PEDESTAL
PULSE

NEWS

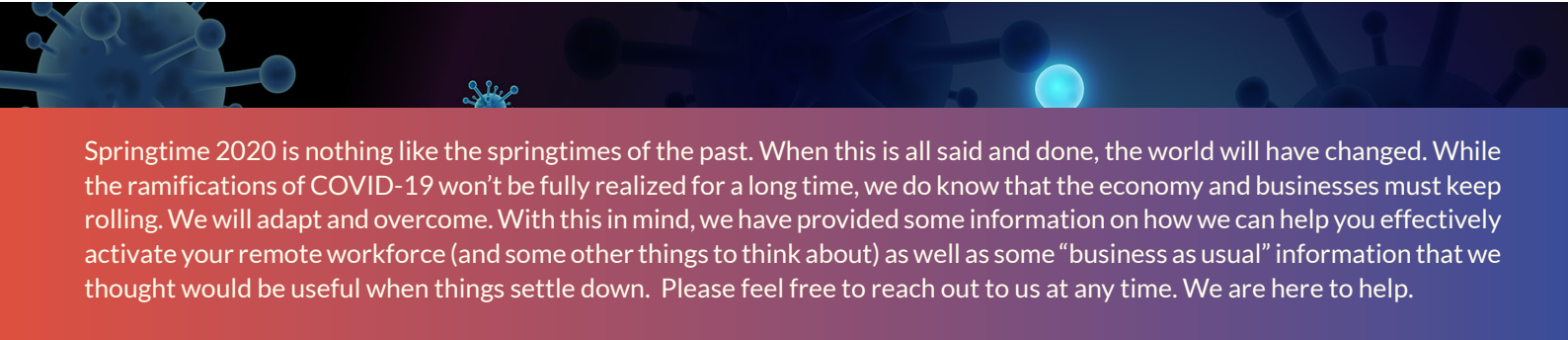**PEDESTAL TECHNOLOGY**

www.pedestaltechnology.com

Welcome to Pedestal Pulse! This quick and easy newsletter provides insight on the latest industry trends, tips & information – all focused on helping you make the best decisions for your company.

Springtime 2020 is nothing like the springtimes of the past. When this is all said and done, the world will have changed. While the ramifications of COVID-19 won't be fully realized for a long time, we do know that the economy and businesses must keep rolling. We will adapt and overcome. With this in mind, we have provided some information on how we can help you effectively activate your remote workforce (and some other things to think about) as well as some "business as usual" information that we thought would be useful when things settle down. Please feel free to reach out to us at any time. We are here to help.
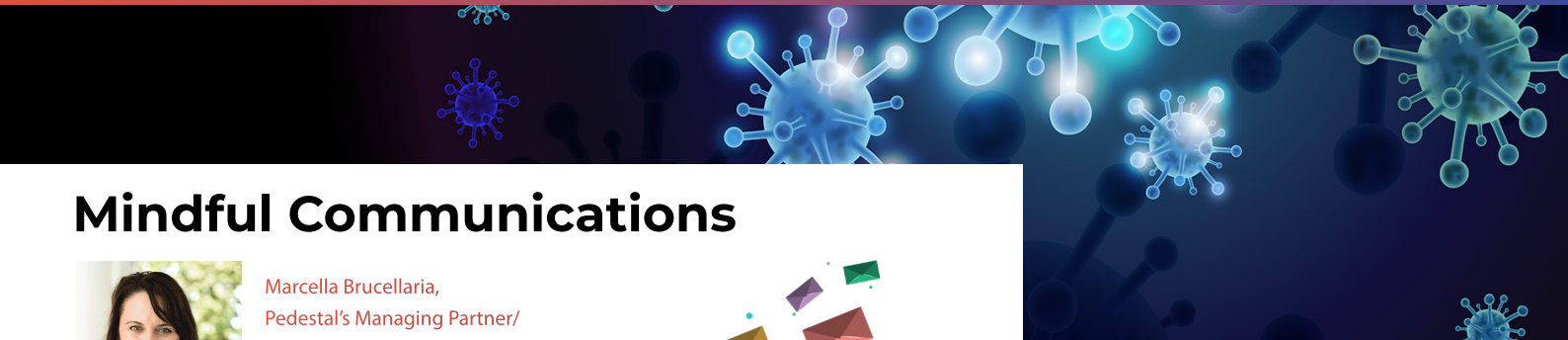
Mindful Communications

