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SOLVE

FALL 2016



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Ted Tomita | Senior VP & CTO
CATSKILL HUDSON BANK

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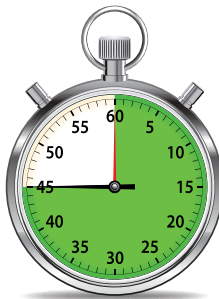
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Data, Defended

If business leaders feel they are constantly seeing headlines about cyber breaches and hacking attacks, it's no wonder. There were 780 reported breaches in 2015 alone, according to the Identify Theft Research Center. Approximately 178 million individual records were exposed. And no sector was immune: those breaches spanned business, government, education, and health care organizations.

Given these statistics, you'd expect that cybersecurity would be at the top of every executive's to-do list. However, as our infographic on page 3 shows, there's a widespread lack of awareness and literacy regarding the topic—which is why the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has declared October National Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

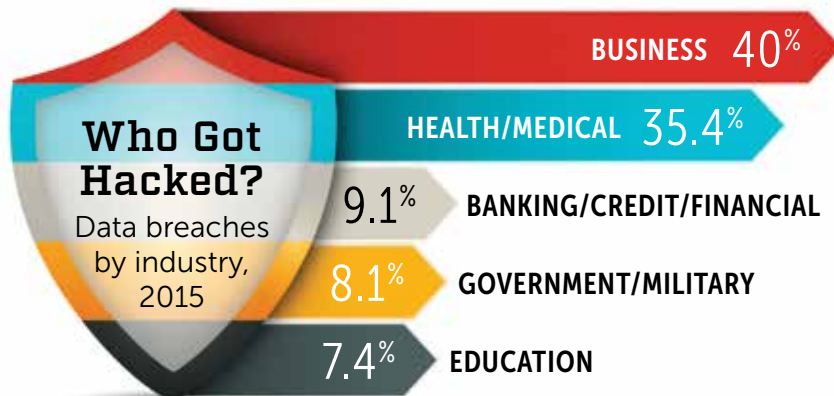
In fairness to executives, keeping on top of cybersecurity is no easy task. The field is multi-layered and complex, and hackers make sure that the needs for cyber-defense are constantly changing. In our story "Yes, You Can Master

Cybersecurity," beginning on page 12, we provide a concise overview of the challenges facing midsize businesses—and, more importantly, the solutions.

At Time Warner Cable Business Class, we know cybersecurity and midsize businesses very well. We've developed easy-to-understand and easy-to-use solutions, such as MRS (Managed Router Service) and MSS (Managed Security Service), and more. Each of these products is tailored to the needs of growing businesses and is kept continuously updated as cybersecurity evolves.

Most important of all, the people behind our products are always there to support our customers. In the end, perhaps the most critical thing a business leader needs to know about cybersecurity is this: Your company doesn't have to face the challenge alone.

Bob Kasai
GVP, Enterprise Marketing



Source: Identity Theft Resource Center 2015 Data Breach Report

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CYBER RISK:

Are Executives Aware?

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, part of a campaign by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (To learn more, visit staysafeonline.org/ncsam.) Despite a steady barrage of high-profile cyber attacks on business, government and education, recent research shows that many businesses aren't sufficiently aware of the threat.

43% of C-level executives can't interpret a **CYBERSECURITY REPORT** AT THE SAME LEVEL AS A **FINANCIAL REPORT**¹

2 OUT OF 5 C-LEVEL EXECUTIVES admit they don't feel **RESPONSIBLE** for the repercussions of **Cyber ATTACKS**² **75%** of **IT pros** **THINK EMPLOYEES' CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS** is **moderate** AT BEST³

\$15.4 MILLION / the average annual cost of **HACKING ATTACKS** to American firms in 2015—**DOUBLE** the global average⁴

77% OF SECURITY PROS say that, due to **COMPANY PRESSURE** they have released a new project before it was **COMPLETELY SECURE**⁵



COULD YOUR CYBERSECURITY USE SOME HELP? FIND ANSWERS IN "YES, YOU CAN MASTER CYBERSECURITY," P. 12.

SOURCES: 1. Tanium and Nasdaq survey conducted by Goldsmiths, 2016; 2. Ibid.; 3. 2016 Cybersecurity Confidence Report, Barkly; 4. 2015 Cost of Cyber Crime, Global, Ponemon Institute for Hewlett Packard; 5. 2015 Security Pressures Report survey, Trustwave



Living By the “Rule of 45”

TAP INTO THE POWER OF THE PROMPT RESPONSE.

Over the course of more than 40 years in business, I’ve learned many lessons. One of the most important is this: communication is the single biggest factor in success.

Communication is something we tend to take for granted, especially in a world with so many technological tools designed to facilitate it. But many, many business problems could be solved, or avoided altogether, if we were only better at communication.

An excellent example of this is what I call the “Rule of 45”: *When someone asks you for something, they expect a response within 45 minutes.*

The person who makes the request could be a client, a colleague, or a contact. No matter who it is or what he or she is asking for, the person is going to assume that you’re jumping right on it, because it’s a priority for him or her.

Nobody wants to spend time following up, asking for a status update, or inquiring when they can expect to hear back. And if they have to do that, there will come a point when they’re going to get upset.

That’s why I, along with my entire staff, live by the Rule of 45. Sure, we might need a day, a week, or even a month to fully deliver on a request. But by opening the initial dialogue within those 45 minutes, we’re beginning a conversation that can lead to a mutually agreeable outcome.

If the other party’s timeline isn’t flexible, we know right away whether we’re going to have to bring in help to get the task accomplished. Regardless of where the conversation ultimately leads, neither party is left to wonder about the next steps.

YOU CAN DO IT

Incorporating the Rule of 45 into a business starts at the top.

Of course, 45 minutes is a tight time frame for anybody, let alone a senior executive—but that’s the point. Time is precious for everyone. Showing respect for others’ time is essential.

What about a typical business day, when you’re in the office, but in back-to-back meetings, being drawn into the crisis du jour, or are just plain too busy to check e-mail?

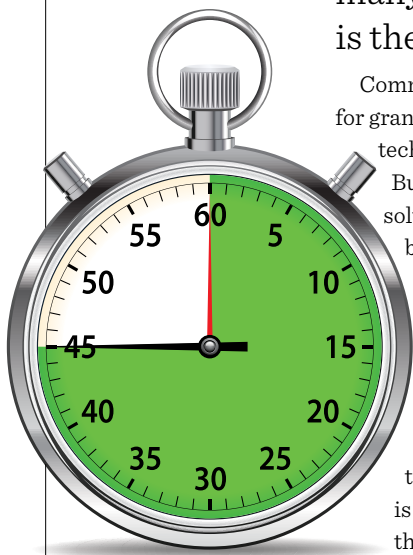
At my company, we set our work e-mails to appear on our mobile phones, so it’s no hardship to check for new e-mail at regular intervals. Our senior executives have learned the value of delegation—i.e., promptly forwarding an e-mail to the appropriate person on staff. Because we have developed a fast-response culture, we know we can count on our colleagues to follow through.

Let’s say you know you’re going to be traveling, or in an all-day conference. Put a plan in place. Do everything possible to keep processes moving in your absence.

Create an automatic e-mail response that says, “I’m out of the office today,” including information about when you will return and to whom urgent communication should be directed in your absence. Change your voice mail greeting, and make sure to keep your office calendar updated.

