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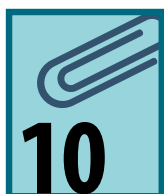


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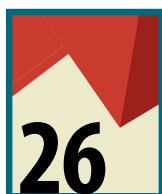
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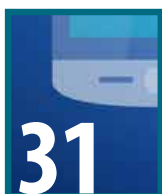
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Editor's Note: For submitting articles, artwork or comments about this publication, please contact: Patti Malott at 832.478.5131 | patti@churchco-op.org

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From the Director

Our son recently came to Houston to participate in a staff retreat. While we had him in town, we grabbed a cup of coffee and headed out for a ride on the new Grand Parkway. We ended up driving him by the house and the area where we used to live during his school years.

We were all amazed at how different things look now: new roads, new homes, new grocery stores, new retail shops. Those of you from the north side of Houston also can relate to the construction challenges that have gone on for several years as the Grand Parkway and these new businesses were under construction. A collective sigh of relief seemed to hang in the air.

I can remember anticipating what that wonderful new road would be like as I patiently awaited its completion—and I had plenty of time to anticipate it while I sat in long lines of slow traffic. We now reap the benefits of cutting 30 minutes off our travel to San Antonio and can move east and west without all the stoplights. Yes, it was worth the wait!

We all know that growth can bring both benefits and challenges. Our CO+OP has experienced phenomenal growth over the past three years. We now serve in excess of 2,500 members (twice the number of two years ago) and have added 5 additional Vendors and Partners to serve you. You can read about them in this issue.

And yes, our growth has not come without challenges. We have filled every inch of the office space that we just moved into a year ago. This year our annual Texas Ministry Conference hit an all-time record of 1,028 in attendance and we packed out the Life Center at lunch.

Does this mean we want to stop growing? Absolutely not! We will continue to work hard at vetting vendors and alliances to help meet your needs. Team CO+OP is here to bring solutions to your challenges and to connect you with resources that can help you keep those ministry dollars going to ministry. Never hesitate to call us at 832.478.5131.

So grab a cup of your favorite drink, check out your newest resources, and benefit from others' experience on the journey of growth.

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Patti Malott
Executive Director



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Purpose

We achieve our Mission through...

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- Acting as your liaison and advocate in time of need
- Helping cultivate mutually beneficial relationships between vendors and members
- Providing excellent networking experiences
- Providing educational opportunities at a reduced rate through our annual Texas Ministry ConferenceSM using national and local relevant speakers
- Meeting the needs of others through our Non-Profit Organization.

Learn more about the CO+OP at www.churchco-op.org or call **832-478-5131**.



www.TexasMinistryConference.org

The purpose of the Texas Ministry Conference is to provide tools and resources for those who serve in churches, schools and non-profit organizations. This includes people in leadership who drive the vision and those who support them such as employees, committee, lay, council, and session members; elders and volunteers.

We do this at our annual conference by offering affordable training, educational workshops, quality vendors and sponsors, networking, fellowship and encouragement.

The Texas Ministry Conference is held the third Thursday of each February.

Learn more about how you can benefit from attending this conference at www.TexasMinistryConference.org or calling **832-478-5131**.

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morepowertoyou

By Michael Bernstein

Navigating Electrical Requirements for Building Expansion

The need for building expansion is a great situation to be in. TES Energy Services, LP (TES) can assist your church in navigating the electrical requirements.

If you have been given the signal to go ahead with planning, you may need a new meter(s) or replace the current meter with a larger meter in a different location. Anytime there is construction, the city or county requires a construction or building permit. The general contractor for the project usually applies for the construction permit before the construction begins. The utilities company (TDU) for your area will need a copy of the building permit from the city or county tax office.

TES Energy Services, LP can assist you by requesting a new ESI ID from your TDU and requesting a temporary meter installation at the address of the new meter to be installed. A load profile form from the contractor will be needed. The form describes the business forecast, timetable, and summary of power needs for the new addition. The building permit should already be in place with the TDU. If not, the TDU will place a hold on installing a meter. We can work with you on providing temporary power. For the smoothest transition, the power request for the construction site will be needed weeks in advance.

