# IT Radix Resource

We make IT Work for You

October 2015

# Building Blocks of Technology

## Leveraging Technology for Construction

What, in one word, is the technology concept that has had the most dramatic effect on the construction industry? That single word might surprise you: MOBILITY!

The construction industry requires a large number of people to be involved in the planning, designing and building of new projects. The desk-based nature of early computing technology and the large project files required for each phase of construction combined to cause this industry to be one of the last to take advantage of advances in technology. However, with the growth of high-speed Internet and continued improvements in mobile devices, software and applications, the construction industry is now in the forefront of using technology tools for business management.

The tech savvy construction firms of today are leveraging technology to reduce costs, speed work, enhance collaboration and facilitate decision making. Here are some of the ways they are doing so:

**Communication** – In the past, project managers in the construction business considered communication to be one of their biggest obstacles to success since their teams were so often on the road or onsite. With improved applications such as hosted Exchange email or cloud file sharing/syncing software that offer ways to easily share documents, messages, pictures and more at a moment's notice, the communication challenges for construction managers have been greatly diminished.

**Design** – The design process in construction has been shortened dramatically with teams now able to view, share and collaborate on their designs in real time. More recently, 3D design applications have enabled improved visualization of ideas. And now with 3D printing available, designs can be brought to life in beta form with great speed and minimal cost. Another big improvement, thanks to tech advances, is that the tracking of approvals and changes can be managed with immense accuracy.

**Project Management** – With so many documents involved in these projects, cloud and mobile technology teams are now able to store huge files safely, as well as access them and share them as needed almost anywhere on almost any portable device. This keeps all key personnel on the same page—enhancing productivity and reducing costs. Another key component of any building project is scheduling, resource and cost management. Modern software applications used on sites now enable the project management of construction projects to be better automated and more easily monitored. Even drones have been used on construction sites to facilitate the monitoring of progress. (Learn more about the use of drones on the construction site in our back-page article.)

**On the Horizon** – The next big technology advancements to come in this industry include augmented and virtual reality tools, safety helmets with heads up displays, smart glasses built into safety goggles and smart sensors for a variety of monitoring options. Pull out those sunglasses…the future looks pretty bright for the construction industry!

In all industries but especially construction, technology—and mobile technology in particular—is no longer an expense item, but rather a value-added tool. The smart construction manager leverages technology advances to drive margin to the bottom line.



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## In This Issue

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www.it-radix.com/news-blog

## Introducing…Chris Soltys

Information Technology is like building blocks.  The best way to tackle an IT project is by breaking it down to manageable pieces.  Once each piece works, start building and the final project is destined for success!

These are the insights of IT Consultant, **Chris Soltys**, and is the same approach he takes when tackling IT projects at IT Radix.  Chris came to IT Radix with 18 years of IT experience in a variety of capacities: programmer, help desk, IT Director, and Sr. Network Administrator.  He even started his own IT business in 2001.  His love of chemistry while at William Paterson University quickly turned into a love of computers that he mostly learned on the job and self taught after hours and hours of reading books in the IT field.

At IT Radix, Chris likes helping our clients any way he can.  He enjoys being on location and interacting personally with our clients face to face.  Being familiar with older technology has built a strong foundation for Chris, giving him experience in a variety of IT areas.  His experience being his own boss enables Chris to be able to look and think about things differently, and he prides himself in being able to understand our clients' business needs.  Our clients know that they are in good hands with Chris!

Growing up in Lodi, Chris now resides in Elmwood Park with his wife, Izabela, and two boys, Alexander and Jacob.  When not working, Chris enjoys spending time outdoors whether it's shooting hoops, riding bikes or going to the park.  Since Chris was 7 years old, soccer has always been a big part of his life.  Chris now coaches for both of his boys in the same soccer club that he played in as a boy and is currently the President of this club.  Chris loves to chill out by himself with his Xbox, but now finds himself spending that time playing Xbox FIFA soccer with his boys.  He is an avid reader and a huge Stephen King fan.

**Chris' Personal philosophy:**  Do it right the first time, even if it takes longer!  It's better than going back and fixing things.  This goes back to building blocks.  If you take the time and start with a solid foundation, everything else builds upon this and the end product only becomes stronger.

"Eat that frog!" – Brian Tracy

This is the title of a book about overcoming procrastination by Brian Tracy and centers around a famous quote from Mark Twain… "*Eat a live frog first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day.*"  Basically, if you just do the task that you have been dreading, then all tasks after that won't seem as bad.

