TECH SAGE TECH TALK

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

"As a business owner, 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!"

John Hill,
TechSage Solutions

Inside This Issue . . . e

3 Technology-Specific New Year's Resolutions You Need To Make

Ahhhh! A brand new year, full of promise, hope and a fresh start. If you're like most people, you're making the usual resolutions to exercise more, lose weight, pay off debt, etc., etc., etc. Essentially, it's a time of year when we momentarily take stock in our lives and think about all the things we "should" be doing more of, but don't. So while you're in the goal-setting mode, we thought we would tack on 5 things that probably aren't on your list, but should be. Especially since these all fall into the "important, but not urgent" category.

1. **Offsite backups.** Can we beat this horse to death anymore? I know MOST of the clients reading this newsletter are smart enough to have this already done, but many still don't and are relying on undependable (and outdated, I might add) tape drives, Carbonite or other volatile backup solutions. If that's you, don't let this be another year where you gamble with everything you've worked so hard to achieve. Get a better backup!!!!

1. **Write A Disaster Recovery Plan**. Pop quiz: If you woke up tomorrow and discovered that you couldn't access your office building due to a fire or a local diaster, what would you do? Or what would happen if a key executive—one who holds the "keys" to critical processes or applications—fell sick or (God forbid) died? Or what would happen if a disgruntled employee or hacker gained access to your web server, line of business application or file server and deleted everything—particularly if the data was hosted on the 3rd party cloud provider's web site? These are all very real scenarios, and without a plan in place, you could be facing serious downtime and financial losses.

1. **Develop A Stronger Cyber Security System That Goes Beyond A Firewall And Anti-Virus.** With more and more information about us being stored electronically, and with State and Federal laws becoming more strict, you MUST take cyber security seriously. Simply having a good firewall and anti-virus isn't enough these days to keep the highly motivated and technically sophisticated criminals out of your network. The HUMAN element is the biggest threat—employees who accidentally click on links in e-mails or download files that introduce viruses to your network. Employees are also using social media sites more frequently, and they can intentionally or accidentally post something that could harm your company's reputation or leak confidential information. Therefore, your security plan must also include employee training and policies so they know what is and isn't acceptable when handling data and using company resources (Internet, computers, etc.).

If you don't know where to start in creating any of the above, we're here to help! Call us at 210-582-5814 to discuss how we can do all of this for you and take the work and worry out of these New Year's resolutions!

Get More Information about our Services At: www.techsagesolutions.com

Buying a Laptop?
Don't Forget This Checklist

Portability Depending on your needs, the choices include basic, yet ultra-portable small laptops that are great when traveling, mainstream laptops for everyday use, or a desktop replacement with bigger screen sizes and features but heavier in weight.

Screen Size There are two aspect ratios to choose from – the wide 16:9 and the standard 4:3. The wide-screen is great for surfing the Internet and opening documents side by side.

Keyboard Small laptops have small keypads; so try typing on the laptop that you want to buy to make sure that you're comfortable with it before closing the purchase.

Touch Pad or Pointing Stick As with the keyboard, make sure that you're comfortable with the touch pad or pointing stick that comes with your laptop model. You always have the option to use an external mouse.

Memory The more RAM it has, the faster your laptop will work for you.

Processor When it comes to processors, faster is usually better.

Slots and Ports Think about the devices you'll want to use. PC Card slots, extra USB and FireWire ports, ports for modems and wireless LAN radios are a must. You may need other ports to output video to a TV or to use parallel printers, if you have this type of setup.

Wi-Fi This is a requirement if the convenience of wireless connection is needed.

Battery The two things that you need to look out for are the lithium-ion type (which means lightweight) and a higher number of cells in the battery (which means a higher capacity). Both conditions ensure a longer battery life.

> ## What is RADAR . . . .
> *Tool for email archiving. It automatically stores a copy of all incoming, outgoing and internal email in a secure, encrypted, off-site repository for up to seven years.*

How To Design A "WOW!" Trade Show Booth Without Spending A Fortune

Trade shows are sales and marketing tools. We have never been able to cash a check on image. We have only been able to cash checks from real, live, flesh-and-blood customers. Because of this, we believe that all sales and marketing tools must be accountable. They must all stand on trial for their lives.

That's why booth design is so important, and why it's a lot more than just designing a pretty booth. Here are some important things to remember:
➢ Your booth must first **ATTRACT** the eye of the attendee.
➢ It must next tell them **WHO** you are and **WHAT** you do.
➢ It must give them a **REASON** to want to share their precious time with you.
➢ In other words, it must **PERSUADE** them to want to stop and talk with you.