Also, the electric provider uses the load profile form to determine the energy rate for your future electric contract. With the construction permit (CO) and electric contract, the TDU will install the temporary meter on a temporary pole designated by the contractor. The contractor uses the temporary power during the construction needs of the building.

When TES is involved with your contractor in advance, we can minimize any unexpected issues for the contractor or administrator. We can even use a “contract style rate” during the temporary meter phase for construction. This locks you into a low cost rate when the construction begins.

When the construction is finished, we can contact the TDU and request a permanent ESI ID. Next, you will need an electrical permit (or “Permit of Occupancy”) for the new ESI ID from the city. With the Permit for Occupancy in place, we can then establish a permanent electric contract for the expansion project. If we have been engaged from the beginning, all we need is for you to contact us that the construction will be complete within a few weeks and an occupancy permit will be in place with the TDU. We can then notify the provider that the meter is now ready for permanent power and TDU will install any equipment change for your church or school.

If you have other permanent meters, we can extend the contract end date of the new meter(s) to match a common end date with your other meters. That way the next renewal of your electricity contract will contain all meters with a common end date.

If you are thinking of making any changes to your church or school that require construction, call us in the planning stage (pre-construction) to walk through a plan for energizing the building. We will walk you through the process and can assist you with issues that may arise.

If you are thinking of making any changes to your church or school that require construction, call us in the planning stage (pre-construction) to walk through a plan for energizing the building.

Is it time to renew your energy contract? We can help. If your church or school is a TES client, we will be in contact. By renewing your contract with a large group of other churches and schools, otherwise known as aggregation, we are usually able to achieve an "under market" rate a year or more before it starts, depending on when and how low the market may dip. There can be exceptions based on the market movement to find an exceptionally low "sweet spot" of the electricity rate while shopping the market.

Also, TES works with electric providers that provide Green Energy. We can make sure the terms and conditions fit your construction requirements without any tricky clauses, and let you focus on other concerns of your business while we handle all your electrical needs. ✦



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we've got you covered

by Michelle Feagin

Never Stop Growing

How I hate growing pains! In the business world, it's always a "good news, bad news" situation.

The good news is that our clients sent us several referrals last year and our business has grown. The bad news is that we need to add another file cabinet and handle a higher volume of phone calls and emails.

The good news is, we have new and better products to present to our clients. The bad news is, we need to find time to research all the minute details to make sure we fully convey everything in those meetings.

The good news is that we had a great 2015. The bad news is that we need to pay more to the IRS.

It is universal and goes on and on. But without growing, we quickly become stagnant. Our work can become very boring and humdrum if we are not constantly updating what we do for our clients. And if we are bored, imagine how they must feel! So we must keep growing by developing new skills. Resting on our laurels is strictly for retirement.

Fortunately, I have a great mentor – my grandson. He is 11 months old and has decided it's time to take on his next hurdle. He is learning to walk.

His first three steps were exhilarating. He was filled with pride and got tons of wonderful feedback from everyone. Soon it was five steps, then seven steps. Then one day he excitedly walked across the living room to greet Daddy when he came home from work. Major applause!

That process took about a week to complete. We lost count of all the times he flopped on the floor. Each time he would pull himself back up and give it another try. Without being willing to endure the growing pains, he never would have reached his goal. He even tolerated our laughter at his awkward attempts to balance himself. Those moves could have been put to disco music. Still nothing swayed him from his goal.

But now that has become old news. We are used to his toddling about the house, and applause now comes rarely for him. Fortunately he has many, many more firsts ahead of him. No doubt he will endure the growing pains each time and push on to accomplish each new goal.

I am blessed to watch this precious gift grow and change before my eyes. He truly humbles me and makes me want to emulate him. If I can handle my own growing pains with the same glowing smile, I will be a very good steward of my talents. ✦

Michelle Feagin

Michelle Feagin, RHU, is the founder and operator of Health Insurance Solutions, which has been helping people with Medicare coverage needs since 2006. You can reach Michelle at 281.752.4830, or online at www.MedicareandLongTermCareSolutions.com.