## Clamp Down Email

Email is the single most effective way cybercrime scammers gain access to your bank account, credit cards and identity— whether it's opening a virus-infected attachment or succumbing to a phishing scam where you unwittingly reveal your username, password and/or credit card information.

As a general rule, the following 5 things should NEVER be included in an email:

1. **Social security number** – Scammers can use it to open credit cards and steal your identity.

2. **Banking information** – Never email bank account numbers, routing numbers, or online banking login credentials.  Also, avoid sending a voided/blank check as an email attachment.

OUR CLIENTS SPEAK OUT:

## THE BUZZ

"*I truly appreciate the work that you and your team have done for the Law Office of Martin D. Eagan.   Everyone has been so pleasant to work with and obviously know what they are doing…things are really shaping up over here!  It has been an amazing journey so far, and I look forward to our future together.  A BIG THANKS for everything to everyone!*"

Noelle Paclawskyj  — Law Office of Martin D. Eagan

# Clamp Down Email (cont.)

3. **Credit/debit card information** – Never click on an email link to update credit/debit card information. Instead, log directly into the company's secured site. Or, simply call the vendor directly using the number on the back of your card.

4. **Login credentials** – Never share your passwords or answers to security questions with anyone, period!

5. **Financial documents** – An *attachment* that includes any of the above is just as dangerous to email as typing it in. Never email any type of financial documents (or scans of documents) to your CPA, financial advisor, bank, etc.

Now is the time to build a strong framework around your online email sharing habits to safeguard your private and financial data! Banks, credit card companies and the government will never ask you to click a link to provide them with any of the five items above. If you get an email asking you to update any of the above information, there's a good chance it's a phishing email from a hacker. Don't be scammed!

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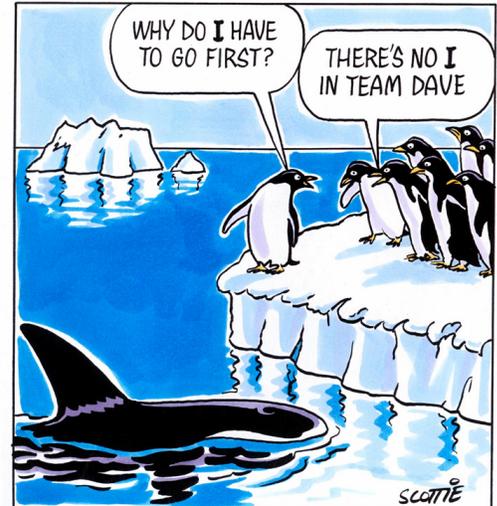
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## SPECIAL OFFER

### Building a Foundation

Sign up for a year of IT Radix Managed Services during the months of **October, November** and **December**, and receive an Amazon Kindle!

All three plans are eligible:
*Capstone, Cornerstone, Keystone*

Visit www.it-radix.com to learn more about what's included in each of these proactive maintenance plans. Call IT Radix today to learn more!

# Building Your Team

A few years ago, all of us at IT Radix studied Fred, a man who went beyond the basics of his job to deliver exceptional service. Mark Sanborn, the author of *The Fred Factor*, recently shared four ideas on how to get more performance, productivity and profit from your team. I find the challenge with receiving all these great ideas is figuring out how to implement them; so, I thought I'd share some of the takeaways that we've implemented at IT Radix.



WHY DO **I** HAVE TO GO FIRST?

THERE'S NO **I** IN TEAM DAVE

First, Mr. Sanborn encourages you to **let your teams learn together**. At IT Radix, we have a daily conference call where the technical team can share information they've learned or brain storm on issues encountered. The brief morning call helps pull us all together even when techs are going in all different directions. We also have in-house tech training every two to three weeks where techs lead each other in deeper dives into technology that we encounter every day. And, of course, throughout the day, the techs often team up to work together on a client issue or problem, sharing and learning together about the technical nuances encountered.

