

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

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

7 Ways To Dodge A Data Disaster

WHAT'S NEW

Quarterly Objectives of Improving Customer Service has been met!

We have exceeded our 90% Client Satisfaction Goal!

We will continue to actively work on improving our customer service satisfaction throughout the rest of this year.

**APRIL
2017**



"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.

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You stride into the office early one Monday morning. You grab a cup of coffee, flip on your computer and start checking e-mail...

A note pops up that rivets your attention:

"Your files have been encrypted. Send \$5,000 within five days or they will all be destroyed."



You start sweating as your throat constricts and your chest tightens. Sure enough, every time you try to open a document, the same message appears. Your phone rings. It's Bob in accounting, and he's having the same problem. All files across your entire network have been encrypted. You contact the local police. They suggest you call the RCMP. The RCMP says they can't help you. What do you do next?

a) You pay the five grand, desperately hoping you'll get your data back, or...

b) You calmly call your IT pro, who says, "No problem, your backups are all current. No files were lost. Everything will be restored by noon, if not sooner."

If your answer is "b," you breathe a sigh of relief and get back to work as your backup plan kicks in...

Ransomware attacks are more common than ever, especially at smaller companies. That's because small companies make easy marks for hackers. The average small business is much easier to hack than high-value, heavily fortified targets like banks and big corporations.

According to Time magazine, cybersecurity experts estimate that several million attacks occur in the US alone every year.

And that figure is climbing. So how can you make sure you never have to sweat a ransomware attack or other data disaster?

One sure solution is having a solid backup plan in place. When all your data and applications can be duplicated, you have plenty of options in the event of an attack.



7 Ways To Dodge A Data Disaster (Continued)

Here then are seven ways to make sure you're in good shape, no matter what happens to your current data:

- 1 Insist on regular, remote and redundant processes.** A good rule of thumb is 3-2-1. That means three copies of your data is stored in two off-site locations and backed up at least once per day.
- 2 Don't cheap out on disk drives.** Less expensive arrays that save money can leave your data at risk. Get features like a redundant power supply and hot spare disks.
- 3 Guard against human error.** Make sure people doing backups know exactly what to do. Take people out of the loop and automate wherever possible. And watch for situations where backups aren't a part of someone's regular duties.
- 4 Check backup software settings routinely.** When new software or updates are put into service, a change in the way the settings are configured can cause incomplete backups, or backups that fail. Do the people who maintain your backups include this on their regular to-do list?
- 5 Make sure critical files aren't getting left out.** As resources are added and priorities shift, documents and folders can get misplaced or accidentally left off the backup list. Insist on a quarterly or annual meeting with your backup management team to make sure all mission-critical files are included in your organization's data recovery systems.
- 6 Address network issues immediately.** Any component in your network that isn't working properly can introduce another point of failure in your backup process. Every juncture in your network, from a mis-configured switch to a flaky host bus adapter, can hurt your backups.
- 7 Ask for help with your data backup and recovery system.** You cannot be expected to be an expert in all things. Yet data is the backbone of your business – its protection and recovery should not be left to chance. Leverage the knowledge, skill and experience of an expert who stays current with all the latest IT issues.

Data Recovery Review Reveals Backup System Vulnerabilities

Don't let your company become yet another statistic. Just one ransomware attack can result in a serious financial blow if you're not prepared.

Visit www.b4networks.ca/dodge TODAY or call 905-346-4966 by April 30 for a FREE Data Recovery Review, ordinarily a \$300 service.

