

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

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

WHAT'S NEW

We are moving!

to a temporary location while our permanent office is being constructed. Our temporary office will be located at:

B4 Networks Inc
170 Hwy 20 Box 249
Fonthill, Ontario, L0S 1E0



The Top Windows 10 Features And Devices To Add To Your Holiday Wish List

Top Your Technophile's Wish List With These Top Windows

It's the season for giving and receiving. Be the top of your favorite technophile's wish list or just treat yourself to some new gadgets or apps with these top new Windows 10 features and devices for the holidays.

Start your wish list off right with ***Cortana**, Windows' to-do list making app, which you can use your voice or type to create different varieties of lists for shopping, meal prep, daily tasks and vacation planning. Cortana then allows you the flexibility of pulling up your lists on all your enabled devices, so you never need to worry about leaving anyone off your holiday list.

December 2016



"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

If you're looking for an economical, yet smart device to carry out basic computing tasks, then the ***ASUS Transformer Mini T102** should top your list at under \$300 USD. This detachable 2-in-1 PC has a smart hinge kickstand and weighs in at under two pounds to allow your work to go anywhere. It comes ready to operate with Windows 10 and Cortana, along with a built in fingerprint reader and windows Hello log-in, keeping documents safe and secure.

For a sleek new lap-top, the ***HP Stream** provides a speedy and powerful device loaded up with Office 365 Personal and Windows 10, along with DTS Studio Sound for booming sound immersion. The laptop retails for \$279 USD.

On the higher end, the ***Lenovo Yoga 910** is a convertible 2-in-1 device in an ultra thin and sleek package. It can be used as a laptop, tablet or display screen and also features a touch screen, fingerprint reader and password-free log-in, all for \$1,049 USD.

The ***Dell XPS 13** features an InfinityEdge screen display that makes beautiful work of looking at pictures and videos. It features a light body and a hard working battery that lasts up to 22 hours, for a starting price of \$999 USD.

The ***HP Spectre x360** elevates the convertible PC in a super slim body with Full HD touchscreen and Windows 10 for work or personal use. A built-in camera aids in Windows Hello facial recognition sign-in for \$1,149 USD.

The Top Windows 10 Features And Devices To Add To Your Holiday Wish List (cont.)

Windows 10 on any device can help make the holiday season easier with a range of applications that provide both professional and personal solutions. From Windows Ink and Pen that turns your device into digital pen and paper, to OneNote that allows you to turn your scribbled notes into a checklist, to the Microsoft Edge browser that enables webpage mark-ups.

Whoever is on your holiday gift list, chances are they'll be delighted with a Windows 10 present.



Why You're A Target - And How To Fight Back!

Increasingly, cyberthieves view SMEs like yours and mine as easy "soft targets." That's because all too often we have:

1. Bank accounts with thousands of dollars.
2. A false sense of security about not being targeted.
3. Our customer's credit card information, social insurance numbers and other vital data that hackers can easily sell on the black market. If you don't want your company to become yet another statistic in today's cyberwar against smaller companies, and your business doesn't currently have a "bullet-proof" security shield, you **MUST** take action without delay - or put everything you've worked for at risk. The choice is yours.

Here are three things you can do right away:

1. Remove software that you don't need from any systems linked to your bank account.
2. Make sure everyone with a device in your network **NEVER** opens an attachment in an unexpected e-mail.
3. Require two people to sign off on every transaction.

LET US HELP

When it comes to defending your data, whether it's bank account information, customer and employee records or proprietary intellectual property or processes, **Do NOT** take chances.

Our experience and track record in keeping our clients' data safe speaks for itself:



"B4 Networks always takes the time to listen so they properly understand our needs and then works with us for a solution. Their team always provides personal friendly service with exceptional turnaround time. Going to the managed package has eliminated all the stress

in trying to manage things ourselves or paying for one off services because you just never know what will happen or what you will need or when. Now it doesn't matter it is covered for one set monthly cost.

There isn't just one benefit to working with B4 Networks, their Managed IT service is a complete package that encompasses more than just fixing computer problems - like working with other suppliers on our behalf, auditing our system and proactively suggesting solutions before they become disasters. It allows us peace of mind knowing that B4 is there for any issue big or small. We can count on the fact that everything is up to date and backed up properly and that should we have an issue B4 has the ability to restore data quickly and effectively.

If you're on the fence about switching to B4 Network's, do it, you won't be disappointed."

**- Melissa Warner, Production Control,
Genaire Limited**

We are offering our **CYBER SECURITY ASSESSMENT AT NO COST**

through the end of December to 5 companies in the Niagara area. Call me at (905) 346-4966 or e-mail me at help@b4networks.ca TODAY because we can only offer this valuable service to the first 10 companies that apply.