Next, Sanborn encourages you to have your team members recognize each other. Over the years, we've done this in a number of ways. Monthly, we announce our "Wow" winners—sometimes these come from clients and sometimes they come from within. We had a "Nailed It" award where a technical consultant was recognized for finding a tricky technical solution—or "nailing it!" It's all too easy to let good work go by unrecognized. Ask your team members to help you by recognizing each other and, as Sanborn says, "catching each other doing something praiseworthy." **Peer recognition is powerful.**
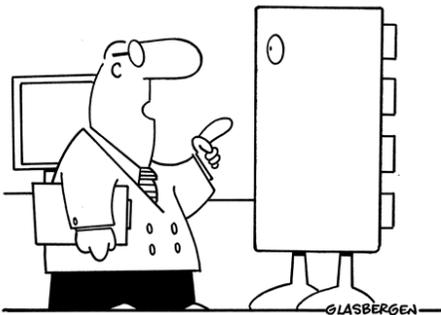
Sometimes you need to **get your team together just to think**. By reflecting on what you're doing as a team, you can consider opportunities, not just solve problems. Getting together as a team at IT Radix is sometimes difficult but we've found that by setting specific monthly meetings with different teams, we're able to focus on marketing or sales opportunities or more general operational opportunities for improvement. The net result of these meetings results in new products or services that we're able to provide to our clients. As Sanborn puts it, "The team that thinks more wins more."

The last piece of advice that Sanborn shared is probably the most difficult. It's not easy creating great teamwork, and as a result, it can sometimes become "optional." Tolerating or allowing poor team play undermines everything you're working toward. If someone isn't being a good player, then take action—even if it means removing the offender from the team. As Sanborn said, "**You've got to expect it (teamwork) and not tolerate it if you don't get it.**"

Want to read more by Mark Sanborn? You can check him out at www.marksanborn.com.

> "The loftier the building, the deeper must the foundation be laid."
>
> — Thomas Kempis



"I want everyone at the meeting to dress like Lego blocks. Then we can see exactly how each team member interlocks with other team members in the project."

**From the desk of:** Cathy Coloff
**Subject:** Building a Brighter Future

I recently had the opportunity to speak to the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects about the pros and cons of cloud computing in their industry. The event was hosted at the Van Vleck Estate in Montclair. The early 20th century home is an example of classical Mediterranean Revival architecture and has some incredible gardens. We're fortunate to have access to this piece of history free of charge. I encourage you to check it out.

Of course, it took many years of design and planning and lots of tender loving care to create what is preserved for us today. It's similar with technology, your computers and network. It develops over time as your business needs change and evolve. I really enjoy designing, planning and then caring for your technology over time. Sometimes we're not able to see the fruits of our labors as you can with buildings and gardens, but it's satisfying nonetheless. Thank you to our clients for letting us be a part of your technology infrastructure.

If you've read any of our newsletters over the years, you've probably enjoyed the humorous cartoons created by Randy Glasbergen. I've always enjoyed his humorous take on things from technology to just life in general. Sadly, Randy passed away in August. Those of us here at IT Radix that work to create this newsletter will miss him and the smiles he generated by his work. May you all generate smiles as you go throughout your day!

## 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 is the world's largest office building by floor size?

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*September Trivia Challenge*

Q: What are the nicknames Edison gave to his first two children, Marion and Thomas?

(Answer: Dot and Dash, respectively.)

Congratulations to our winner, Barbara Den Dulk, of BCI Systems Inc., recipient of a NJ Bagel Basket.

## Smart Construction—Flying High

Look, up in the sky! It's a plane! It's a bird! It's a drone! A drone? Officially known as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), drones have become the latest and greatest in construction-site technology.

Over the past few years, drones have made a significant impact on the construction industry. Equipped with a video camera, these small quadcopters are being touted as a tool that can improve jobsite communication and safety, along with performing highly technical tasks such as 3-D modeling and capturing real-time images from the field. Whether they are used for surveying, monitoring, building, excavating or safety, this new-fangled technology is an exciting development! The possibilities are endless:

**Surveying** – Drones are being used pre-construction to survey and measure job sites. They can send images to computers to build 3-D models of the terrain to assess whether the topography is right for construction. Measuring by air is much faster and easier.

**Monitoring** – Drones can be used throughout the building process and are a cost-effective way to check a project's progress or identify structural problems at higher elevations. They are useful for showing clients aerial overviews of various stages of the construction project.

**Building/Excavating** – Companies are already experimenting with aerial construction and utilizing drones in the actual building process. Not only are drones capable of stacking and weaving structures, but unmanned ground equipment (bulldozers, excavators) are also being researched.

Technology advances in mobile devices, cameras, aeronautics and autopilot navigation have helped make drones affordable, reliable and easier to operate. Utilizing drones in the construction industry is shaving both cost and time from the construction project and making for a much safer work environment!