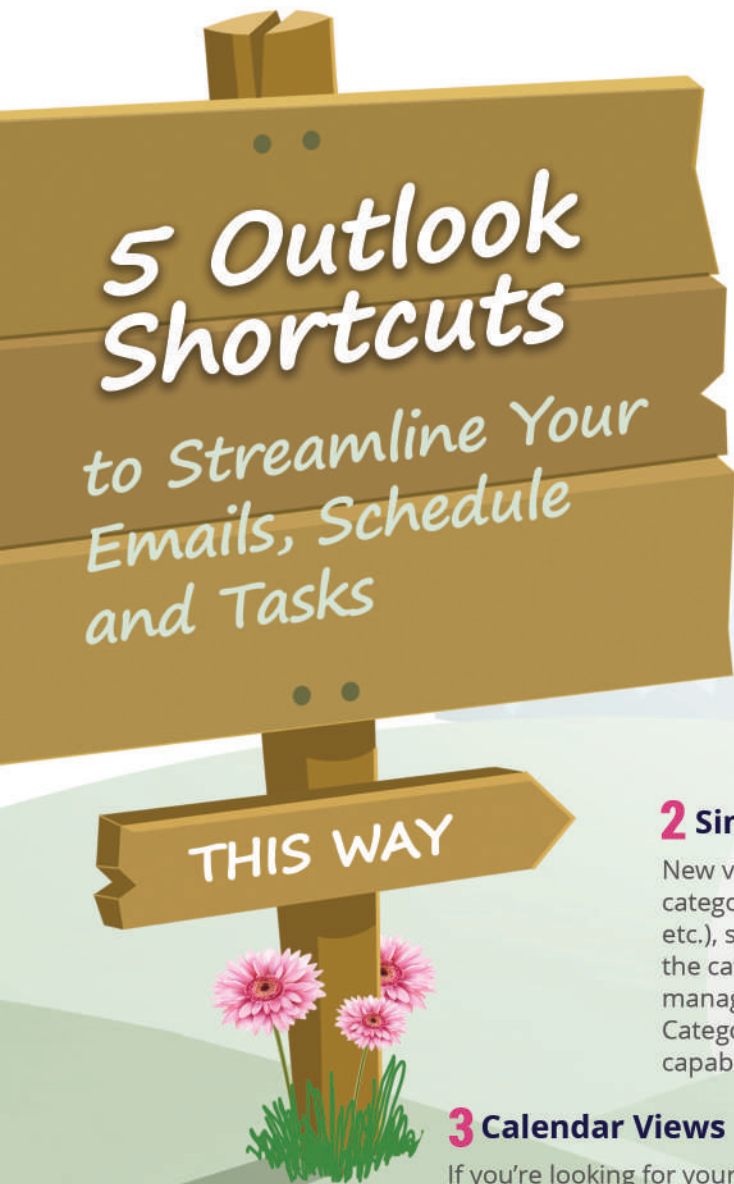
Here is what a client is saying about us:

"A special thank you to the B4 team for helping us transition over to Annex Insurance."

"We are grateful for the countless hours spent to make our move seamless. Bryan, Alex and Andrew, a sincere pleasure working with all of you. Outstanding! I look forward to our continued relationship."

Joe DelGuzzo - Annex Insurance - jDelGuzzo@annexinsurance.ca





5 Outlook Shortcuts

to Streamline Your Emails, Schedule and Tasks

THIS WAY

Outlook shortcuts don't require you to memorize a thousand commands.

By mastering a few key shortcuts, you can save several minutes to get more done at work.

Most office workers are used to the quirks of Microsoft Outlook, but many may not know just how much it can do (and just how quickly it can do it.) While many of the things about Outlook are intuitive, shortcuts can keep your focus at the moment instead of having to break it to find what you need. If you've ever been late for a meeting, let a task slip by or lost an email, then use these 5 shortcut tips to save time.

1 Start Organizing Your Emails

When an email comes in, you can flag it as a task, so it shows up in a list on the right-hand side of your computer screen. Much like a ticketing system, it means you're less likely to forget to take care of something if you have a list that you can quickly check off and update. All you have to do when you get the email is hit Control + Shift + K, and voila, you have a new task. You can also use Control + Shift + G to flag it as a follow-up if you don't want to create a task.

2 Simplified Searching

New versions of Outlook allow you to color-coordinate both the categories and details within the categories (e.g., by person, project, etc.), so you're more likely to find what you're looking for. Right click on the categories field to get started. From the Home tab, you can then manage your tags and choose your own shortcut by going from All Categories to Tags Group to the alternative options. Again, your capabilities will depend on your version.

3 Calendar Views

If you're looking for your daily, weekly or monthly calendar, simply hit Alt + the first letter of the timeline you seek. So Alt + D will pull up your daily calendar, Alt + W is weekly, etc. This can help you quickly pull everything up quickly, so you have a chance to say yes or decline invitations without delay.

4 Mute Thread

Ever put on an email chain that pings you repeatedly from the 30 people who are all on it? If so, you can use Control + Delete key to get to the Delete panel, where you can then click Ignore so you can mute the thread and concentrate on your day.

