

NOVEMBER 2015



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



The Smarter Path

Last Chance To Save Up To \$25,000 In Taxes On IT Software, Equipment And Services



“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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Cybersecurity Seminar Lunch

It’s not too late to reserve your VIP seating for the November 6th, 2015 Cybersecurity Lunch and Learn! SmartPath Technologies will be sharing information **YOU CAN’T AFFORD TO MISS!** We will be working hand in hand with Mr. Dan Jackman from the FBI, to cover the topic of cybersecurity that every business in this area must know! Right now, cyber criminals are hard at work to try and steal sensitive data from local small businesses and we want to make sure everyone is well informed on protection tactics. If you would like to attend **“Why Businesses in Western Kentucky and Southern Illinois Are Becoming the Bullseye for Cyber Criminals and How to Stop Them COLD!”** please respond today to reserve your spot at :

www.smartpathtech.com/novemberlunch

or call our office at (270) 2238-8997.

While many tax incentives for small business have been shot down in recent years, Section 179 of the IRS tax code remains one legal “loophole” worth looking into.

This year (unless Congress changes it at the last minute, which they have done in the past several years) Section 179 allows you to purchase up to \$200,000 of qualified equipment and software. With that purchase, you can write off up to \$25,000 as a Section 179 deduction.

That’s less than in previous years, but the good news is, you can still triple your savings. Here’s how:

- 1. Save on taxes.** If your business could use new software, equipment or services, but the expense is just a little beyond your reach, the tax savings you’ll gain from a Section 179 deduction might just tip the balance in your favor.
- 2. Take advantage of year-end price reductions.** Manufacturers and service providers need to look good to their investors at year’s end. It’s a great time of year to bargain for the best deal.
- 3. Leverage your savings with smart financing.** Taking advantage of an equipment lease or equipment finance agreement could turn out to be the most profitable business decision you’ll make this year. How? By combining a properly structured equipment lease or equipment financing agreement with a full Section 179 deduction, your cash outlay for the year will very likely be less than your deduction.

Plus, your business can start profiting immediately from the new equipment, software or services you invest in.

AND, in the spirit of saving you money, we’ll provide a discount ranging from 5-25% off of any project labor costs related to the upgrade!



Call us today at (270) 238-8997 to get started.

Just remember – these savings for 2015 evaporate at midnight on December 31. Call us today at (270) 238-8997 to get started.

Disclaimer: Everyone’s tax situation is different. Consult with your own tax professionals for specific advice.

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.



It's almost that time of the year again! Can you believe it? I've already seen Christmas ornaments in stores and the glistening of gold and red lights that automatically

brings the holidays to mind. At SmartPath Technologies we simply love children and giving back to the community. We love that our clients are so giving as well! So in the spirit of giving, we will continue the Angel Tree Drive again this year!

Watch in the coming months for more information on how you can make Christmas morning special for a child in our immediate area. We will work hand in hand with all of our generous clients as well as community resource partners to make sure no child goes without a sparkly gift under the tree this year. Last year, we smashed our goals and only hope to make the **2015 SmartPath Technologies Angel Tree Drive**, the best one yet!

Two Basic Ways to Determine the Size of Your Market

Understanding the size of a potential market is all-important. If a market is too small, you can't make money, no matter how innovative your products or competitive the pricing. That's where a market analysis comes in. Here are two basic methods:

Top-down analysis: Determine the total size of the market and then estimate your share of that market. Here's how a typical top-down analysis might go: "Let's see. I will sell a widget everyone can use, and since there are at least 3 billion potential users, even if I only manage to land 1% of that market I'll sell 30 million apps!"

Sound optimistic? That's how a top-down analysis usually sounds; it's like the stereotypical "2% of a \$1 billion market is \$20 million!" sales forecast made in hundreds of pitch meetings every year.

Bottom-up analysis: Estimate potential sales to determine a total sales figure. A bottom-up analysis evaluates where products can be sold, the sales of comparable products and the portion of sales you can gain. While it takes a lot more effort, the result is usually much more accurate.

Here's a quick example. Say you just developed a new external hard drive and want to determine if there is a profitable market that will sustain a real business.

1. Where are hard drives pumps typically sold? You decide to focus on specialty computer stores, at least at first, since landing shelf space at Walmart isn't particularly likely.
2. How many specialty stores are in the US? You determine there are approximately 5,000 (a number we just made up).
3. How many of those stores will be willing to stock your drives? Talk to as many as you can to see if they would be willing to carry your product. If you talk to 100 and 30 claim they will, be conservative and cut that number in half. If 15% of stores actually carry your product, that's 750 stores.
4. How many drives does a shop sell over the course of a year? Say the stores average 200 total drives a year. Every shop carries a variety of drives, so assume you can sell 30 drives a year to each shop.

The final math is easy: 750 shops times 30 drives per shop equals 22,500 drives a year.

The key to sizing up your market is to stay objective and make an honest and unbiased evaluation of how viable your product or service will be. Always go into business with realistic expectations — that way the only surprises, at least where sales are concerned, will be pleasant ones.

