

# TECHNOLOGY TIMES

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

**Learn from our expertise & experience:**

## 7 Secrets to choosing software everyone should know

by Joanna Sobran



Joanna recently had the honor of being invited to participate on a technology panel of experts in front of a group of 300+ technology companies. Despite teaching best practices learned over 10 years in business, MXOtech knows the technology industry is constantly changing, and that means there is always more to learn.

As a fellow business owner, I understand that choosing the right software for your company can make or break your budget and your spirit. In one hand you hold a shiny box of pre-fab software that offers several options all rolled into one relatively economic package. In the other, you have software specifically customized for your needs with a higher price tag.

How do you know which is best for your business? And how do you wade through the sea of software options and IT consulting companies to find your perfect match?

**Here are a few secrets that everyone who wants to buy software should know:**

- 1. Describe It.** I'm serious. Sit down and outline everything you need from your software. The answer lies in outlining a complete picture of what your business requires from the software. There are some very basic steps you can take to determine your specific needs and how to negotiate the various processes of implementing them. By outlining what you need before you try to make the software choice, you are better prepared to weed out the obvious software "no's" and stop conversations with IT consulting firms that don't have what you need.
- 2. Get Real.** This is the time to be completely honest with yourself about your business. Identify where you lack efficiencies, where you may be losing money, and anything that is currently keeping you from growing the value of your business. What are your gaps? What is taking you too long to do? The process of evaluating your strengths and weaknesses is called a Business Process Review. It requires participation from all "business champions" in your organization, meaning that the experts in each area – accounting, operations, sales – need to be thoroughly interviewed in order to answer the questions of "how do we do it today" and "how can we do it better." Then, only consider talking to an IT consulting firm that can help you "do it better."
- 3. Wishes.** You have to make a wish for it to come true. Now that you've navigated through your internal pain points, it's time to create a wish list. What does your ideal software look like? What does your ideal technology partner look like? What is your ideal business IT support staff relationship? Outline all of the factors that would make you happiest when you implement your new software, whether boxed or custom. Then, combine your wish list, goals, and philosophies to create a Request for Proposal (RFP). Visit [www.bit.ly/TechEbook](http://www.bit.ly/TechEbook) to find a technology partner that will help you implement the right solution for your business.
- 4. Dear Future Technology Partner.** Often businesses find themselves in a position where they are just coping with their systems and software. Perhaps that Access database worked well when you started your business, but is now slow and cumbersome. It might be the case that a system or software package that was purchased essentially has you and your team working for it, instead of it working for you and your team. Or it could simply be that you are frustrated by some system or process.

...CONTINUED on Page 2



"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!"

Joanna Sobran  
President/CEO, MXOtech



It couldn't be easier! Be the first to email [brainbuster@mxotech.com](mailto:brainbuster@mxotech.com) with the correct answer to the question below & win a \$25 gift card.

**According to the article on page 2, how long does a BPI Assessment usually take?**

### in this issue:

<b>7 Secrets to choosing software everyone should know.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Client Spotlight.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>A Backup Plan you can fall in love with.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Employee Spotlight.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What exactly IS a Business Process Improvement (BPI) Assessment?.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Innovation Inspiration.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Client Referral Program.....</b>	<b>4</b>

**Do you have a funny story or resource to share with other subscribers? Send it to us!**  
Submit your content to [aplomin@mxotech.com](mailto:aplomin@mxotech.com).

In any of these cases, it's time to perform a Business Process Improvement (BPI) Assessment.

A BPI Assessment is usually a one week, low cost engagement where MXOtech Analysts review your systems and processes that cause issues for your business. This assessment is composed of three parts – staff interviews conducted by MXOtech Analysts, systems analysis, and solution research.

5. ....**CONTINUED ONLINE:** Read the rest of the article with Tips #5-7 at: [www.bit.ly/SoftwareSecrets](http://www.bit.ly/SoftwareSecrets)



Share this article and read others like it on my blog at:

[www.bit.ly/JoannaLinkedIn](http://www.bit.ly/JoannaLinkedIn)

Learn more about choosing the right software for your company: [Download our FREE ebook](#)

"[The Business Owner's Essential Guide to IT & All Things Digital](#)" at [www.bit.ly/TechEbook](http://www.bit.ly/TechEbook) or contact us today at 312.554.5699.

