

The Tech Tribune

Did you know?!

Did you know that there was a perfectly legal way to save ALOT of money on your taxes, computer hardware, and office equipment? Thanks to a special tax deduction for small businesses titled, "Section 179 election", the Federal Government allows you to deduct 100% of leased and purchased equipment in 2015. So, if you are going to need a network upgrade in the near future, NOW is the perfect time to act! The deadline is midnight on 12/31/2015.

For more information about this sweet deal, please visit:
www.acts360.com/section179/

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Greg Sweers, CEO of ACTS360.

"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 worries!"



You get in to work, sit down at your desk, clear out a few e-mails and start blasting through that report that's due in less than an hour... Looking good, on your way to the finish line when — whoops, what's that? A text from one of the kids — forgot his homework... You're just getting that fire doused when you get a Facebook IM from a friend, so you click to see what's up and... whoa, check out the leaping-lizard video... The minutes slip by, and when you finally look up and check the time... Yikes, five minutes to finish that report!

It's no joke. Not only are people more stressed than ever, but all those little attention shifts could be robbing you of as much as 3.2 hours every working day, according to recent studies in the new field of "Interruption Science."

Are Notifications Killing Your Productivity?

How To Win Back Your Sanity - And Your Time

An article in the Harvard Business Review says that trying to focus on more than one thing at a time lowers your IQ by 10 points — and decreases your productivity as much as 40%. (That's nearly half of your entire day — gone!) No wonder we end so many days with that gnawing sense that we got so little done...

Among the chief culprits in all this is the endless stream of notifications that our smartphones and other devices send us whether we're in the middle of a meeting, trying to finish a report, dodging traffic on the commute home or doing our best to give full attention to the real flesh-and-blood person sitting across the table at dinner...

We're bombarded with an endless stream of visual and sound cues about the latest text message, e-mail, social update,*continued pg.2*

instant message, phone call, voice mail, chat request... It's all wonderful, but how do you balance it with getting important things done?

To conquer the endless interruptions when you need to concentrate, follow these steps:

Phone Calls And Text Messages

First, you'll want to weed out all but mission-critical calls and texts. That way, you can go into Do Not Disturb mode without feeling panicky that your kids, boss, client or aging parent may not be able to reach you in a pinch:

Android:

Tap Settings > Sound & notification > Interruptions and set your preferences. Then open Contacts and star the folks you don't want to block when you're in Do Not Disturb mode.

iOS:

Tap Settings > Do Not Disturb > Allow Calls From and select Favorites. Next, check your iOS Favorites list — texts and calls from these folks will get through even when you're in Do Not Disturb mode.

Social Networks

In Facebook, go to Settings > Notifications and turn off any notifications you don't need. In Twitter, select Settings from the upper-right drop-down menu, then your preferred notifications from the new menu on the left.

If you're a Gmail user and that little bright red circle from Google Plus screams "click me" more often than you'd like, unfortunately your only option is to download Google Chrome and install the Hide Google+ Notification extension.

E-mail

No matter which e-mail client you use, there's a setting for turning notifications off. And that's just half the battle... To really master time spent in e-mail, try limiting your responses to certain times of day. You may want to set up an autoresponder to let folks know what your "e-mail hours" are if you're concerned about not responding right away. If you'd like help with any of this, call us!

Let Our 'Force Be With You'

We can help you win the battle against techno-stress and time waste. Call 813-699-5356 or e-mail us at getacts@acts360.com to book your free "Win-back-your-time" workout with one of our tech superstars. We'll help you mute your e-mails, set up your smartphone, modify your social media and put your technology squarely back on your side.

But call now - before that crazy cat video sucks you back into the maelstrom.

"How do you balance it with getting important things done?"

Refer Our Services And We'll Donate To Your Favorite Charity!



We love having customers like you and, quite honestly, wish we had more like you! So instead of just wishing, we've decided to hold a special "refer a friend" event during the month of December.

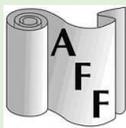
Refer any company with 5 or more computers to our office to receive a FREE Computer Network Assessment (a \$397 value). Once we've completed our initial appointment with your referral, we'll donate \$100 to your favorite charity for every referral that you've sent, as a small thank-you for thinking of us.

Simply call us at 813.699.5356 or e-mail us at getacts@acts360.com with your referral's name and contact information today!

Client Spotlight: American Fabric Filters

For nearly two decades American Fabric Filter Co. has been a leading provider of custom made filter bags and transfer sleeves for the food, wood, chemical and mineral industries. All of their fabric products are custom designed and made to fit the needs of your business. Customer Service is top priority and they welcome the challenge to solve their customer's issues, anytime.

American Fabric Filters is one of our newest clients. They are taking full advantage of our top-of-the-line ACTSCare-Optimum package. "The transition from our old platform to the new one went smoother than anticipated. Acts360's team has been responsive to all of our needs." Tim Robinson, AFF We are thrilled that AFF has given us the opportunity to manage their network infrastructure from start to finish.



7 Ways To Communicate Powerfully In Writing

Executives can multiply their influence by learning the techniques of forceful writing. High-powered writers learn to focus words the way a laser beam focuses light.

Focus your objective. What is the purpose of the material you want to write? Writing can help you achieve the five I's: it can inform, inquire, influence, instruct and incite.

Focus your audience. Written materials such as reports and brochures can be valuable positioning tools. They should be written with a specific audience in mind — the audience you wish to influence to buy your products or services.

Focus your content. Make sure your message is the right message for the right audience. Don't let unnecessary ideas intrude on your principal message. To quote Professor William Strunk, Jr., the renowned authority on English usage:

"A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts."

