Happy New Year!

We all make New Year's Resolutions. And most of the time, we break them a week after they're made. Don't lie to yourself, you know it's true. That's because resolutions are MEANT to be broken. That's why you get to make the same ones next year. We decided, this year, instead of making flimsy resolutions, we are going to set concrete goals. Only 5% of leaders write their goals down, but guess where those leaders are? You guessed it; at the top.

Join us this year in making concrete goals that will change your life.

A word to the wise– how you talk to yourself makes all the difference. Instead of telling yourself "I can't miss the gym." Tell yourself, "I *don't* skip the gym." and bam, suddenly you're not skipping the gym.

So let's make 2016 a huge success. Let's soar above the rest and be profitable and healthy.

Happy New Year!

January 2016

This monthly publication provided courtesy of Rob Downs, CEO and President of Managed IT Solutions

Our Mission: To build a community of successful minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.

Upgrading To Windows 10? Avoid Headaches, Downtime And Frustrations By Following This Advice
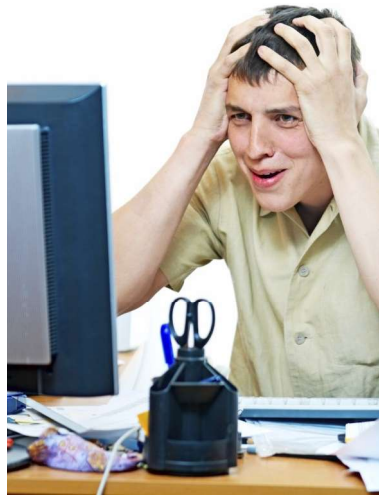
For the past few months, we've been swamped with questions about Windows 10.

If you're wondering whether now is the best time to upgrade your system, here's what you need to know:

First and foremost, if your organization relies on your computers in any way to make money or save lives, consider the risks carefully.

As with any software upgrade – but especially your computer's operating system – you've got to weigh the advantages of upgrading now against potential downtime if there are problems with the new code.

A good rule of thumb regarding any operating-system upgrade is to wait six months after the product release before deploying it into any system or group of systems that your business depends on.

Since January 29 marks six months since the Windows 10 official release date, it's a good time to look at whether it's wiser to upgrade now or wait for further fixes and improvements.

That being said, here are a few of the key questions we've been fielding – and pitfalls to avoid:

Q. It's free for a "limited time" – don't I have to act now?

A. No. You have until July 2016 to take advantage of the free upgrade. And, if your system hasn't prompted you to upgrade yet, you'll need to wait. If and when your system is deemed capable of adapting to the upgrade, your current Windows OS will notify you. Either way, you have until July 28, 2016. If you do plan to upgrade, we strongly advise that you get it done well before that date, in order to avoid any last-minute scrambling.

Q. It's better and/or faster, right?

A. Maybe… It depends. Here's what we're seeing:

• Windows 10 radically changes how your system operates, compared to

Windows 7. While some computers make the change with no problem at all, it can cause older systems to lose key hardware drivers (like networking or printing), rendering them an "instant brick."

• Some systems, even those certified by their manufacturers as "Windows 10 ready," start misbehaving after being upgraded. That means undue downtime while you reinstall or upgrade MS Office or other software – or even revert back to your older OS.

• Some older systems actually run slower on Windows 10 than on Windows 7 or 8.1.

Q. Will my computer work with Windows 10?

A. Age is probably the biggest factor for any Windows-based device. Anything older than three years is not worth upgrading. At three years

"Some systems start misbehaving after being upgraded, which can lead to downtime."

old, your machine is nearing the end of its useful life. You are better off leaving the old operating system in place and waiting for Windows 10 until you upgrade to a new computer.

Q. I've heard Windows 10 transmits all of your personal information to Microsoft. Is this true?

A. This is true, unless you opt out of some of the most attractive features, such as the MS Store and Cortana, the voice-controlled virtual assistant. According to Windows 10 terms of service, Microsoft can:

"access, disclose and preserve personal data, including your content (such as the content of your emails, other private communications or files in private folders), when we have a good faith belief that doing so is necessary to protect our customers or enforce the terms governing the use of the services."