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Growing Pains

By CJ Malott

Once everyone else was done I stepped up to the counter, placed my order and pulled out my wallet to pay. The young lady working the register hit a few buttons and said to me, "That will be \$28.67, sir." There had to be something wrong because I've got a pretty good idea what a stop at the local fast food joint runs our family of four. I asked her to repeat the order and as she read it back to me I realized there was no kids' meal listed. When I asked my nine year old what he ordered, he was excited to tell me he had ordered a grownup meal. I realized that our days of cheaper fast food meals had come to an end; he had ordered a double meat cheeseburger and to make things worse, before the meal was over he also ate some of my fries. As a father of two sons, I was quickly seeing that their physical growth was costing us more at the restaurant and the grocery store. Growing costs something.

The same could be said of churches when we desire to see them grow. It may cost something. As ministers, we spend a lot of time and energy involved in meetings. We brainstorm and organize think-tanks while strategizing how to grow our churches. We have marketing plans to attract more people to our doors from the community. What if we are spending so much time, energy and resources in the name of growth that we are actually doing more harm than good?

Please hear me out: I am a huge believer in strategic thinking and developing good processes. I love a productive meeting that involves evaluating and brainstorming. But these things can be done well and still not ensure proper, biblical growth.



Is it possible to be really good at all these things and still be spinning our wheels? I know of many churches that run like a well-oiled machine and those churches are often growing exponentially. As we grow, we must be careful not to let the driving force to grow the church be all about the numbers. When we worry about the numbers, we may be working so hard on “keeping up with the Joneses” that we could fail to develop the deep roots of true spiritual growth.

The issue of numerical growth versus spiritual growth can be observed while browsing through Christian bookstores where bookshelves are filled with “how to grow your church” options. We flock to the latest and greatest church craze and seek out the newest church growth strategy. Or we might attend conferences that tout speakers, hoping for that one nugget that will make our church as “successful” as the others. Unfortunately it may come at a price and we could fail to see just how costly it is. As a result, churches can grow numerically but become filled with people who have little spiritual depth.

What would happen if churches worried less about the numbers and more about the spiritual growth of their staff, elders, deacons and members? What if through intense and deliberate discipleship, churches began to see marriages reconciled, fathers leading their families, senior adults and college students serving and discipling one another, forgiveness of past hurts between church members, sharing the gospel, etc.? Could there be a way to quantify that type of growth and call your church successful regardless of numerical size?


There is a fine balance between growing numerically and growing spiritually. The current trend seems to neglect one over the other, but for sure, both will cause growing pains.

Spring is a time for renewal. This may be a good time for your staff and/or elders to sit down and refocus. Maybe you’ve found yourself so wrapped up in the numerical growth of your church that you’ve neglected the spiritual growth of your congregation. Maybe it’s time to ask yourself what it might cost to take a year and focus only on spiritual growth – Will it cost church members? Will it cost financially? Will it cost some pride as leaders to see the numbers take a dip? Will it cost time to retool and rethink evaluation processes for staff and congregational growth? Growing does cost something. What price are you willing to pay? ✦

CJ Malott

CJ Malott has spent 21 years serving local churches across Texas and is always looking for new and innovative ways to effectively juggle ministry, his family and life. Feel free to contact him at cjmalott@yahoo.com or follow him on Twitter @cjmalott.





By Arlen Busenitz

WANT TO GROW?

Embrace Challenges

I grabbed a rope and walked across my dad's farm. Thirty days earlier I had purchased a newborn calf. I had mixed up the powdered milk and bottle-fed him twice a day. Now he was ready to be weaned and moved from the nursery pen to the fresh grass pasture.

The calf was excited to see me. I slipped the rope around his neck and opened the gate. Freedom! He dashed across the yard, hit the end of the rope, spun around and started pulling. As he fought the rope and my slow walking speed, the rope began to choke him and he toppled. I dashed over and loosened the rope. He leaped up and repeated the same maneuver of pull, choke, fall. Eventually he learned to walk with the rope instead of fighting it. A few minutes later he was free and roaming the pasture.

Do the challenges and adversities of life feel like a rope around your neck? Our response to these challenges can either choke us or grow us. We can fall over or we can work with them and reach new pastures and new growth in our life. Jesus told us not to be surprised when challenges come. In fact, he promised we would have trouble (John 16:33)!

