



Innovations

Review Twice, Implement Once. Doing IT Right the First Time. • May 2017



Scott Bernstein, CPA President
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CIO & Chief Security Fanatic

What I Learned by Screwing Up at a Board Meeting

I'm on the board of the local chapter of a professional association. For six months, I've been on the committee charged with upgrading the website, watching the project languish.

At lunch with the chapter president, I said, "I'll be happy to take the lead on this and get it done." She gratefully agreed.

Then things went south ...

At the next board meeting, I asked for feedback on 1) the target audiences, 2) the functions we wanted the site to perform, and 3) what pages we should have on the site.

The president-elect (also on the website committee) told me nothing I did that day made any progress. When I tried to speak with him to mend fences after the meeting, he stormed out to his car.

The other website committee member told me I was being dictatorial when I said a forum page -- which no one had used since 2013 -- should be scrapped.

Yup: it was one of those moments when I felt like a cartoon character who was hit by a shovel, and my head was vibrating like a tuning fork. After some time to reflect -- and breathe deeply -- here's what I learned.

#1: They're Right about Not Assuming

I thought these people would be happy someone was taking ownership of the project and removing the burden from them. Not so! Each had an emotional investment in this.

The president-elect liked to be in control and didn't want to see this "taken" from him. The other member wanted everyone to be included, and saw the deletion of a forum page as reducing member engagement.

#2: Float the Trial Balloon

I didn't know these things because I didn't ask them what they thought before the meeting. Neither did the

chapter president. They both felt blindsided and angry.

Next time I'll check with people in advance -- even if that's not my "job." This will help me go into any meeting with a better understanding of who is involved -- and perhaps a little buy-in because they've felt seen and heard first.

#3: Don't Talk to People when Their Hair Is on Fire

After the meeting, I went outside to breathe deeply. After calming down, I went back to talk with the two committee members. My goal was to apologize for anything I did that made them feel uncomfortable and give them the chance to vent -- so we could get past this and work together.

Just because I was ready didn't mean they were. Both were still simmering -- and only interested in making me wrong.

I can't use myself as a barometer for how others feel about a situation. They needed more time.

What Now?

I'll do the things I promised -- and make sure the committee members as well as the chapter president are consulted before anything is brought to the full board. I'll recognize their efforts and make them think it's their idea. (I really don't care about credit -- just about getting a decent site done.)

But I won't be a doormat. When someone yells at me, I'll listen to see if there's value in what he says. I'll speak in a slower and lower tone, in an effort to lessen the intensity of the situation. And I'll let them know that name-calling isn't OK -- without letting myself get all superior about it.



Lynne Franklin is a corporate and marketing communications consultant and speaker. What she does best is create meaningful communications to help businesspeople solve their problems and get what they want. To learn about how she can help you, contact Lynne at 847-729-5716 or lynne@yourwordsmith.com

Technology Tidbits

The Cloudflare Screw-up: Have your passwords been compromised?

Little bugs can cause huge problems. Like when web performance and security company Cloudflare's code upgrade leaked sensitive data to 3,438 unique domains this past February. Everything from API keys to personal data was exposed. And scariest of all is that any bot could have accessed every bit of it. The good news is that Cloudflare was alerted to the tiny leak before hackers discovered it. The bad news is, a more moderate-sized leak could bring down the web. It just brings home the point that you need to be more vigilant than ever. Change passwords routinely. Use strong passwords that hackers can't easily break. Upgrade to two-factor authentication.

-Gizmodo, 02.17.17

Big Red is still the big dog...but T-Mobile is nipping at its heels.

In the battle to claim best mobile network, the winner is arguable. RootMetrics says it's Verizon. OpenSignal says T-Mobile. Digging into their reports, you'll find that geographical factors determine the winner. OpenSignal's crowdsourced data comes mostly from city dwellers. So their finding that T-Mobile wins most likely applies to urban areas. But that data doesn't apply if you're out in the sticks. RootMetrics reports more on overall coverage, and they find Verizon at the top. So who's got the best network for you? At this point, it boils down to where you live and work. But stay tuned...this race is getting close.

-AndroidCentral, 02.24.17

Get totally weird with new Virtual Reality (VR) tools.

You may not have a clue about how to draw at all, much less in 3-D. Doesn't matter... Whereas VR used to be a tool for techies, now amateurs can get in on the act. A-Frame by Mozilla, for instance, lets you easily type in commands that place 3-D objects like blocks, balls and more into a VR scene you create. Tilt Brush lets you paint in the air wearing a Google Vive headset. And Second Life inventor Philip Rosedale is building software that lets you invite friends into a VR world you design. Most of what any amateur creates will likely be grotesque, ugly or flat-out lame, but somewhere in all that mess, amazing new products will be born.

-Wired, 02.24.17

The Lighter Side....

A plateau is the highest form of flattery.

It's hard to explain puns to kleptomaniacs because they always take things literally.

Time flies like an arrow, fruit flies like a banana.

A soldier survived mustard gas in battle, and then pepper spray by the police. He's now a seasoned veteran.

What's the best thing about Switzerland? I don't know, but their flag is a huge plus.

A Buddhist walks up to a hotdog stand and says, "Make me one with everything."

I'm addicted to brake fluid, but I can stop whenever I want.

I asked my North Korean friend how it was there, he said he couldn't complain.

Two fish are sitting in a tank. One looks over at the other and says: "Hey, do you know how to drive this thing?"

