

Foundations—a Pedestal Group Publication

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FOUNDATIONS

The Pedestal Group

What Do You Sell?

Special points of interest:

- *Computer tips*
- *Podcasts*
- *Outlook tips*
- *Time Management*
- *AND MORE!*

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When people ask “what do you do?”, do you answer quickly and then immediately follow it with a “but” or a “not what you’re thinking”? Many people in trying to differentiate their offering tend to start with the known and then follow it with an explanation. But where that leaves the listener is either stuck with the known (telling a friend “he’s a head hunter” or “she’s a computer geek”) or just confused. People are not going to be engaged enough to listen for a long period of time to get your full explanation. So how do you answer the question?

Metaphors—Humans like to categorize things and being able to relate one thing to another helps understanding immensely. Saying, “we’re the Energizer Bunnies of the realty world” or “we’re the Nordstrom’s of small business consultants” gives a person a picture of what you can offer. If my last experience with a realtor was that she was slow to react, I’m going to hire the energizer bunny the next time! The other nice feature of using a metaphor is often that the person listening will re-

member that and tell the next person. Now your message is getting out just the way it was intended.

Start with a pain question—Another way to convey how you are different is to ask the person a “have you ever” question. When confronted with “What do you do?”, simply ask, “have you ever had your computer get so slow you wanted to scream? We fix that.” Now, the person is not only in touch with what you do, but has made it a personal experience with which they can relate.

Begin with the end in mind—We’ve talked in this newsletter before about beginning with the end in mind, but with differentiation it is critical. When looking at your offering from your side of the table, it is often difficult to determine how to describe it so it is different from your competition. But viewed from the customer side at the end of a sale, it becomes much clearer. When a customer is at a networking event and someone complains about a competitor or a problem you solve, what do you want your customer to say? Or,



People are not going listen for a long period of time.....

what do they say now? These kinds of statements can help explain what you do. When asked, “What do you do?”, the answer can be “our customers say we provide the most unique problem-solving techniques to small business issues around” or “our customers describe us as their one-stop-shop for all things hiring”. Again, this kind of description let’s the listener know more about what you do in a unique way and they can share with others as well as be engaged enough to ask further questions.

These three techniques can help you better answer the “What do you sell/do?” question and show your differentiation. What’s yours?

Keeping Your Computer Working

It is tough to know how to protect your computer from everything out there—and there is always more stuff coming. So here are the basics you need to be sure everything will stay



Backups, firewalls, anti-virus, anti-spyware and updates!

working the way you need.

The first, best security measure is to have a reliable backup. A reliable backup can get you out of a lot of problems quickly and easily. Recently I had a client change something on his website that broke it.

It would have taken hours to try to fix it. Instead, we restored the backup of that page and he was back to being functional in less than 3 minutes!

After a backup, you must have a firewall. A firewall is protection against incoming threats against your computer. It can be through your router, Windows or other software. If your router has a firewall, you are all set as you only need one firewall.

The next area to address is anti-virus software. A virus is a computer program that gets into your system and does something malicious. Many peo-

ple assume having more than one program will help protect them from viruses more fully but the reality is it is probably just hurting your performance. We strongly recommend AVG anti-virus as it catches the majority of what we have run into as well as maintains system performance. Other programs, like McAfee and Norton, have been known to stop programs from running. There is no gain from sitting on tech support lines just to find out Norton updated and it broke your business-management software!

The third category of security threats to deal with are called “Spyware”. Spyware is called that because it is really designed to monitor what you are doing on line—whether that be capture your keystrokes to gain account numbers or passwords, or generally track your habits. This type of program is different from a virus and needs a different tool to manage it.

Our favorite, and that of many technicians we consulted for this article, is Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware. This free product can often clean many more problems than just your typical spyware but you do have to run it manually. If you prefer to have it run all the time, you can pay for it. **NOTE:** There is no gain to having more than

one spyware remover running all the time. If you are concerned about this you can download other tools and run them selectively, but always make sure the tools come from reputable sources (we like CNet) as sometimes these “tools” are actually malicious software in disguise!

The last way to protect your computer is to make sure you keep your software up to date. Software manufacturers are discovering problems and putting out updates on a regular basis so it is vital to get those updates! Most programs install an automatic updater by default so leave those running and if something doesn't have an updater, check periodically. This can save a lot of hassle down the road. (HINT The first thing any tech support rep is taught is to have the person get on the latest version when there is a problem. You would be amazed how much is fixed through that process!)

Finally, it is important to be smart about where you go and what you do. If software is going to be installed, make sure you know why and that it is from a trusted source. Don't click on links that aren't from a trusted source. Take the time to look at what you are doing and you can prevent many computer problems right up front.

Where to Find Good Podcasts

Most studies are showing that after 1-2 years of keeping noses to the grindstone, most small business owners are

in fact taking vacations this year. One way to keep up on interesting topics and refresh some ideas is to listen to

**CHECK OUT
PODCASTS IN
THE OFFICE, IN
THE CAR OR ON A
PLANE!**

podcasts in the car or on the plane.

But what's a podcast? A podcast is content, generally a talk or an interview, presented and recorded in a manner conducive to playing on a mobile device or phone. But where do you find good ones?

<http://www.ted.com/talks>—TED is a conference about ideas worth spreading. The talks center around Technol-


ogy, Entertainment and Design.