To avoid being choked by adversity, we need to understand four benefits adversity offers us.

1. Adversity shows our need to grow.

I took a preaching class in college. I crafted my ten-minute talk, put on my suit, and stood up and delivered. It was a phenomenal talk. Chuck Swindoll was going to have competition!

Then I saw my grade. Either the teacher did not recognize good preaching or my preaching skills needed a lot of help. I finally accepted the latter. The adversity of a low grade was the spark needed to fuel my growth. I'm a better speaker today because of that low grade.

Low grades are minor compared to the adversity we face in life and in ministry. We may think we are kind, patient, organized leaders. Our ego tells us we are at the top of our game. Then adversity comes and shows us the ugly truth of our need to grow.

We can either blame the adversity or humbly accept that God is using adversity to show us our need for Christlikeness and growth. This pruning may hurt, but it is necessary for our growth (John 15:1-6). Realizing our inadequacy is the first step to growth. People who habitually run from adversity are often running from growth. God may have to send more adversity to get their attention.

2. Adversity forces us to choose new actions, habits, and thinking.

A crisis happens when the problems and pressures of life are too big for us to resolve. Just as my calf had to learn to change and respond to the rope, adversity requires us to change how we respond to life. Either we grow or we choke.

God had James write some blunt words: "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (Jas 1:2-4 ESV)

Trials are necessary to produce endurance, bring maturity, and help us be the person God wants us to be. To avoid being crushed by these adverse events, we have to act differently, think differently, and develop new character qualities. Trials are the catalyst for change. James said to rejoice because of the end result.

My calf would not have reached the pasture without the adversity of the rope. Neither will we reach the maturity God has for us unless we let trials grow us. Just as successful athletes must go through the pain of training, we have to go through the pain of adversity to become the people God wants us to be.

3. Adversity encourages creativity.

Limits in time. Limits in money. Limits in people-power. When responsibilities, needs and pressure skyrocket, these limits create more adversity. We can complain, or we can creatively find solutions to operate within those limits or find ways to adjust the limits.

Moses was overwhelmed with the number of people coming to him with problems (Exodus 18). The solution was training and appointing a group of men to help with those problems. We wish that Jesus would do a miracle and turn five loaves of bread into food for thousands. However, often the option we have is to simply get creative.

Feeling choked? Get creative. Ask God for wisdom. Think outside the box. You may look back on this adversity and see it as a catalyst for new directions and potential.

4. Adversity can drive us to depend on God.

Let's be real. Christians sometimes live like atheists. We say we believe in an all-powerful God who created the world, raised Jesus from the dead, and changes people. Then we go for days or weeks without asking for God's help and depending on Jesus for power.

We believe John 3:16 which says believe in Jesus and have eternal life, but we forget John 15:1-6 which says apart from the power of Jesus we can't bear fruit. We recognize our need for love, peace, patience, kindness, self-control and

the fruit of the Spirit, but we forget they only come when we walk in obedience and dependence on the Holy Spirit. Our first response to adversity is often either to give up or to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps.

God causes or allows adversity to show us our need for God—to wake us up.

The apostle Paul was in great danger of getting an inflated ego and living under his own power. He was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment him. Commentators have speculated that it could have manifested itself in a health problem, false teachers who were opposing, "demons" from the past, etc. Whatever it was, it was a constant reminder that Paul needed God's power every day. Here is how Paul responded:

"Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Co 12:8-10 ESV).

What "thorn in the flesh" are you experiencing?

Adversity will come. We can dance with it and grow, or fight it and choke. Choose to see adversity as opportunities to grow, mature, be creative, and depend on God. ✚

Arlen Busenitz

Arlen Busenitz is pastor of Burns Countryside Church near Wichita, Kansas. He also teaches Philosophy, Ethics, and Death and Dying for a local community college and speaks at various conferences. Visit Speakinginfo.com.

FEELING CHOKED? GET CREATIVE. ASK GOD FOR WISDOM. THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX. YOU MAY LOOK BACK ON THIS ADVERSITY AND SEE IT AS A CATALYST FOR NEW DIRECTIONS AND POTENTIAL.