Who Couldn't Use a Little More Money?

With the holidays right around the corner, who couldn't use more change in their pocket right now? SmartPath Technologies is always committed to trying to find technology that is also cost effective to our clients. This month we are spotlighting VoIP telephone services. If your office doesn't currently take advantage of the voice over internet provider phone technology, we would love to introduce you to the latest technology in answering phones and message services, as well as potentially save you a lot of cash!



If you would like to know more about VoIP, simply scan a copy of your last two phone bills and email those to marketing@smartpathtech.com and we will get working on the comparison for you or you may visit our website www.smartpathtech.com and click under the **SERVICES** tab. We have had clients switch from AT&T and Windstream recently and save almost \$4,000! Again, who couldn't use a little more money?

If VoIP sounds like something that would benefit your office and help things run smoothly, call today to set up an appointment (270) 238-8997!

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.



Write me a theme song and rig it so it plays when people enter my office."

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Barn Movers

In 1981 Donna and Herman Ostry bought a farm in the small town of Bruno, Nebraska, about 60 miles outside of Omaha. The farm came with a big barn that had been built back in the 1920s and also had a nice little creek that flowed through their property. The creek was both a blessing and a problem for the Ostrys. It was great to have readily available water for their farm animals but it also flooded a lot during heavy rains. The barn floor seemed to always be wet and muddy, and then in 1988 they had a huge flood where the water rose about 30 inches up the side of the barn walls.

The Ostrys desperately needed to move the barn to higher ground, but the cost to contract with a company that has both the capability and equipment to move a barn of this size was prohibitive. One night, sitting around the dinner table, Herman Ostry commented that if he had enough people he could pick the barn up and move it to higher ground. Everyone laughed off the comment as silly ... everyone except his son Mike.

I wonder if "young" Mike knew that people scoffed at the idea of traveling 30 miles per hour on a railroad car. People actually thought that traveling that fast would stop the circulation of the blood. I wonder if "young" Mike knew that Eli Whitney was laughed at when he showed his first cotton gin, that Thomas Edison had to install his electric light free of charge in an office building before anyone would look at it or that Samuel Morse had to plead before 10 Congresses before they would even look at his telegraph (*which revolutionized communication*). Maybe "young" Mike just thought ... **WHY NOT** ... and then he set out to figure out a way to make his Dad's statement a reality.

Young, inexperienced, doesn't-know-any-better Mike did some calculations and figured out that the barn weighed about 17,000 pounds. He then figured out that he could design a steel grid system that he could place under the barn that would weigh another 3,000 pounds. So, the total weight that would need to be lifted was 10 tons. "Young" Mike figured if he could gather up about 350 people, they would all need to only be able to lift approximately 50 pounds each.

Mike presented his calculations to his dad, and they both thought it would work. Mike and his dad got a little lucky on the timing when they presented their idea to their small town. Nebraska was getting ready to celebrate its centennial, and the town of Bruno had put together a committee of townspeople to decide on different things to do for the celebration. Mike and his dad convinced the town to make the barn moving a part of the celebration. The word got out and over 4,000 people from 11 states witnessed the event.

A little before 11 a.m. on July 30th, 1988, in front of the local television cameras, 344 people moved the barn 143 feet up a gentle slope to its new foundation. *All in all*, it took 3 minutes to move the barn. So, the next time somebody hits you with an idea that you think is silly or maybe even impossible ... think again, and never discount the POWER of TEAMWORK.

Relive this idea again in your head. Someone in a meeting says, **"Let's move a 17,000-pound barn 143 feet up a slope, and do it in less than 3 minutes, using no machinery."** Now, that idea sounds pretty nuts, ridiculous, stupid, impossible and far-fetched to me. But a need, a desire, a creative mind, a well-designed plan and a giant team, **all working together**, made it happen.



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Are You STILL Keeping Critical Passwords On A Post-IT Note Next To Your Computer? Read On For An Easy Way To Remember Your Passwords And Maintain High Security



One of the hardest habits we struggle to get our clients to break is writing down their passwords on sticky notes by their PC. Obviously this is a security risk. Another bad habit is choosing really easy-to-remember passwords such as “password.”

But admittedly, it CAN be hard remembering all of those passwords that are always changing. To solve this little dilemma, we’re suggesting to our clients to stop using passwords and use “pass-phrases.”

What is a “pass-phrase” you ask? They are letters and numbers put together in an easy-to-remember phrase such as “GoEagles09!” These are MUCH easier to remember than a random cluster of letters and numbers, which means you won’t have to write them down on a post-it note anymore!

Pass-phrases can be built from anything, such as favorite quotes, lines from movies, sports team names, a favorite athlete’s name and jersey number, kids’ names and birthdates, pets, and so on.

All you need to do is be a little creative to get numbers, letters and punctuation into the phrase. Since introducing this to our clients, we’ve found (believe it or not) they actually have fun doing this! Just don’t get so proud of your pass-phrase that you share it with others.