The Rule of 45 works. Since I started my company 22 years ago, we have gone from a staff of 10 to a staff of more than 650 across three continents. That type of success doesn’t happen by accident. It requires an organizational commitment to excellence in our work and our communications.

Try the Rule of 45, and see if you don’t get big results—just by making everybody’s life a little bit easier.



WARREN IVIE is the founder and CEO of Ivie & Associates, an international marketing firm headquartered in Flower Mound, Texas.

FIELD REPORT: PROSOURCE

Aligning IT With Customer Goals

A MANAGED IT PROVIDER FINDS SYNERGIES WITH TWCBC'S BUSINESS PARTNER REFERRAL PROGRAM.

THE CHALLENGE: Prosource Technology Solutions, a division of office equipment dealer Prosource, takes a nontraditional approach to providing managed IT. "With a traditional model, the IT provider's goal is to maximize hourly billing," explains Jeff Loeb, vice president of operations. "In our model, we're charging a flat rate, so our goal is to keep things running smoothly and have as little downtime as possible. Our goals [and the customer's] are aligned."

However, neither Prosource nor its customers can meet those goals without a robust and reliable technology infrastructure. As businesses turn to cloud-based business applications, the need for faster, more reliable Internet service becomes ever more urgent.

THE SOLUTION: In 2011, Prosource joined the Time Warner Cable Business Class (TWCBC) Business Partner Referral Program (BPRP). That means Prosource enjoys a range of benefits, from a dedicated business partner portal to access to TWCBC's local sales engineers. TWCBC's expertise helps Prosource create strong proposals and enhances its "virtual CIO" approach. "We might say [to a client], 'Your Internet is not up to specification because of these applications,'" explains Dan Winterhalter, VCIO and director of customer relations. "TWCBC will then help us through that piece."



VP, OPERATIONS: Jeff Loeb, left
VCIO: Dan Winterhalter, right

THE RESULT: Teamwork has paid off. Through referrals and retention, Prosource has averaged annual growth of 30 percent, and doubled its business last year. (As a partner, Prosource receives commissions on referrals that TWCBC sells and installs.) When TWCBC provides the right solution at the right price, Prosource can customize its proposals to ensure that customers reach their specific business goals.

"It doesn't matter whether we're recommending connectivity or telephony solutions. [TWCBC] can deliver both, which is great," Loeb says.

Security is another area in which participating in the BPRP offers an advantage. For example, when connectivity over public Internet isn't right for a customer, the TWCBC sales engineer might recommend a point-to-point



private network solution. Prosource can then use that network as a backbone for its own multi-layered security for cloud, mobility, big data, and social media applications.

The quality of service the relationship allows may be the biggest advantage of all. "If we take care of customers and do what's best for them, they will be our customers for life," Loeb says. "When we bring in TWCBC, we know clients are going to be treated the way we would treat them."

"If we take care of customers and do what's best for them, they will be our customers for life."

—Jeff Loeb

For more information on the TWCBC Business Partner Referral Program, visit business.timewarnercable.com/referral

CAN OUTSOURCING MAKE YOUR COMPANY STRONGER?

FOR GROWING COMPANIES, THAT IS THE QUESTION. HERE'S HOW TO FIND YOUR ANSWER.

The most precious resources of any business are the time and mind-share of the owner or CEO.

That's always been true, but it's even more so today as technology and globalization accelerate innovation and competitive threats. Top executives need to spend most of their time dealing with core business challenges and opportunities. They also need to understand where *not* to spend their time.

Enter outsourcing, the practice of partnering with an outside company to take care of specific tasks that would otherwise be done in-house. It's an arrangement that has become increasingly available to midsize companies in a range of functions: payroll and benefits, help desk support, server maintenance and backup, IT security, call center activity, customer loyalty programs, and more.

In midsize companies, a leader's time is too often consumed by functions like these, which, while important, should not require the CEO's hands-on involvement. This tends to happen when a department, such as IT or HR, is small. The department head often reports directly to the CEO, who then finds him- or herself providing strategic and tactical management in that area. And as a business grows, it needs to rethink its processes to accommodate greater needs.

All of this takes time—time that the CEO would better spend focusing on core competencies that have an impact on revenue generation, customer service, and product innovation.

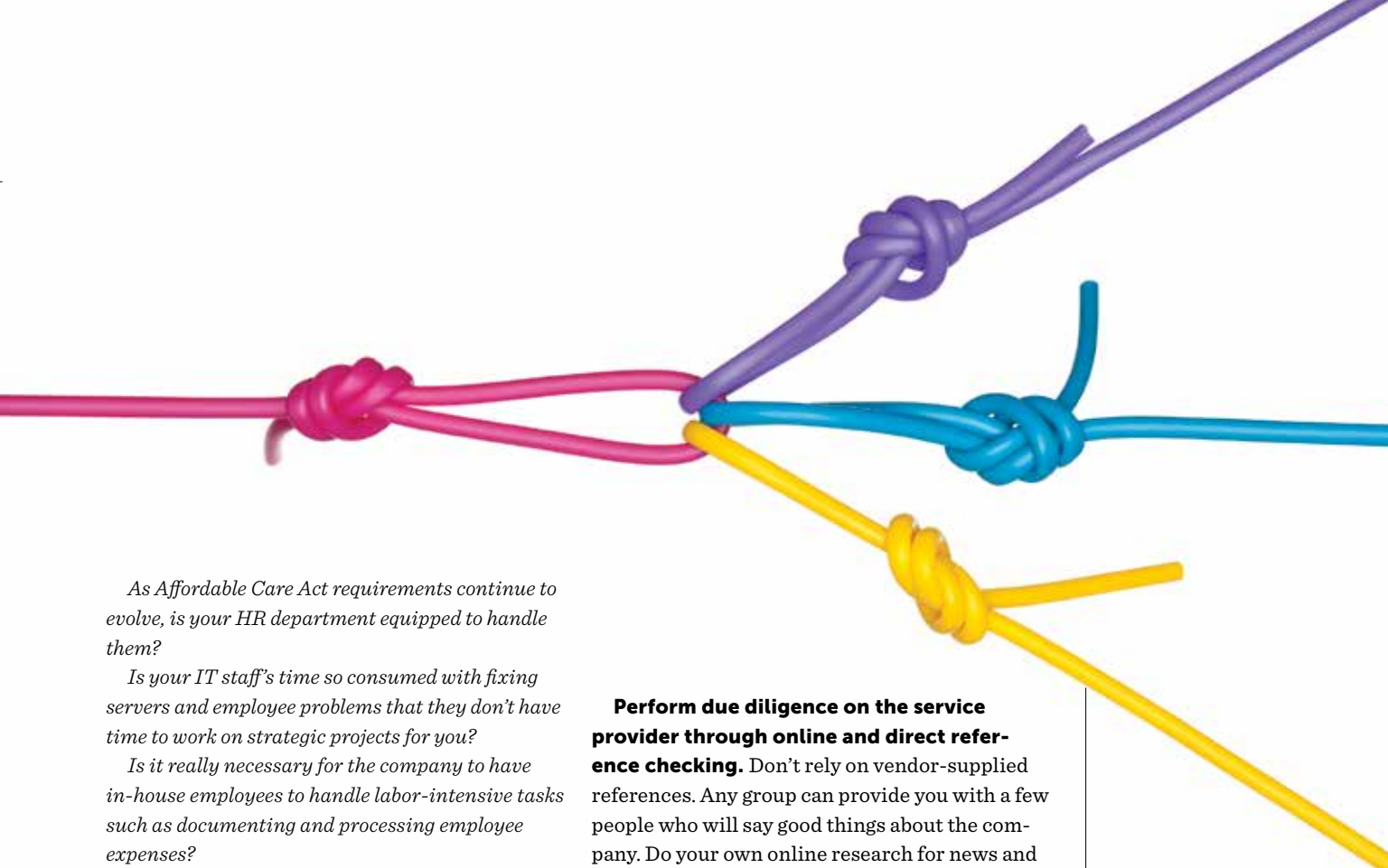
But how does a business leader decide what function to outsource and when to do it?