If you decide that giving that kind of control of your personal and business data to Microsoft is not in

your best interest, you can still install Windows 10; just call us and we'll help you adjust the settings to keep all your information from being sent to Microsoft.

Q. We use some custom software here. Will it run on Windows 10?

A. Until your custom software vendor blesses Windows 10 for that program, the answer is no. In all cases, we advise against upgrading to Windows 10 until your custom programs are 100% fully vetted, compatible and supported for it.

Deciding when to upgrade to Windows 10 isn't as simple as Microsoft and some pundits would have you believe. But if you know the pitfalls we've laid out for you here in advance, you've at least got a fighting chance for a smooth, headache-free transition.

Want help setting a target date and plan for your business to upgrade to Windows 10? Call us at 919-848-3259 or e-mail us at marketing@managedits.com to schedule a free Windows 10 Readiness Assessment.

EXCITING NEWS! MITS is joining forces with PC MedEvac!

We're excited and you should be, too! With the addition of the PC MedEvac team, Managed IT Solutions has more experienced and hardworking engineers and technicians to take care of your IT issues!

The merger provides two locations from which clients can now get service and has added over

sixty years of experience to the MITS team! We are especially excited to add Matt Carter and Rob Clive to the team as they have been providing solid, reliable IT solutions for PC MedEvac clients for over 20 years.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call the office at 919-694-0032

The 5 Biggest Mistakes All Leaders Make

Although everyone agrees that hiring is tough, most managers struggle with an even more prevalent leadership mistake. It's an affliction as prevalent as the common cold, and one of the least recognized in the workplace today.

Over the last 20 years at ghSMART, we have been able to empirically observe where executives excel and where they get in their own way. We have conducted five-hour interviews with more than 15,000 leaders across every major industry, producing more than 9 million data points.

So, what is the No. 1 most common mistake that holds leaders back?

The complete inability to remove underperformers.

And why do we all struggle with this? Here are the top five reasons that we see:

1. You are an eternal optimist. You somehow believe that you will fix poor Mark in Finance or Emma in Marketing. Or, even better, perhaps they will magically fix themselves.

2. You don't want to rock the boat. You believe in accepting the cards that you are dealt. You have been taught to make do. As kids learn at daycare today, "You get what you get and you don't get upset."

3. You dislike conflict. Difficult conversations are difficult. So it is easier to suffer through it even if your whole team can now get less done.

4. You will look bad. You may have hired or promoted them into the role. You don't want to just pass the buck.

5. You excel at procrastinating. Why do today what can safely be put off for another day? Besides, who knows? He

or she might resign, and that would make it easier for everyone.

You may suffer from just one, or more likely a combination, of these reasons.

And yet our research found that executives who excelled at removing underperformers from their teams are more than twice as likely to have had a successful career than all other senior leaders.

Yes, that's right: twice as likely. The best leaders we meet tell us that it makes all the difference.

Panos Anastassiadis is one who does it very well. He was the CEO of Cyveilance, which grew over 1500% in five years. His secret? "I have simply been constantly averaging up who is on the team."

Yet how do you do that and still do right by the individual in question?

You can set them clear goals and craft the role to play to their strengths. But when it clearly isn't working, it's time to take action. Run a fair, objective talent management process, tell them that their performance isn't where it needs to be and give them 30, 60 or 90 days to turn their situation around.

If that doesn't work, it's time to have that tough conversation that deep down you know you should have had six, 12 or maybe 24 months ago.

Once done, yet only then, can you hire that A player you really need.

Geoff is Chairman & Founder of ghSMART. Geoff is co-author, with his colleague Randy Street, of the *New York Times* bestselling book *Who: The A Method for Hiring* and the author of the #1 *Wall Street Journal* bestseller *Leadocracy: Hiring More Great Leaders (Like You) into Government*. Geoff co-created the Topgrading brand of talent management. Geoff is the Founder of two 501c3 not-for-profit organizations. SMARTKids Leadership Program™ provides 10 years of leadership tutoring and The Leaders Initiative™ seeks to deploy society's greatest leaders into government. Geoff earned a B.A. in Economics with Honors from Northwestern University, an M.A., and a Ph.D. in Psychology from Claremont Graduate University.

Did You Know That Managed IT Solutions Offers...