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT



**ALL-TECH DECORATING CO.**  
*"Committed to Excellence"*

While you might not know it, chances are you've seen the fantastic work of All-Tech Decorating throughout Chicago. Specializing in commercial, industrial, residential painting and specialty coating applications, All-Tech Decorating has had a hand in transforming commercial properties like U.S. Cellular Field, Key Lime Cove Waterpark, Chicago high-rises, industrial spaces, as well as upscale residential buildings and penthouses. With more than 30 years in business, All-Tech Decorating has become a name synonymous with quality, reliability and safety.

One of the keys to their success, and what makes them stand out from their competitors, is their commitment to utilizing the most advanced technology available. "We are continuously improving the bidding process, field application methods and material selection to cost-effectively service our customers," said Don Steadman, Owner and President of All-Tech.

Last year, Don and his team decided to take their commitment to technology even further by enlisting MXOtech to help them identify and remediate issues they were having with their business applications.

MXOtech worked with the All-Tech Decorating Team to conduct a Business Process Improvement Assessment. Business Process Improvement (BPI) is the strategy a business uses to automate processes in order to contain costs. It consists of integrating applications, restructuring labor resources, and using software applications throughout the organization.

During the BPI Assessment with All-Tech, MXO interviewed key staff members and reviewed the technical environment and application architecture in order to paint a picture that shows where the most time and effort in a process is spent. "This is valuable for our clients because it clearly shows the return-on-investment of a solution, technology or otherwise, to improve the workflow," states Sean Blair, MXOtech Chief Technology Officer, who leads the BPI Assessments.

"Engaging in a BPI Assessment with MXOtech was a low-risk investment that turned out to yield high rewards for our company," said Pat Green, Office Manager for All-Tech. "We discovered that there were, in fact, A LOT of inefficiencies and wasted time – especially with our budget tool. MXOtech provided us with a roadmap that showed us exactly what needed to be done to improve and streamline our communications between the field and our purchasing department. The assessment validated our concerns, but better yet, the final deliverable – the roadmap – contained all of the information gathered from their interviews and technical analysis, as well as the recommended approaches to rectifying our issues, and the pros and cons of each approach."

MXOtech is currently working with All-Tech to execute the BPI roadmap. They also utilize MXO's Managed IT Services. Learn about All-Tech Decorating and their commitment to excellence at [www.alltechdecorating.com](http://www.alltechdecorating.com).

**Read more about Business Process Improvement and how to get started with your own BPI Assessment on page 4 or contact Joanna at 312.554.5699**



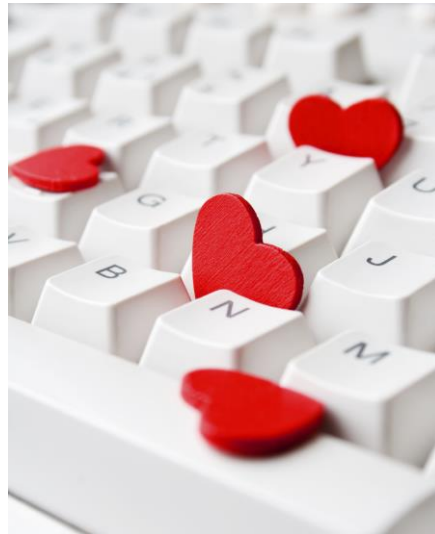
**Donald Steadman**  
Owner, President  
of All-Tech Decorating

## A Backup Plan you can fall in love with!

In today's fast-paced, data-driven world, backups are mission critical to your company's survival and success.

Yet your data may be just one damaged drive, lost laptop, natural disaster, accidental deletion, malware attack, equipment failure, power spike or petty theft away from a profit-sucking, heartbreaking disaster.

So what measures must you take to keep your data safe, secure and where you need it, when you need it? While there's no one-size-fits-all silver bullet, there are some general principles to be aware of.



### Image-Based Backups

An image-based backup or "clone" serves like the spare tire for your car. If you get a flat, the spare will get you to a tire shop.

If the hard drive on any device in the network goes kablooeey and its user is in a time crunch to complete a project, an image-based backup allows them to get right back to where they were.

It saves all files, apps and settings that were on that device, exactly the way they were at the time of the last backup. And generally, that means the user can get right back to work with no need to reconfigure everything all over again.

