THE ACCOUNTING NOTE

OFFICIAL COMPANY NEWSLETTER OF
PLUS 1 TECHNOLOGY

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

The technology newsletter for Accountants

This monthly publication is provided courtesy of Marc Umstead, President of Plus 1 Technology.

Our Mission:
Plus 1 aims to help empower accounting firms with tools that boost productivity, efficiency, and reliability. Our goal is to take the stress out of IT through innovative solutions and services.

Using Technology to Maximize Employee Productivity.

WRITTEN BY MARC UMSTEAD

Technology is a great tool to help improve the productivity of employees. Technology helps alleviate employees of menial, repetitive, and data entry tasks. The productivity gains from technology have been increasing every year for the last twenty or so years. We have seen an evolution from replacing people having to file folders, looking up pricing in price books, and even data entry tasks. Today we are seeing even more improvements with AI and computer learning replacing basic customer service interactions and predicting inventory needs.

Technology also helps improve everyday employee workflow. As a Managed Services Provider we work with companies everyday on optimizing their productivity and here are the 4 solutions that provide some of the largest productivity gains.

1. Multiple Monitors – To the users that have never used multiple screens, they often view it as excessive but users that have experienced the benefits often can't live without them.

Multiple monitors maximize productivity by allowing users to view different applications at the same time in full screen such as using Outlook while looking at an order or copying data from one system to another.

2. **Appointment Setting** – Microsoft Bookings, AppointmentCore, Calendy, and others provide easy ways for users to allow their customers, vendors, and colleagues setup meetings without the productivity killer of the back-and-forth emails trying to select days and times. This solution is great for CPA firms to setup tax appointments or salespeople trying to book intro or demo calls

3. **Inter-company communication** – Microsoft Teams, Slack, and others enable workers to communicate and collaborate weather they are in the next office over or across the globe. Enabling these chat tools allow employees to get answers much quicker than email or phone calls permit.

4. **File Sharing / Cloud Storage** – Using a cloud storage or sharing solution allows workers in any location to retrieve, edit, and produce company data. These solutions cut the tie between the physical location and access to company data. As long as the proper security is enabled this is a great way to enable remote work.

Companies should be looking to enable as many of these and any other identifiable productivity improvement because the ROI is usually exponential. Employees are also grateful that companies are investing in maximizing their productivity tools.
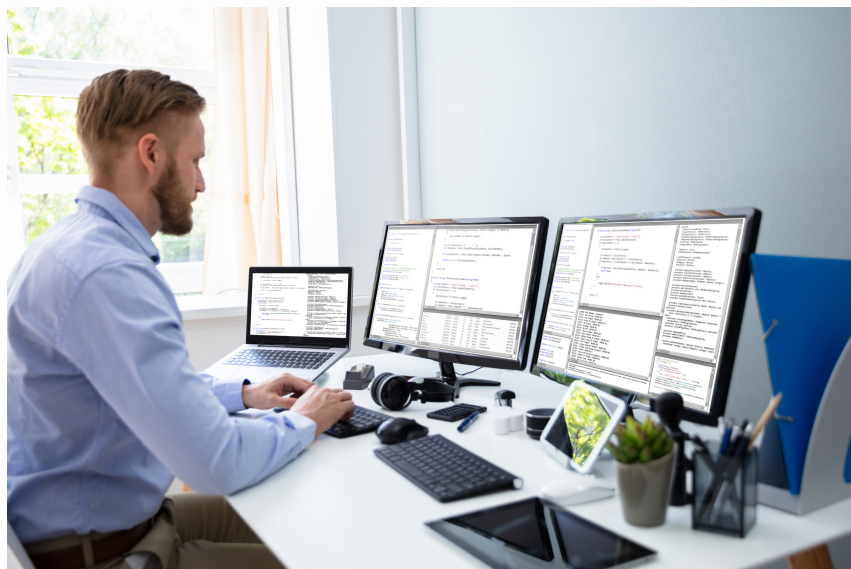
Free Cyber Security Audit Will Reveal Where Your Computer Network Is Exposed And How To Protect Your Company Now

At no cost or obligation, our highly skilled team of IT pros will come to your office and conduct a comprehensive cyber security audit to uncover loopholes in your company's IT security.

After the audit is done, we'll prepare a customized "Report Of Findings" that will reveal specific vulnerabilities and provide a Prioritized Action Plan for getting these security problems addressed fast. This report and action plan should be a real eye-opener for you, since almost all of the businesses we've done this for discover they are completely exposed to various threats in a number of areas.

