

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



The Smarter Path



“As a business owner, I know 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!”

- Willie Kerns, SmartPath Technologies

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Windows Server 2003: Why You Should Get Current

Each product that Microsoft releases has a lifecycle that determines how long to maintain and support the product. Please be reminded that support for Windows Server 2003 family of products will be coming to its End of Support (EOS) on July 14, 2015. We understand that this EOS brings complexities, but it also brings wonderful opportunities to transform your Network. New advancements since Windows Server 2003 included in Windows Server 2012 R2 as well as Microsoft Azure allows you to upgrade and take advantage of so many advancements, not only with the Operating System, but in the way to support the business. Don’t think of this as a mere lift and shift, but a truly amazing time to reconsider the way you position your business for the future.

So what happens when Windows Server 2003 support comes to and end?

- Requests for changes to product design or features will no longer be accepted nor accommodated
- Security updates will no longer be provided, exposing your Windows Server 2003 installation to security threats
- Payment Card Industry (PCI) policies will not be met with an operating system that is EOS
- Hotfixes and bug fixes will no longer be provided
- Complimentary support (phone and online) included with the licenses will no longer be provided
- Paid support (e.g. from Microsoft Premier Support) will no longer cover Windows Server 2003 Family of Products

New vulnerabilities discovered in Windows Server 2003 after its “end of life” will not be addressed by new security updates from Microsoft. What is the risk? One risk is that attackers will have the advantage, because attackers will likely have more information about vulnerabilities in Windows Server 2003, placing the applications running on Windows Server 2003 in a precarious position. When Microsoft releases a security update, security researchers and criminals will often times reverse engineer the security update in short order in an effort to identify the specific section of code that contains the vulnerability addressed by the update. Once they identify this vulnerability, they attempt to develop code that will allow them to exploit it on systems that do not have the security update installed on them. They also try to identify whether the vulnerability exists in other products with the same or similar functionality. For example, if a vulnerability is addressed in one version of Windows Server, researchers investigate whether other versions of Windows Server have the same vulnerability. To ensure that our customers are not at a disadvantage to attackers who employ such practices, one long standing principle that the Microsoft Security Response Center (MSRC) uses when managing security update releases is to release security updates for all affected products simultaneously. This practice ensures customers have the advantage over such attackers, as they get security updates for all affected products before attackers have a chance to reverse engineer them.

But after July 14, 2015, organizations that continue to run Windows Server 2003, as well as any other Microsoft products that have hit their EOS, like Exchange 2003, Outlook 2003 and even Windows XP, won’t have this advantage over attackers any longer. The very first month that Microsoft releases security updates for supported versions of Windows Server, attackers will reverse engineer those updates, find the vulnerabilities and test Windows Server 2003 to see if it shares those vulnerabilities. If it does, attackers will attempt to develop exploit code that can take advantage of those vulnerabilities on Windows Server 2003. Since a security update will never become available for Windows Server 2003 to address these vulnerabilities, Windows Server 2003 will essentially have a “zero day” vulnerability forever.

Shiny New Gadget of the Month



Pebble Steel

Pebble Steel does more than just tell the time — this smart watch displays e-mail, text messages, caller ID and other notifications from your favorite apps, reading them straight from your iPhone or Android phone. Pebble cleverly vibrates on your wrist to alert you of incoming calls, meeting reminders or approved notifications. Leave your phone in your pocket as you go about your day-to-day activities.

The long-lasting battery life and the easy-to-use design makes this watch both stylish and necessary in this day and age, and its e-Paper screen makes it easy to see in both direct sunlight and even underwater.

Pebble Steel is available on Amazon.com for \$149.99. With this gadget, whose battery can go for a week without charging, the integration of technology in your life will be smoother and much more hands-free.

