunate enough to never have encountered a major computer-related disaster, but that's similar to someone thinking they don't need to wear a seat belt when driving a car because they've never had an accident.

Disaster preparedness isn't just planning for a fire, theft, or flood, a Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) is a flexible approach to your organization's day-to-day operations, and can even make your business more nimble, and flexible in non-disaster situations.

Computers and technology have become so critical to most businesses today and most operations simply cannot function without their computer

systems operating effectively. All businesses should have at least a basic plan in place. The first step in making this plan, is admitting the possibility of a disaster, and this needs to be done at a senior level. If you have done that, then here are a few tips to get your started right now:

Assess your current environment

1. Define all critical functions, systems, software and data in your organization, and prioritize them in order of importance to your business (mission critical to minor) based on which ones, if destroyed, would have the greatest negative impact on your business.
2. Create a document that outlines your current IT infrastructure (network documentation) so

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another IT person or company could take over easily if your current IT person wasn't available, or could assist in the recovery of your IT infrastructure in the event of a disaster.

3. Determine the expectations for RTO (recovery time objective), RPO (recover point objective) and MTO (maximum tolerable outage) for every critical function and system in your business.
4. Create an IT Assets Inventory list and identify all the functions, data, hardware and systems in your business.
5. Identify all threats that could potentially disrupt or destroy the above mentioned data, systems, functions, etc. and the likelihood of those threats.

Mitigation and Planning.

1. For each mission-critical system or function, brainstorm ways to minimize, avoid or limit the damage done.

2. For the most likely disasters, create a Disaster Recovery Plan specific to what damage could be done (fire burns down your office, city evacuation, virus attack, etc.), and identify who will be responsible for executing the plan (your disaster recovery team).
3. Identify a recovery plan and timeline for each function, and prioritize these functions by the order in which they need to be recovered if multiple mission-critical functions were affected.
4. Create a backup strategy for your data and systems.
5. Create a testing and validation strategy, and schedule tests for your backups. (Having a backup is good, but testing that backup is critical)

Important! This list should only be used as a starting point for your Disaster Recovery Plan. This is in no way complete; we highly recommend you engage with a professional IT firm to map out a complete Disaster Recovery Plan for your business.

Disaster Planning Essentials Report Free Immediate Download

This report will reveal important planning strategies you should have in place now to protect yourself from common data-erasing disasters including natural hazards, human error, cyber criminals, hardware failure, software corruption and other IT failures.

You'll Discover:

- ✓ 12 Disaster Recovery Questions You Need To Answer
- ✓ The 7 Disaster Planning Essentials
- ✓ 4 Questions About Backups That Business Owners Should Know The Answer To
- ✓ A Free Disaster Planning Checklist

Don't lose everything you've worked so hard to achieve in an instant! Plan ahead with our Free planning Guide. Download now at www.b4net.ca/disaster or email me directly at bryan@b4networks.ca, and I'll reply to you with a copy.



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

The B4 Networks Comic Strip



Meet *After Stuff Happens Networks*

After Networks is a fictitious computer company that provides terrible customer service, does everything wrong, takes days to respond to service requests, are very arrogant, talk down to clients, and are anything but helpful. In fact they are downright lazy.

This company does not actually exist. No one we know of is this bad at delivering their service. But we've all at one time or another run across a company that has one of these poor traits. If you struggle with your IT firm, call us for a second opinion. 905-346-4966

Have You Tried Restarting It?

This sentence... probably the most dreaded sentence for someone that uses computers everyday. Should anyone have to restart a system for the same problem over and over again, NO absolutely not.

Now don't get me wrong, there is a time and place for this question. If it's the first time you've ever experienced a particular problem, and it goes away never to return after a restart, then problem solved.

However if the problem is a recurring problem, or has nothing to do with a restart, it's very frustrating to hear that question.



ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL VANDERSTEEN

Do you want an IT company that's will treat you with the respect that you deserve?
Call us today @ 905-346-4966 - www.b4networks.ca

Client Spotlight

Thorold Auto Parts & Recyclers is in the business of supplying garages, repair facilities and private individuals with quality recycled vehicle parts. But that's not all Thorold Auto Parts & Recyclers is up to in 2016.

Frank Serravalle, the owner of Thorold Auto Parts & Recyclers, says he and his team are working hard to upgrade and enhance their facility so they can serve their clients better than ever.

A member of the Ontario Automotive Recyclers Association, Thorold Auto Parts is one of the largest auto recyclers in southern Ontario with a huge inventory of auto parts throughout its 23-acre property. Thorold Auto Parts has over 200,000 recycled parts in stock at any one time. That includes a wide range of foreign and domestic models—everything from Honda and Mazda to Jeep, Nissan and Chevrolet.

Thorold Auto Parts has been part of the Niagara business landscape for well over 30 years now. Frank's father Lenny originally established Thorold Auto

Parts back in 1982, and passed the family business on to Frank in 2000. Since that time, Frank has made several enhancements to his operation. For instance, just a few years ago, Thorold Auto Parts doubled its recycling capacity by adding four new recycling bays and 4,000 square feet to its vehicle dismantling facility.

But the updates haven't stopped there. This past fall, Thorold Auto Parts began the first stages of an ambitious new expansion project, adding 10,000 square feet to their building to allow more room for parts storage and vehicle processing.

