TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

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

.50 BEST MANAGED IT COMPANIES

MSPmentor® 501 2017 WINNER

"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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What Is Managed IT Services
And Why Should You Demand It
From Your IT Services Company?

In today's constantly shifting technological landscape, where fresh viruses and the new security patches designed to protect against them arrive by the week, it takes a proactive approach to stay abreast of all the changes. This is why, in 2019, more small to mid-size businesses (SMBs) are ditching their outdated break-fix strategies and making the switch to a managed services provider (MSP) for their IT needs. But for those of us still coming to terms with the new rapid-fire reality of business in the digital age, it can be difficult to determine which approach is right for your organization, or even what a managed services provider actually does.

Here's a breakdown of the managed services strategy versus the traditional break-fix approach and how it applies to your business.

MANAGED SERVICES ARE DESIGNED FOR UP-TO-THE-MINUTE IT UPKEEP.

Maintaining the integrity, efficiency and security of your business network is a little like taking care of your car. You don't buy the equipment with the expectation that it'll be good to go forever; you know that it'll take regular upkeep to stay in tip-top shape. For a car, of course, that means regular oil changes, rotating the tires,

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checking the alignment, checking and replacing the fluids, ensuring adequate tire pressure, changing your spark plugs, flushing the transmission – the list goes on and on. If you don't bother with basic preventative maintenance of your vehicle, it'll fail you sooner rather than later. We're guessing most of our readers wouldn't drive 30,000 kilometres without checking the oil, for instance. Many of these tasks can be taken care of with some savvy and time investment, but others require the expertise of a seasoned professional, especially when serious problems arise.

It's the same with your network. Business technology is notoriously finicky. It'll work perfectly for months and, in rare cases, for years – until suddenly it doesn't, at which point it's likely too late. Suddenly all your data is locked down behind some nasty new ransomware, or your server decided to give up the ghost without warning, leaving key customer information swinging in the wind. We constantly hear about Fortune 500 companies shelling out millions for high-profile data breaches, but when these attacks come to SMBs, they often fold the company completely. What was once a thriving small business is now an empty storefront, buried under the never-ending progress of modern technology.

The old break-fix approach to IT management attempts to address the digital risks facing SMBs only after problems arise. Is your server down? Is malware giving you a headache? Is your email not working for some reason? If so, they're on the scene. Otherwise, they're hands-off. The idea behind this strategy is the classic adage "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Business owners look to cut costs on IT by only addressing the most serious technological crises after they've already happened, rather than shelling out funds for regular preventative maintenance.

Unfortunately, just like how this approach doesn't make sense in the context of your car, it certainly doesn't make sense for your network. A break-fix strategy can save money in the short term, sure, but it results in more network downtime, a much higher frequency of issues and a ton of dollars spent on damage control down the line.

Instead, you should demand that the IT professionals responsible for the backbone of your business provide managed services. This means they're in the guts of your network every day, mastering and locking down every aspect of your technology long before anything goes wrong. They'll detect issues before they cost you money and fix them without hesitation. You might balk at the initial subscription fee, but if you run the numbers, you'll quickly see how much money it will save you in the long run.

An investment in an MSP is an investment in the future of your business. You wouldn't drive your car mindlessly until it breaks down; it's arguably even more dangerous to do the same with your network. Take a proactive approach, demand managed services and breathe a sigh of relief knowing your network is in the hands of professionals well-versed in the ins and outs of your business's specific needs.

"You don't buy the equipment with the expectation that it'll be good to go forever; you know that it'll take regular upkeep ... "

How Does Your I.T. Company Compare?
Our March 2019 Service Key Performance Indicators

84%

8 Business Hour
Ticket Resolution

93%

Client Satisfaction

6.5 mins

Average Response Time

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month

LG Signature OLED TV R9

Roll out the future

This television isn't tiny; it's just rolled up. LG showed off its new, disappearing OLED TV, with a screen that can stretch to 65 inches and then roll into a compact box, at CES, setting a launch date for the second half of 2019. There's no price yet, but you'll get a 4K HDR Smart TV-watching experience like none before it, with Google Assistant and Alexa. That, plus a decluttered view.

Cartoon Of The Month

The telephone - day two.

5 Ways To Answer Questions Like A CEO
By Geoff Smart

In my work as a consultant, I've had the privilege of posing questions to over 1,000 business leaders. As a result, I've been on the receiving end of many great answers from some of the most respected CEOs on the planet. Unfortunately, I've also heard answers from less-skilled managers.

There are key differences between both. Here are five ways to answer questions like a CEO.