Whether your needs are hosted or on-site Voice Over Internet Protocol,

we at Managed IT Solutions can accommodate.

A hosted VOIP system allows users to have fully functional business phones within their office area without the need for extra hardware other than the phones themselves. This is a great option for smaller companies that would rather not have the need for extra set-up onsite, potentially creating extra costs for supplies in excess of what is needed. A hosted system will leave all of the so-called "heavy lifting" to the off-site VOIP provider that will deliver the calls to your in office phones.

An on-site VOIP system on the other hand is a great option for larger companies that are in need of a greater amount of extensions or lines. This can cut costs that hosted services can charge for having the need for the additional lines. Having an on-site VOIP system allows the company its own IP based private branch for receiving and sending call data. This can have benefits of greater call clarity and allow for a higher volume of calls to be tended to at any one given point in time.

Would you like to know which system type would best fit in your office?

Schedule your FREE VoIP assessment and plan of action today by:

Visiting us at www.palladiumnetworks.com/services/voip/

If the hosted system meets your needs.

We offer hosted VOIP services through Cytracom.

Get a new advanced phone system with no hardware costs and less than $25 per month per phone. This includes unlimited local and long distance calling.

If you find the on-site system is best for you.

We offer on premise VOIP services through 3CX.

The on-premise varies in price depending on the size requirements of your system. Sign up for your FREE VoIP assessment today and receive a no-obligation quote.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Who Else Wants A Little Music With Their Light?

The next time you replace a lightbulb, you can now pick one that will stream your favorite music and light up your life in your choice of over 16,000 colors, all with a tap on your phone.

In case you haven't noticed, some LED bulbs now include a Bluetooth– or Wi-Fi–controlled speaker. And at least one, the MagicLight® Plus, available on Amazon, also lets you pick a light color to suit your mood.

At anywhere from $15 to $129 or more, these bulbs can add music – and light – throughout your home or office in a matter of minutes, at a fraction of the cost of a wired–in sound system.

How's the sound quality? It depends on the one you select. And it may not resonate like Carnegie Hall live…but hey, it's a lightbulb – what did you expect?

Your Vacation

Resolved to see more of the world this year? Here are three surprisingly great places to visit, according to travel-guide publisher Lonely Planet: 1) For cutting-edge art scenes, emerging nightlife, great skiing and rich wildlife-watching, including bison, wolves, lynx and bears, Transylvania tops the list. 2) Celebrating 50 years of independence in 2016, Botswana features luxury camps, self-guided tours, community projects and award-winning family safaris. 3) For postcard-worthy views of the stunning Sapphire Bay, as well as charming alleyways, tasty food and its still-traditional way of life, Kotor, Montenegro, deserves a top spot on your short list. This year, get off the beaten path for a vacation that can't be beat!
Today.com

Your Waistline

Make 2016 the year you can wear those favorite old pants again with these three tips… Drink more water: By far the easiest, yet most forgotten way, to lose weight, swap soda and fruit drinks for water and watch belly fat vanish. Get sound sleep: Science confirms that old saying "Early to bed…" Your deepest and most cleansing sleep happens when you get to bed earlier in the evening. Countless studies bear out the link between a good night's rest and less belly fat. Train harder in less time: In High Intensity Interval Training you go hard for about 30 to 60 seconds, then rest. Just 20 minutes of HIIT training boosts your metabolism all day long.
Bembu.com

Your Career

A mentor can help you achieve big things. But finding and connecting with the right person can be tough. Here's what helps: First, get clear about what you want in a mentor: do you need a sounding board? A guide? An advocate for a project you're working on? Once you know what

you're looking for, let the search begin. Look inside or outside your company, run an advanced search on LinkedIn and be open to working with someone younger than yourself. When you find a good candidate, simply ask for help on a specific problem. Then make it fun, give back and nurture the relationship. Mentoring can be a highly rewarding experience for you – and for your mentor.
Forbes.com

Your In-box

Got e-mail overwhelm? Get more done in your day with these three tips used by top pros: 1) Empty your in-box often. Use "Follow Up" and "Hold" labels in Gmail (folders if you're in Outlook) to quickly sort e-mails you can't respond to right away. 2) Use the Two-Minute Rule: if it will take more than two minutes to respond to, sort it for later. 3) Respond quickly. This sets you apart in a world where most people are drowning in e-mail. Often, a quick reply such as "Got your note, will get back to you by end of day Tuesday" is all you need. Pair this with time blocks for knocking out batches of replies for massive productivity.
LifeHackerBook.com