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Texas Ministry ConferenceSM

2016 Recap



The best part of the conference was learning new and innovative ways to improve my ministry.

The speakers for my sessions were well prepared, organized and helpful.

I liked the variety of topics, a variety of vendors and plenty of time between sessions.

Great, relevant information, lots of door prizes, great food. Thank you!

I liked the opportunity to learn new ideas and left with tools to help in my ministry.

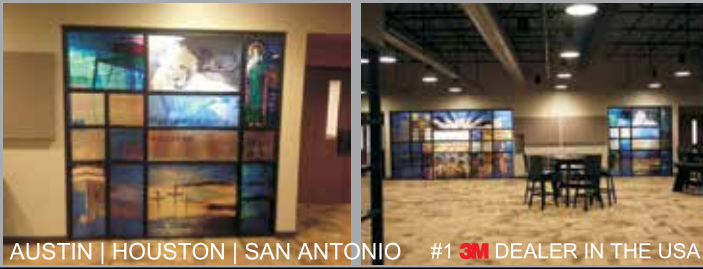


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The hospitality was great, classes were relevant and very generous sponsors.

The workshops I attended helped me look at my job in a different light.

The conference provides relevant updated information and insight into new technologies.

The variety and relevance of subjects make this my "must go" event each year. The food is great too!



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The speakers were great, relevant and engaging.

I liked the mass amount of information all in one place. The food was great, timing between workshops was good, great volunteers and staff.

So many choices! I love that others from our church in various departments can attend together.



The food was great, and I enjoyed the chance to meet others in different ministries.

I always enjoy coming to this great conference.

I like the variety of workshops – professional and personal.

The conference provides me with affordable professional development.



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The Peace of Paralysis

By Michael Euliss

For those who have only known me as an older adult, this will come somewhat as a shock. As a kid, I was a pretty decent athlete. No superstar, but decent. I was lightning fast with good hands which allowed me to be well suited for the sports of football and basketball. Because I was always active, my legs were very strong and my thighs were so muscular they barely fit in a normal pair of jeans. This strength allowed me to grab the basketball rim as an 8th grader and to dunk before my 9th grade year. All of that changed during a football game in the 9th grade. On a routine play I tore ligaments in my left knee and for 6½ weeks, I was in a cast from my hip to my ankle.

There I was, a very active teenager who had to be virtually paralyzed and immobilized for a month and a half. The doctor told me that an injury like this would require a lot of rehabilitation. It was only after the cast came off that I truly understood. When the doctor pulled the cast apart, I was horrified. My right leg was still pretty muscular from supporting most of my weight while the cast was on. My left leg looked like it belonged to someone else. It was smaller than my arm!

Just leaving it static caused it to lose size, strength and flexibility. But that was not all. Being fairly inactive during the 6½ weeks affected other parts of my body too. I gained weight and lost endurance, flexibility, and overall body strength at the same time. It was a painful road just to get back to where I had been before the injury. It was extremely difficult to do by myself; I had to call in a coach who would challenge me to keep going. This coach could see things in me that I could not see in myself.

You may be wondering what this has to do with organizations. The answer – everything.

As a leadership coach, I see the same thing in organizations as in individuals. One of the metrics of a great organization is its ability to change and adapt as times change, while remaining strong in its core values. I have worked with a number of organizations who found success with a particular way of doing business and then “put a cast” on that method, virtually immobilizing themselves. As the environment they served changed around them, they were paralyzed in the old way of doing business, which rendered them weaker and unable to adapt to meet the new needs of those they serve.

One such example is a church that was built in the early 1900s in an upper-middle-class white neighborhood. They called in a coach because their membership was declining. In investigating the situation, the coach discovered that sometime in the 1970s the neighborhood around the church had begun to change. The middle-class white families had moved to the suburbs, and families of a different race and socio-economic class had moved in. This caused great concern in the church. As membership and attendance dropped, they eventually voted to move the church to a new location. They were paralyzed in the old paradigm of

what the church should look like. The real problem was they had forgotten their core values and mission – to make disciples. To use their gifts and talents wherever God places them. Unfortunately the story does not stop there. A few years after the church had moved to a new location, that new neighborhood began to transition as well. Attendance began to drop again. So they voted to move a second time to a location that more closely resembled the demographic they preferred to serve. A few years later, you guessed it, the third neighborhood began to transition. Attendance dropped from what had once been hundreds of people to fewer than twenty. The congregation resembled my leg after the cast was removed: smaller, weaker, and less able to perform the service needed to fulfill its mission.