Backups: Don't Wait Until It Breaks

Accidents happen. Eventually, something will go wrong within your IT infrastructure and when it does, you are going to want to be data-protected. Having effective backup means more than just having an extra file on hand. It means being able to rest easy knowing that, if the worst should happen, it would not spell the end of your business. It means that in the event of a **total collapse of your network systems**, you have a fallback plan. It means knowing that you have already taken care of the largest problem in the event of a crash: recovering files and getting back up to date.

The most common way data is lost is due to a **workstation failure** due to user error (like unwitting file deletion or the occasional spilled drink). If your workstation is not backed up, your files may be lost entirely. An increasingly common way to lose data is due to viruses and infections that spread throughout the computer and delete, steal, or corrupt the data.

What (and When) Should I Back-Up?

The question people become puzzled with is, "What can/should I back-up?" The easy answer is: everything. With technology being what it is today, space is cheap. You can sometimes **backup an entire business** for a few hundred dollars. On the other hand, you can wait for everything to go wrong, replace a dozen devices then try to start recovering all the data lost in the mishap. If space does become tight, consider things your business cannot function without, such as client information (phone numbers, email addresses, notes about the client), sales and product receipts, Internet bookmarks, anything that cannot be replaced, and anything that takes significant time to replace.

Backing up your data can be as simple as storing a copy of your important files on an **external hard drive** that you update every week. If the worst should happen after a backup is kept, you need only plug in the backup drive to the repaired or replacement computer, copy the contents over, and continue on with your work. Instead of losing years of data, you only lose a few days.

Data Backup Technology and Solutions

What should you use to back-up your data? In the example above (using a small flash drive or external hard drive), they can usually be damaged or lost quite easily. If the memory device is lost, it poses a problem in that it is unsecured data and can be accessed by anyone that plugs it into their computer. While these devices can be a cheap solution to backing up data, they are far from perfect.

One of the most popular solutions for any business – smaller businesses especially – is **online backup**. The perk of online backup is there is no hardware or software on site that can be damaged, lost, or stolen. A monthly fee based on how much storage you require is all it takes. Choose the data you want to backup and it will be securely sent to a data center where it is stored. Generally, this can be done automatically which can remove accidental user error from the equation.

In a perfect world, we would all have a **backup for our data** and a backup for our backup, but even having one backup can sometimes be enough to keep a problematic crash or error from becoming a monumental crisis. If you do not already have a backup in place, you have to ask yourself one thing: if all your systems crashed tomorrow, would you be able to recover?

Discuss Data Backup Methods with an IT Expert

If you need help with establishing better data backup and recovery methods, contact a qualified IT specialist with B4 Networks, which is a leader in IT consulting and services. Call (905) 346-4966 or send us an email at help@b4networks.ca, and we will be happy to help you.



Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Your Desk Is Killing You: Do This Instead

The evidence is piling up that sitting all day is bad for your health. Though not perfect, Varidesk offers a compelling solution.

On the plus side, The Varidesk sets up right out of the box – no assembly required. With its weight-balancing system, you don't need any hardware to fasten it to your desk. And it features an attractive, sturdy design. You can lean on it and your monitor won't go crashing to the floor. Springs and levers make it easy to raise or lower it to one of 11 preset levels.

The main flaw is that when you raise it, it also moves forward – a problem if you're in a tight space. All in all, though, it's worth looking at, especially if you have a wireless keyboard and mouse – and enough space in your office or cubicle to back up a bit.

Client Spotlight: Desks Plus Office Furniture

Since 1989 Desks Plus Inc. has serviced the Canadian and International office furniture industry. Desks Plus is a fully equipped to satisfy any office requirement from small entrepreneurs looking to establish a new business to large corporations expanding their office space.

Desks Plus are a people oriented and driven company with a reputation that stands on providing products and services that their clients need, want and demand. They have Niagara's largest selection of office furnishings on display, from Canada's best manufacturers.

Looking at the big picture is also important to the team at Desks Plus.

When it comes to "thinking green", Desks Plus takes pride in the fact the its office furniture is sourced from suppliers that adhere to strict environmentally-conscious manufacturing practices. Desks Plus can even recycle many types of office furniture for its clients convenience.

This Year Desks Plus is celebrating 25 years!

Marc and his team take a great deal of pride in "the business that Jim built". Desks Plus continue to serve their many customers from all over the world with the same level of commitment and exceptional quality of service established by its founder Jim Forbes from the very beginning. "Service, Quality, Trust.... Desks Plus"



Visit their 15,000 sq ft showroom at 166
Bunting Road at Dieppe Road in St. Catharines.