<http://www.ibizradio.com/> - Has a wide spectrum of business-related podcasts.

http://www.podcastalley.com/podcast_genres.php?pod_genre_id=10—focuses on various topics including strategy and management.

Fun With Microsoft Outlook

Here are some handy productivity tips on using Outlook!

Just received an email from someone with all the information for a meeting? Rather than copy and paste into an appointment, just drag the message to the calendar icon, typically found in the lower left of the screen. You will immediately see an appointment where  you can change the title, categorize it, or add additional notes. (This also works for Tasks

but there is a catch. If you drag a message to the Task List, you can't delete the email or it also deletes the task!

Tip2—Ctrl+V. You are reading an article or working on something and need to get it to someone via email. Highlight the information and copy it, then in Outlook just click Ctrl+V. It will open a new email and paste in the contents!

Tip 3—Change the Subject for Filtering. You receive an email from

someone and forward it, which generates a discussion that in turn becomes something important. Now you want to save the email but the subject has nothing to do with the content you want to save. No problem! Just put your cursor into the subject, change it, and press enter. (Note: This only works when you open an email—not in the message preview.)



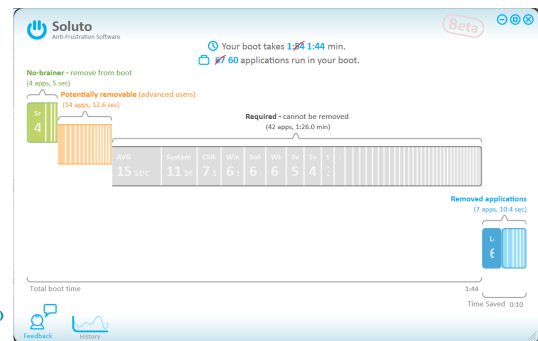
Soluto—Eliminate Boot Up Frustration

At The Pedestal Group we tend to get pretty excited about new tools, but this one has to be the coolest we've seen in a long time. The purpose of Soluto is to review a PC's boot up time and analyze what is taking as long as it does. (NOTE: Not for Apple computers)


So why are we so excited? Well, when you install this program and reboot, the boot time comes up in the lower left of your screen and counts the seconds. Often clients have called and

said it takes a long time to boot, but Soluto will tell you EXACTLY how long it takes (mine took 1:54). Once the boot up process is complete, you will get a screen that shows exactly what programs are starting up. Better? In plain English, you get information on what each program does and if you need to leave it or if you can remove it. In the example, the green are the "no brainers" to remove and the gray are the ones I have to

leave alone. This tool can really make the start process on your computer much simpler!



Podcasts (con't)

 <http://www.sba.gov/tools/resourcelibrary/Podcasts/index.html>—These talks are specifically geared to the small business owner.

<http://www.businessweek.com/search/podcasting.htm>—go behind many of the articles to hear more detail.

<http://www.time.com/time/>

podcasts/ - Interesting topics that cover a wide range.

<http://www.smallbusinesspodcast.com/> - Tackles very specific, tactical problems of small businesses.

iTunes—if you are an iTunes user, you can choose the Podcasts menu at the top of the screen and browse by category.

Often the easiest way to manage podcasts is to download them to iTunes and then sync to your mobile device. Otherwise, you can manage them through your phone's software as well. Happy listening!

Podcasts are talks, interviews and reviews you can take with you!

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Putting our clients where they belong.

The Pedestal Group was founded to answer a need we saw in small businesses to have a source for help. That could be how to find and integrate the right technology, how to better hire and manage people, how to set goals and create a strategic plan, or really attack and own your marketplace.

Our team has worked in a variety of industries including staffing, recruiting and executive search, retail, technology, healthcare software / IT, higher education and franchising and the consistent theme we have found it is very hard to see the forest for the trees. In small business, that is compounded by the number of resources available.

Our approach is unique in that we don't just say it is all about the customer, it really is. The Pedestal Group puts our customers on a pedestal – right where they belong. That isn't to say the customer is always right because that is an adversarial relationship – in our case, we always come to agreement. We are always in a partnership with our clients but also remember who's the most important – YOU.

The Pedestal Group - Putting our clients where they belong.

Time Management in Real Life

We all need to maximize our time, but that can be difficult some days. Here are some great tips to get more done!

Schedule meetings for 10 minutes extra—When you schedule a meeting, add an extra 10 minutes to it in your calendar and use that time to sort your notes, add to do's to your list, or update your calendar. By doing it as part of the meeting, you get it done and



can then file your notes and move on without having as much stress trying to remember what you meant.

Block Time—Whether the task should take 12 hours or 10 minutes, determine up-front how much time you will invest in the task now. That way, you can evaluate at the end of the time if you should continue or shelve the project for another time. This is also a great way to manage email, social networks, and other needed-but-distracting activities. Need a timer? There's an app for that and a website and a program.....

Set Project Milestones—For big projects, put milestones in your calendar as deadlines. That way as time goes on projects don't get pushed to the last minute.

Track Your Time—There is nothing more eye-opening than tracking your time for a week. When you write down what you do every 30 minutes, you really find out where you spend your time and where you SHOULD spend your time.

Batch Tasks—Unless there is a reason to do something right now, batch tasks that go together to increase efficiency. Making copies can go with getting coffee and dropping information off on someone's desk. Answering email and checking voice mail can be grouped together as well. Putting voice mail and email into the same category helps you determine how to respond to people and how quickly.