



Ribb"IT" Review

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

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“As a business owner, 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!”
- Alex Bleam, Frogworks

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Time To Upgrade Your Network? Here Are 4 Things You Should Know

It’s that time of year again when business owners from all over are scrambling to make any last minute purchases they can to lighten the tax burden for 2012. One of the things many tax-savvy businesses do is purchase new office and computer equipment that will be needed within the next few months NOW so they can deduct the expense on the current year’s taxes. But if you’re planning to upgrade your server, here are 4 things you might want to look into before making any decisions:

- 1. Cloud computing.** Cloud technologies are far beyond “hype.” They offer real, tangible benefits to businesses, including improved disaster recovery and backup, easier access to data remotely, reduced IT complexities, fewer problems and, in many cases, a cost savings because you don’t have to buy a server and keep it in your office closet anymore. The Cloud is definitely not a right fit for everyone, but you should at least consider this as one of your options.
- 2. HaaS.** In case you haven’t heard enough acronyms in the IT industry, let me give you one more: HaaS, or “hardware as a service.” Simply, HaaS is an option to “rent” hardware on a low monthly basis instead of purchasing it outright. This eliminates the hefty cash drain for a network upgrade and allows you to pay for hardware as a service. It also puts the burden of repair and replacement on the shoulders of your IT company (us) to keep your equipment up and running. You do end up paying more in the long run (as you would if you leased a car or bought a house on payments) but the ease on cash flow makes this a better option for some people.
- 3. Windows 8.** Microsoft’s latest operating system is making headlines with its completely new look and feel. We do not recommend that you upgrade at this time. In our experience Microsoft seems to have issues with every other generation of their software, and we have found that it is better to wait until the first Service Pack is released. Additionally, Line of Business applications may not be fully tested or supported.
- 4. Our Year-End Bonus Program!** During the month of December, we’re offering clients who purchase a new server or upgrade to our Cloud9 solution a FREE month of our Relax. We’ve Got It Covered. This will save you hundreds, possibly thousands, of dollars in IT services and support. But to get it, you MUST upgrade your network THIS YEAR. For the full details call us at 240-880-1944.



"You're out of key, and you've totally picked the wrong number for your vocal range. Face it, you'll never make it as carol singers!"

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month

<http://www.google.com/alerts>

Google

Alerts

Search query:

Result type:

How often:

How many:

Deliver to:

If you're not familiar with Google Alerts (or if you're not using them) this article may be one of the best tips we give you all year! Google Alerts is a free service offered by Google that will e-mail you whenever new content is posted online on a particular subject. While some people use them to keep up to date on their favorite celebrities or sports stars, there is a far more practical reason to use this in business.

First off, everyone should have a Google Alert set up for their name for obvious reasons; if you are in business, this goes double, including your company's name, as well as the names of your key employees. After all, if someone posts a negative comment about your services or names one of your employees, you probably want to know about it so you can make it right. You might also consider setting up Google Alerts on:

- Your biggest competitors.
- Your key clients or prospects you're trying to win business from.
- Industry alerts or trends.
- An important news story in your industry.

3 Simple Tricks To Get More Done Every Day

In today's crazy-busy world, who doesn't want to cram more "done" into your day? We've got 3 really simple things you can do to get more work done for the hours you're putting in.

1. **Use dual monitors.** According to a University of Utah study, you can increase your efficiency by 25% just by adding a second monitor. Performance measures included task time, editing time, number of edits completed, number of errors made, as well as usability measures evaluating effectiveness, comfort, learning ease, time to productivity, quickness of recovery from mistakes, ease of task tracking, ability to maintain task focus, and ease of movement among sources. All of these factors combined show truly increased productivity. We have several clients who have seen the value and increased their productivity through the use of dual monitors. Call us if you would like a **FREE** 60-day trial of a dual monitor system for one or more of your key employees. Please be sure to make this request before December 31st.



2. **Block social media sites and/or other non-work related content online.** THIS one won't be popular for a lot of people, but if you want to get more done, then take the distractions out of your day. Of course if your job is "social media director" for your company, this doesn't apply; for all the other workers in your office who don't NEED to go on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to do their job, this will remove the temptation to "snack" on social media sites throughout the day, which add up to hours wasted on entertainment surfing. Content filtering software can easily manage which sites you can and cannot go online to view, also keeping employees from gambling, searching for jobs, reading the news or visiting sex sites.

3. **Set up remote access.** It's incredibly easy to access files, e-mail and programs from home (or while on the road) these days using cloud technologies or other remote access applications. Not only does this allow people to keep working when forced to stay home with sick kids or to wait for the plumber to show up, but employees would also put in several more hours of work on their own initiative if they could easily jump on their home PC and put in a few hours.

Each of these is an EASY fix for us to implement. If you want more details on how to get these implemented into your business, just give us a call at 240-880-1944.

FREE BUSINESS ADVISORY GUIDE:

7 Little Known Facts Every Owner Should Know About Remote Backup



If you are a business owner relying on tape drives, external hard drives or USB devices to back up your data, then it's critical for you to read this informative white paper. You'll learn what most IT consultants don't know or won't tell you about making sure your company's critical data is safe from loss, corruption, cyber criminals, natural disasters and employee sabotage, in addition to:

1. The only way to know for SURE your data can be recovered if lost, corrupted or deleted – yet fewer than 10% of businesses have this in place.
2. 7 critical characteristics you should absolutely demand from any office backup service; do NOT trust your data to any company that does not meet these criteria.
3. Where tape backups fail and give you a false sense of security.
4. The #1 cause of data loss that most businesses don't even think about until their data is erased.