SIZING UP YOUR SITUATION

As a first step, review the workflow associated with any function being considered for outsourcing. How much of leadership's time is involved in these areas? How core are the areas to the customer experience, or to product or service innovation? Questions to ask may include:

Does your company have the depth and breadth of expertise required to be best in class in a fast-evolving area, such as web-based marketing?





As Affordable Care Act requirements continue to evolve, is your HR department equipped to handle them?

Is your IT staff's time so consumed with fixing servers and employee problems that they don't have time to work on strategic projects for you?

Is it really necessary for the company to have in-house employees to handle labor-intensive tasks such as documenting and processing employee expenses?

If your business is like most, a certain institutional inertia will impede your ability to identify and execute on outsourcing opportunities. Some of the more frequent objections are:

- “We need to have this function in-house.” (This may mean an executive feels he or she needs to have people on the premises reporting to him or her to maintain power in the company.)
- “I feel more comfortable knowing that ABC function is right down the hall.”
- “What would we do without Mary? She has been with us for 10 years.”
- “I don't have the time to transition it out.”
- “I don't know who the potential outsourcers are, or how to evaluate them.”

The “keep it in-house” argument is becoming ever weaker as technology continually advances, and also because the labor market is tightening. If you have an “A” player in a non-core function, there is a good chance he or she will be hired away by an organization that can offer a better career track—and that person will be hard to replace.

PROCEEDING WITH CAUTION

For all its beneficial aspects, outsourcing can have its downside. Here are some ways to avoid some of the most common bad outcomes.

Perform due diligence on the service provider through online and direct reference checking. Don't rely on vendor-supplied references. Any group can provide you with a few people who will say good things about the company. Do your own online research for news and reviews. Ask peers in your industry who they use and how it's working out.

Be clear on what remains in-house versus what is outsourced. Do upfront work to minimize the potential for misunderstanding. Ask specific questions. For example, if the outsourcing agreement includes onboarding and new employee education, at what point does the process get turned over to the company?

Engage an attorney with experience in negotiating outsourcing contracts. A good lawyer will bring up legitimate business points on your behalf—for example, pre-negotiating rates for integration of future growth. He or she can also make sure that your contract gives you a way out if the service levels deteriorate, or if either you or the service provider goes through a merger or acquisition.

Over the past three years, we have seen outsourcing become more acceptable even to CFOs, traditionally the most risk-averse members of an executive team. Increasingly, corporate ecosystems are evolving beyond employees, vendors, and customers to include outsourcing partners. When you release resources—people, capital, and time—you allow yourself and your staff to focus on core competencies.



THOMAS BONNEY is founder and managing director of Philadelphia-based CMF Associates LLC, a firm that delivers transaction- and transition-focused financial, operational, and human capital solutions to private equity-backed companies.



Clean Up!

THE SIMPLE SECRET TO GETTING MORE SALES FROM YOUR LEAD LIST

BY SARAH MCMURRAY AND KARL BECKER



As you run your business, chances are that cleaning up your lead, customer, or prospect lists—i.e., making sure all contact information is up to date—is low on your priority list, if it's on there at all.

If that's the case, the likelihood is that a significant percentage of your list is outdated. And that means you're leaving money on the table.

Most companies' lead lists, whether maintained in-house or purchased, tend to be highly inaccurate. Prospects change jobs, salespeople

change jobs, companies restructure, and nobody is really focused on updating contact information. When a list isn't "clean," and an e-newsletter or marketing message is sent out, chaos ensues.

Let's take the case of a B2B professional services company looking to expand its market share. They want to fill the sales funnel, so they invest in a direct outreach program involving e-mails and calls

So make someone responsible for lead list management, or work with a partner that can manage your leads and your lead outreach efforts for you.

Establish standard operating procedures.

How would you enter your latest prospect, James Smythe of Hewlett-Packard, into your CRM? And would your entire team enter it the same way? Chances are you'll see different records

If a company isn't reaching a prospect for lack of correct information, one of its competitors certainly is.

to their in-house lead lists and to new leads from lists they recently purchased.

But the outreach backfires. More than 30 percent of the leads bounce because of invalid e-mail addresses. Numerous "prospects" ask to be removed because the company's services aren't relevant to them. Several people ask why they were on the distribution list, since they're current customers (several more ask why this is the only communication they've received from the company in ages). Then there are the people on the Do Not Contact list, who respond with e-mails that are less than pleasant.

Why does this matter? Because the professional services company has annoyed people and wasted their time, as well as its own time. The company has also, through inaccurate lists, missed the chance to reach a bunch of prospects. And if the company isn't reaching a prospect for lack of correct contact information, one of its competitors certainly is.

Keeping in touch with the right people, regularly, matters. For most sales, and certainly in B2B, there's a long courting process—essentially, a brand conversation—before a sale takes place. In our experience, more than half the time, the opportunity to work with a prospect follows 12 to 24 months of outreach efforts.

So when a customer says, "Hey, your timing is great—I was just thinking about buying," chances are that the key to the prospect's receptiveness is that your company had the right contact info for the right person, and therefore your company was showing up consistently on his radar.

LEAD LIST BEST PRACTICES

To be clear, list management is a big task. The good news is that some simple best practices can transform your lead lists from sources of inefficiency and needless expense into money-making assets.

Designate a lead list manager. Your marketers are focused on messaging and target audiences; your salespeople are zeroing on what needs to happen to make the next sale; and few or none of your employees have had training in data integrity.

for J. Smythe of HP, Jim Smyth of Hewlett Packard, James Smith of The Hewlett Packard Company, and so on.

These simple mistakes can lead to duplications, mistargeted product outreach, and ongoing Do Not Contact requests. So establish a standard procedure by which your company will input contact info, and train anyone who has access to customers or your CRM to make sure that updating the list is top of mind.

Use your CRM's capabilities. At the most basic level, send a test e-mail in order to record numbers of bounced e-mails. You can also set your CRM to do bounce reports on a regular basis. Running "open activity" reports can help identify dozens or even hundreds of ownerless leads in the system. A CRM can also alert you to tasks that are still open or overdue, so that if a salesperson leaves the company, you will be able to smoothly transition his or her tasks.

Automate where possible. Your CRM may even have the capability of merging duplicate entries. If you use Salesforce.com, check out its AppExchange for a number of dupe-detecting and list-merging applications, both free and paid. As your lists get into the high thousands, consider investing in a "scrubber" application, such as DemandTools, that uses fuzzy logic. Whereas Excel and CRMs look for exact matches, fuzzy logic algorithms incorporate variations, abbreviations, and misspellings.

Whatever methods you choose, be sure to refresh regularly. If James Smythe leaves HP and takes a new position at Oracle, you want to stay in touch with him in his new position, and also get to know his replacement at HP. Bringing in new leads at regular intervals will also keep your information fresh. Some lead providers, for example ZoomInfo, will even regularly refresh your lists with new leads.

