

MC Connect

“Insider Tips to Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, and More Profitably”

The Bottom Line? It’s all Nonsense!



Justin Shelley w/ Mike Michalowicz, author of Profit First

On May 15th, 2014 I met a guy named Mike Michalowicz. Mike taught me some things (and confirmed some theories) that will likely change my life, or more specifically, my business. I say “likely” because I’m still working on putting all this into practice, and it is a process that will take

time. What really aggravates me, though, is that none of this is rocket science. It *should* be common sense. But it is NOT common sense. In fact, in the nearly 17 years that have passed since I first started Master Computing, I have never heard this taught. I’m no genius, I don’t have an MBA, but I do a LOT of reading. I do my best to make up for my lack of formal education by pouring through business-related books almost non-stop. And in 17 years, I have never been taught such a simple, life-changing concept.

But before I dive in, let me give you some background.

I started Master Computing in November of 1997. I printed my own business cards, made up some cheap flyers, and started peppering the parking lots. You know those stupid flyers that people jam under your windshield wiper blade low enough so you can’t see them until you get in your car and start driving? Ya, that was me. You’re welcome! I also posted flyers on the bulletin boards located at the entrance of the grocery store (remember those?) I landed my first long-term client with that one. Brilliant!

Marketing was simple back then. Life was simple back then. I remember depositing a check for just over \$5,000. That was the day I really started to believe I could make this thing happen. Under the circumstances, that was a lot of cash!

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“As a business owner, you don’t have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That’s where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!”

- Justin Shelley, Master Computing

June 2014

DENTON, TEXAS

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“Your password was so clever I mentioned it to everyone who came in today.”

I found better ways of marketing, joined the local Chamber, got referrals, and over time grew to the point where I had 10 employees and two offices. Life was great.

But here's the problem: I was young, inexperienced, and impulsive. For example, I closed a deal that landed me \$100,000 in profit. It was like hitting the jackpot! So I immediately spent \$30,000 putting in a new yard at the house. I have no idea what I did with the other \$70k. But that was how I rolled at the time. And my wife *hated* it. Some months were great. Some left us scratching our heads wondering why we couldn't buy groceries.

Then came that horrific day that altered life for so many: September 11, 2001. Although I was shocked, dazed, by the news, I had no idea at the time that an event so far away was going to have such an impact on my life. To keep this brief, I'll just say that the economic problems that followed translated to political problems within my client base, and that led to me losing roughly 75% of my revenue almost overnight. I struggled to reinvent myself, offer new services, anything to keep the doors open. I fought it as long as I could. But eventually I admitted defeat. To this day I am haunted by the look in my office manager's eyes as I told her she was no longer needed. We closed our doors and I started a new career in aviation. I would leave the world of technology for good (so I thought).

Fast forward to November 1, 2010. I found myself once again running an IT shop. With the scars of my past business failure locked in my mind, I vowed to do things differently this time. Instead of waiting for the phone to ring I would offer service agreements. Because A/R was the problem that finally sunk me before, I had a new approach to making sure I always got paid on time. For the most part, and with some ongoing adjustments, things have been much better this time around. But something was still not right. Only, I didn't know what it was.

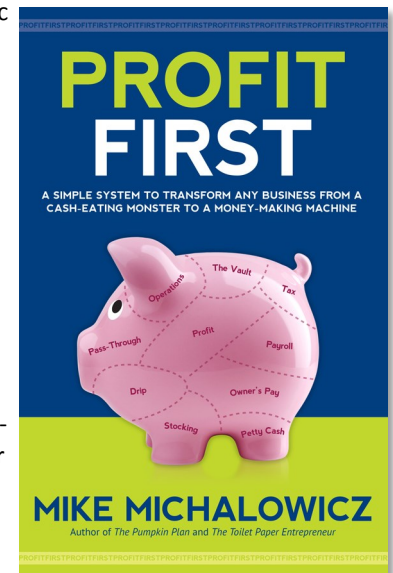
Then I met Mike. He was presenting at an IT convention I attended in Nashville, TN. The topic for his spot on the event schedule was: "*Profit First: A Simple System To Transform Any Business From A Cash-Eating Monster To A Money-making Machine*". I was intrigued.