(905) 641-4713
www.desksplus.com

7 QUICK TIPS TO HELP YOU MAXIMIZE EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY



There are only so many hours in a day, and figuring out how to get the most out of each one is a trick we all wish we could master. Or perhaps more importantly, it's a trick you wish your employees could master. Getting them on the right track is easier than you might expect. As with any skill, the key is to start small.

Here are 7 simple things you can do starting right now that can help to boost productivity for your entire team:

1). Utilize Keyboard Shortcuts - A keyboard shortcut is simply a sequence or combination of keystrokes that will allow you to perform certain functions, or prompt certain commands in software. There are hundreds of keyboard shortcuts. Some are universal, others are specific to a program or operating system. Having an arsenal of shortcuts for the programs and applications you use every day can be a big time-saver. Think about how often you use something like ALT + Tab to switch between windows, and how annoying it would be to have to go back to using your mouse instead. It may only take a few seconds, but when it's an action you repeat constantly, those few seconds start to add up.

2). Take Advantage of Outlook Integrations - There are a ton of handy apps and programs that can integrate with your Outlook account. You're already using your email constantly throughout the day, so making it a tool to help you complete other tasks and stay organized almost feels like common sense. For example, connecting your Outlook account to your Skype account lets you send instant messages and place calls right from your inbox.

3). Utilize the Right Software Platform for Every Need - Whatever you're trying to manage, create, or complete, chances are there are a dozen different programs or applications that can help you do it. Finding the software that works best for the task at hand and integrates well with the rest of your system might take a bit of research, but it's well worth the effort. Relying on generic software just because it's there can be a huge waste of time and energy, and make something simple take twice as long to accomplish.

4). Allow Your MSP to Deal with Vendors on Your Behalf - When your Internet connection goes down, your team is going to have their hands full trying to work around the obvious issues this will create for your business. Asking an employee to step back from an already hectic situation to sit on the phone with your provider to get back up and running is not ideal. By leaving problems like this in the capable hands of your MSP, your staff is free to focus on managing your business while the problem is dealt with by professionals who not only will have a better grasp of what the problem is, but also know your IT infrastructure inside and out. Make your MSP your main point of contact for all things tech-related, and you can spare yourself a lot of frustration when something goes wrong.

5). Have Backup Hardware Available - Computer troubles are never ideal, but having a spare on hand that can be put into use quickly can make a huge difference with regards to offsetting downtime. Consider investing in a backup computer for each of your departments. A system that already has all required software installed and ready to go makes it possible for your employee to get back to work in minutes, instead of losing hours or even days of productivity while the faulty PC is repaired or replaced.

6). Use Dual Monitors - Adding an extra screen to your workstations can save a heap of time by allowing employees to multitask by referencing one screen while working on the other, or comparing documents to make finding necessary information easier. Typing up a report will go much faster when the spreadsheet it's based off is open and sitting right next to your Word document, offering up data at a glance.

7). Eliminate Social Media Distractions - The urge to check Facebook or Twitter periodically throughout the day can be tough to ignore. Consider using an app like Freedom to block social media sites and allow you to work distraction-free, or set your firewall permissions to prevent access to social media sites from within your office altogether. If you want your workplace to be a work-only environment, there are tools available to make that possible.

Want to learn more about the ways B4 Networks can help your business maximize productivity? Contact us at help@b4networks.ca or (905) 346-4966. We're the productivity experts local businesses trust.



At the Office: Be the Adult in the Room

By Andy Bailey

There's a reason people refer to the office as a "sandbox," because some folks refuse to act like adults. And, if the level of childish behavior rises to tantrum pitch and the culture becomes toxic, there's no chance for communication or growth. But the office is not a playground, and we're not children. So it's important that we enter into an "adult agreement" when we walk through the doors at work and begin our day.

When I work with companies looking to improve their business, one of the things we start with is our adult agreement. It informs the work we do for the entire day, and hopefully beyond.

Here are three agreements to make sure you're acting your age in the workplace:

Don't shoot each other down.

When a colleague brings an idea to the table – even if you disagree with it – don't shut them down just to be "right." If we want to be collaborative, we've got to consider that those around us have something valuable to offer. If you make it a habit to cut people off or discount what they're saying out of hand, you'll not only guarantee that they won't share their ideas with you again, but you'll likely miss out on insights that could help you and your company.

Own up to mistakes and bring them to the table.

Nobody is perfect – not you, not me, not Bill Gates or Mark Cuban or anyone you might admire in business. We all make mistakes, and the worst thing we can do is deny that they exist. Instead, own up to your mistakes and let everybody know what they are. We only grow and learn when we're vulnerable with each other. Admitting error is often considered a risk, but it's really an opportunity.