As your company grows, your lead list automation and management capabilities should grow with it. Clean up those lists—and watch them become a valuable tool for business growth.



KARL BECKER is president, and **SARAH MCMURRAY** is process and workflow systems director, of The Carruthers Group, an Arvada, Colorado-based provider of sales programs for improving all phases of the sales funnel.





Jones with colleague
Captain David Kilmer

COMPANY Hagadone Corp.
CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY Judd Jones, *right*

FIELD REPORT: HAGADONE CORPORATION

Finding the Key to Connectivity

A DIVERSE ENTERPRISE GETS THE ROBUST NETWORK IT NEEDS.

THE CHALLENGE: The Hagadone Corporation, headquartered in offices overlooking Idaho's breathtaking Lake Coeur d'Alene, is a diverse enterprise that encompasses businesses from various industries, including hotels, golf, restaurants, real estate, media and publishing, advertising and photography, and marine and aviation divisions.

By 2014, the multiplicity of business operations had led to Hagadone Corporation having four different telecom providers—each with different capabilities for redundancy, bandwidth, and reliability. With the entire enterprise running on just 10 Mbps of bandwidth, capacity was definitely an issue. "It was very unreliable," says Judd Jones, corporate director of technology. "We paid a lot, but didn't get much for our investment."

However, with so many operations relying on the network, excellent service was critical. "[Our 14] newspapers

"In the past, things would break [at peak capacity], and now they don't."

—Judd Jones

have to hit the street," Jones says. "We have to have a network that is redundant and capable of high uptimes and low latency for delivery of data."

For years, Time Warner Cable Business Class (TWCBC) had provided the in-room TV service for Hagadone's two Best Western hotels and the flagship Coeur d'Alene Resort. When Jones began to explore his overall connectivity options, "TWCBC came in with such a compelling price point and bandwidth that it was pretty hard to not get on board."

THE SOLUTION: In 2015, TWCBC completed a major upgrade, installing a 200 Mbps EPL (Ethernet Private Line)

that links Hagadone corporate offices to operations at its hotels and resort. An additional 30 Mbps EPL extends service to the resort golf course.

A 400 Mbps DIA (Dedicated Internet Access) circuit provides connectivity for hotel guests, as well as for users and employees across the Hagadone enterprise. The DIA circuit can burst up to 1 Gbps to support seasonal—and even daily—usage spikes caused by, for example, a large convention at a hotel, or late-afternoon newspaper production. In addition, TWCBC Business Internet provides high-speed connectivity to Hagadone's boat shop. HDTV service was also upgraded for higher quality and reliability.

THE RESULT: "When we brought Time Warner Cable Business Class in, they consolidated everything into a single point that we can manage and monitor," Jones says. "We were also able to put more security around the network." Beyond ease of management, Jones prizes TWCBC's robustness and reliability. "In the past, things would break [at peak capacity], and now they don't."

TWCBC services have allowed the Hagadone Corporation to find new ways to deliver outstanding experiences for employees, customers, and guests. "We have probably one of the most updated WiFi access systems in place for hotels of our size, and it's all powered by Time Warner Cable Business Class service," Jones says. So is the WiFi for the conference rooms, convention center, and publishing division.

TWCBC service has even allowed the golf course to have webcams on the famous 14th hole, the "Floating Green," which is surrounded entirely by the waters of Lake Coeur d'Alene. Connectivity also extends to the golf carts, which have GPS and network interfaces, as well as a beverage cart service.

Looking ahead, Jones sees opportunities in every direction. He's considering ways to use network technologies to let hotel guests check in while they're on their way from the airport. He's also exploring a campus-wide dome of WiFi access points. He's evaluating how the network can best help Hagadone with PCI (payment card industry) and EMV (chip-enabled credit cards) compliance standards. "All things Internet-based [will] become more and more prevalent in our day-to-day operation," he says. As that happens, he can trust TWCBC to provide the scalability, reliability, and service required to support Hagadone Corporation's ongoing drive for excellence.

SHARE YOUR STORY! How did you partner with TWCBC to SOLVE your technology issues? Tell us about it for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue of SOLVE. To share your story, visit business.twc.com/nomination.



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 **TIME WARNER CABLE
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YES, YOU CAN



A comprehensive solution is closer—and cheaper—than you think.

If

YOUR MIDSIZE BUSINESS has plenty of IT staff, an ample IT budget, and no worries about keeping your data safe, congratulations. There's no need for you to read this article.

If, on the other hand, your company is like most companies today, the situation is much different. Your executives are unnerved by near-constant headlines about cyber hacks in business, health care, and government organizations. IT talent is hard to find, and once you do find it, the team's time tends to be consumed with maintenance and problem-solving.

Pressures like these, along with the breakneck pace of technology change, have led to a growing acceptance of turning to outside help for certain IT functions. In fact, more than 70 percent of small and midsize businesses utilized an outside IT firm at least once in 2014, according to a CompTIA survey. One of the chief reasons cited: security concerns.

In today's über-connected world, your business data could conceivably be shared with any other connected device on the planet. In some ways (think e-commerce or intra-company data sharing), that provides growth opportunities or operational efficiencies. On the flip side, connectivity can introduce risk that may well seem too complex to manage.

That's where an MSP (managed services provider) can step in and be the specialized partner you need to keep your data secure. Two specific services—MRS (managed router service) and MSS (managed security service)—are particularly relevant.

THE BIG PICTURE

First, let's look at an overview of managed services. MSPs vary widely in the types of services they provide. For example, they can take on your physical connections (Ethernet and Internet circuits) and so on, down through your routers, firewalls, switches, and phone systems.

STEER CYBERSECURITY

Most MSPs have an area of specialty, so before you enter discussions, be clear on what aspects of your network most require help.

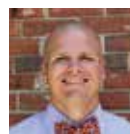
No matter what service you choose to focus on, an MSP should be able to provide clear benefits in the following three areas:

Lower total cost of ownership.

Working with an MSP allows your business to avoid large capital expenditure outlays for purchasing equipment, and eliminates the need to buy or renew licenses or do software updates.

If you operate these network services on your own, such outlays would be required about every three years for equipment, and at least annually for licensing. Depending on the equipment needed, you could be spending between \$3,000 and \$15,000 each time—and that's if the unit doesn't break or need to be upgraded.

On the other hand, if you take advantage of a provider's service,



JOSH HOLMES is product manager, managed network services, at Time Warner Cable Business Class.



MSS

AND

MRS

CAN SAVE
COMPANIES
MONEY.



your company will pay a monthly fee—a predictable operating expense for your budget—that covers all equipment, licensing, maintenance, software updates, and needed replacements.

Improved ease of network management. A good provider's platform will allow your IT staff to receive regular status reports in the form of a Web-based portal that provides a consolidated view of network devices in near real time. This view will allow your IT teams to perform a number of tasks efficiently, such as ensuring uniformity across devices; planning out network change; and confirming that company policies are enacted across all devices or locations. The payoff: increased network consistency, and the potential to avoid costly downtime and maintenance hours.

Access to advanced technical expertise and knowledge. As the networking world continues to evolve, new types of equipment are being launched to support new services. An MSP is in the business of staying abreast of the most current knowledge, and using it to best serve its customers. Through this specialization, an

MSP can help you realize new efficiencies through technological developments.