Not long before meeting Mike, I read *The Richest Man in Babylon*. I immediately put it into practice. At home. I wasn't really sure how to apply that concept to my business (10% saving/investing). I kicked it around, tried a few things, then moved on. Until May 15th. When I heard about Profit First it was one of those light bulb moments for me. It was *The Richest Man in Babylon* for business. And more. The concept is simple, but figuring out all the formulas, percentages and numbers would have been a lot of work. Thanks Mike! So much easier and faster to just read your book.

I firmly believe that if I had been running my business by the principles of Profit First starting in 1997, I would have survived the nightmare following the 9/11 attacks. So what is so revolutionary about Profit First? In it's simplest form, we've all been using the wrong formula in our accounting practices. We are taught that $Gross - Expenses = Profit$. That is absolute nonsense. Profit becomes an afterthought, a result, or more accurately, an accident. Flip the formula on its head: $Gross - Profit = Expenses$. Mathematically it's still the same formula, just a different order of operations. Decide what your profit will be, remove it from your account (in fact, put it in a separate bank), and pay expenses with what's left. No money for expenses? Time to make some cuts.

But wait, there's more! So much more. If you are still reading this article, you probably have enough interest to go out and buy (pre-order) the book. I was lucky enough to get a sneak-peak copy at the convention. But go order it now. It comes out early July. Available on Amazon. (Mike, I want some commission for all the sales I'm bringing you.)

Justin Shelley



This Month in Technology History

1977 – Apple Introduces the Apple II Personal Computer

On June 10, 1977, Apple Computer introduced the original Apple II home computer. As the name suggests, this was not Apple's first product to reach the market – that was the Apple I, which was released in 1976. Like the Apple I, the II was designed to use a keyboard and monitor as its primary interfaces, not a series of switches and LEDs like other early competitors, and the two machines were built around the same processor. Unlike the I, however, the II was designed with regular users in mind. The I shipped only as a motherboard – the purchaser (usually an electronics hobbyist) had to provide the case, keyboard, monitor (plus the necessary wiring), power supply, and cassette deck (if they wanted to save their work). In contrast, the II shipped fully assembled with almost everything that a person would need to use the computer – they only had to provide a monitor (even a TV set would work) and a cassette deck if needed.



This new approach was one of the first examples of Steve Jobs's brilliance. He understood that Apple could never sustain itself in the light of new competitors (such as Radio Shack and Commodore) if it did not start to make computers that average users could use with ease. He insisted that the II's casing be neat and visually pleasing as he was sure that it would increase the value of the product. He also influenced the price of the machine – at almost \$1300, it was significantly higher than similar competitors, but Jobs was confident that people would pay the premium for a higher quality product.

But the key figure behind the Apple II was the other co-founder of Apple, Steve Wozniak. Excepting the case, the Apple II was Wozniak's design top to bottom. Wozniak selected all of the hardware, built most of the prototypes by himself, and ensured the machine was something that hobbyists would still appreciate even though it was no longer targeted specifically towards them. To this end, he ensured that the II remained easy to open, upgradeable, and expandable, unlike its competitors and despite Jobs's wishes to the contrary. Perhaps his most amazing feat while designing the II, however, was writing and compiling the system's default programming language Integer BASIC *completely by hand*, a task completely unheard of in technology today.

The II would become a runaway success upon its introduction, spawning five revisions. It even kept Apple afloat while it experimented with other product lines such as the unsuccessful Apple III business computer and the initially unprofitable Macintosh. By the time the last Apple II model, the IIfx, was discontinued in late 1993, it had become a ubiquitous presence in American public schools, saved Microsoft from the brink of insolvency, and set a trend for all personal computers to follow.



