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FARGODOME

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How Technology & Business Get Along

Business Lessons in Technology



Technology is an amazing thing. It allows us to connect to people across the world in the blink of an eye; to track data and make better decisions as managers and business owners; to make calculations at a rate that would have Einstein's head spinning. But what truly is the role of technology in business?

To answer that question, I rely on one of my favorite business books, "Good to Great" by Jim Collins. In his book, Mr. Collins hypothesizes that great companies look at and deploy technology in a different and unique way. Great companies don't even consider technology as a factor in why they are great companies. To them, technology is simply an Accelerator. But what does Mr. Collins mean by Technology as an Accelerator? This concept simply means that the core value chain activities (sales, marketing, service, operations, etc.) of a business

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CRM – A Practical Introduction

This article is an excerpt from a presentation I gave at the 2007 Great Plains Technology Conference in Fargo, ND.



What is CRM?

CRM is an acronym for Customer Relationship Management. But what CRM means to you is "a system to understand your customers better and use that understanding to serve them better; ultimately resulting in increased customer loyalty and greater profit per customer."

CRM isn't a new idea. Using good customer service and customer relationships as a way to improve business

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are the most important factors that affect bottom line. The role of technology in the business model is to be deployed only where it can enhance a core value chain activity to a degree greater than the cost of implementation.

How well does your organization evaluate technology as an accelerator? And once it has been decided that a specific technology might help your organization, is it properly deployed? I asked a friend the other day if his organization had any type of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool available to their sales people, his response was,

"We did."

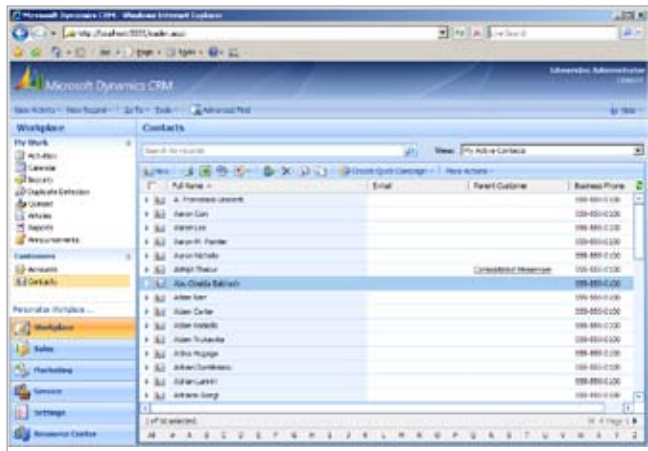
"But nobody used it."

"So we got rid of it."

Mr. Collins, please cover your ears.

My humble advice would be to keep the "Technology as an Accelerator" concept first and foremost in mind when making technology decisions that will affect your organization. The proper evaluation and deployment of technology as a bottom line driver is imperative for greatness. Of course, you could just ignore this article or toss out this newsletter altogether. Just promise not to yell at me when you toss out the latest, greatest technology that was supposed to take your business to the next level, too. 🍌

Chad Wegner | chad.wegner@ignus.com



profitability is an idea that's been around for a long time. But while CRM isn't a new idea, it is a great idea.

CRM computer systems are experiencing a boom now because the software has finally matured to the point where it is powerful enough to really make an improvement in business and affordable enough even for small businesses.

Powerful CRM solutions can also integrate with other software and data on your network making your CRM system the one place where customer data is centralized. This is one of the easiest to achieve, yet most valuable features of CRM – a centralized location where all staff can get the information they need to best serve customers.

I've outlined what I feel are the seven key features of CRM here.

Key Features of CRM Solutions:

- 1. Shared knowledge – entire organization can collaborate**
- 2. Centralized customer data – available to everyone**
- 3. Customer history – at a glance, know the history of each customer; improves customer service**
- 4. Customer segmentation / profile – know the characteristics of your best customers**
- 5. Marketing tools – easily market to each customer segment differently**
- 6. Workflow / Automation – automation streamlines activities, increases efficiency, reduces errors**
- 7. Analysis and reporting – dashboards and reports for managers / decision making**

With typical implementation times running from a few months to nine months or more, it's important that top management is committed to seeing the project through. One way to do that is to focus on the benefits that CRM will bring once fully implemented.

How Businesses Benefit From CRM

1. Increased efficiency
2. Improved customer service
3. Better marketing
4. Better decision making
5. Greater profitability

CRM can make a difference in your business. Your staff will be happier, your customers will be happier, and your bottom line will be better.