I told my doctor that I broke my arm in two places. He told me to stop going to those places.

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

What do you call it when Batman skips church? Christian Bale.

Two whales walk into a bar. The first one says, "Weeeeeeooooouuhhhh." The next whale says, "Shut up, Steve. You're drunk."

I hate Russian dolls...so full of themselves.

What's the difference between a golfer and a skydiver? A golfer goes *whack* "damn" and a skydiver goes "damn" *whack*.

I didn't know my dad was a construction site thief, but when I got home all the signs were there.

Use this 9-Step Checklist to Ensure your Data is Safe, Secure and Recoverable

Summer is upon us... Time for a stroll in the park... softball... fishing... a few rounds of golf...

Yet how could you possibly relax if some random bit of malware, software glitch or cyber-attack catches you off guard just as you're walking out the door? A well-designed secure computer network gives you the confidence that "all systems are go," whether you're having fun in the sun, or just getting things done with your team.

Here's a quick nine-step checklist we use to ensure that a company's computer network, and the data for that business, is safe and secure from disruption, if not absolute devastation:

1. **A written recovery plan.** Simply thinking through what needs to happen when things go south, and documenting it all IN ADVANCE, can go a long way toward getting your network back up and running quickly if it gets hacked, impacted by natural disaster or compromised by human error.
2. **Have a clear communication plan.** What if your employees can't access your office, e-mail or phone system? How will they communicate with you? Make sure your communications plan details every alternative, including MULTIPLE ways to stay in touch in the event of a disaster.
3. **Automate your data backups.** THE #1 cause of data loss is human error. If your backup system depends on a human being always doing something right, it's a recipe for disaster. Automate your backups wherever possible so they run like clockwork.
4. **Have redundant off-site backups.** On-site backups are a good first step, but if they get flooded, burned or hacked along with your server, you're out of luck. ALWAYS maintain a recent copy of your data off-site.
5. **Enable remote network access.** Without remote access to your network, you and your staff won't be able to keep working in the event that you can't get into your office. To keep your business going, at the very minimum, you need a way for your IT specialist to quickly step in when needed.
6. **System images are critical.** Storing your data off-site is a good first step. But if your system is compromised, the software and architecture that handles all that data MUST be restored for it to be useful. Imaging your server creates a replica of the original, saving you an enormous amount of time and energy in getting your network back in gear, should the need arise. Without it, you risk losing all your preferences, configurations, favorites and more.
7. **Maintain an up-to-date network "blueprint."** To rebuild all or part of your network, you'll need a blueprint of the software, data, systems and hardware that comprise your company's network. An IT professional can create this for you. It could save you a huge amount of time and money in the event your network needs to be restored.
8. **Don't ignore routine maintenance.** While fires, flooding and other natural disasters are always a risk, it's more likely that you'll have downtime due to a software or hardware glitch or cyber-attack. That's why it's critical to keep your network patched, secure and up-to-date. Deteriorating hardware and corrupted software can wipe you out. Replace and update them as needed to steer clear of this threat.
9. **Test, Test, Test!** If you're going to go to the trouble of setting up a plan, at least make sure it works! An IT professional can check monthly to make sure your systems work properly and your data is secure. After all, the worst time to test your parachute is AFTER you jump out of the plane.

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***“We make all of your
computer problems go away
without the cost of a
full-time I.T. staff”***

Shiny New Gadget of the Month

Surface Studio: All Beauty, A Little Brains



“We want to move from people needing Windows...to loving Windows.”

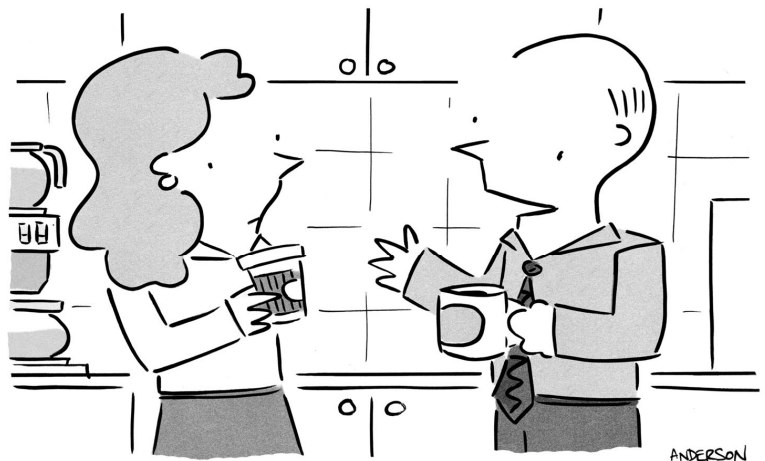
So said CEO Satya Nadella after taking over Microsoft. And their new Surface Studio takes a bold step in that direction.

In a bid to win over creative types, they designed the Studio with a gorgeous desktop screen that easily glides from vertical to almost horizontal, like an artist's sketchpad. With its Apple Computer-like brushed aluminum finish and ultra-thin screen, it's feels right at home in an open-plan office with microbrews on tap.

The guts of the machine are stuffed into a nine-inch-long base that's joined to the screen with an überslick hinge design, allowing it to fold nearly flat for stylus- or touch-driven design work.

Downsides? Well, you'll pay at least \$3,000. And it's a bit underpowered to be in that price range. But all in all, even the graphically challenged will find this machine tantalizing.

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“Things have gotten a lot easier since I moved everything from my to-do list to my it-is-what-it-is list.”

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