Kaizen—Good Change

A Kaizen Approach Can Help Your Business

Have you ever tossed your loose pocket change in a jar only to find that in a matter of weeks that small, insignificant change has grown into some substantial bucks? Similarly, has your church's fundraising efforts of collecting pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters for a local charity turned into thousands of dollars just a week later? Well you, my friend, have experienced the Kaizen effect!

A philosophy that sees improvement in productivity as a gradual and methodical process, Kaizen is a Japanese term meaning "change for the better." Kaizen, as it pertains to business, is a gradual approach to ever higher standards in quality enhancement and waste reduction, through **small but continual improvements** involving everyone from the chief executive to the lowest level workers. Today, Kaizen is recognized worldwide as an important pillar of an organization's long-term competitive strategy. It involves making the work environment more efficient and effective by creating a team atmosphere, improving everyday procedures, ensuring employee satisfaction and making a job more fulfilling, and safer. It was popularized by Masaaki Imai in his 1986 book entitled Kaizen: The Key To Japan's Competitive Success.

Businesses that follow a Kaizen mentality often get much more in return:
- **Improved Competitiveness** – Increases in efficiency translate into lower costs and higher quality products.
- **Happier Customers** – Customers appreciate higher quality products with fewer faults.
- **Satisfied Staff** – Employees are more satisfied when they have a direct impact on how things are done. They are more engaged and committed and more likely to stay. Working together to solve problems helps build and strengthen teams.
- **Reduced Waste** – Employee skills and resources are used more efficiently.

This same Kaizen philosophy can and should be transferred over to how companies direct their IT efforts. In today's high-tech world, technology never stops changing and there are always areas to improve upon. The next "big thing" is waiting just around the corner. One buys technology one day, and it is obsolete the next. We've all experienced it…technology waits for no one! The only way to keep up with technology is to take a continuous approach to incorporating small, good technology changes along the way just to stay in the game.

Some small, good IT changes that you can make today are:
- Build a Business Continuity plan
- Protect your company's data with Backup and Anti-Virus solutions
- Get on the Cloud
- Get off of XP
- Move away from Windows 2003
- Use Social Media to showcase your company (FaceBook, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter)
- Revamp your website and SEO to get your company seen

Is your head spinning—don't know where to begin? That's where IT Radix can help! Become a Managed Service client and let IT Radix handle your IT so you can manage your business. As a Managed Service client, we'll help you navigate the technology super highway and plan ahead to incorporate small, good changes to get you ready for the next "big thing!"

In This Issue

If you would rather receive our newsletter via email, sign up on our website or send an email to resource@it-radix.com

More free tech tips at: www.it-radix.com/news-blog

Introducing…Chris Scrivana

IT Radix works hard at maintaining our position as leaders in the IT field—not an easy task when you consider the ever-changing role information technology plays in our lives. All good changes that make our lives easier—for sure!

We are happy to introduce one of our newest IT Consultants, **Chris Scrivana**, who embraces our same ideals and is excited about all the new challenges and "good changes" IT has in store for our future.

Chris came to IT Radix with over 3 years of IT experience. Most recently he worked at Mortgage firm where he was a member of their in-house IT team. He also has experience as a field engineer and desktop support specialist. At IT Radix, Chris handles workstation setup and configurations as well as provides remote and onsite technical support for our clients.

When not working, Chris enjoys playing his favorite PC game, Counter-Strike. He also likes space science…his favorite TV shows are *Cosmos* and *Through the Wormhole*. His favorite book, <u>Fingerprints of the Gods</u> by Graham Hancock is one that he's read multiple times! Chris enjoys running and participating in 5K's, though he's been frequenting the gym adjacent to the IT Radix office more and more these days.

Chris also has a love for cooking, which he attributes to his mom. Whether it's indoors or on the grill, Chris enjoys experimenting with new foods—his specialty is pulled pork simmered in Pabst Blue Ribbon beer! Be sure to invite Chris to your next cookout!

Chris is getting ready for a little "good change" on the home front as well this month when he and Kristy are expecting the birth of their first child—it's a boy! Born and raised in Andover, Chris is in the market to buy a new home in the Lake Hopatcong area…nice lake, simple life, pure enjoyment!

<u>Chris' personal philosophy</u>: Never quit!

"Be kind. For everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about."

- Wendy Mass

Welcome!

A warm welcome to our newest **Managed Service** Clients:

Bryan Does It
Konner Harbus & Schwartz PC
Market Analytics International Inc.

Remember, IT Radix is here to service all of your technology needs!