Focus your organization. A good piece of writing flows like a symphony. Organize your material so that each topic flows easily and naturally into the next.

Focus your clarity. Some writers think they can hide fuzzy thinking by burying it under a mass of words. To have impact, ideas must be expressed precisely and concisely. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address required only 275 words, and 196 of them were of one syllable.

Focus your refinement. Perfection rarely emerges from a first draft.

Ambrose Bierce once said that "a saint is a dead sinner revised and edited." Great writing is rough copy revised and edited.

Be your own toughest editor, but don't stop there. Let others read what you have written before you submit it to your audience. You know what you meant, but you can't know how others might interpret it until others have read it.

Focus your results. Unless results are built in, they don't happen. Good writing always does four things:

- It creates a feeling.
- It gives an idea.
- It gives the reader a benefit.
- It produces a desired response.

Communication is not a nice-to-have skill. It is essential to success in the business world. To produce and market the products and services to support the billions of people who now inhabit the earth requires a level of communications undreamed of in previous centuries. When the quality of your product depends upon the collective efforts of dozens, hundreds or thousands of individuals, communication becomes the lifeblood of your enterprise.

In fact, communication is at the heart of everything we do. It is the foundation for interaction among human beings. Communication has to do with meanings, with understandings, with feelings, with desires, with needs and with ideas. Our world is filled with information.

But the greatest need is for understanding — for building bridges between human beings so we can better live together, work together, get along with each other and make this earth the best possible home for the human race.



Dr. Nido Qubein is president of High Point University, an undergraduate and graduate institution with 4,300 students from 40 countries. He has authored two dozen books and audio programs distributed worldwide. As a business leader, he is chairman of the Great Harvest Bread Company, with 220 stores in 43 states. He serves on the boards of several national organizations, including BB&T (a Fortune 500 company with \$185 billion in assets), the La-Z-Boy Corporation (one of the largest and most recognized furniture brands worldwide) and Dots Stores (a chain of fashion boutiques with more than 400 locations across the country). As a professional speaker, Dr. Qubein has received many distinctions, including the Golden Gavel Medal, induction into the International Speaker Hall of Fame and as the founder of the NSA Foundation in Arizona. To learn more about Dr. Qubein, go to: <http://www.nidoqubein.com/>

Your Systems... Windows 10

■ Feeling a little gun-shy about making the leap to Windows 10? After all, even Microsoft admits Windows 8 was a flop... So why switch to 10? To start with, the user interface just makes a lot more sense. It brings back the start menu that W8 ditched. Also, key functions are accessed from the task bar and it features a more refined design — for instance, smaller window borders. Finally, your first year is free if you have Windows 7 or 8.1, or a Windows 8.1 Phone. So unless your Windows device is an RT version or is about tapped-out on memory, you can feel pretty good about upgrading to Windows 10.

<http://www.techradar.com/us/reviews/pc-mac/software/operating-systems/windows-10-1267364/review/2>

<http://www.ibtimes.com/microsoft-charge-windows-10-upgrade-after-free-one-year-deadline-expires-1930783>

Your Sleep

■ Do you wake in the night, then find it impossible to go back to sleep? A restless night can ruin your whole day. And

ongoing sleep problems can become a serious health risk. What can you do? Here are five tips to help you get the rest you need: 1) Keep the room dark. If you need light for a trip to the bathroom, put a nightlight in the bathroom and leave the door open just a crack. 2) Don't touch your computer, smartphone or TV; the light "resets" your internal clock, making it hard to go back to sleep. 3) Resist the urge to eat unless you're truly starving; a revved-up digestive system can keep you awake.

<https://www.caring.com/articles/sleep-problems>

Your Sales

■ Think December is only about giving? For consumers and businesses alike, it can be a time to save on taxes and use up an unspent budget. That could mean pockets jingling with hot cash about to burn a hole... Here's how you can help solve that problem: 1) Offer multi-year bundles to increase the value of each sale. 2) Could any of your offerings serve as gifts? If so, promote that angle and have gift cards ready. 3) Close sales by the 15th. Things really slow down after that, so do what you can to close now

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"How come Lewis and Clark didn't just use MapQuest?"

rather than carry over into January.

<https://www.waveapps.com/blog/small-business-maximize-december-sales/>

Your Web Site

■ Sure, you may not have put up your web site as a profit center in and of itself, but if it could make money for you, why not? Here are three tips and tools to help you harvest some of the hidden wealth in your web site: 1) Share what you know. In this age of info overload, people are willing to pay an expert to guide them. BuzzSumo.com is a great tool for seeing what your audience is hungry for. 2) Turn your web site into a selling machine. Roomjoom.com takes your visitors on a content journey leading to more sales for you. 3) Buddy up. If your web site or blog mentions other products, why not collect commissions on referred sales? ShareASale.com helps you do just that.

<http://www.inc.com/yoav-vilner/4-tools-to-improve-your-website-s-monetization-in-2015.html>

Your Hiring Process

■ What's the one hiring question no one asks (but maybe you should)? When you find someone who seems to be a perfect fit, there's always the risk that they're just really good at painting a picture they can be proud of... So how do you get the whole picture? Bert Lorang, CEO of FullContact, says he likes to ask for negative references. He's found it very revealing — and helpful. But there are a few things you need to do to make this work: 1) Begin by building trust. 2) Give them time to think about it. 3) Call the negative references and get them talking. 4) Present your findings to the candidate. His or her response may reveal volumes about who they really are.

<http://www.inc.com/minda-zetlin/the-deeply-revealing-interview-question-no-one-ever-asks-but-you-should.html>

