



Tech chronicle

The Creative Curve By Allen Gannett

According to Allen Gannett, everything we've been taught about creativity is a lie. It isn't only for geniuses, whose inspiration arrives like a bolt of lightning. In fact, Gannett argues, the principles behind achieving success in any creative endeavor, whether it's selling a painting or starting a business from the ground up, is quite predictable. In his book *The Creative Curve*, Gannett boils down the essentials of creative success into four prime laws. If you've been stuck in a creative rut and are looking to get a leg up on the competition, his book is the perfect place to start.



What Is Managed IT Services

And Why Should You Demand It From Your IT Services Company?

April 2019



Our Mission:

To enable you to achieve your technology goals by being an integrated IT partner within your organization.

In today's constantly shifting technological landscape, where fresh viruses and the new security patches designed to protect against them arrive by the week, it takes a proactive approach to stay abreast of all the changes. This is why, in 2019, more small to midsize businesses (SMBs) are ditching their outdated break-fix strategies and making the switch to a managed services provider (MSP) for their IT needs. But for those of us still coming to terms with the new rapid-fire reality of business in the digital age, it can be difficult to determine which approach is right for your organization, or even what a managed services provider actually does.

Here's a breakdown of the managed services strategy versus the traditional break-fix approach and how it applies to your business.

MANAGED SERVICES ARE DESIGNED FOR UP-TO-THE-MINUTE IT UPKEEP.

Maintaining the integrity, efficiency and security of your business network is a little like taking care of your car. You don't buy the equipment with the expectation that it'll be good to go forever; you know that it'll take regular upkeep to stay in tip-top shape. For a car, of course, that means regular

continued on page 2

... continued from cover

oil changes, rotating the tires, checking the alignment, checking and replacing the fluids, ensuring adequate tire pressure, changing your spark plugs, flushing the transmission – the list goes on and on. If you don't bother with basic preventative maintenance of your vehicle, it'll fail you sooner rather than later. We're guessing most of our readers wouldn't drive 20,000 miles without checking the oil, for instance. Many of these tasks can be taken care of with some savvy and time investment, but others require the expertise of a seasoned professional, especially when serious problems arise.

“You don't buy the equipment with the expectation that it'll be good to go forever; you know that it'll take regular upkeep ...”

It's the same with your network. Business technology is notoriously finicky. It'll work perfectly for months and, in rare cases, for years – until suddenly it doesn't, at which point it's likely too late. Suddenly all your data is locked down behind some nasty new ransomware, or your server decided to give up the ghost without warning, leaving key customer information swinging in the wind. We constantly hear about Fortune 500 companies shelling out millions for high-profile data breaches, but when these attacks come to SMBs, they often fold the company completely. What was once a thriving small business is now an empty storefront, buried under the never-ending progress of modern technology.

The old break-fix approach to IT management attempts to address the digital risks facing SMBs only after problems arise. Is your server down? Is malware giving you a headache? Is your e-mail not working for some reason? If so, they're on the scene. Otherwise, they're hands-off. The idea behind this strategy is the classic adage “If it ain't broke, don't fix it.” Business owners look to cut costs on IT by only addressing the most serious technological crises after they've already happened, rather than shelling out funds for regular preventative maintenance.

Unfortunately, just like how this approach doesn't make sense in the context of your car, it certainly doesn't make sense for your network. A break-fix strategy can save money in the short term, sure, but it results in more network downtime, a much higher frequency of issues and a ton of dollars spent on damage control down the line.

Instead, you should demand that the IT professionals responsible for the backbone of your business provide managed services. This means they're in the guts of your network every day, mastering and locking down every aspect of your technology long *before* anything goes wrong. They'll detect issues before they cost you money and fix them without hesitation. You might balk at the initial subscription fee, but if you run the numbers, you'll quickly see how much money it will save you in the long run.

An investment in an MSP is an investment in the future of your business. You wouldn't drive your car mindlessly until it breaks down; it's arguably even more dangerous to do the same with your network. Take a proactive approach, demand managed services and breathe a sigh of relief knowing your network is in the hands of professionals well-versed in the ins and outs of your business's specific needs.

News To Share!

Last month we exhibited on the Annual Review: Hot Issues in Federal Contracting conference at the MGM National Harbor!



Special thanks to Centre Law & Consulting for the amazing event!

The conference covered vital topics on federal contracting, providing key information for contractors regarding developments in the last year. The agenda hosted a series of distinguished speakers and panelists, experts on GSA, Legal Compliance, FAR, and more.

The Self-Made Myth: All Business Leaders Had Help Along The Way

I'm about to share an unpopular opinion: the self-made CEO is a myth. No successful entrepreneur or business leader is a self-made man or woman. If you think you are, you need to take a long, hard look in the mirror. Behind your successes are countless contributions from family, friends, teachers, mentors and coaches. If you can't see that, you're not looking hard enough.

As a business coach, I've seen companies grow from kitchen tables to \$100 million enterprises and then collapse because the owners thought they knew everything. In contrast, the world's most effective leaders know they didn't get to where they are by themselves. They recognize that ideas can come from anywhere, and they actively seek out people who can help them on their journey. Here are three ways to harness that inspiration.

1. RY ON YOUR TEAM, AND SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION.

The most effective leaders are always the first to admit that they don't have all the answers. They ask themselves tough questions to understand their own strengths and weaknesses, and they don't let ego or pride get in the way of building their companies.

One of the biggest mistakes I see business leaders make is thinking they can't learn anything from the people around them. It's essential to recognize your limits, seek others' help and opinion to patch holes in your expertise and give credit where credit is due.