"We're always looking for ways to expand our clientele," Frank says. "In order to do that, we're

constantly improving ourselves and the way we do business—and our brand new expansion will be a big help in that department."

Thorold Auto Parts and Recyclers is located at 1108 Beaverdams Road in Thorold. For more information, please call 905.227.4118 or visit www.thoroldautoparts.com.



Guest Article:

4 Phrases of Amazing Customer Service

I've grown my companies by focusing on great customer service. We didn't always have the biggest names in business working at the firm, and we sure couldn't always afford the flashiest equipment. What we did better than all our competitors was ensure that our customers were thrilled.

In fact, superlative customer service can be your very best (and cheapest!) form of marketing. Customers talk about their experiences, especially if those experiences are unexpectedly good. Sometimes even the most difficult situations can yield satisfied customers, depending on how you and your team handle the problems that arise. Even a failure to meet expectations can offer an opportunity for a great recovery and a happy customer.

Here are four phrases that will help you bring up the level of service your customers receive:

1. "I don't know, but this is what I'm going to do."

You're not always going to have the answer to every question at your fingertips, and your customers will understand that. What they expect in exchange, though, is honesty and follow-up. The key here is to make a clear commitment like "I'll call you by 5 p.m. with the answer," and then keep that commitment!

2. "I am very sorry."

When you or your company has made a mistake, the customer wants to hear you accept responsibility and apologize. Too many customer service reps have been trained not to accept responsibility, in some cases because they fear the legal record of

having admitted failure. Realistically, though, the probability of a lawsuit is minimal, while the chance of losing a customer is virtually guaranteed. The apology is only a step, albeit an important one, and the goal is to turn the failure into a success by determining what your company can do to make it right.

3. "Yes."

"Yes" is what your customer wants to hear, and your goal should be to say that word whenever possible, even if – *especially* if – you're working through a problem. Customers want progress. Say yes to reasonable requests as soon and as often as possible, and leave your customers pleasantly surprised at how easily the problem was resolved.

4. "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

Here's your perfect wrap-up. Not only does this question give your customer the opportunity to bring up additional concerns, but it also lets the customer feel like they're in control. They can ask for additional information or they can thank you for your spectacular service.

Great customer service relies first and foremost on authenticity, and being trustworthy is the foundation. If your customers trust you to keep your word, then you're more than halfway there. If your customers know they can rely on you, even if there's a problem, that's the rest of the journey.

Work on training your customer service reps to listen, determine what the customer expects and do what they can to make sure that customer is satisfied.



MIKE MICHALOWICZ (pronounced mi-KAL-o-wits) started his first business at the age of 24, moving his young family to the only safe place he could afford—a retirement building. With no experience, no contacts and no savings, he systematically bootstrapped a multimillion-dollar business. Then he did it again. And again. Now he is doing it for other entrepreneurs. Mike is the CEO of Provendus Group, a consulting firm that ignites explosive growth in companies that have plateaued; a former small-business columnist for *The Wall Street Journal*; MSNBC's business makeover expert; a keynote speaker on entrepreneurship; and the author of the cult classic book *The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*. His newest book, *The Pumpkin Plan*, has already been called "the next *E-Myth!*" For more information, visit <http://www.mikemichalowicz.com/>.

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

Do You Know Someone That Needs Computer Support?

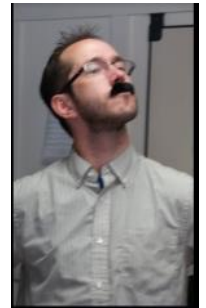
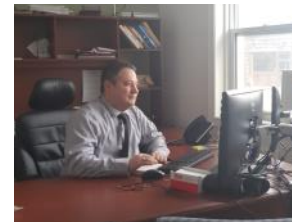
Did you know we have a referral program where you can earn \$100 for each referral you send us. See www.b4net.ca/referral for more details. **You don't have to be a client to benefit either.**



Random Images From The B4 Networks Families



Some great news. Steve and Sharon are having a boy! :)



(Continued from page 1)

there are countless other stories playing out at small businesses everywhere. Cybercriminals are constantly in search of loopholes and weak security. And, unfortunately, small businesses often have the weakest IT security.

With St. Patrick's Day this month, I want to take a moment to remind you that just because you've been "lucky" enough to avoid an incident like this in the past doesn't mean you're not at risk – in fact, that's a very dangerous way to think.

During the month of March, we are offering local businesses a Highly discounted Cyber-Security Audit to help uncover loopholes in your company's online security. For a minimal fixed fee our highly trained team

of IT pros will come to your office and conduct this comprehensive audit.

After we've completed the audit, done, we'll prepare a customized "Report Of Findings" that will reveal specific vulnerabilities and a Prioritized Plan Of Attack for getting any problems addressed fast. You can opt to have our team take care of it for you, or you can take our report of findings and have your IT team implement them.

Because of the intense one-on-one time required to deliver these Cyber-Security Audits, we can only extend this offer to the first five lucky companies who request it by March 17th—St. Patrick's Day. All you have to do is call our office at **905-346-4966** or email me personally at bryan@b4networks.ca

Services We Offer

- Fixed Monthly Fee Worry Free IT
- Peace of Mind Security Services
- No Hassle Backup and Business Continuity Solution
- Disaster Planning and Prevention
- Network Design & Implementation
- Server Planning and Deployment
- Project Management
- General Computer / Network Repair and Troubleshooting



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

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