Unfortunately, many exhibitors fail to recognize this important fact. Typically, they fall into one of three traps.

#1—The first trap is the *Traffic Trap*. This is where an exhibitor designs the booth and promotions to attract as many people as possible. These are companies who have no way of using trade shows to measure impact on creating or maintaining long-term customer relationships. They believe that if their booth is crowded, they MUST have had a successful show!

#2—The second trap is the *Cost Trap*. These companies see trade shows purely as a line item in their budget. They're an expense. And the only way to make money off an expense is to cut it down or out. These companies strip their participation to the bare bones. Many small and first-time exhibitors fall into this trap. You see them with the 10X10 booth, a couple of tables and chairs, and very little signage.

#3—The third trap is the *Me-Too Trap*. Very few exhibitors are willing to "visually" take a chance. In fact, most exhibitors (especially the smaller ones) look to each other for design ideas. That's not standing out. That's being a lemming. As Gary Hamel, author of ***Competing in the Future*** puts it: most people in an industry are blind in the same way—they're all paying attention to the same things and not paying attention to the same things.

I'm not advocating spending a lot of money. But I am saying you have to create a booth that helps you stand out from the crowd and attract your target market.

A trade show is a three-dimensional representation of your company. You are there to create and maintain long-term customer relationships. Think about the display you had at your last show and ask yourself these questions:
1.Did your booth visually attract your specific target market?
2.Did your booth give the visual representation of your company that you want your market to have?

Why is this so important?

A trade show can be one of the most powerful marketing tools your company ever uses. You can exhibit at shows where hundreds, maybe thousands of your targeted prospects are looking for you! But first, they've got to find you. difficult.

It's National Clean Up Your Computer Month

I didn't believe it either, but after some research it's official…an authority no less reputable than "The Vinegar Institute" declared January as a national holiday to clean up your computer.

I thought I'd take the time to answer a small but nagging question, "How do I get those smudges, dust, and fingerprints safely off of my flat screen monitor?"

Although each monitor manufacturer has its own special instructions for cleaning, there are some common guidelines you can use to get your screen looking like new in no time.

➢ **Use a cotton cloth** or compressed air to get rid of light dust buildup. Never use a rag or paper towel to clean since they can scratch the screen.
➢ **Don't use products with ethyl alcohol or ammonia-based products**. Products like Windex can yellow flat-screen or laptop monitors.
➢ **Use water or a homemade mix to clean grungy surfaces**. If water is not enough, concoct a cleaning solution of 1 part water, 1 part isopropyl alcohol, and 1/2 part vinegar.
➢ **Lightly moisten your cloth with the cleaning solution**. Never apply the liquid directly to the screen.
➢ **Wipe the cloth in one direction** – from top to bottom. This method will ensure grime and dust move to the bottom of the screen surface where it can be wiped away.
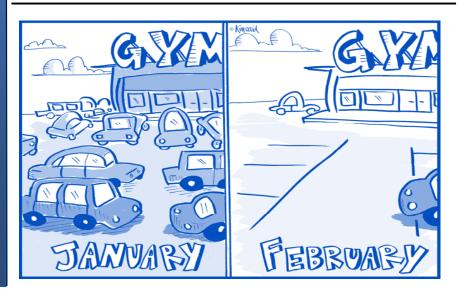
One final guideline, never touch or press on your LCD screen with your fingers as this can cause the pixels to burn out. Happy cleaning!

"Super Wi-Fi" Coming This Year Promises An End To Dead Spots

Get ready for a new type of Wi-Fi coming online in 2013 called, "Super Wi-Fi." What is it? As defined by the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), it's a stronger, more powerful wireless networking connection that uses the lower-frequency white spaces between television channel frequencies instead of the 2.4 GHz radio frequencies of the Wi-Fi we all know and love. These lower frequencies allow the signal to travel further and penetrate walls better than the radio frequencies used in Wi-Fi today.

Why do I say, "As defined" by the FCC? Because it's not really a form of wireless networking; therefore, the name "Super Wi-Fi" is being questioned and criticized by organizations who feel it's a copyright infringement on the Wi-Fi name. Politics!

Whatever it ends up being called, this new wireless connectivity could make it a lot easier (and faster) to get online. As you might expect, it's being championed by the likes of Google and Microsoft who have heavy investments in cloud computing and wireless networking. Until now, there have only been a few beta networks where people can use it. But like any new technology, the delivery will get cheaper, faster and more ubiquitous, particularly in rural areas and other dead spots where broadband wireless isn't available. Essentially, if you can get a TV signal, you'll be able to get high-speed Internet access. Of course, as your technology leader, we'll continue to keep tabs on this and let you know about your best options for getting and staying connected!