2. RIP OFF AND DUPLICATE – THE OTHER R&D.

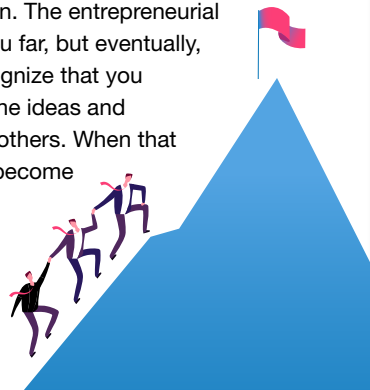
Some of the best ideas I've had for my businesses are ones I've borrowed (and modified) from others. In my experience as an entrepreneur and coach, I've seen firsthand how ideas that are considered standard practice in one industry can be innovative when applied to another. Of course, it's about how you adapt those ideas to your business, not necessarily just copying what your competitors are doing. Instead, use the existing base of knowledge to provide a novel solution.

3. CROWDSOURCE IDEAS FROM FELLOW BUSINESS LEADERS.

Finding new solutions to business challenges is a never-ending and often exhausting task for entrepreneurs and business leaders.

One source that I've used to help me solve problems has been a business advisory group (BAG) comprised of professionals in business operating in noncompetitive markets. Peers in a BAG can relate to the daily challenges you face running your company, managing teams and growing the business. BAG members can provide you with valuable insight into how they are running their own companies and how business solutions they've implemented may apply to your business.

Business is a team sport. No great company has ever been built solely atop the efforts of a single person. The entrepreneurial spirit will take you far, but eventually, you have to recognize that you need to rely on the ideas and contributions of others. When that happens, you'll become a greater leader, and you'll see your business and company culture grow exponentially.



Who Wants to Win A \$10 Starbucks Gift Card?

The winner will receive a \$10 gift card to Starbucks and has to be the first person to correctly answer our quiz question.

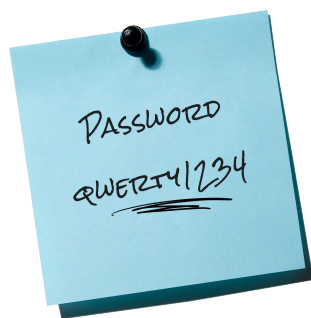
Where did John Philip Sousa compose The Stars and Stripes Forever, the official march of the United States?

- In an army bunker during the civil war
- In Washington, D.C., after visiting the White House for the first time
- In his living room, after a particularly good dinner
- On a boat, en route from a European vacation with his wife



Andy Bailey is the founder, CEO and lead business coach at Petra, an organization dedicated to helping business owners across the world achieve levels of success they never thought possible. With personal experience founding an Inc. 500 multimillion-dollar company that he then sold and exited, Bailey founded Petra to pass on the principles and practices he learned along the way. As his clients can attest, he can cut through organizational BS faster than a hot knife through butter.

[Email Us Right Now!
newsletters@grstechnologysolutions.com](mailto:newsletters@grstechnologysolutions.com)



The #1 Way Hackers Access Your Network (And How To Prevent It From Happening)

It's easy to imagine the hackers attacking your network as a team of computer masterminds. But in reality, the vast majority of data breaches don't occur from some genius hacking into the mainframe. According to Trace Security, a full 81% of breaches happen as a result of poorly constructed passwords.

Luckily, avoiding this is pretty simple. Ensure every member of your team uses strong passwords, over eight characters in length and comprised of letters, numbers and symbols. Keep the numbers and symbols away from each

other, and *definitely* avoid the common, obvious passwords like "123456789" or "password." You also might consider implementing two-factor authentication in your system, which is several degrees of magnitude more secure than ordinary passwords, but it can be a headache to set up without an expert on your team.

SmallBizTrends.com, 1/3/2019

THERE IS ONE THING THAT SEPARATES SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE FROM EVERYONE ELSE

Steve Jobs was a notoriously exacting boss. He constantly held himself to the highest standards of business and creativity and drove himself, and those around him, to greatness. But in his own words, one of his greatest strengths wasn't the quality of his mind, but his strength of

belief. As he put it, "You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So, you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something – your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life."

Of course, he's not talking about faith in some divine purpose; he's talking about faith in your own ability to make things work. Instead of developing some "perfect" master plan where every detail is accounted for, we always have to work with imperfect information and step into uncharted territory. Being comfortable with this, according to Jobs, is one of the biggest secrets to success.

Inc.com, 1/2/2019

SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH Bringing The Peephole Into The 21st Century: The Ring Door View Cam

As more and more things in the world become digitized and revamped for the smartphone generation, the humble peephole has joined the ranks of IoT-enabled devices. Enter the Ring Door View Cam, a nifty little piece of tech that replaces the fish-eye lens of your peephole with a camera so there's never any question who is at the door. In addition, you get mobile notifications whenever the device's motion sensor is triggered, enabling you to remotely communicate with a visitor from your phone, even if you're not home. That means no more missed drop-ins, no more packages left out in the open on your doorstep and no more shady, late-night encounters with suspicious strangers.



Help Us "Hook" Some More Clients Like You & Get Rewarded!

We've decided to start a special rewards program for the clients we value the most.

Here is the deal....

Refer clients to us and receive a \$ 350 gift card to any place of your choosin' when your referral becomes a GRS client. Earn a \$ 100 gift card when 3 or more referrals do business with GRS!

For more information, visit

www.grstechnologiesolutions.com/referral-program

or call at 703.854.9559