5 Spellcheck

Just hitting F7 when you're in Outlook automatically runs the spellcheck for you. This can be a quick habit to get into when you're sending multiple emails a day and need them to be perfect.

Before you dismiss these, consider how much more you can get done with just a few extra minutes a day. Those who use these shortcuts can cut between 10 and 15 minutes of unnecessary work.

B4 Networks is the trusted choice when it comes to staying ahead of time-saving ideas in technology and can provide you with tips, tricks and news.

Contact us at (905) 346-4966 or send us an email at help@b4networks.ca for more information.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Once upon a time, Oculus Rift ruled the world...



The virtual reality (VR) world, anyway. Not so much anymore. Now that VR heavyweights Sony, HTC and Samsung have entered the ring, there's a whole new reality in, well...VR.

Sony's PlayStation VR was recently crowned "Editor's Choice" by PC Mag. And, if you happen to own a compatible Samsung Galaxy smartphone, such as the S7 or S7 Edge, you can get "untethered" VR for just \$100.

You'll pay four times that for the Rift, HTC's Vive or Sony's PlayStation VR – all tethered sets, requiring a clunky cable from headset to hardware.

Vive has the most advanced technology, but Rift is nearly as sophisticated and sells for \$200 less. You could shell out that much for the Rift's hand controllers, but, according to PC Mag, they're well worth it.

So while Oculus may not be king, it's still a serious contender.

Client Spotlight



Auto Body Supply Specialists for 25 Years

Treschak Enterprises has been servicing Ontario for the past 30 years.

We have built a solid reputation with our customers and strive to work with them as partners in their business. The only thing we pride more than our service to our customers is the quality of the products we stand behind.



Jamie Treshak

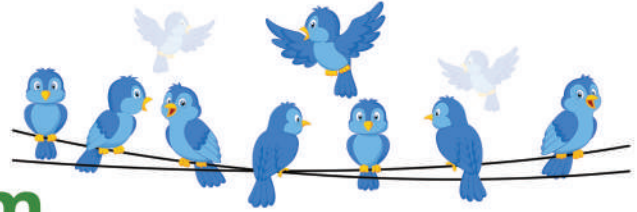


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Twitter Tactics: 6 Tips To Attract Followers For Your Firm



Through efficient use of hashtags, networks, and other Twitter features, you can use tweets to bring valuable attention to your brand

Brevity isn't just the soul of wit; it's also the heart of an effective tweet! Though many firms are loathed to use Twitter because of its strict character limits, those limits are what makes the platform so useful. By constraining the length of your posts, Twitter forces you to use every word intentionally, streamlining information for your followers. To take advantage of these features and promote your brand, you must:

1. Handle Hashtags

Practical use of hashtags helps potential customers find and follow your posts. Each tweet should thus have an important, relevant tag. Initially, you can determine which tags to use by googling different options and choosing the ones that most bring the most results. As you gain followers, pay attention to the tags they use, incorporating them into your tweets to create a more personalized experience for loyal customers.

2. Navigate Networks

First-time Twitter users are often shocked by the sheer amount of information in their feeds. This is particularly the case for business users, whose accounts attract traffic from all relevant industry sources. To avoid information overload, you must sort the users in your network into different lists, whether based on business size, specific activities, or other features you value. You can then switch between lists, gaining access to specific kinds of information as you need it.

3. Cultivate Consistency

Once you begin accruing followers, it is important to give them a clear sense of what to expect from you. Consistency is of particular importance when it comes to tone. Writing your posts in the same positive, engaging way makes it easier for customers to read and interpret them. You should also try to post at similar times each day so that you don't catch followers off-guard. Try to coordinate the tone and timing of your tweets with posts on other social media to enhance the effect.

4. Focused Following

Contrary to popular belief, a larger network is not always a better one. Instead, you should follow only those users who are relevant to your industry and have a good reputation. This ensures that the consumers who learn of your firm through your followers will actually find you valuable. It also prevents you from becoming associated with brands that have a bad public image.

5. Multimedia Management

Videos, photos, and audio can enhance a tweet, but only if used effectively. Incorporate multimedia that relates directly to the substance of your tweets, as it will break up the monotony of text. Multimedia added for the sake of adding multimedia, however, will distract followers.