Our mistakes let others understand who we are, what risks we're willing to take and what lessons we've had to learn. Share freely to engender trust and understanding among your teammates.

Don't hide problems.

Maybe you want to stay focused on the positive and don't want to highlight "problems." Wrong. You're not a negative person just because you bring problems to light or point out conflicts where they might exist. More likely, you're finally saying what everyone else is thinking and is afraid to say. Or you're bringing something up that's important for everyone to understand in order to improve and move forward. Put problems up for discussion and brainstorm solutions. Hiding problems only makes them grow.

As you seek to master these three steps, remember one more thing: adults don't crush each other just for acting like adults. We've got to support each other in our efforts to be truthful and vulnerable. A team is only as strong as its weakest link, so it's critical that we lift each other up.

When we act like adults – especially in the sandbox – we all win.



Andy Bailey can cut through organizational BS faster than a hot knife through butter, showing organizations the logjams thwarting their success and coaching them past the excuses. After all, as he tells his clients, 100% annual growth is only 2% growth every week. It's not easy. But possible. Andy learned how to build great organizations by building a great business, which he started in college then, grew into an Inc. 500 multi-million dollar national company that he successfully sold and exited. He founded Petra to pass on to other entrepreneurs, business owners and leaders the principles and practices he used to build his successful enterprise, which are rooted in the Rockefeller Habits methodology.

NEWS BRIEFS



■ "Smart Cities" are adding a whole new layer of complexity to data protection.

Driverless cars, cloud-based services and networks of sensors are driving rapid change... Yet along with great benefits, the smart city revolution adds new threats. For instance, since it relies heavily on interconnectivity, weak links make the whole system vulnerable to cyber-attack. Yet a study by Kaspersky Labs estimates that 57% of smaller companies underinvest in security. With deeper connectivity to these "weak links," encryption of your own data becomes more critical than ever. Using secured websites (the "https" vs. "http" protocol), for example, not only secures data, it also creates trust among your customers and vendors. Clearly, the smart thing to do is to be ready for smart city challenges.

HarvardKennedySchoolReview.com

■ With Google's new Daydream VR platform, reality will never be the same.

While it isn't as pixel-rich as PC-tethered systems like Oculus Rift, Daydream is fully mobile. That means, for instance, you could navigate through a museum and get way more interactive with the exhibits. Google's "View" headset with clickable touchpad controller is just the first of many to come, as other developers jump into mobile VR. As for apps, Google says there will be at least 50 in the Play Store by the end of December. Daydream has been deeply integrated into the new Android Nougat OS. If Nougat isn't on your phone yet, be patient - or buy a phone, such as Google's Pixel, that already has it installed.

TechRadar.com

■ Stop wasting your time and costing your company money.

No company is 100% productive 100% of the time. But talk of last night's game, social media check-ins and long lunch breaks aren't the only time thieves. Without realizing it, you may be asking your team to do things that frankly hurt the bottom line. For instance, do you hold meetings that take longer than necessary - or don't need to be held at all? Consider holding meetings only when critical. And when they are, use an agenda to keep everyone on track. Another big time killer is trying to fix a problem via multiple e-mails or chat. Often a simple phone call could resolve the issue with a lot less back and forth.

Entrepreneur.com

■ Want better collaboration at work? Play these tunes .

Research has already shown that teams who listen to music together at work feel more bonded and collaborate better. Yet that begs the question - what type of music do you listen to? It's a topic likely to end up in wrangling and conflict. However, a recent study at Cornell University offers a scientific answer. And, while metal fans may not be thrilled with it, the results weren't exactly shocking. The study found that people who listen to happy music were more likely to cooperate, regardless of age, gender or academic major, than those who listen to unhappy music. Interestingly, they found it was not the vibe, but the bouncing beat, that gets teams in sync.

Inc.com

FREE REPORT DOWNLOAD:

The Ultimate Guide To Choosing The Right VoIP Phone System

Read This Report To Discover:

What VoIP is, how it works and why the phone company may force you to switch to a VoIP phone within the next 3-4 years.

- 4 different ways to implement VoIP and why you should never use 3 of them for a business phone system.
- Hidden costs with certain VoIP system that can negate any cost-savings you might gain on your phone bill.
- 7 revealing questions to ask any VoIP salesperson to cut through the hype, half-truths and "little white lies" they'll tell you to make the sale.



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PHOTO ALBUM



TEKTIP

Protect Your Business

Against Viruses, Spyware, and Other Malicious Code

Make sure each of your business's computers are equipped with antivirus software and antispyware and update regularly. Such software is readily available online from a variety of vendors. All software vendors regularly provide patches and updates to their products to correct security problems and improve functionality. Configure all software to install updates automatically.