Now let's talk about some specific services related to security.

MEET THE MRS

As mentioned, MRS is an acronym that stands for managed router service. (Yes, we are bringing you over to the dark side of tech jargon. It's okay; we have cookies here.)

The best way to picture what a router does is to imagine you're traveling to New York City. Before you leave, the first thing you're probably going to do is try to figure out the best way to arrive at your destination. The FDR Drive? The GW Bridge? What route is going to get you there most efficiently?

That's exactly what a router does. If you have five interconnected offices and want to share files via e-mail or your private network, you want your router to access the network server that will get your message across fastest, based on traffic volumes. As you add locations, you need to configure new paths, travel to each site, and test them to make sure they're working.

Is it possible for your in-house team to do this? Of course—but with MRS, a team of experts can take pre-tested configurations and seamlessly drop them in your system. Your MSP will maintain the server, fix any issues that arise, and provide any needed upgrades. You will also have access to a portal that shows each routing device and information about its function, as well as captures and measures inbound and outbound traffic flow statistics, and each employee's Internet bandwidth consumption.

MRS helps your network function efficiently and securely. MRS solutions can also provide firewall functionality, which serves as a "filter" between the private network and the Internet. The service includes regular vulnerability scanning, as well as reporting on all attempted firewall attacks. The router, the critical point of contact between your network and the outside world, is monitored 24/7.

WHAT MSS DOES BEST

For a comprehensive cybersecurity solution that does not have a heavy need for traffic routing decisions, you will want to consider a managed security service, or MSS. Usually, an MSS takes the form of a physical device that sits at the point where your company's LAN (local area network) faces the Internet. There, it stops threats before they have a chance to enter the network. Where the MRS tool is used to efficiently direct and move traffic through a network, MSS is the tool used to scrutinize that traffic in a similar way to how the TSA checks passengers entering airports.

An MSS provides enhanced firewall protection because the MSP has the capacity to monitor worldwide trends in hacking, new vulnerabilities, updated virus signatures, and the like—fast-moving areas that are difficult for even the most diligent in-house teams to keep up with. Incoming data packets are scanned within a fraction of a fraction of a second before being sent on their way, so the network user experience is not affected.

A first-rate MSS will also include many more security features that would otherwise have to be purchased and deployed separately, such as antivirus protection, anti-spyware protection, content filtering

(which allows you to block inappropriate websites), and an IPS (intrusion prevention system) that not only monitors for attacks, but also takes action against them. Of course, a good MSS should include a web portal that lets you view and analyze all Internet activity that your company generates so that you can ensure your employees are not visiting any inappropriate sites while at work.

An MSS can also scale as your business requires. If your business has five or six locations, but you don't have the budget for an Ethernet-based private network, your MSS can create an encrypted tunnel to each of your other locations. This tunnel can be used to transfer sensitive company data between locations in a cost-effective way and it can be used to ensure all locations have the same security policies in place. An incoming data packet hits the MSS first, all firewall policies are applied, and then the data packet is sent to its intended location.

Both MRS and MSS can save companies money. In fact, a managed Internet router and security service can deliver up to 84 percent lower total cost of ownership, compared to an internally managed approach, according to ACG Research.

A second, and equally important, area of savings is in opportunity cost. What amount of revenue could your IT department help generate if they weren't plowing through software patch updates to routers and firewalls? Is there an operational efficiency project that could be completed by that team, if only they had the time?

Taking advantage of managed services allows you to transfer those mundane tasks to an outside provider. That frees your in-house staff to focus on what's most important to you: finding ways your business can be both more productive and more profitable.



is for MANAGED

A GUIDE TO THE ALPHABET SOUP

MSP (MANAGED SERVICES PROVIDER): Usually an IT or telecommunications company, an MSP provides outsourced monitoring, managing, and problem resolution for specified IT services, usually on a subscription basis. Managed functions can include broad-band connections, security services, VPNs (Virtual Private Networks), IP (Internet Protocol) communications, and more.

MNS (MANAGED NETWORK SERVICES): Provided by a third-party operator, this refers to building, operating, and maintaining security for a business's network infrastructure.

MRS (MANAGED ROUTER SERVICE): A subset of managed services, MRS provides installation, configuration, management, and security for a router, the essential device that connects your business network to the Internet.

MSS (MANAGED SECURITY SERVICE): Another subset of managed services, MSS provides security services for the "perimeter"—any place, such as a server, that your network touches the Internet or other networks.

S

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test smarter

USE THE **SCIENTIFIC METHOD** TO DETERMINE WHICH IDEAS WILL **GUARANTEE GROWTH**.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JEANNE M. LIEDTKA

Are you looking for the next innovative product or service that will drive growth? If so, your company has lots of company. “Innovate or die!” has become a battle cry in an increasingly disruptive (and disrupted) business environment.

Companies with consistent, profitable growth are, of course, the exception rather than the rule. How do the most successful do it?

Over years of working with many companies, I’ve learned that consistently profitable companies tend to approach idea generation and implementation in a dramatically different way. Rather than rolling out a formal business plan for a launch, they take an idea and treat it as a hypothesis to be tested, iterated on, and then improved or discarded. It’s a faster and cheaper approach that is

more likely to lead to success.

I call this approach a learning launch. I have seen it work for B2B and B2C companies; for nonprofits, health care, education, or government; and for launching either products or services.

IDEAS AND THE OPEN MIND

A successful launch begins with doing your homework to create a new idea. Most new business ideas fail, not because the business can’t execute, but because custom-

ers don’t want the idea when the business has finished executing.

Customers don’t want our product or service, necessarily, but they have something they want to get done. To paraphrase the famous quote by Harvard Business School marketing professor Ted Levitt, “People don’t want to buy your quarter-inch drill; they want to make a quarter-inch hole.”

For example, I once worked with a company that was in the business of helping people

stop smoking. Their marketing and sales approach was basically, “This is bad for your health, don’t do it.”

However, the more they got to know potential customers, the more they realized that people were viewing smoking as a lifestyle choice. They recognized it wasn’t a good choice and intended to stop at some point, but they weren’t there yet.

So, much like a person who needs to lose weight, they didn’t want a professional simply telling them about bad things that could happen. Instead, they wanted a coach who would help them do the things they needed to do to get healthier. This insight led the company to a different way of defining the problem—the job the customers wanted done.



How Midsize Companies Innovate

72% of middle market leaders rely on their own teams—either dedicated R&D teams or teams within a specific unit

26% of middle market firms work with consultants on innovation projects

7% rely on crowdsourcing or “open innovation” techniques

Numbers add up to more than 100 because some companies use more than one method. Source: survey of 400 middle-market leaders, June 2015, National Center for the Middle Market.

BRAINSTORM BETTER

Business people tend to be in a hurry. They're action-oriented. They don't want to muck around in perspectives; they want to assume, know, and jump into action.

Like the rest of us, they also tend to impose views of their own needs onto other people. That's why it's important to try not to filter ideas solely through our own gut.

When exploring possible new products or services, you need a wide range of perspectives. Put people from a mix of functions on your idea-generation team, to avoid ideas that marketing loves but sales can't sell or manufacturing can't produce. It's also critical to engage trusted outside partners—whether supply chain partners, or customers—in the process of co-creation, and draw from their experience and perspectives.

Mix personality types on your team, too. You want hard-nosed people who are financially oriented, as well

as more possibility-oriented, dreamer types. The most important thing you, as a leader, can do is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and possibility, where each member has permission to speak freely.