Contact Ignus today to see how CRM can work for you. ☺☺

Wes Henry | wes.henry@ignus.com

XML – The Way of the Future

XML has been around a few years now and has started to become a standard in the web development world. As time goes on XML becomes more and more popular. XML, simply put, is the future of web; but why? What is so great about XML? For that matter; what is XML?

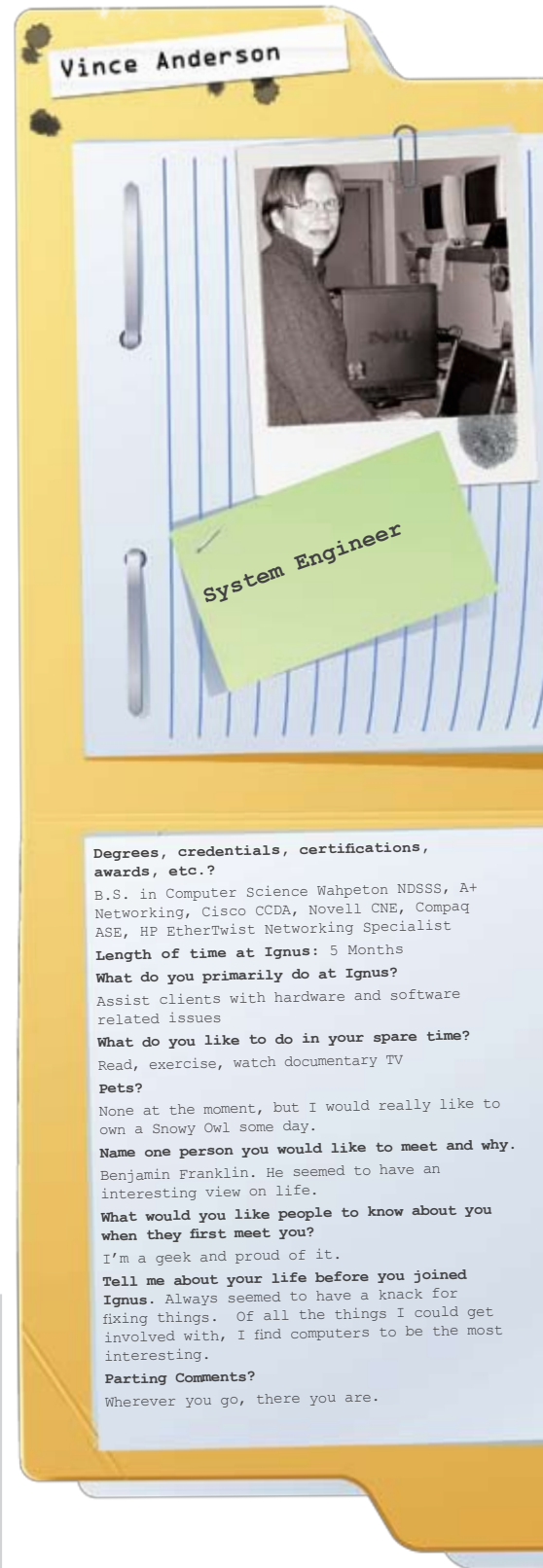
XML, or Extensible Markup Language, is a flexible way to create common information formats and share both the format and the data on the World Wide Web, intranets, and elsewhere. Basically it is an extremely flexible way of storing data.

What's great about XML is that it is so powerful while still being so flexible. You can store any data in XML no matter how detailed it is and as long as whatever is looking at the XML knows the format it can read that data.

XML is the future of web because it does two things very well, transmit any kind of data and allow anything to read it. This means that your phone can read data that was sent from a news or weather website. Or your website can read information on product inventory sent by your suppliers. The possibilities are only limited by what we want to do with it.

Want to learn more about XML? Go to www.w3schools.com/xml. ☺☺

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Site URL: yelp.com
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Type of Site: Business Reviews

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Comments, Questions, Suggestions?
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Ignus Quick Tip

Create a Vista Password Reset Disk Using a USB Flash Drive

Ok, so this Quick Tip is a little long (thus the slightly modified title), but for you Windows Vista users this tip is worth the read. In this Quick Tip, I'll show you how to create and use a password reset disk in Vista using a USB flash drive rather than a floppy disk. If you were an early adopter of USB flash drives, you may still have a 128 MB or a 256 MB USB flash drive in the back of your desk drawer. Even though the dusty drive may seem too small to be of any real use, you can put it back to work as a password reset disk for Windows Vista.

For the rest of the Quick Tip go to

www.ignus.com/articles/392

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