To get started and claim your free assessment now, visit www.IT4MyBusiness.com/csra

Microsoft Bookings

Looking for an easy way for your clients to book their tax appointments?

Plus 1 Technology has adopted the Microsoft Bookings solutions for Accountants to allow their clients to easily book their tax or monthly review meetings. This solution allows your clients to visit a web page to see available times to book an appointment with either a specific person or a member of a team. This solution is included in many Microsoft 365 subscriptions and integrates directly with your Exchange and Outlook. This solution is fully customizable so you can specify how long the appointments should be, who they can book with, and if there should be buffer time before and after.

This solution eliminates costly administrative time for your staff and eliminates the need for the back and forth emails or phone calls trying to schedule appointments.

PLUS ONE
TECHNOLOGY

Budgeting for IT: The Full Picture

WRITTEN BY MARC UMSTEAD

As accounting firms, you understand the importance of creating and using budgets for benchmarking company performance. How can your firm and your clients properly budget for IT spend? IT spending has become much different in recent years with the advent of subscription licensing, leasing, and more necessary services. In this article we will break the spending down into three parts: subscriptions, hardware, and services.

Subscriptions often replace what used to be annual or multi-year software licensing agreements. Microsoft Office, Adobe, and many more software license costs are now sold as a monthly subscription. The subscriptions costs are stable with pricing changes only once a year if that. This helps keep the cost assumptions constant and predictable. These subscriptions are also usually sold per user so your incremental cost of hiring a new employee is also predictable.

Hardware is probably the most overlooked part of IT budgeting. If you aren't using leasing, financing, or newer "as-a-service" offerings your hardware costs will fluctuate. Your Managed Services Provider should continually provide you a five-year hardware replacement schedule. Computers do not last forever and often need to be replaced for users to take advantage of faster and improved components. We typically recommend that computers are replaced every five years and physical servers are replaced every five to six years. We find that computers start to lag and generate more support calls around the five-year mark. If done correctly a hardware replacement schedule can be created to spread the cost of replacing hardware over a period. There are also leasing, financing, and even subscription options for hardware that can create a predictable monthly cost without having to make larger investments at one time.

We categorize services as your IT support costs. This may include management, cyber security, and your support costs. Your Managed Services Provider may offer different service plans that include different levels of services and support. Some of those plans may include certain support services so your service spend is more predictable. If you select a lower cost plan you may have to pay out of pocket for service calls which in turn can create a more fluctuating services bill.

Companies should also consider if they have any short- or long-term IT projects that may affect their budget. Migrating solutions to the cloud, moving offices, or moving to a new software package are all projects that may want to be budgeted for in advance. Budgets don't have to be exact but doing an imperfect budget is better than not doing one at all.

Windows 11 is Here!

Windows 11 was released on Oct 5th. We are still recommending that anyone using software for their work, check with the software manufacturer before updating. Also check with your Managed Services provider before upgrading any equipment so they can ensure you won't have any issues upon upgrading. Once you have the all-clear to upgrade, these are some features you may enjoy.

1. Windows 11 allows to the download and use of **Android apps**
2. **Widgets.** – It is a customizable feed of information on the side of the pc such as weather, calendar and a to-do list
3. **Microsoft Teams** is now more integrated with the operating system, making chats easier
4. **Multiple Desktops** – Now you can create separate virtual desktops depending on tasks. You may want a different desktop for work and personal use with different icons or wallpapers.
5. **Snap layouts** – Probably the best new feature for productivity is the ability to better "snap" different apps to different sections of your screen. This allows for enhanced productivity typically reserved for people with multiple monitors.

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Need a Level, Use your phone!

If you need to hang a picture, you don't need to grab a level — your phone can do it for you.

On an iPhone:
- Open the Measure app, then tap Level on the bottom right.
- The level will appear on the screen and is ready to use.

On an Android:
- Open the Google app or your browser and search for "bubble level."
- Use it just like you would a normal level, placing it on a surface.

MISTLETOE MARTINI

A fruity blend of elderflower and cranberry, this is a vibrant, uplifting drink that'll keep the party going late into the night.

HAPPY HOUR

Ingredients:
- 1 1/2 ounce vodka
- 1/2 ounce elderflower liqueur
- 1 1/2 ounce cranberry juice
- 1/2 ounce simple syrup
- Cranberries
- Mint leaves

- **Fill a cocktail shaker halfway with ice.**
- **Pour in the vodka, elderberry liqueur, cranberry juice and simple syrup.**
- **Shake until chilled.**
- **Strain into a martini glass.**
- **Garnish by tossing in a few cranberries and floating mint leaves on top**

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T E C H N O L O G Y

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