6. Managing Social Media

To prevent a growing Twitter feed from taking up all your time and energy, it may be wise to invest in a social media management tool. Programs like TweetDeck and Hootsuite help you to sift through your followers' content, identifying and taking advantage of material that is most directly relevant to you.

B4 Networks offers in-depth social media marketing advice for organizations in St. Catharines, Welland, Niagara Falls, Grimsby and across the Niagara Peninsula. For more information, contact (905) 346-4966 or help@b4networks.ca today.

■ Comparing Apples To Apples: The Predominant IT Service Models Explained

Before you can accurately compare the fees, services and deliverables of one IT services company to another, you need to understand the 3 predominant service models most of these companies fit within. Some companies offer a blend of all 3, while others are strict about offering only one service plan. The 3 predominant service models are:

Time and Materials.

In the industry, we call this “break-fix” services. Essentially you pay an agreed-upon hourly rate for a technician to “fix” your problem when something “breaks.” Under this model, you might be able to negotiate a discount based on buying a block of hours. The scope of work may be simply to resolve a specific problem (like removing a virus), or it may encompass a large project like a computer network upgrade or move that has a specific result and end date clarified. Some companies will offer staff augmentation and placement under this model as well.

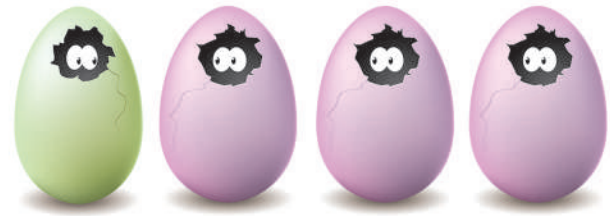
Managed IT Services.

This is a model where the IT services company takes the role of your “IT department” and not only installs and supports all the devices and PCs that connect to your server(s), but also offers phone and on-site support, antivirus, security, backup and a host of other services to monitor and maintain the health, speed, performance and security of your computer network.

Software Vendor-Supplied IT Services.

Many software companies will offer IT support for their customers in the form of a help desk or remote support for an additional fee. However, these are typically scaled-back services, limited to troubleshooting their specific application and NOT your entire computer network and all the applications and devices connected to it. If your problem resides outside of their specific software or the server it’s hosted on, they can’t help you and will often refer you to “your IT department.” While it’s often a good idea to buy some basic-level support package with a critical software application you use to run your business, this is not enough to provide the full IT services and support most businesses need to stay up and running.

When looking to outsource your IT support, the two service models you are most likely to end up having to choose between are the “managed IT services” and “break-fix” models. Therefore, let’s dive into the pros and cons of these two options, and then the typical fee structure for both.



■ Why Regular Monitoring And Maintenance Is Critical For Today's Computer Networks

The fact of the matter is, computer networks absolutely, positively need ongoing maintenance and monitoring to stay secure.

The ever-increasing dependency we have on IT systems and the data they hold — not to mention the type of data we’re now saving digitally — has given rise to very smart and sophisticated cybercrime organizations and who work around the clock to do one thing: compromise your networks for illegal activities.

In most cases their intent is to access financial information and passwords to rob you (or your clients), create fake identities for credit card fraud, etc.

In other cases they may want to use your computer network to send illegal spam, host pirated software, spread viruses, etc. And some do it just for the “fun” of being able to make computer systems inoperable.

These criminals work around the clock in teams, constantly finding and inventing new ways to get around your antivirus software and firewalls; that’s why you have to remain ever vigilant against their attacks.

Of course, this doesn’t even take into consideration other common “disasters” such as rogue employees, lost devices, hardware failures (which are the #1 reason for data loss), fire and natural disasters and a host of other issues that can interrupt or outright destroy your IT infrastructure and the data it holds. Then there’s regulatory compliance for any business hosting or touching credit card or financial information, medical records and even client contact information such as e-mail addresses.

Preventing these problems and keeping your systems up and running (which is what managed IT services is all about) is a LOT less expensive and damaging to your organization than waiting until one of these things happens and then paying for emergency IT services to restore your systems to working order (break-fix).