3 “Techie” Reasons You Can Be Thankful This Season

1. **Cyber Thieves Keep A-Knockin’ But They Can’t Come In.** A study presented at the International Conference on Dependable Systems and Networks showed that small-business networks are attacked every 39 seconds by some type of hacker or malicious software. Thankfully, having the proper firewall and office network security tools can prevent even the most determined cyber hacker from getting his hands on your network.
2. **Downtime Should Be A Thing Of The Past.** Thanks to monitoring and maintenance tools that are openly available, any reputable computer company can now actually notice when things go awry and prevent your computers from having issues. Hot fixes, patches and security updates are generally items that, when maintained on a regular basis, keep a network healthy and up and running. If, for some reason, your network still has some kind of downtime, cloud-based remote management tools allow your IT professional to access your system from anywhere, getting you up and running more quickly than ever before.
3. **If Disaster Strikes, You Can Be Back Up & Running In Minutes Instead Of Days.** In addition to lost data, many businesses’ operations would be completely down for days or weeks if a major disaster like fire, flood or theft ever occurred. Here’s where Backup & Disaster Recovery solutions (BDR) can help you feel very thankful indeed. Most of today’s BDR solutions include a “virtualization” component, which means an exact “picture” of your server and computers is taken throughout the day and stored elsewhere. If you ever need to get back up and running, your IT company simply restores that image... and you’re back in business.



Want To Feel Thankful Instead Of Frustrated With Your Computers? Call us before November 30 for a FREE Problem Prevention Network Audit (a \$297 value) that will help eliminate problems on your network and give you peace of mind.

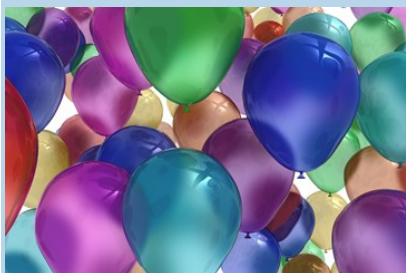
CALL 270-205-4709 NOW!

Meet Mike Murray:

Michael Murray is originally from Memphis, TN but found himself relocated to KY in early 2013. Mike, as we call him, loves to watch Sports Center, play basketball and enjoys a good game of golf on the weekends. Mr. Murray claims to be a shy person, but really, there’s not a shy bone in his body! Kristy has found that his sore spot is her home-made banana nut bread-that works wonders for bribing Mike into doing things! He is our VOIP go to guy, and will be speaking at our VOIP Lunch & Learn in October. Who better to help others get the right phone system for their business?!



The Lighter Side... How Balloons Teach Teamwork



Once, in a seminar of about 50 people, the speaker decided to change his presentation to prove a point. He decided to do a group activity. He gave each person a balloon and asked them to write their names on it with a marker.

All the balloons were gathered up and put into a small room. The attendees were all let into the balloon-filled room and were asked to find the balloon with their own name on it within 5 minutes. As expected, everyone was frantically searching for their name, colliding with each other, pushing around others and creating utter chaos.

At the end of the 5 minutes, no one had found their own balloon.

The presenter then asked the attendees to randomly pick up one balloon and give it to the person whose name was written on it.

Within minutes, everyone had their own balloon.

“This is what is happening in our lives,” the presenter explained. “Everyone is looking frantically for their own happiness, not knowing where it is.”

Our happiness lies in the happiness of others. Give happiness to other people, and you shall find your own.

This is the purpose of human life.

Workplace Lemons (and How Not to be One)

According to the Wikipedia, “**Lemon laws** are American state laws that provide a remedy for purchasers of cars in order to compensate for cars that repeatedly fail to meet standards of quality and performance.”

No one wants to spend money for a car or other product that is defective or doesn't meet expected standards. And no one likes to be disappointed by what they get for the money they spend. What if there were lemon laws for disappointing workplace performance?

As an employee who is paid by an employer to perform, what might get you disqualified as a “lemon”?

In the workplace, they're not called “lemon laws.” They are called dismissal and termination. And they're bad for both the employer and the employee.