1. Answer a yes-or-no question with a "yes" or "no" before you provide details.
Does John Thomas work at Google?

Bad answer: "John Thomas? I knew him back at the University of Michigan. He and I were in the same engineering lab. This one time …"

Great answer: "Yes. He works at Google now. We went to college together, and we're Facebook friends."

2. Answer a number question with a number answer before you provide details.
How much did your sales decline during the last recession in '08?

Bad answer: "The Great Recession was a really hard time for us. It felt like we were running a marathon in quicksand. No matter what we did …"

Great answer: "Twenty percent. Fortunately, the compensation of our team was largely variable, so we all made a bit less income during that period and avoided layoffs."

3. Say what your goal was, what you did and what the results were.
What happened in that job?

Bad answer: "Well, it was in the South. I was not used to the South. Wow, were the summers humid. And the mosquitoes? Big as birds …"

Great answer: "My mission was to set up a new food bank in Atlanta. The goal was to recruit 20 restaurant partners, hire the first five employees and serve 100 meals a day within three months. Things moved a little more slowly than I was used to, so I had to get creative. We hired a video crew, interviewed restaurant managers and customers and gave free social media advertising to the restaurants if they signed up with us. This allowed us to achieve our goals a month earlier than planned, and my bosses were thrilled!"

4. Answer from the other person's point of view.
Why do you want me to invest in your ice cream stores?

Bad answer: "Because we need the capital to grow."

Great answer: "Because 10% return on invested capital is what you say you want, and that is what we have delivered reliably on a per-store basis for over 50 years."

5. Share just enough information to prove your point, but not more.
Why should we buy from your company?

Bad answer: "For starters, here's our 150-page brochure, a 25-page PowerPoint slide deck and a dozen customer cases about some companies that are nothing like you, as well as a bunch of random anecdotes – whatever comes to mind!"

Great answer: "Three reasons: 1) Gartner group did a survey of our industry and rated us #1 in the three areas that are most important to you. 2) We know this space better than anybody. Our team published the #1 book on this topic, both in sales and review ratings on Amazon. 3) We offer a 100% money-back guarantee."

Geoff Smart is chairman and founder of ghSMART. Geoff is co-author, with his colleague Randy Street, of the New York Times best-selling book, Who: A Method For Hiring, and the author of the #1 Wall Street Journal best seller, Leadocracy: Hiring More Great Leaders (Like You) Into Government. Geoff co-created the Topgrading brand of talent management. He is the founder of two 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. SMARTKids Leadership Program™ provides 10 years of leadership tutoring and the Leaders Initiative™ seeks to deploy society's greatest leaders into government. Geoff earned a BA in economics with honors from Northwestern University, and an MA and Ph. D in psychology from Claremont Graduate University.

Do You Really Want The Cheapest Computer Technician Working On Your Company's Network?

These days, small businesses are more dependent on IT systems than at any other time in history. Because of this, even the slightest technological hiccups in our cyberspace-centered workflow can have expensive, lasting consequences. Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of this occurred back in 2013, when Amazon went dark for half an hour. Sure, it was a paltry 30 minutes, no big deal, until you consider the mega giant was theoretically hemorrhaging $66,240 every 60 seconds, based on their quarterly revenue.

Of course, your company probably isn't a staple of international commerce like Jeff Bezos' beloved brainchild. Because of this, many small business owners think that a downed server or small security breach here and there won't matter too much for their bottom line. For these unlucky few, IT takes a backseat to more "pressing" issues, and they go the cheap route with their technicians. This cost-cutting solution seems like the idea of the year, and will undoubtedly work great for the business — until it doesn't.

Maybe your long-time technicians fail to notice a piece of outdated equipment, and your server gives up the ghost during peak business hours. Virtually all work grinds to a halt, and your employees are forced to wile away the two hours shooting three-pointers into the trash bins. Add up the two hours of wasted wages for your entire team, the financial cost of missed business, and the much more intangible loss of customer goodwill as they struggle with diminished service on a workday, and you'll come up with a sum that disabuses any business owner of their illusions about "cheap" IT.

And that's not even close to the worst-case scenario. Imagine, for a minute, that your technicians assure you, despite the lack of regular monitoring and maintenance, your network is secure. These words of comfort sound nice until the day a team of expert hackers actually attempt to access your systems, and find outdated, ramshackle security solutions in place — basically, a front door left wide open. At that moment, your business becomes a criminal's playground. They're free to access financial information and personal data of your customers and employees, hijack your business to send out floods of malicious software and spam, hold nearly every aspect of the company ransom for thousands of dollars, and cause chaos to their hearts' content.