The 7 Little Known Facts Every Owner Should Know About Remote Backup

is part of our 6 Free Report series that you can request from our home page at www.getfrogworks.com

Those Demanding Customers And Their Expectations

If you're old, like me, you probably remember vacationing with the family way back when...driving down brand new interstates...and staying at some motel, like Holiday Inn or Howard Johnson's (HoJo's!).

Back then we didn't expect much from our motel room. A bed, chair, bathroom, towels, a TV. However, one of my Mom's expectations for our motel of choice was a clean bathroom. The great thing about her expectation was you knew instantly when you walked into your room whether the bathroom was truly clean or not. The clean ones always had a sanitary paper wrap around the toilet seat!

Then one day, some hotel chain put an iron and ironing board in our room. WOW, that was awesome! We didn't have to call housekeeping and beg them to bring an iron to our room. That hotel did something no other hotel did and, as a result, became our choice hotel.

Of course, that advantage didn't last long when every other hotel/motel chain in the US put an iron and ironing board in their rooms. It wasn't a wow anymore. It became an expectation.

Then some bright hotel executive figured out they could add shampoo and conditioner as an advantage. We were thrilled until all the chains did it. Another expectation from customers added to the list. Air conditioning? Expectation. Alarm clock? Expectation. Remote control TV? Expectation. Coffee makers? Expectation. Blow dryers? Expectation. USA Today? Expectation. Heavenly bed? Expectation. WiFi? Expectation.

What was once an advantage for some hotel chain quickly became copied in some form by everybody else. And once something was copied by all, it became an expectation to the customer. Think about it. Have you had any recent experience where something was missing? You probably noticed it immediately. I actually stayed at an upscale property in Alexandria, VA a while back that did NOT have irons and ironing boards in their rooms. I was astonished and more than a little peeved when I had to wait for them to deliver one.

This creates quite the dilemma for businesses. Because of competition and technology, we keep adding benefits to our products and services. We enjoy a clear, but too often brief advantage. Unfortunately, like in my hotel example, if something can be copied, it will be copied. Once copied, we have to look for another advantage we can develop. Of course, we also watch our competition. When they develop a new benefit, we copy it in some way (usually it's an exact duplicate, in fact). We take away their advantage and pat ourselves on the back.

Meanwhile, the customer gets educated. He or she gets educated to EXPECT the new perks. Even worse, they often get these new perks for no extra cost. Whether I stay in a Hyatt or a Holiday Inn Express, I expect to find pretty much everything I wrote about above. All these benefits are now part of the expected package when I check in.

Continued on next page...

Happy Ha-Ha-Holidays



Q: If athletes get athletes foot, what do astronauts get?

A: Missletoe!

Q: What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

A: Frostbite.

Q: Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

A: Because he had low elf-esteem.

Q: Where do polar bears vote?

A: The North Poll.

Q: What do you get when you cross an archer with a gift-wrapper?

A: Ribbon hood.

Q: Why does Santa's sled get such good mileage?

A: Because it has long-distance runners on each side.

Q: What do you call a bunch of grandmasters of chess bragging about their games in a hotel lobby?

A: Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer!

Q: What do you call a cat on the beach at Christmas time?

A: Sandy Claus!

Q: How do sheep in Mexico say Merry Christmas?

A: Fleece Navidad!

Q: What did Santa shout to his toys on Christmas Eve?

A: Okay everyone, hit the sack!!

Q: What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

A: Frosted Snowflakes.

Q: What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?

A: Claustrophobic.

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A dilemma. Adding all these benefits add cost. They often add labor. But to the customer, they are FREE. Oh those demanding customers and their expectations. We are also the enemy because outside the walls of our own businesses we are somebody's customer. At the end of the day, we take our marketing hat off and WE expect more value for our hard-earned dollar. We are no different from our own customers who make us tear our hair out. The answer? Stop practicing continuous, incremental improvement. Start practicing continuous innovation. These are fundamentally different propositions. Improvement can almost always be copied. True innovation is much more difficult.



Guest article provided by: Steve Miller

The essence of Steve's work is to develop creative and implementable ideas that create value propositions for associations, and corporations. Learn more at www.theadventure.com



Looking For The Perfect Holiday Gift? New Ultrabooks Will Score You BIG Points With That Special Someone On Your List This Year

It's becoming common for business folks to have multiple devices these days: a laptop for work, a tablet to travel with plus your smartphone to play Angry Birds and text—or even to make the occasional phone call (yes, we still use it for that too). But thanks to the new ultrabooks inspired by Intel, you'll be glad to know you can now get the best of both worlds in one super cool, ultra-portable, lightweight device.



The new ultrabooks were created to provide key features everyone wants: a thin and lightweight device (less than 1 inch and 2 lbs.) without sacrificing power and speed, a large, brilliant screen, a large keyboard (for those of you, like me, who would actually like a keyboard when typing long documents) or battery life of 6 to 7 hours. Whew! And coming soon, the newest versions of ultrabooks will give you the ability to flip the screen—and even detach it—to use it like your average touch-screen tablet.

Right now, most ultrabooks are coming in about \$1,200 and range upwards to over \$2,000; but, like all new gadgets, the prices will continue to drop while the features continue to increase. Naturally, with the holidays here, many retailers will be running promotions and discounts, so watch for the best deals online. For our clients who need network upgrades (see the first article in this newsletter!) we're recommending these devices for those heavy computer users who travel.