When you convene a brainstorming session, make clear that this isn't merely an exercise in creativity. Participants should come prepared with first-hand data, not just their own assumptions about what the marketplace needs.

Brainstorming should not be expected to produce actual solutions, but fragments of ideas that can be thought through, selected out, and combined in different ways— all with the goal of turning



JEANNE M. LIEDTKA is a professor of business administration at the University of Virginia Darden School of Business who is known for her work on strategic thinking, design thinking, and organic growth. She is coauthor of four business books, including *Designing for Growth: A Design Thinking Toolkit for Managers* and *The Catalyst: How You Can Become an Extraordinary Growth Leader*.



your ideas into hypotheses that can be tested.


For instance, we worked with a banker whose team was very excited about an idea they'd come up with for creating a new "one-stop-shopping" experience for high-net-worth customers so that they could get all their financial needs met in one place. The assumption: clients would value the additional convenience this brought.

But what she discovered when she tested this hypothesis was that these clients already had financial advisors who were doing the legwork for them. They didn't need one-stop shopping. Further, their financial advisors felt that the idea threatened their business. Never assume!

RUBBER, MEET ROAD

In a typical scenario, a business would prepare a formal business plan for the new idea, complete with financial projections. However, because there's no historical data, estimates of ROI are fraught with room for error.

In a learning launch, analysis is replaced by experimentation. Put your idea through a series of small, quick tests. That means creating quick and dirty prototypes and getting them out in front of a small group of customers. For instance, instead of starting out by fighting (and paying) for space on a supermarket shelf, start by bringing your products to farmers markets and get some face-to-face feedback first.

No matter the product or service, your launch must 

CEOs SPEAK: Where I Got INSPIRATION CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE.

→ FROM TECH TRENDS →

COMPANY: Concierge Auctions, leading real estate auction provider, New York City, New York, and Austin, Texas; founded 2008

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 63

CHAIRMAN: Chad Roffers

CHALLENGE: How to scale a luxury real estate business

INNOVATIVE IDEA: "Because luxury properties can take longer to sell, owners often had to rely on live auctions to set the value of the asset and find a buyer quickly. Back in 2010, we had the idea of creating an app that would allow customers to bid from anywhere in the world, but the market wasn't ready yet. Still, we prepared the ground by adopting a mobile-first attitude, including 'smartphone Tuesdays,' where our entire product and marketing teams could only work from their handheld devices

"As mobile transactions became the standard, we retooled and launched our 'Instant Gavel' app in December 2015. Sellers get access to a wide range of buyers, and bidders can bid anonymously and watch the competition in real time. It's driven a whole new phase of growth for us."

→ FROM MILLENNIALS →

COMPANY: DollarDays, an online wholesale distributor and closeout company, Scottsdale, Arizona; founded 2001

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 54

CEO: Marc Joseph

CHALLENGE: Increasing repeat customers

INNOVATIVE IDEA: "Three of our supervisors, who are millennials, felt we had a void in showing our customers that we care about them and want to give back to the causes they support. They came up with the three ideas below:

- Outreach on our Facebook page, e.g., "Nominate a Homeless Shelter to Win a \$2,000 Shopping Spree"
- Creation of a program by which customers can choose to donate five percent of their order to a favorite charity
- A "Wish List" function on our site where nonprofits can sign up and share their lists with potential donors

Since we started these programs, our business is up 30 percent."

→ FROM THE TRASH →

COMPANY: Danby, North American refrigeration and specialty appliance company, headquartered in Guelph, Ontario; founded in 1947

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 300

CEO AND PRESIDENT: Jim Estill

CHALLENGE: Find profitable ways to use waste

INNOVATIVE IDEA: "I was in our shipping area in June 2015 and noticed that some containers from China that were being unloaded had extra space in them—not enough space for our regular appliances, like bar fridges or wine coolers, but enough to think about. Since we had paid for the space, what could we fill it with?

"We chose to enter the business of tabletop appliances like kettles, choppers, and blenders. In that category, we would have competitive advantage since we would have no shipping cost. We did it and it has worked out well for us.

"We get some of our best ideas from the garbage. Right now, we're in the process of creating herb growers from glass door wine coolers that were being returned to be sold for scrap metal. We decided to experiment by removing the unit compressor and installing grow lights and a hydroponic system. Again, we have competitive advantage in that there is almost no cost for the shell. We are just starting this project so it is premature to call it a success, but my gut feel is that it will be."

That Great Growth Idea

→ FROM EXPERIENCE →

COMPANY: MallforAfrica.com, e-commerce site, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, and Lagos, Nigeria; founded 2013

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 103

FOUNDER AND CEO: Chris Folayan

CHALLENGE: Provide a seamless means for customers in Africa to acquire goods from U.S. and U.K. retailers

INNOVATIVE IDEA: "In 2011, while planning for a trip home to Nigeria to visit family and friends, I acquired a mile-long list of goods that people wanted me to bring—all of them things that weren't readily accessible in Nigeria.

"I arrived at San Francisco International Airport with 10 suitcases. But when I went to check in, the desk attendant looked at me, looked at the suitcases, and promptly snapped 'Not happening.' I had exceeded even the excess luggage weight limit.

"As I headed back to my car, pushing my heavy luggage trolley, I had the idea of creating a business that would tap the market of people living in Africa who wanted to be able to easily purchase products from the U.S. and U.K. Today, MallforAfrica.com works with more than 180 retailers and offers more than 8.5 billion items. Most recently, we solidified an exclusive deal with eBay for the entire continent of Africa."

→ FROM CUSTOMERS →

COMPANY: inDinero, accounting software and service, headquartered in San Francisco, California; founded 2009

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 200

FOUNDER AND CEO: Jessica Mah

CHALLENGE: Getting in front of business owners

INNOVATIVE IDEA: "inDinero was originally just lightweight accounting software—a vitamin for business owners, not a pain killer. We ran out of cash and I had to lay everyone off in 2012. But I took advantage of this urgent problem by interviewing customers, going to their offices. I found out that they wanted us to do it all—all their accounting and taxes—and they'd pay us more. That was the start of our full-service comeback story.

"By 2015, we had three-year revenue growth of 2,685 percent. I have rebuilt inDinero to 1,000 customers and a nine-figure valuation."

→ include interviews with your test market to find out specifically what's working and what's not—valuable data since customers had the opportunity to actually spend money on it. These customer interviews are different from doing focus groups in advance, because focus groups have a tendency to yield "false positives." (After all, someone said they wanted New Coke at some point.)

Drill down into the customer's needs. If the product or service you provided didn't meet those needs, what would? If it did meet the needs, does the customer have buying authority, and would his or her company have the money to buy it?

A learning launch is also different from doing a pilot, because the emphasis is on learning, not selling. You are testing a series of hypotheses: the customer has X need, we can produce it for Y dollars, the customer will pay Z dollars for it. In a learning launch, like a good scientist or detective, we seek to overcome our blind spots and follow where the facts lead us.

We also minimize the investment and risk we take when we try to implement a growth idea in an environment of uncertainty. Think about the behaviors of venture capitalists. Even really good VCs place 10 bets, knowing that only two are likely to turn into profitable companies—they just don't know which two. They are actively managing risk, and they don't put all their eggs in one basket.