From Preference to Purpose

Whether it’s a church or another type of organization, we have to be honest with ourselves and determine whether we are more focused on our preference or on our purpose. The more we focus on our preference of getting things just the way we want them – that is, comfortable – the more we can find ourselves becoming paralyzed. It is a trap. But when we focus on our purpose, God’s purpose, we may not be couch-potato comfortable, but we will become stronger, more flexible, and ultimately more effective.

Why do we gravitate toward comfort? Maybe a better question is, why are we so resistant to change? Usually the root is fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of failure, fear of not being comfortable. Maybe that’s one of the reasons God reminds us in His word so many times not to fear. He also reminds us in His word, from the very beginning, that a walk with Him will not be about remaining stationary but it will be about movement.

Genesis 12:1 – “The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.’” (Emphasis added)

Genesis 12:4 – “So Abram went, as the Lord had told him . . .”

Matthew 28:19-20 – “Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations . . .” (Emphasis added)



One of the metrics of a great organization is its ability to change and adapt as times change, while remaining strong in its core values.

So which is more painful – staying the same, or changing? The answer is simple. There can be pain in both. However, the first brings atrophy; the second brings strength.

British evangelist, preacher and Bible scholar G. Campbell Morgan stated, “There is a toleration which is treachery. There is a peace which issues in paralysis. . . . The reason why men do not look to the Church today is that she has destroyed her own influence by compromise.” He warns us that forgetting our mission to be a place that people come to when the world goes haywire makes the Church no different than the world itself. It’s a delicate balance, but it is possible to become so fixated on becoming relevant that we become irrelevant.

Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, saved the company from ruin during the 1980s and 1990s with an interesting approach. When he took over GE, he looked at all the things that the company was doing. After all, it was worth about \$12 billion at the time. Then he stopped 72% of them. He stopped all the activities that were not related to the mission of the company, and by so doing increased GE’s market value to \$280 billion. It was a painful change for many who were in positions of authority but had become paralyzed and ineffective, because they found themselves looking for

new jobs. GE had become more about bureaucracy than about business. It was because of this practice that Welch made this observation:

“Bureaucracy frustrates people, distorts their priorities, limits their dreams and turns the face of the enterprise inward.”

I encourage you to take an honest look at your organization today. Then have an outside coach look as well. Compare notes. Learn where you have become paralyzed and where you’ve gone astray of your mission. One pastor shared with me that once he was honest about how ineffective his church had become, he went into the woods and cried for three days. But when he realized that things had to change, he focused all his energy on the true mission, and the church has been growing ever since. Oh, and as for the church that moved, they had a coach help them identify their blindness and now they are in the business of making disciples and growing once again. ✦

Michael Euliss

Michael Euliss is President and Founder of the American Institute of Servant Leadership, a 501(C) (3) non-profit organization. He can be contacted at michael@ServantLeadershiplife.org or on the web at ServantLeadershiplife.org.

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Overcoming Growing Pains As Technology Improves

By Doug Reed

Considerations for Migrating to Office 365 Cloud Services

As new technology promotes us forward in our ability to communicate and save information, growing pains occur regularly. With the introduction of Office 365 and Cloud services, Microsoft has made it possible to simplify network administration. They provide software as a service in the Cloud, which makes management easier and more reliable while reducing cost. This enables IT departments to consider abandoning in-house servers such as Exchange, File, Intranet, Active Directory, and other elements of their network. But how do organizations move to Office 365 efficiently?

Plan and Prepare

First, start by looking at the big picture, or as Microsoft puts it, "Define your vision." Decide which aspects of your IT infrastructure should be migrated to Office 365. This will help determine the plan that will be used. Some plans have user caps, and not all services are available in each plan. Each company varies in technical needs, expectations, and Office 365 plan eligibility, so administrators must ensure that the wrong plan is not selected.