Don't take our word for it. Here's what a client is saying about us:

Brendan Deraaf
Finance Department

"I'd say that B4 Networks is very knowledgeable and professional. They have been able to handle our IT needs very well during our company's greatest period of growth. If you want to partner with a company that is going to look out for your best interests, don't hesitate to connect with B4 Networks. What surprised me the most is the responses from technicians are very quick and they do a great job of following up to make sure that the issues were resolved.
They make it such that you can focus on your business activities and growing your business while leaving the IT issues to the professionals."
*- Brendan*

When
By Daniel H. Pink

If timing is everything, why do we decide "when" to make our decisions purely based on intuition?

In his best-selling book When: The Scientific Secrets Of Perfect Timing, Daniel H. Pink conducts a deep dive on this question and pinpoints the exact moments when humans work best in different situations.

By synthesizing a wide body of research from diverse fields, he has created the world's first "when-to" guide. By getting serious and specific about when we conduct simple daily tasks or massive life decisions, we can optimize their outcomes and improve our lives at the root level.
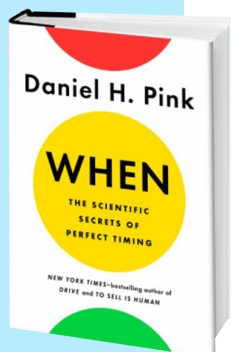
What To Avoid When Building Your Website

To turn a prospect visiting your website into a paying customer, you need to convince them fast.

Waste even a second of their time and they're likely to click away forever. Don't explain everything you've ever done and every little thing you can offer your prospect in detail straight away. Don't expect people to jump to buy your highest-tier offering straight from the web. Avoid impersonal e-mail forms or info@yourbusiness.com type addresses.

These may seem pretty basic, but they're essential things to keep in mind if you want your website to make a difference.

The fact is, fixing problems is a lot more expensive than preventing them. When you cut corners and utilize subpar IT professionals (if any at all), you're paying for an array of shoddy, Band-Aid solutions that will be applied piecemeal, and usually too late, like a finger plugging a hole in a dam. But when you make a substantial investment in your IT support, you're investing in the most basic aspects of the future of your company.

Robust network security, dependable computers and servers, consistent internet access, and other fundamental components of your company network are far from luxury items. These days, technology forms the scaffolding upon which businesses run. If any piece of the operation fails, the whole system suffers, usually accompanied by a fat financial penalty.

There is an ever-growing, endless list of potential technological pitfalls that can have permanent consequences for your business: teams of hackers zeroing in on vulnerable small businesses, rogue employees with a grudge, lost laptops, aging and unreliable hardware, fire, natural disasters, and IT "professionals" that have no idea what they're doing, to name just a few. As technology progresses, and companies depend increasingly more on it to stay competitive, it simply doesn't make sense to relegate IT to the neglected corners of your budget.

When it comes to business, there's a lot to worry about these days. A total collapse of your company's technological infrastructure doesn't need to be one of them. Invest in a robust, managed IT package from tried-and-tested professionals, and leave the worrying to the experts. You can rest assured that our IT team of experts truly has you covered.

Welcome to the new B4 member

I'm Ryan Smith a Network Administrator for B4 Networks. Starting my education in Aviation Industry, I quickly realized that this path was not going to challenge me enough and looked to the world of technology. 20 years later, I have worked as a service tech for small local IT shops to being an IT Director for a corporation with 2000+ end users.

I was born and raised in the Niagara Region and am passionate about what this area has to offer. I collect unique classic cars and enjoy spending quality time with my wife and kids. My personal philosophy is "A day without learning is a day wasted".

Ryan Smith
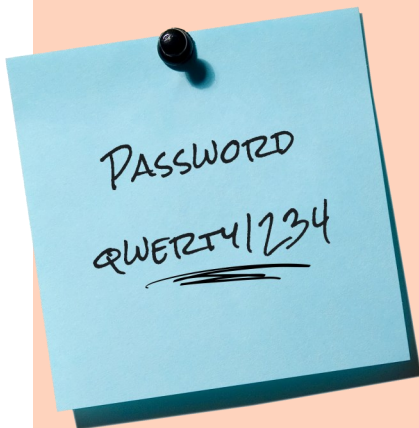
The #1 Way Hackers Access Your Network
(And How To Prevent It From Happening)

It's easy to imagine the hackers attacking your network as a team of computer masterminds. But in reality, the vast majority of data breaches don't occur from some genius hacking into the mainframe. According to Trace Security, a full 81% of breaches happen as a result of poorly constructed passwords.