But, just as a spare tire isn't designed for long road trips, an image-based backup may not perform as well as the original drive. It may, for instance, take a little longer to access data from the server, slowing down user workflow.

An image-based backup will be useful only to the extent that it has backed up data recently.

For servers, daily or even multiple backups per day are recommended.

### Archive Backups

Archive backups don't replace image-based backups, but are an efficient way to reduce the size of these backups because they take less-frequently-used data off the main computer or server.

You can't reboot from an archive, but if you've accidentally deleted a file, you can retrieve it from an archive. If any device on the network goes down, you can simply plug the external hard drive into another computer and regain access to the archived files.

### Cloud Backups

....CONTINUED ONLINE: Read it at: <http://bit.ly/LoveYourBackup>



### Meet Steve, MXO's new Chief Financial Officer



Steve brings an extensive financial, entrepreneurial, and operational acumen to MXOtech, leveraging his many years as CEO and owner of Techcare, a Chicago-based MSP.

As Chief Financial Officer, Steve provides strategic financial input to senior management, oversees the overall accounting processes, maintains a key role in developing and implementing financial and operational procedures, and drives customer satisfaction while maintaining a reasonable cost structure, profitability and managed growth.

"After months serving as a business coach and consultant for Joanna and the MXO Leadership Team, it became clear that this was a group that I want to be part of!" said Steve. "The Company's mission and core values are something I believe in, and I can't wait to see what we will accomplish together."

We are thrilled to have Steve's financial and operational expertise added to our leadership team as we continue to grow and expand our service offerings.

## Innovation Inspiration

"Without change there is no innovation, creativity, or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable."

—William Pollard

Can you rest assured that your company's backup system is built to minimize downtime in the event of data loss or equipment failure? Most likely, your answer will be no.

Contact us right now through the end of March to claim your **FREE Backup and Disaster Recovery Assessment**.  
Let us make sure your backup system never lets you down.

We can fix broken computers, but a broken heart is another thing entirely...**Call TODAY! 312.554.5699**



## What exactly IS a Business Process Improvement (BPI) Assessment?

*A BPI is defined as the strategy a business uses to automate processes in order to contain costs. It consists of integrating applications, restructuring labor resources, and using software applications throughout the organization.*

We recommend a BPI Assessment for any business who has even the smallest concern that some aspect of their system could be streamlined or integrated.

Are you still using an Access database? Do you need to eliminate downtime? Would you like your systems to talk to one another? Are you replacing a core software platform in your organization?



A Business Process Improvement Assessment will review and evaluate the systems and processes in your organization that are causing you issues. Ultimately, a successful BPI Assessment will show you how to leverage technology to propel your operational performance and profitability through solutions that drive growth and efficiency.

At MXOtech, these assessments are a typically a 1-2 week engagement. We'll conduct interviews, audit your solutions, and work with your vendors to produce measureable metrics such as a reduction in IT spend or increase of employee productivity. Often times we will create a Value Stream Map to show actual time spent per part of the workflow. This data is then used to craft a comprehensive actionable roadmap that includes a high level project plan and projected costs. It is then up to you if you would like to execute the roadmap on your own, with MXOtech, or another vendor.

A BPI Assessment with MXOtech is a low time, low cost, and high return investment. **We're currently scheduling BPI Assessments through the end of March so contact us at 312.554.5699 or at [sales@mxotech.com](mailto:sales@mxotech.com) to get started.**

## CLIENT REFERRAL PROGRAM:

*Have a friend whose technology isn't working efficiently?*



*Spread the love and tell them about your experience with MXOtech!*

We'll show our appreciation by giving you **\$50 for every computer user** your client referral has!

That's right – if your referral signs a contract with MXO and they have 20 computer users, then we'll send YOU \$1,000! Not your company. Not your boss. YOU! We will make out the check to the person who contacts us.

[bitly.com/referMXOtech](http://bitly.com/referMXOtech)

**mxotech**  
Beyond IT. People.

1101 West Adams • Suite A  
Chicago, Illinois 60607  
312.554.5699  
[www.mxotech.com](http://www.mxotech.com)

Joanna Sobran  
President/CEO  
312.267.0573  
[isobran@mxotech.com](mailto:isobran@mxotech.com)



Get more Free Tips, Tools and Services on our website | [www.mxotech.com](http://www.mxotech.com)