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Creative Business Thinking in 2009

by Greg Slater

► Creative thinking and Business thinking may be an oxymoron, but I believe in 2009 we have to think out of the box and also go back to basics. In business there are always ups and downs and the way we react will often determine what our company will look like at the end of the roller coaster ride.

At *CCS Technologies* we obviously believe that technology will benefit most companies with efficiencies that will help them be very competitive and even give them a competitive edge in the market place. 2009 should be a year to look at where your business needs to go and search for different opportunities. Look at which industries are doing well such as alternative energy, medical, education, food processing and repair businesses. By creating a vision in some or all of these industries may allow you to re-create all or part of your business.

In a recent edition of *MiBiz* they said there will be "struggles ahead, but opportunities too". By looking at some of these "hot" industries you may also be eligible for grants or re-training help from local, state and federal organizations. There are some grants already available and I believe there are more to come, especially in Michigan.

Each one of us should also take a look at who we do business with and make sure our first priority is to retain the clients we currently do business with while we are searching for new business. Sometimes the best business to look for is with the clients you already have. What new product of service could you offer?

Another often overlooked opportunity is thinking locally. Many times we think the grass is greener on the other side of the state or other side of the country. How about collaborating with other good local businesses? Many times you don't have to think too long before you can come up with a common theme. A quick thought of mine was Life Insurance and IT Security. Both businesses are trying to "protect" something. I'm sure you can think of one of your valued vendors or clients and then come up with a common theme.

My final thought is getting together with other local business people. There is no better place to do this than your local chamber of commerce. I recently read that consumers are 63% more likely to buy from a chamber member business. Another great reason to join a chamber is the informational programming they provide. In 2008 much of the good business information I received was at chamber events. *CCS* is currently a member of three different local chamber organizations and each of them help in our success. If you are not a part of a chamber of commerce, you should be!

As you start 2009 also start "thinking outside the box". I know this is a term overused, but I believe it is very appropriate for all of us. Are you looking for that technology that will give you the competitive advantage? Make sure you give *CCS* a call. May your prosperous new year be filled with new opportunities.

"Relax...we're on IT"

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Back issues: www.ccstech.net/news.htm



Greg Slater is shown at one of the three computers.

Virus Alert! By Scott Toney

► Viruses have been on the rise in recent months. Virus protection companies are working overtime, but some things are very difficult to prevent. One example of what we are seeing is a fake antivirus program installed on a computer. It gives what appears to be real warning messages with "click here to clean" instructions. Another is a fake video player from sites like *MySpace* or *Facebook*. The short story is "you click something" and you get infected. Here are some basic tips to help keep you out of trouble.



Back up your important files. We are seeing more machines "wiped out" from viruses than hard drive failures.

Situational Awareness: Know what you are doing and what you have installed on your computer. For example, if you have Avast antivirus installed on your computer and you get a message saying *Antivirus 2009* wants to clean something, don't do it.

Use caution when online. If you're pretty sure you should not open that email or go to that web site, you're probably right.

Watch who uses your PC and how they use it. Kids' home for the holidays downloading things on your business laptop is usually not a good idea.

Keep your system up-to-date. Install *Microsoft* and antivirus updates whenever they are available. Don't let your antivirus expire.

Get help before it's too late. We can often remove virus infections if they are caught early. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

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