Jay Hathi is the Lead Technician at Master Computing. Jay has been with Master Computing as Lead Technician for almost four years and is the technical face of the company. An avid bowler and phonophile, Jay can be found spending his time off watching game shows and critiquing atrocious fragments of popular culture. Jay lives with two cats and is commonly referred to as "that crazy cat dude." He enjoys playing guitar and bass, drinking mid-cost wines, discovering new culinary dives, and book shopping. Please be aware that his sense of humor is so dry and obscure that it is often thought he doesn't have one at all.

My Computer Network Doesn't Need Regular Monitoring And Maintenance, Does It?

This is probably one of the biggest and most **costly misconceptions that many business owners have**. Usually this is because they've been fortunate enough to never have encountered a major computer-related disaster, but that's similar to someone thinking they don't need to wear a seat belt when driving a car because they've never had an accident.

Computer networks are complex and dynamic systems that need regular updates and maintenance to stay up, running fast and problem-free. In fact, it's surprising how fast a brand-new computer will slow down after a few weeks or months of use without proper updates and maintenance. Here are just a FEW of the critical updates that need to be done on a weekly – if not daily – basis:

- Security patches applied – with NEW viruses and hacker attacks cropping up DAILY, this is a CRITICAL part of maintaining your network
- Antivirus updates and monitoring
- Firewall updates and monitoring
- Backup monitoring and test restores
- Spam-filter installation and updates
- Spyware detection and removal
- Monitoring disk space on workstations and servers
- Monitoring hardware for signs of failure
- Optimizing systems for maximum speed

A computer is just like a car: if you don't change the oil, replace the filter, rotate the tires, flush the transmission and perform other regular maintenance on your car, it will eventually break down and cost you FAR MORE to repair than the cost of the basic maintenance – and cars are far simpler than a computer network!

Handy Technology Tip

Do you have a CD or DVD that won't play?

Try this: rub it with some toothpaste and water. Be careful though, don't rub it too hard, or too much!

Rinse the toothpaste off, dry the disc, then pop it in. And hopefully, you can get back to that movie or those songs that you love so much.

Is Cloud Computing A Good Fit For Your Company?

While there are a ton of benefits to cloud computing, it's NOT right for every company. Some applications don't play well in the cloud. You need commercial-grade Internet connectivity, and some functions, like working with big graphics files, are better kept local or the slowness will make you crazy. However, in almost every case, parts of your computer network (functions) can easily be put in the cloud to save you money and give you better service. So before you donate your server and sign up for Google Apps or Office 365, it's important you talk to someone who can honestly assess your unique situation and tell you the pros and cons of making the switch to cloud computing.

Want To Find Out If Your Business Is "Cloud-Ready"?

During the month of May we're offering a FREE Cloud Readiness Assessment to any DFW business with 10 or more PCs and a server. At no cost or obligation, we'll come to your office and conduct a complete review of your computer network, data, software, hardware and how you work. From there, we'll provide you with insights and helpful answers as to how you could benefit from cloud computing.

To claim your free Cloud Readiness Assessment, **simply e-mail us at connect@master-computing.com or give us a call at 940-220-9590. Offer ends June 30, 2014.**

What Are The Benefits Of Cloud Computing?

- Eliminates the need for expensive server upgrades and allows you to use cheaper devices (PCs, etc.) to get the same work done.
- Frees you to access applications from any device and any location. All you need is an Internet connection.
- Built-in disaster recovery and business continuity.
- Only pay for what you need and use (utility pricing).

The Ultimate Small Business Guide To Setting Up A Work-From-Home System For Your Staff

WORK FROM HOME GAMEPLAN

"The Ultimate Small Business Guide To Setting Up A "Work From Home" System For Your Staff"



Secrets Every Business Owner Must Know Before Installing A "Virtual Network" To Allow Employees To Work From Home, On The Road, Or From A Remote Office

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“I Quit!”