Need Help Right Away? Call our team at 905.346.4966 or visit b4networks.ca

NEWS BRIEFS

As of January 31, "outsiders" can now Skype into the White House Press Room. This enables journalists outside the Washington, DC, area to ask questions during White House press briefings.

It's part of the Trump administration's strategy to keep in touch with people outside the beltway. Journalists attending via Skype must be at least 50 miles from the DC area. All political questions aside, it's just another example of business (or, in this case, government) taking advantage of available technologies. Or, in this case, finally catching up... Skype, the world's largest video calling service, is nothing new – it's been around since 2003. Sometimes it just takes a while for users to figure out how to make tech work to their advantage.

Yahoo.com, 01.31.17

"DIY" data security kits can offer basic protection. Are you a do-it-yourselfer willing to take defending your company's data into your own hands?

If so, you can find a variety of low to no cost products that provide basic safeguards. Koozali SME Server, for instance, bundles security and other server apps for small businesses. These include file sharing, directory access, redundant backups, firewall and web hosting. Its makers claim you can be up and running with it in less than 20 minutes. It's based on Linux, yet allows you to network Windows and MacOS as well as Linux-based devices. It's all free and there is no paid version. However, because no support is provided, you may need to contact a professional for assistance.

SmallBusinessComputing.com, 12.21.16

Anti-malware programs can't even touch this new kind of attack... "Fileless" attacks became all the rage among hackers in 2016.

According to a report by cybersecurity firm Carbon Black, fourth quarter 2016 saw a 33% rise in these "non-malware" attacks compared to the first quarter. Experts expect the trend to continue through 2017. Cyberbad-guys carry out these attacks in any number of ways. Their "en vogue" method at the start of 2017 was hijacking PowerShell and WMI (Windows Management Instrumentation) to do their dirty deeds. Brian Kenyon, chief strategy officer for Symantec, said recently, "Fileless infections are difficult to detect and often elude intrusion prevention and antivirus programs." Reports show the Democratic National Committee hack last year used a fileless attack.

DarkReading.com, 12.27.16

Cassette audio tapes (remember those?) are making a comeback. Compact disk sales are declining, yet vinyl records have enjoyed a resurgence over the past several years.

And last year, cassette sales rose to 129,000 units, an increase of 74% over 2015. So what's up with cassettes – why so popular all of a sudden? Actually, the numbers are still miniscule compared to the 105 million CDs sold in 2016. Yet the bump in cassette sales reflects a growing appetite for tangible items that fans can cherish. Also, it doesn't hurt that artists like Justin Bieber, Eminem and Prince brought tape reissues to market. Or that online retailer Urban Outfitters has exclusive deals to sell their cassettes, as well as vintage gear to play them on.

TheVerge.com, 01.23.17



Just one ransomware attack can result in a serious financial blow if you're not prepared.

Visit www.b4networks.ca/dodge TODAY or call 905-346-4966 by April 30 for a FREE Data Recovery Review (ordinarily a \$300 Service)

> We'll provide you with a complete on-site assessment of your current backup system to check for and safeguard against any gaps that could prove financially lethal to your business.

PHOTO ALBUM



TEKTIP

6 Keyboard Shortcuts You Have to Learn Today

Keyboard shortcuts can help you feel more efficient by shaving off a few seconds on everyday computer tasks, but the sheer amount can be overwhelming to users.

1. Forwards and Backwards on a Website: Control + Left (or Right) Arrow

This command is what saves you from hitting the back and forth arrows on your browser.

2. Plain Text: Control + Shift + V

When composing an email or creating a working document, you may want to cite information from a web page.

3. Restore Your Last Tab: Control + W

Opening up 30 tabs may be necessary, but it can also make it harder to figure out where everything is located on the screen.

4. Locking Your Screen: Windows + L

Information is becoming more and more valuable, and open screens make that information there for the taking.

5. Bookmark a Webpage: Control + D

Web pages can be difficult to find sometimes, so don't spend unnecessary searching after you've found them.

6. Send an Outlook Email: Alt + S

One of the most popular things you'll do all day, this lets you send multiple emails faster. Once you're in the zone, you're not going to want your hands to be off the keys for even one second.

B4 Networks is the trusted choice when it comes to staying ahead of technology developments and can provide you with tips, tricks and news.

Contact us at (905) 346-4966 or send us an email at help@b4networks.ca for more information.