Microsoft has Office 365 plans for non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and for-profit organizations. For non-profit organizations, the free E1 plan is usually the best option. This plan offers scalability with no limit on the number of users. If users need Office Professional, the Office ProPlus license can be added to the E1 plan for only \$2.00 per user/month, making this a more logical option than the \$4.50 per user E3 plan.

Educational institutions can take advantage of the Office 365 Education plan. This free plan offers all services without limits on user count. It also gives students access to resources such as Office ProPlus at no additional cost.

For-profit organizations must choose between the small, medium, and Enterprise plans. These plans vary in cost, user count limit, and services available. Most decisions on these plans will be based on IT budget and organization size. In this scenario it is key to understand the plans and licensing, given the wide variety of offerings.

Steps for Migration

- Prepare for the migration: Create a migration plan and identify users and devices that will be affected. Take an inventory of the hardware and software that will be involved in the migration to Office 365. Make sure that there are no incompatibilities and that all Microsoft software has been patched. Having software such as Office or Exchange up to date ensures a smooth and efficient migration process. The version of software will dictate the migration process and Office 365 tools available. For example, any Exchange server older than 2010 SP2 cannot take advantage of a Hybrid migration and must be migrated using the Cut-over process.
- Clean up Time: Before the migration is a good time to clean up the network.
- Active Directory: Inactive users should be removed from AD (Active Directory). Review user accounts and password policies when considering AD synchronization with Office 365. Office 365 offers tools to help transition AD to ADFS or just Single sign-on. Administrators just have to follow the Office 365 AD requirements.

- Exchange: Purge all unused mailboxes and distribution groups from Exchange. Due to Office 365 migration limits, messages with attachments larger than 25 MB must be removed, or a third-party tool such as MessageOps must be used to export these messages prior to email migration.
- File Server/One Drive: When migrating user data and shares, directories should be examined for any data that can be excluded. The more “fat” administrators can carve out, the faster the migration process.

Migration Process

Office 365 and Network Performance: Administrators must also consider the impact of the migration to the performance of the network. Since data will most likely be moving from an in-house server to the Office 365 Cloud, the network connections will be taxed during the migration process. Once data migration is complete, the organization uses the Internet to access company resources. This increases the dependency and burden on the company’s Internet connection. Because of this, multiple Internet connections provided by different ISP (Internet Service Provider) vendors are recommended for load balancing and redundancy.

The migration process can take several hours to several months depending on the size of the organization, the size of data being migrated, and the services selected. Examples of the migration tasks are reconnecting users to resources such as email and data, connecting phones and devices to mailboxes, relaying multi-function printers through Office 365, etc. Proper planning will ensure the transition is smooth and will limit any downtime.

Post Migration - Enjoy the Ease of Office 365

Administrators can start post-migration tasks. This may include decommissioning servers, deleting migration batches, adding rules to email filter, adding 3rd party backup retention, etc. Post-migration tasks will vary depending on how you “defined your vision” at the start, but once the dust settles, administrators can enjoy the benefits of Office 365 Cloud services. Microsoft takes care of all updates and maintenance to services being used: no more updating and maintaining Exchange, Office Suite, Sharepoint, etc. All patching happens in the background, so no loss of productivity or time spent planning version upgrades. No more server hardware headaches. No more purchasing of server licensing or CALs for user access to Exchange. No more managing backups of data in Office 365. Microsoft handles all backup process of company data and accommodates for deeper retention when necessary. No more 3rd party spam management or cost: spam filtering is provided by Office 365 and centralizes management with Exchange.

Change can be difficult, but the growing pains are definitely offset by the benefits offered through the use of Microsoft Office 365. This is an option that should be considered by most any organization. ✦

Doug Reed

Doug Reed is with Bema Information Technologies, a Houston-based IT company providing services to churches, schools, and other organizations for more than 10 years. He can be reached at doug.reed@bemaservices.com.





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CEO Ron Farmer states, "Of all our accomplishments, I am most proud of our team. US LED has the best culture and work environment I have ever experienced. We still have growing pains, because we are still growing. But US LED is a great place to learn and grow. Our goal as a group is revealed in our motto – "We do the right things the right way and on time!"