Tech Tools

Check out these time management tools:

• To Do Lists–Most people use Outlook for email, calendars and contacts, but that last leg of the stool is called 'Tasks'. It is a very easy to use place to keep, prioritize and manage an ever changing to-do list. You can attach priorities to tasks and sync them with your calendar if you like. Google Tasks, does virtually the same thing, allowing you to manage tasks in the office or on the go.

• Goal Setting & Tracking–There are a number of apps you can use to set and track goals. Most allow you to set goals for the upcoming week, month or longer periods across a host of areas such as family, personal growth, financial, health, social, hobbies and career. You might try GoalsOnTrack.com or the apps: GoalTracker by Mobillion or ReachYourGoals by Appshive.

• Managing Priorities–Deciding what to do across the Urgency/Importance matrix is never easy and to be successful at this, one must make management decisions daily and not rely on a tech tool, but if you want to try one that aligns with this grid, try Priority Matrix by Appfluence LLC.

THE BUZZ

OUR CLIENTS SPEAK OUT:

"Because of IT Radix, our system is now a fully integrated, functioning network. Prior to working with them, we had the typical small-office problem. We had many different computers, printers, workstations, software programs—each added piecemeal at different times by different people, without a coherent plan or an efficient way for them to work together. IT Radix interviewed our staff, evaluated the types of work we do, inventoried our resources and came up with a viable plan to allow our offices to run much more cohesively and effectively. It greatly streamlined the ways that our various staff can work together."

Georgeann duChossois — Christ Church in Short Hills

Cloud File Synchronization

Stare up at the sky to watch cloud formations and one thing is for certain, the formations will change. So too are there many changes in the way files can be shared. Our point of view is that most of these changes are "good changes." Cloud based file sharing can eliminate the need for Virtual Private Networks (VPN) to be set up for employees to access/share files when remote.   And with a 100% cloud sharing solution, it can allow an organization to eliminate a physical server on premise.   But doing it right, can be complicated. We recommend you allow the professionals at IT Radix to help.

Cloud file sharing applications can protect against lost or deleted files. But it is not a full replacement for a solid onsite and offsite backup program. That is because sync/share solutions focus on usability and performance while backup solutions focus on security and reliability. How backup and sync/share software programs are developed are fundamentally incompatible in approach. "Sharing" is almost the opposite of "Securing." In particular, database files such as QuickBooks cannot be backed up by sync/share software. Enterprises want to protect ALL their data-–using backup, but only want to share SOME of their data—using share/sync. One thing's for sure….more changes to come!

SPECIAL OFFER

IT Radix Cloud Reflection

There is no time like the present to take advantage of cloud file synchronization and sharing! Purchase a 1-year subscription to ITR Cloud Reflection during the months of **October**, **November** and **December**, and get the 1st month free!

Call IT Radix today to learn how you can sync, protect and share. Everywhere!

Avoid These Common Time Management Mistakes And Shazam, it's Kaizen

I, like most people, am always on the lookout for better ways to manage and use my time. Often I find that just small tweaks or little changes can have a good, measurable impact on my personal time management and consequently my life because I've reduced my stress and increased my productivity. In other words, kaizen! So, when I came across the article, "10 Common Time Management Mistakes" posted on the MindTools.com website, I read it with interest.

Mistake #1 was not keeping a to-do list. To-do lists certainly help me remember everything I need to do. The list helps reduce or eliminate the stress of trying to keep track of everything in your head. Well, I thought to myself, I'm good to go here, I've got a list—even if it's an overwhelming list. The trick the folks at Mind Tools shared was to prioritize your list. You can use A/B/C, high/medium/low, or 1/2/3 or whatever works best for you. To refine this even more, Arnie Rintzler of AWR Business Concepts recommends further breaking the items down into 'must do today' and 'should do today'. Personally I ended up using numbers to prioritize my to-do list and scheduled anything on my calendar that was classed as high priority and "must do today" is noted by (1). I use "00" before the description of the activity or appointment to clue me in that it's a firm time (for example, 00-Call Client ABC re: our Lunch'n'Learn). I asked our staff to follow this system when scheduling me for appointments, return calls and the like. This way I automatically know if someone is expecting a callback today, tomorrow or other. Additional bonus, it's easy to see on my calendar what is a firm appointment vs. a suggested time.

Mistake #2 is not setting personal goals. Well this definitely resonated with me because it's oh so easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and not work towards my goals. As a company, we set our goals annually and meet briefly each month to make sure we're on track or see if we need to make some adjustments. I can attest to the value of setting the goal and then tracking against it. A few years ago I realized that unless we made some changes we weren't going to meet our revenue goal which would result in a precarious financial situation. We took stock of where we were and changed our sales focus. The result: We were able to meet our revenue goal almost to the penny—which was certainly a wonderful feeling to have. I still need to work on my personal goals but I'm getting there. Of course, when I set those goals, I'll make sure they are *S.M.A.R.T*. Google "SMART goals" if you don't know or remember significance of the acronym.

