Inside This Issue…

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"Thank you for calling our Technical Support Hotline. The longest we've ever kept anyone on hold was 19 hours and 23 minutes. If you break that record today, you will win $10,000! Good luck!"

XperText

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

4 Questions About Backups That Business Owners Should Know The Answers To

The old saying, "Pack your own parachute," comes to mind when I think of data backups or, more specifically, data RECOVERY. However, how many people actually know how to pack their proverbial data backup "parachute" and instead rely on someone else – be it an employee or vendor?

If that's you, read on. Since the absolute WORSE time to check your backups is AFTER a data disaster, all company CEOs ought to know the answers to the following questions NOW so they aren't unpleasantly surprised later when data gets erased and they're scrambling to get back up and running:

1. **Where EXACTLY is your data being backed up, and how do you get access to it?** If it's being hosted in a remote place, you ought to have the account information and a direct contact you can call if your vendor or employee goes missing with this information. Ideally, it should be in your network documentation that is kept in your operations manual or somewhere you can easily access it if necessary.

2. **Who's responsible for monitoring the backups to make sure they are working?** When data is lost, the finger pointing starts. It's not uncommon to hear, "Well I thought (they/he/she) was in charge of our backups!" only to discover that this person (be it a vendor or employee) actually has no idea that they had such an important responsibility. Keep in mind that many offsite backup companies allow you to store your data there, but they won't agree to ANY responsibility for whether or not the data is being backed up correctly, completely or in a format that can be restored.

3. **How often do you run a test restore?** The only way to know if your backups are working properly is to conduct a test restore or "fire drill" of your data. We recommend running this once a month at a minimum to verify that you can actually restore from your backups in an emergency.

4. **If your data is lost, what's the process required to restore it?** Some business owners don't realize that their raw data backups would take a LOT longer to restore than they imagine. If you are not "imaging" your data (a process that takes a snapshot of your server as is) you will have to reload all of your software, set up the network, reconfigure your settings and THEN restore the data – a process that can take the better part of a week PROVIDED you still have your original software discs and licenses.

Get More Free Tips, Tools, and Services at our Website: www.XPERTECHS.com

Our Free Backup Audit will give you the answers to these critical questions. If you don't know the answers to these questions, give us a call to schedule a FREE inspection of your backup process. At a minimum you'll know for sure that your data is safe and in a format that can get you back up and running again FAST.

Call: 410-884-0225 or Email Pam at: **marketing@xpertechs.com**

Spring Forward!

Don't Forget Daylight Saving Time Begins
Sunday, March 13th.

Be sure to set your clocks an hour ahead when you go to bed.

3 Reasons To Have A Blog
(Even If Nobody Reads It)

Building a massive following online is no easy task. But before you give up on your company blog due to the disappointing number of people who read and comment on it, here are 3 reasons to reconsider:

Search Engine Optimization. If for no other reason, blogging weekly about a particular topic will work wonders for your search engine optimization. Make sure your blog entries frequently include the keywords that people are likely use when searching for your services online, but avoid spamming the blog (overusing the words). There's no scientific percentage here; just don't repeat them so often that your writing seems unnatural to your readers.

Free PR. The media is constantly surfing the web for content and for experts who can provide content and commentary. All it takes is one reporter to find you online and you could get tons of free publicity. You can bolster your chances of getting mentioned by writing about current events in the world or local news. For example, if you sell insurance and a hurricane or other natural disaster hits your town, you should blog about useful tips for people submitting claims to their insurance agents or how to determine how much insurance you should have, etc.

Indirect Selling. Writing stories about projects you are working on, clients you're serving or case studies is a great way to showcase your expertise and "indirectly" sell services. Of course, you can also use your blog for new product or service launches and get direct input from clients and prospects on new products and services they want to see.

Have you seen the XPERTECHS Blog?
Visit WWW.XPERTECHS.BLOGSPOT.COM

A Note from the Project Manager …
By Mike Mellott, Jr.