Marcella Brucellaria, Pedestal's Managing Partner/ Owner, provides a few tips & reminders for clear, effective email communications.

Do you feel the Zen…?
As we move swiftly through our days, it's easy to make mistakes in our communications – whether it's an email sent to the wrong person or an out of control email chain. To keep us all on track, below are just a few high-level reminders. These are all common-sense based and don't include any big epiphanies… but the message is clear - a little mindfulness goes along way.

Emails – More Thought, Less Angst
Clarity & succinctness have never been more important than now – as attention spans continue to dwindle with each new app introduced. For each email you send, here's a few tips to keep in mind:

Subject line – Don't bury the lead. Put the Ask/Issue right in the subject line. No need to make people guess what it's about – but at the same time, avoid lengthy or complex subject lines. Examples: "Action Required by Tuesday" or "Your Help Needed"

Recipients – Take a good look at the "to" line – do they ALL need to be there? Some people are best suited to receive a forwarded "FYI," after the fact. The "cc" line should only be used for those who do not have any action items – they just need to be "in the know." Be sure you have the right people in the right place.

Size does matter – Just seeing a 6-paragraph email pop up is headache provoking. Emails should NEVER be long. They should have just the key information, with supporting docs attached. Use bullets to highlight critical information.

Use punctuation sparingly - Multiple exclamation points seem ridiculous and either dilute or enflame the situation. And, of course, avoid "shouty caps." An email is not the right vehicle to showcase too much emotion. If it's that big of an issue, take a pause – or maybe sleep on it - and then pick up the phone.

In This Issue

About Pedestal Technology
Pedestal, a woman/minority-owned business, is a leading information technology service provider. We specialize in infrastructure, security, business intelligence and data analytics. Our experienced technology experts design, deploy and manage IT products and services.

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Mindful Communications

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Clear timeline - If there is an action item, make the deadline clear.

Questions - If there are multiple people on the email, don't ask questions "to the team." Nobody will respond. Assign ownership and follow up.

Reply to all? I think not. When you are replying, be mindful of the "Reply to all" button. 9 out of 10 times "All" does not need to be on the receiving end of that email. Be respectful of the inbox clutter everyone is facing.

The dreaded "FW" – If there is an ongoing chain of emails being forwarded, be the trendsetter and stop the madness. Change the subject line to reflect what's going on.

A necessary evil? And finally, do a good think if you really NEED to send an email. Maybe a call would get things moving quicker. Here's a good litmus test: If you have more than 2 questions in your email, pick up the phone.

Replying in a Timely Manner – Each and every email you receive should be met with a response. You do not need to know the answer or have the solution. But rather you need to acknowledge you have received it and what next steps/timing are required.

Some easy examples include: "Thank you for the information. I'll get back to you shortly." Or, for internal or more casual emails, it's as easy as "Got it – thanks." Do not leave people hanging. They took the time to send it. It is your job to take the moment to respond.

Is your business prepared for a prolonged work from home event?

KEEP CALM AND WORK FROM HOME

WORK AREA • POWER • EQUIPMENT • NETWORK

IT'S TIME TO DEFEAT COVID-19

Take a minute to review our Business Work from Home Checklist:

- Does your internal chat solution work externally?
- Can employees access their work phones from their mobile phones?
- How do your employees collaborate?
- How easy is it for employees to access your collaboration solution?
- Do you have a work from home video conferencing solution?
- Do you have a call center solution to triage issues, questions, concerns?
- Do any employees or groups work with larger files that pose a potential slowdown or block?