Luckily, avoiding this is pretty simple. Ensure every member of your team uses strong passwords, over eight characters in length and comprised of letters, numbers and symbols. Keep the numbers and symbols away from each other, and definitely avoid the common, obvious passwords like "123456789" or "password." You also might consider implementing two-factor authentication in your system, which is several degrees of magnitude more secure than ordinary passwords, but it can be a headache to set up without an expert on your team. SmallBizTrends.com, 1/3/2019

THERE IS ONE THING THAT SEPARATES SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE FROM EVERYONE ELSE

Steve Jobs was a notoriously exacting boss. He constantly held himself to the highest standards of business and creativity and drove himself, and those around him, to greatness. But in his own words, one of his greatest strengths wasn't the quality of his mind, but his strength of belief. As he put it, "You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So, you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something – your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life."

Of course, he's not talking about faith in some divine purpose; he's talking about faith in your own ability to make things work. Instead of developing some "perfect" master plan where every detail is accounted for, we always have to work with imperfect information and step into uncharted territory. Being comfortable with this, according to Jobs, is one of the biggest secrets to success. Inc.com, 1/2/2019

Client Spotlight

The foremost Carpet Cleaning Company in Niagara has selected B4 Networks as their IT solutions provider. Their service oriented "Do the right thing" approach has led to 26 years of exemplary work. They boast highly skilled, trained and certified staff combined with the best chemistry, state of the art tools and equipment and to bring the best quality of service that the industry has to offer.

Their residential and commercial clients rely upon their extensive body of experience to always know the best way to get the job done right. And with their efforts to always "better their best" they have added the Custom Rug Gallery and a Binding Shop to make rug repairs and custom rug design available to their clients. As a small business in Niagara they represent what it means to strive and succeed in our region.

To learn more about PCS and the great work they do visit: **www.pcsniagara.com**

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.

Disaster Planning Essentials

"Little-Known Facts, Mistakes And Blunders About Data Backup And Disaster Recovery Every Business Owner Must Know To Avoid Losing Everything In An Instant"

Discover 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.

Download now at **www.b4net.ca/reports** or email me directly at **bryan@b4networks.ca**, and I'll reply to you with a copy.

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In our opinion, referrals from very happy clients and their employees are the greatest form of flattery. We love it when you're so pleased with our services, that you're willing to recommend us to other business owners you have a relationship with!

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If your referral becomes one of our managed clients, you will receive a cheque to the amount of one month of their signed agreement. That could be up to $5000 in your own pocket!

For full details about our referral program and to submit your referral, please visit www.b4networks.ca/referral-program today and get us in contact with your friends today!

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Press Release

WE DID IT AGAIN FOR THE 2ND YEAR IN A ROW.

B4 NETWORKS NAMED ONE OF CANADA'S TOP 50 BEST MANAGED I.T COMPANIES

Contact: Bryan Lachapelle, B4 Networks Inc

Phone: 905-346-4966

B4 NETWORKS HAS BEEN NAMED ONE OF CANADA'S TOP 50 BEST MANAGED I.T. COMPANIES at the 50 BEST MANAGED IT COMPANIES AWARDS GALA in Toronto, Ontario, on February 7, 2019.

We are pleased to announce that B4 Networks Inc. received an award as one of the Top 50 Best Managed IT Companies in Canada at the TechnoPlanet hosted black-tie gala in Toronto.

"The re-qualification for the Canada's Top 50 Best Managed IT Companies award reaffirms our commitment to customer service our employees provide our customers. I am proud of the care the employees of B4 Networks put into their work everyday," said Bryan

Bryan Lachapelle, President of B4 Networks, receiving our Top 50 Award

About TechnoPlanet Productions and the 50 Best Managed IT Companies Award

TechnoPlanet is an international channel marketing and communications company that specializes in the technology industry. Since 1993, we have been developing best-practice channel solutions that help technology manufacturers develop and manage their channel partners.

Over 1,800 nominees from 4 countries worldwide were evaluated in their business practices including Business Vision & Strategy, Operations Processes, Financial Management, Leadership & Management, Sales & Marketing Processes, and Customer Satisfaction. Winners were selected based on a rigorous review of the best practices that are used to run their business.

This award recognizes VARs, MSPs and ITSPs who receive the highest scores for best business practices in 12 categories. These companies must be profitable in the past 3 years and demonstrate their best practices in each of the 12 areas.

Eight judges from different backgrounds review and audit each application. The scores are added up and the companies with the top 50 highest scores win the award. Each applicant also receives a report to know where their strengths and weaknesses are so they can improve for next year. **This is the group of channel partners that vendors want and need!**

Award winners are among the best-of-the-best in the IT Channel in their country when it comes to running their businesses. They have the best business leaders in the IT industry, are poised to have sustainable success in the future, offer superior customer service, and attract and retain the top talent in the IT industry.

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