Project Collaboration – Anywhere!
Cloud Resources for a Successful Project

When working with our clients to plan new technology projects and understand long term technology goals, a recurring topic is the need to increase collaboration and efficiency of their growing remote and disparate workforce or teams. Currently there are a wide range of technologies aimed at addressing just this goal and more recently thanks to 'the cloud,' small and medium sized businesses can take advantage of enterprise class solutions with zero infrastructure costs.

Long ago, large companies adopted complex solutions and applications (at a very hefty cost!) to solely manage and deliver projects across remote teams and resources. Many small and medium businesses could not justify such a costly tool and instead relied on email and their file server to 'collaborate'. Fast-forward to today and these email/file servers are aging, growing in size, and in need of help – sound familiar? Add on the fact that your team, company, or resources are doing more and more 'remote' work and it is easy to see where productivity and collaboration are lost. One answer to this conundrum is to utilize a 'cloud' based technology platform such as Microsoft SharePoint to manage, maintain, and deliver resources <u>anytime</u> and <u>anywhere</u> there is an internet connection! Our team uses these resources every day to deliver client service and support. Here are just a few ways your business could benefit from this technology:

File Sharing, Versioning, and Control: Too often we see companies using email for sharing and distributing critical project team deliverables, notes, and documents. This process of 'back-and-forth' emails is what I refer to as the 'death by attachment' approach. While this may seem like a fast way to share a document it can slow your email server, hog critical disk space, and require costly upgrades/expansions. SharePoint technology helps avoid these issues by allowing teams to create shared libraries for documentation, restricted access documents, version management, and custom workflows. No more waiting to download that 25MB attachment!

Anywhere (Secure) Access (even via your smartphone): Project teams and employees are now scattered around the country, working from home, or on-site at a client's headquarters with little more than a smartphone and laptop. If you rely on everyone accessing your office file server then you most likely have employees using VPN connections from home or the road. While these connections work well they also 'steal' your company's' on-site bandwidth (i.e. 25 employees remotely accessing your server through your firewall – at one time!). Such solutions also require setup and do not help when needing to grant third-party access (i.e. contractor, auditor, etc.). SharePoint technology addresses all these issues by providing access to all of your team anywhere there is an internet connection. The connection is secure, user roles provide granular access permissions, and no longer rely on your corporate server!

Scalability and Adaptability: Teams, and companies in general, are working shorter deadlines with narrower margins and cannot afford lengthy downtime or drawn out install, configure, and training for a new tool. Additionally, project and company resources vary across sites, making flexibility a priority. Again SharePoint technology offers a solution to all of these issues through scalable sizing (i.e. add storage as you go), pre-built templates and quick-start workspaces, and no limit to the number of projects or project team members.

Along with these key advantages, a SharePoint based project and collaboration solution offers many other great tools to keep your employees and team members working at their best. If you or your teams are looking to increase collaboration, better manage project and team resources, and be productive in and out of the office, visit our Share-Point services site at **WWW.XPERTECHS.COM/SHAREPOINT** or call our team (410.884.0225) for a free trial!

Social Media Policies In The Workplace

Back in November, the National Labor Relations Board issued a Complaint alleging that an employer illegally terminated an employee who posted disparaging remarks about her supervisor on her personal Facebook page. The posting referred to her supervisor as a "psychiatric patient" and used several vulgarities, which resulted in other employees chiming in (Associated Press, November 2010).

While the Complaint is only an accusation and not a formal ruling from the NLRB, the repercussions of this action are critically important for employers of both unionized and non-unionized employees alike. Many employers are now reviewing their social media policies with a view to determining what they can lawfully prohibit employees from posting online.

Although we cannot provide any legal advice, one of the things we can help our clients with is establishing an acceptable use policy that outlines how employees can use company resources, such as their e-mail, Internet and electronic equipment. We can also help by setting up monitoring software that can either allow management to govern employee access to certain web sites, such as gambling, porn, career sites, etc., or block employees from those sites all together. If you want to keep employees focused on being productive at work, then give us a call or visit our website for more Information.

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