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The Buckeye Cleaning Center sales force is factory trained in the Buckeye line of products as well as receiving support from other manufacturers' representatives. Our Schools/ Government specialists are well versed in identifying customer needs and provide training with the correct procedures for their staffs. Our salary based sales reps provide training and product knowledge to help our customers save labor and product dollars through our patented chemistry. Our Cleaning Centers provide service, quality products and cost savings to our customers. The Buckeye Cleaning Center has established a reputation for providing products of superior performance and safety as well as an unparalleled commitment to customer service.

Buckeye has a proven track record of service to churches and non-profits, including Fallbrook Church, Sugar Creek Baptist Church, Goodwill Houston, and Sugarland First United Methodist in the Houston area. And we are a member of the Better Business Bureau with an A+ rating.

Founded in 1844, Buckeye has grown to a nationwide presence of 30 locations. In Houston we are located at 16420 West Hardy Road, Suite 150, Houston TX 77060. Please contact Charles Wood
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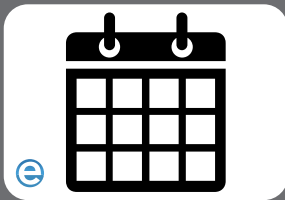
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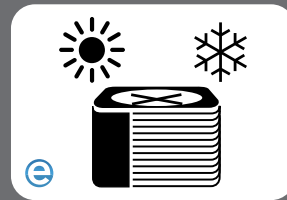
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eSPACE, a division of Cool Solutions Group, offers Facility Management Software solutions including

1. Event Scheduler/Event Registration
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eSPACE was founded by Tim Cool, who has been serving churches' facilities-management needs since 1986. Our company is located in Charlotte, North Carolina, but serves the entire United States and Canada.

There are several significant differentiators between eSPACE and other Church Management Software:

1. We offer the only church-facility-based software designed and supported by church facility professionals.
2. We are the only Church Facility Management Software offering Event Scheduler and Registration, Work Order Management, and HVAC Interface.
3. We are cost effective.
4. We offer the best-in-class customer service.
5. We are constantly improving and enhancing our applications.
6. Our software integrates with other Church Management Software applications.

eSPACE provides multiple levels of customer service:

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2. We provide support via e-mail and phone calls (yes, with a live person).
3. We also provide a robust knowledge base of FAQs in our portal.

We are passionate about facility stewardship. Our primary mission is to help churches and other organizations be intentional in the stewarding of the physical facilities God has entrusted to them! In fact about 90% of our clients are churches. We keep a blog where you can find some references: <http://www.espace.cool/the-company-we-keep/>

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We provide the above services from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday.

Tim Cool

Tim Cool, the founder of Cool Solutions Group, has assisted nearly 400 churches (equating to over 4 million square feet) throughout the United States with their facility needs. He has collaborated with churches in the areas of facility needs analysis, design coordination, pre-construction and construction management as well as life cycle planning/facility management. Cool Solutions Group is also the developer of eSPACE software products including Event Scheduler, Event Registration, Work Order Management and HVAC integration.

Tim is also the author of three books, *Why Church Buildings Matter: The Story of Your Space*; *Church Locality* (co-authored with Jim Tomberlin); and *Plan 4 It: The 4 Essential Master Plans For Every Church*, as well as a manual series entitled "*Intentional Church Series*."

Tim lives in Charlotte, North Carolina with his wife of 31 years, Lisa, and supports his triplet college students at Appalachian State University.



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Ambassador Services, LLC is a commercial cleaning service company that specializes in re-engineering buildings to promote cost savings. We provide facilities cleaning, landscape and parking lot maintenance, resulting in cost-effective, long-term utilization and value preservation of your church or school building. Our quality control systems provide a tight reporting structure for every project within every facility.

Our company was founded by an individual who started as a janitor and worked his way up serving national companies. We have been in business for ten years, and are a member of the Better Business Bureau. Our corporate office is located in Houston, Texas, but we have a nationwide presence. We have experience working with churches and non-profits, including First Baptist Church of the Woodlands, Star of Hope and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. We are very active in the community and give back in numerous ways to all of the churches, schools and other non-profits that partner with us.

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