If you respond "No" to any of these, we are here to help.

Bonus: Learn how to keep the Trolls away from your Zoom Conference. **Click here for tips and tricks to keep you safe.**

> Working on the right thing is probably more important than working hard."

Outsourcing IT Services – Is It a Good Idea?

By: Subha Ganapthi, Pedestal Business Intelligence Developer (click here to learn more about Subha)

Organizations in the Manufacturing, Health Care and BFSI (Banking, Financial Services and Insurance) sectors sometimes find themselves with a multitude of problems in their supply chains, logistics and day-to-day production. As a result, they may not have enough time to explore effective IT solutions, like building a data center that tracks and monitors their financials and understand trends/actionable insights. They may also lose focus on significant IT and security processes. Some organizations may consider creating an in-house IT team but are struggling to identify the core competencies/skills needed. Hiring resources with an inaccurate skill set may lead to unwanted overhead and expenses. In this article I'm going to discuss some major issues faced by organizations and how IT Consulting firms can help.

Network Outages

In the case of network outages, an organization loses the ability to cascade important and confidential details. This is when IT consulting firms come to the rescue. Consulting firms have their own email/infrastructure and can help clients cascade important pieces of communication while maintaining the highest level of security and confidentiality. They can also work along with the network provider and find a faster resolution to outages.

SMEs & Problem Solving

IT consulting firms often have SMEs (Subject Matter Experts) with varied capabilities and a wide range of experience. This enables them to leverage their capabilities for out-of-the-box solutions. SMEs often suggest solutions that can be automated, leading to subsequent reduction in setup and maintenance costs of software and hardware.

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Lack of Documentation

Sometimes, organizations may have a single resource handling the IT processes for the entire organization. The resource might be so preoccupied that he/she might not properly document their processes. When the resource exits the company, the processes might be at stake due to lack of documentation. Some consulting firms are adept at reverse-engineering these IT processes even without documentation due to their past experiences with these situations. They can also leave behind a host of documentation for you based on what they find. Pedestal uses the popular documentation platform called 'Confluence' amidst other collaboration tools to do this type of work.

Timelines

Many organizations often ask – 'Do consulting firms provide unrealistic work estimates to earn revenue?' I advise that when in doubt, speak directly to the consulting firm to understand their processes and practices. Consulting firms with a well-structured and transparent process will never provide unrealistic estimates. For instance, Pedestal Technology follows an Agile process to track work done by its resources.

Timelines are tracked in widely used project tracking applications like Atlassian (JIIRA). A Data Discovery phase is carried out during which important resources (i.e. human resources, assets, utilities) and constraints are identified. A Business Requirements Document is then created that has all business/user requirements translated to functional requirements and an estimate is assigned to each task. This document is broken down to the most granular level, enabling better transparency with the client. The information is then shared with the client along with the timelines - which provides the client better clarity on what to expect and when.

Report Management

A common issue that many organizations face is "Trusting the numbers in reports." This happens when two reports display two different numbers for the same entity. Consulting firms are adept at creating reports using different tools like SQL Server Reporting Studio (SSRS), Cognos, Tableau and PowerBI. Based on a client request, Pedestal Technology recently developed a backend automation piece that compares numbers between reports created using different reporting ecosystems; and sends out the reports only if the numbers match.

Production Support

Consulting firms provide production support to tackle everyday IT security/data/reporting issues in a faster and more efficient manner. They can also do a Causal analysis to understand the root cause of an issue and can create special-handling mechanisms to prevent them from occurring again.

Are you an IT decision maker that is contemplating whether outsourcing is a good option? If so, it's worth your time to contact the consulting firm of your choice and discuss what's going on in your IT organization. They can then conduct an audit/assessment of your organization's IT resources and come up with a plan. If the plan meets your needs, I say go for it!