Solving the People Puzzle

HOW A STAFFING COMPANY WORKS TO PERFECT THE ART OF PLACEMENT



HIRE
THINKING
→

As a CEO, you have the option and opportunity to decide how spread-thin you want to be. Our

placement expertise lies in the areas of sales and administration, including HR and operations. That's where my background is, so that's where I placed my foundation. The areas align well, and the business opportunity is definitely there.

The verticals we specialize in produce ripple effects in their organizations, and that's why we do what we do. Nothing is more important to us than creating change.

Our success is very much tied to asking questions that help hiring managers think about the bigger picture. We don't just take a job description and check boxes from a resume. We take

a consultative approach. Often we interview not just the direct manager for the position, but other layers of influence for that specific hire. We want to know what the potential is for this position. We want to know how someone can join the organization and take the role beyond the bulleted job description; what their future career growth may be. We are out vetting talent 24/7, and we meet every candidate so we know who we're placing.

We are not a "value" player. Our clientele understands that there needs to be an investment in order to receive the return they're looking for.

One of our challenges is to educate clients about what younger job candidates want. It's

very difficult for some hiring managers to think about focusing on the importance of the employee's contributions. But [the staffing] industry is generally far ahead of the curve in terms of seeing what's next in the workplace, and that is what we are seeing now: the next generation is most

MEET THE
CHIEF
→

FOUNDER AND CEO: Sara Menke
COMPANY: Premier Staffing
HEADQUARTERS: San Francisco; three other locations
WHAT IT DOES: Talent identification and acquisition for growing companies

VITAL STATS: 80 employees; five-time *Inc.* 5000 honoree; Bay Area Best Places to Work list, 2016

CHALLENGE: Standing out in a competitive and crowded field



Menke at Premier's San Francisco headquarters with COO Matt Ruport

interested in joining a company where they can contribute on a higher level. They want more of a community versus a “me me me” culture where they are expected to innovate independently. They would rather be paid less and be on a team that is cohesive and comes together as a group to create change.

Companies' hiring pain points can vary based on the region they're located in.

In the Bay Area, there's a huge emphasis on being an entrepreneur and joining a startup, on changing the world and innovating. Candidates can have the impression that mid-market companies offer less opportunity, so we work with our client companies to help explain to potential hires how they can make an impact.

In the Bay Area, the talent shortage is very severe, but in New York we don't feel a talent shortage. In New York, our candidate pool is much more attracted to mid-market companies versus startups. They're excited about the stability, leadership, and decisiveness of that kind of organization, and the way the core values tend to be well thought out.

Consistency of our product is critical to the scalability of our organization.

We've learned that it is essential to take our homegrown leadership talent to any new office we open. The only way we can guarantee we're producing the same talent in each office location is to make sure the leadership of that office is intimately involved in the hub.

Our company always has a “word of the year,” such as “purposeful” or “grateful.” This year, it's the Latin phrase *quo animo*, which means “mindful intention.” It's an appropriate phrase as we prime ourselves for more aggressive growth in California in 2017, and eventually in Austin, Chicago, Boston, and London.

We all work diligently to grow professionally and personally toward whatever that word might be. Every individual in leadership uses this word throughout the year, referencing it in meetings and tying it to our goals and core values. It becomes part of our DNA.

We will never risk hurting our reputation by providing inconsistent service. Nothing is more important than that. Our referral networks are what they are because of who we are.

“We are not a ‘value’ player. Our clientele understand that there needs to be an investment in order to receive the return they’re looking for.”

—Sara Menke

↓ KNOW AND TELL

The Most Important Interview Question

COMPANIES TODAY ARE STRETCHED SO THIN that each and every hire has to be able to go beyond the job description, and be solutions-oriented and a creative thinker.

That's why it's more important to ask a candidate about mistakes than to ask about his or her achievements. We'll ask, “What was the greatest mistake you've made in your career?” and wait to see how detailed the candidate will get with us in the answer. That will tell us a lot about who this person is.

If they don't volunteer details, we'll probe: Was a solution implemented? What was the retention of that solution? How has the mistake helped shape future decision-making? If you were in a situation like that now, how would you approach it differently? Companies can't hire people who want to sweep something under the rug; they need the kind of person who's going to seek it out and clean it up on all levels.



COMPANY FrontRoom Furnishings
IT MANAGER Philip Gervais, left
CO-OWNER AND CIO Mike Quinn, right

FIELD REPORT: FRONTROOM FURNISHINGS

Making Room for Growth

FIBER ALLOWS A FURNITURE COMPANY TO THRIVE.

THE CHALLENGE: The Quinn family of Columbus, Ohio, has been in the furniture business since 1959, when co-owner and CIO Mike Quinn's parents sold furniture door to door. Today, the family business is FrontRoom Furnishings, "the Living Room Experts," a furniture retail chain with three brands, seven stores, a corporate office, a distribution center, and 200 employees.

FrontRoom is known for its first-class customer service. However, by 2012, the company's telecommunications system—a T1 service with poor reliability and limited bandwidth—was hampering its ability to provide that.

FrontRoom could not, for example, tap Internet-based services such as using tablets to show customers photos of how different fabrics would look on a furniture model. Credit card processing, which ran over phone lines, was slow. Furthermore, Quinn and his IT manager,

Philip Gervais, knew that the company's network had to be ready for the expansion that leadership envisioned.

THE SOLUTION: After years with "the telco model," Quinn and Gervais wanted fiber. They analyzed proposals from five providers and chose Time Warner Cable Business Class (TWCBC) on the basis of its proposed project rollout, timeline, speeds, and cost. "I think investment in technology is becoming less one-size-fits-all and more user-defined," Quinn says. "Time Warner Cable Business Class's commitment was greater than that of any other provider."

"If I'm not worried about IT, my focus can be on making things great."

—Mike Quinn

The original solution created by TWCBC gave all FrontRoom Furnishings locations a 10 Mbps link to an EVPL (Ethernet Virtual Private Line). Fiber Internet connectivity was provided by a 50 Mbps DIA (Dedicated Internet Access) circuit. This solved the company's bandwidth and processing problems, and much more. "I'd say nearly 100 percent of our devices are running off the service that TWCBC is bringing us," says Quinn.

In 2014, FrontRoom added a 100,000-square-foot superstore housing all three store brands. This superstore added 40 computer terminals and phones, as well as additional

printers, credit card terminals, conference and training rooms, and cameras. Here, the TWCBC solution's scalability came into play, and Quinn and his team saw seamless transition to meet the new needs. TWCBC provided an upgrade to a 20 Mbps ELAN (Ethernet Local Area Network), plus Internet connectivity via a 150 Mbps DIA circuit located at FrontRoom's headquarters.

THE RESULT: Quinn values the total scalability of his solution, as well as the control it gives him. Network-based systems give "instant notice of what's happened, whether it's a sale or delivery," he says, providing a real-time view that makes the retail experience better for customers—and easier for employees.

The TWCBC solution has also freed FrontRoom to migrate to a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) phone solution. It's one more example, Quinn says, of how "Time Warner Cable Business Class has given us better control of what we do."

That control includes many means of improving the business. For example, the training facility is now equipped with video conferencing. Trucks use a GPS-based routing system. Customers sign for deliveries on tablets. And at the new superstore, video cameras at greeting stations ensure prompt assistance for visitors.

FrontRoom has also implemented an Internet-based payroll system that can scale easily as employees are added or requirements change—a cloud solution that Gervais says they would never have been able to consider without TWCBC's reliability.