If you like your job, you don't want to be replaced for being defective in the results you deliver. Here are three ways to make sure your work won't invoke the spirit of the lemon law:

1. Know what is expected

Every employer has expectations when they do business with you. Unfortunately, some employees don't find out what those expectations are until after they're not met.

Meet with your manager to clarify your own job expectations. That includes where you should focus your attention, what gets priority and what skills you need to develop or improve.

Priorities change, so regularly schedule a brief meeting for feedback on your performance to make sure you're focused on doing the right things.

2. Meet standards and, if possible, exceed them

The most valued employees are those who know how to add value to their work. To earn more, contribute more. The worst thing you can do, for an employer or a customer, is to over-promise and under-deliver. That's a guaranteed strategy for disappointment.

Consider these questions: What are you doing to exceed expectations? Are you willing and able to do a little more than expected? Are you unique in a way that your company values, or are you interchangeable with anyone else who could do the job?

3. Commit to excellence

Excellence begins with a mind-set. It is the commitment to focus your attention and skills to create something worthy of you, valued by your employer and worthwhile to your customer. Those who do only “just enough” often get by but they never get ahead.

Employers appreciate not just the work that is done, but the attitude of the person doing the work.

There is an old and familiar saying: “If life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” That's great advice for dealing with adversity and setbacks. But if you want to be a valued employee and move ahead in your career, make sure your work doesn't qualify for any lemon laws of low performance. Instead, strive to be a positive example of superior performance.

4. Seek feedback

One way to assure that your performance is as expected or better is to ask for ongoing feedback. Don't just inquire about how you're doing; specifically ask about what you could do differently or better to improve your work. A rational employer will appreciate your efforts to assure quality and get better at what you do.

If there were lemon laws for workplace performance, neither you nor I would want to invoke them with substandard work. Aim to meet expectations, continually improve performance and become an encore performer in your organization.



Robert Stevenson is a highly sought after, internationally known speaker. He is the author of the best-selling books *How to Soar Like an Eagle in a World Full of Turkeys* and *52 Essential Habits for Success*. Robert is a graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and is a former All-American Athlete. He started his first business at 24 and has owned several companies. Robert has international sales experience dealing in over 20 countries and his client list reads like a Who's Who in Business. He has shared the podium with such renowned names as Generals Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf, former President George H.W. Bush, Anthony Robbins and Steven Covey. www.robertstevenson.org/

Would You Rather Text Than Talk? Essential Tips For Business Texting

You use your iPhone or Android for everything else. Your spouse even texts you to grab some milk at the store or to tell you they'll be gone when you get home. It's quick, easy and gets the job done. Why not in business too?

If you're going to text for business purposes, follow these 7 texting tips to keep it professional:

- Consider if your message is urgent. Your text may interrupt your recipient...be sure there's a good reason for that interruption.
- Is e-mail better? Most people prefer business communications via e-mail as it better respects their time and ability to respond appropriately. Text messages are also easily lost if sent at a bad time.
- Do they only e-mail you? If yes, respond to them in the same way. If they e-mail, send an e-mail. If they call, call them back.
- DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS. DON'T YOU FEEL LIKE SOMEONE IS YELLING AT YOU WHEN THEY TYPE IN ALL CAPS? DON'T SEND E-MAILS OR TEXTS IN ALL CAPS.
- Proofread your message. Ever hear of "Auto-Correct" in text messages? Some can be downright embarrassing. If you're taking the time to write the message, take the extra seconds to proofread.
- No abbreviations! Your recipient shouldn't have to decipher your text message with a decoder ring. Be as clear as you can with proper grammar and pronunciation. No sense in risking losing a customer who gets fed up with your messages.
- Include your name in the message. Not everyone knows who you are simply by your cellphone number. Assume that the person doesn't know who the message is coming from.

If you do text in a business environment, especially with a customer or prospect, follow these 7 tips to ensure that you are perceived as the true business professional that you are!



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