Mistake #3 in the article circled back to priorities and failing to set them. As the article points out, it's easy to get sidetracked or off track "when you're facing a flood of seemingly urgent tasks." Perhaps you've seen the following grid before—it's from Steven Covey. I find it a useful litmus testing tool when I'm struggling to prioritize my activities.

Give just one these ideas a try and you'll have a better handle on your time and will have taken a good forward in the pursuit of *kaizen*.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	1. **Real Actual Work** Tasks at work (some) Paying bills	2. **Zen Work** Learning Investments Work on Goals Research Health /Sports Leisure Relationships
Not Important	3. **Nag Tasks** Interruptions Most mails, calls Pointless tasks Pointless meetings Pointless documents	4. **Busy Work** Browsing Reading stunf.com/blog Checking your mail every 5 mins

> Your life does not get better by chance, it gets better by change."
>
> — Jim Rohn

Just for Laughs!

LITERATURE

"JUST THINK OF IT AS IF YOU'RE READING A LONG TEXT-MESSAGE."
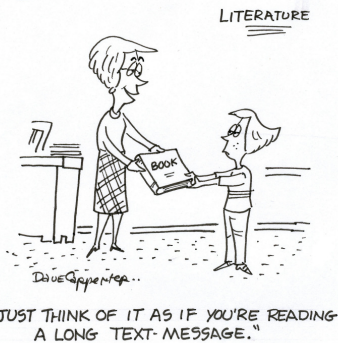
From the desk of: Cathy Coloff
Subject: My personal *kaizen*

I finding it interesting how people resist change, including myself. How many of us have kept doing the same thing over and over just because changing seemed too hard, risky or perhaps scary? I think that is why the concept of *kaizen* can be so powerful. Its focus is 'good change' and it doesn't have to be big changes. Small little tweaks to a process or way of doing things can have a positive impact and since it's small, perhaps the resistance to change will be less.

I challenge each of you to look at your job and your personal activities for opportunities to practice *kaizen*. Recently at a business lunch, my colleague pointed out that I could squeeze in a workout in my office in a small 3' x 3' space. At first, I was skeptical but as I listened to the workout he described, I realized he was right. If I just changed my viewpoint and my definition of a workout slightly, I could workout in my office and improve my health and my life.

I also want to encourage you to not wait – just do it. Making small changes tends to reduce the risk. If it doesn't work out, no harm done. Adjust and make another small change. As for myself, I've been closing my office door and squeezing in a "workout" on a regular basis. Happy *kaizen*-ing!

Cathy

Enter and Win! Trivia Contest

The first person to send an email to resource@it-radix.com with the correct answer to our trivia question will win an Amazon gift card!

Q: What was the name of the all-female parody pop group whose picture was the first ever uploaded on the WWW by Tim Berners-Lee?

_____

Summer Trivia Challenge

Q: What is the alter-ego of Barbara Gordon, formerly known as Batgirl, who used technology and computers to help other superheroes by operating a worldwide communications network? (Answer: Oracle)

Congratulations to our winner, Donna Darlington of Montville Executive Suites, recipient of two AMC theatre tickets.

Life-Changing Gadgets

Decades after their invention, computers look roughly the same. While they may be smaller and more portable, we still click, type and stare at flat screens. But not for long, exclaims David Rose, author of <u>Enchanted Objects: Design, Human Desire and the Internet of Things</u>. Technology is starting to get a little more personal!

Some of our favorite gadgets are:

A trash can that shops for you – The *Amazon Trash Can* prototype currently in the development stage has a tiny camera and a barcode scanner that records everything you toss in the trash and sends the information to Amazon.com, where it is immediately reordered and shipped to you. Another prototype that is being developed comments on your eating habits—both good and bad.

A coffee table that shares pictures – The *Facebook Coffee Table* uses real-time speech analysis to pick up keywords from your conversation and pulls up relevant Facebook feed photos. Rose is currently fine-tuning the design for a major hotel chain to function as a self-service concierge. The hotel table will feature nearby events, restaurant suggestions and displays about traffic and weather.

A fork that watches what you eat – The *Hapifork* alerts you with a gentle vibration when you are eating too quickly. It also measures, using the tines of the fork, how long it took to eat your meal, the amount of "fork servings" taken per minute, and the time between servings.

Inspector Gadget would have a field day with all the cool gadgets available today and on the horizon! When it comes to technology, the sky's the limit! What will they think of next? Go Go Gadget IT Radix!!