Your Time

Being busy doesn't always mean being productive. To win back big chunks of your time every day, avoid these three "busy-ness" traps: 1) Multitasking cuts your IQ by up to 40% and makes the two tasks you're working on take 25% longer. 2) Interruptions suck up your time because not only does it take up to 20 minutes to fully refocus on the original task, but we tend to get back to trivial rather than more important tasks at hand. 3) You're busy because technology wants you to be, not because you need to be. Must you really remain available to your boss, customers, family, friends and social networks 24/7/365? Take control again – it's your life!
Inc. Magazine

How To Keep Your Laptop Secure

You can't beat the convenience of checking e-mail and hopping on the Internet at (Wi-Fi) hotspots found in airports, coffee shops, bookstores, and even in some major parks. For the uninitiated, Wi-Fi hotspots are areas where you can use your wireless laptop to surf the Web and check e-mail.

But the question you have to ask yourself is, just how safe is it to connect? With the proliferation of hackers, viruses and identity theft at an all time high, you are smart to be concerned. Wi-Fi spots are very attractive to hackers because they can use what's called an "evil twin" connection to access your laptop.

An evil twin is a wireless hotspot set up by a hacker to lure people from a nearby, legitimate hotspot. For example, when you log in at your favorite coffee shop, you might actually be logging onto the evil twin Internet connection set up by the innocent-looking person working on a laptop at the next table.

The most dangerous evil twins remain invisible and allow you to do business as usual. But in the background, they record everything you are typing. Buy something online and they are recording your credit card information. Log on to your bank account, and they can grab your password. Some hotspots may even feed you a fake Web page after you log on asking you to update your billing information. This is the same tactic used in phishing scams.

So what can you do to make sure you are not giving an evil twin access to your laptop?

First, know the name of the hotspot you're going to use by asking someone who works there. Some businesses will give you printed instructions that include the hotspot name. Again, be careful. Hackers will try to name their evil twin network by a very similar name as the real hotspot, and may even show up as a stronger signal.
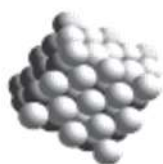
The best protection you can have is connecting via your company's VPN (virtual private network). A VPN will protect your online information by encrypting your data and activity even if you're connected through an evil twin.

If you don't have a company VPN, you should assume that someone is looking over your shoulder and recording everything you type in. Therefore, the BEST protection without a VPN is to never type in information such as credit cards, passwords, or social security numbers when connected to a public Wi-Fi hotspot.

CHARACTER & SETTING
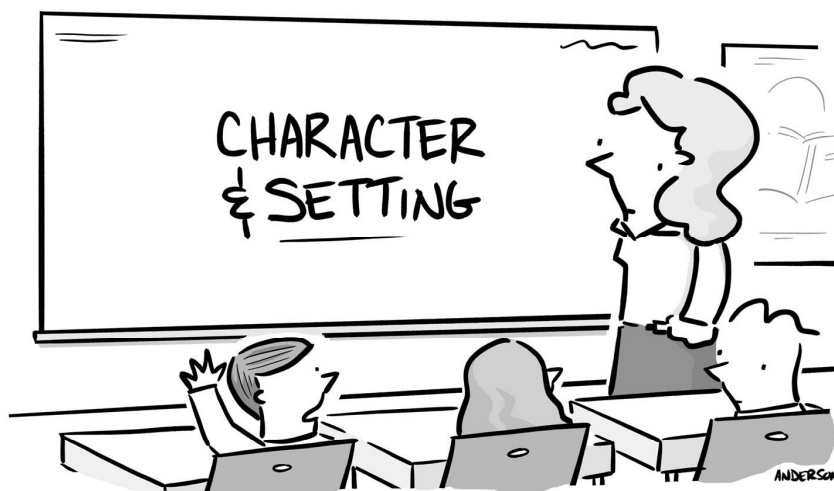
"Like how the people in the story configure their wi-fi?"