As the business grows and the company needs more bandwidth, TWCBC will be there. "Looking ahead, I want this company to be great," Quinn says. "If I'm not worried about things like IT or a network connection, then my focus can be on making things great."

SHARE YOUR STORY! How did you partner with TWCBC to SOLVE your technology issues? Tell us about it for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue of SOLVE. To share your story, visit business.twc.com/nomination.



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Artificial Intelligence 101



If you've been reading the technology or business sections of national news sites, you've heard about some really cool uses of artificial intelligence for driving cars, recognizing human speech, and classifying images. You may also be thinking about how you

can leverage this technology for your business. As you enter those discussions, here are some of the key terms you'll need to understand.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI): A field of computer science dedicated to the creation of machines that mimic some degree of human intelligence. While many people think of robots when they think of AI (thanks to *The Terminator* and other movies), it is more commonly associated with basic applications used in ordinary life. For example, AI is used by a navigation application like Waze to make intelligent recommendations about your driving route based on a constant stream of information about local traffic patterns.

ADVANCED ANALYTICS: In many ways the predecessor to AI, advanced analytics refers to a sub-field of *business intelligence* (BI), in which business insights are attained through the application of advanced mathematical models. Instead of just looking at the past and analyzing what happened, advanced analytics can predict the future (*predictive analytics*) and discover hidden patterns (*data mining*). The field has become increasingly popular as a result of cheaper information storage and the ensuing deluge of data—the so-called “big data”—that requires advanced technologies to assess.

DATA SCIENCE: An interdisciplinary field (primarily based on statistics) focused on extracting insights from data. Data scientists are highly trained professionals, often PhDs, who can go beyond the traditional roles of “business analyst” or “data analyst” because of the range of data sources from which they are able to draw. Data scientists focus on developing and training predictive models for a variety of business problems

like preventing fraud, predicting customer churn, recommending offers, and so on.

MACHINE LEARNING: A field of AI designed to teach machines to act without having been explicitly programmed to do so. Instead of a simple rules-based method of behavior (if X, then Y) machines can “learn” to recognize patterns in data and modify their behavior in response. For example, instead of just telling you that a person with a bad credit score is unlikely to return your money, machine learning allows your model to make a prediction about credit worthiness based on a wide variety of factors exhibited by previous customers. Online recommendations from e-retailers are another example of machine learning in action.

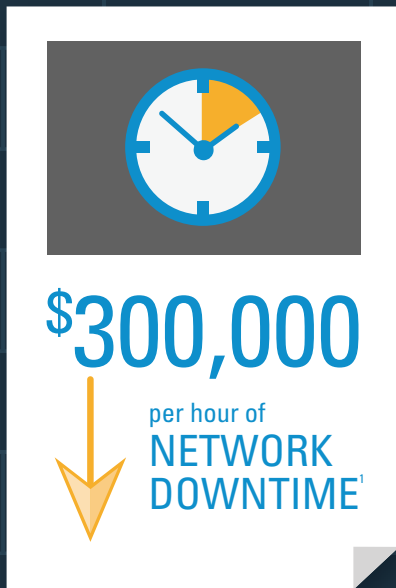
DEEP LEARNING: Deep learning is a branch of machine learning, originally inspired by the biological neural networks of humans and other animals, that attempts to solve complex problems, such as image and facial recognition. The idea is to mimic biological neural networks by creating a deep network of artificial neurons (math functions) that connect with each other individually and can recognize patterns by looking at data.

NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING (NLP): The ability of computers to understand “natural” languages used by humans (e.g., English, Spanish, French). In other words, NLP refers to the instantaneous ability of machines to translate human languages into code that they understand. Anyone who has used Google Now or Apple's Siri has witnessed NLP in action.








VINOD IYENGAR is director of product marketing at H2O.ai, an open source AI company.

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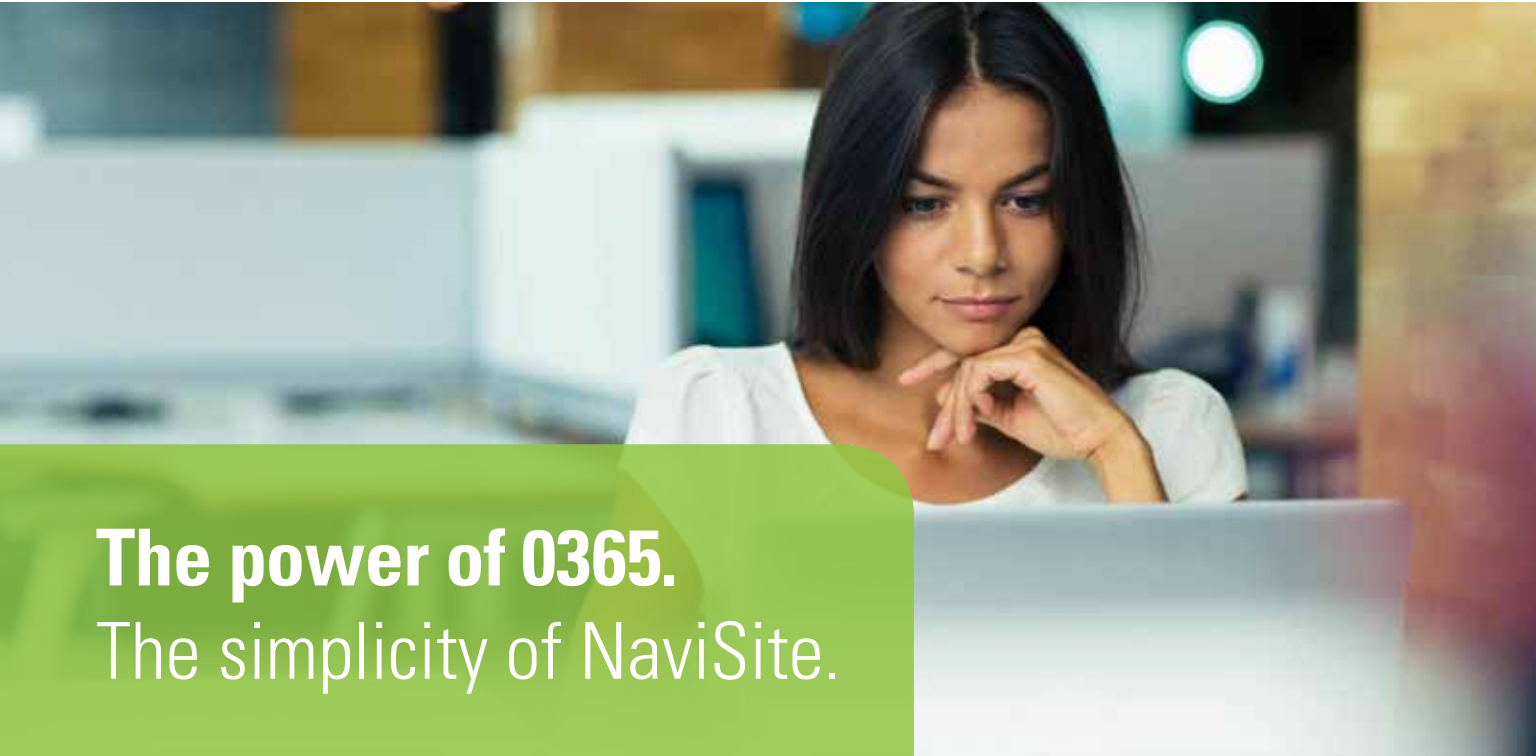
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