THE BOSS: *“Don’t think of me as your boss, think of me as a friend who is never wrong!” ... “When I want your opinion, I’ll ask for it.” ... “We don’t pay you to think. We pay you to work.” ... “You want recognition? We recognize you every time you get a paycheck.” ... “Your job is what I say it is.” ... “You’re lucky to even have a job.” ... “I don’t know what it is that you need to improve, but something is definitely wrong and you should work on fixing it.”*

THE EMPLOYEE: *“The only way I would ever work here again is if the world were coming to an end ... because every day working here feels like an eternity.” ... “You can’t pay me enough to ever want to work here again.” ... “You treat us all the same – AWFUL.” ... “I QUIT.”*

I was recently talking to *staffing industry expert* Daniel Abramson about why people leave companies. I met him when he was the president of an international staffing firm with 120 offices. He now has his own firm (www.staffdynamics.biz) and is helping companies in their hiring and retention practices. I wanted his input on the troublesome problem of **WHY qualified, talented and needed employees leave companies**, especially when it costs so much money to find, hire and train them. The last three words of his first statement to me were very disconcerting. He first stated the obvious – “there are several reasons why good people quit” – but then added ... **“MOST ARE PREVENTABLE.” OUCH!**

Here are his **5 Top Reasons Why Employees Leave Firms:**

- 1) Lack of corporate compatibility and fit
- 2) Lack of appreciation by management
- 3) Lack of support from inside staff
- 4) Limited advancement and personal growth opportunities
- 5) Money and compensation issues

He also mentioned that ... *People don’t quit their company, they generally quit their boss ... and Too much emphasis is placed on the technical aspects of the job and not the soft people skills.* I suggest if you are having a problem with a particular employee, you might want to move them to a different department, reporting to a different boss, before firing someone you have invested so much money in; *some people just aren’t meant to work with each other.* And while you are doing your reassignments, make sure you give both the manager and employee some help with their soft skills.

It costs a lot of money to replace an employee; some experts say it can cost up to 20% of a worker’s salary to replace them, so it’s in every business’s best interests to keep their top performers. Interestingly, according to the *U.S. Department of Labor*, **46% of employees leave their job because they do not feel appreciated.** I would be starting there. It doesn’t cost a dime to tell people ...

You are doing a great job

I really appreciate your contribution

This company is a better place because of you

I don’t know what I would do without you

You made it happen – thanks for all your effort

It’s free, effective and smart! **Compliments Cost Nothing – Unspoken Praise Is Costly**



Robert Stevenson is a highly sought after, internationally known speaker. He is the author of the best-selling books *How to Soar Like An Eagle in a World Full of Turkeys* and *52 Essential Habits For Success*. Robert is a graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and is a former All-American Athlete. He started his first business at 24 and has owned several companies. Robert has international sales experience dealing in over 20 countries, and his client list reads like a Who’s Who in Business. He has shared the podium with such renowned names as Generals Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf, Former President George H.W. Bush, Anthony Robbins and Steven Covey. www.robertstevenson.org/

Shiny New Gadget



Laser Projection Virtual Keyboard

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Everyday Photography

Have you ever wished that your photographs looked as beautiful as those gracing National Geographic? Well, here are some tips that can get you closer to that goal!



Taking a beautiful photograph is one artistic route that is open to all of us, whether we think we're artistic or not. How often have you thought to yourself *that would make a beautiful picture!* And guess what? Thanks to modern technology, you have a camera with you all the time! There are some important photography guidelines to remember, but they apply to everything- from expensive, top of the line digital cameras to smartphone cameras.

1. Rule of Thirds. Sounds intimidating, doesn't it? But it's really not. What this means is that a frame (or picture) can be divided up into three horizontal and three vertical squares (making a total of nine squares). And, a photograph usually works better if the main focus of the picture is off center.
2. Simplicity. Everyone likes simplicity- we are always trying to simplify our lives. The same works for photos. Too much busyness in a photo takes away from the main focus of your picture.
3. Leading Lines. These are "lines" that draw the eye deeper in the photo, either to the main focus, or to a part of the photo that you might not notice otherwise. They can be anything from rivers to branches to bridges; vertical or horizontal.
4. Straight Horizon. Keep that horizon on the level!
5. Framing. Use things in the picture (doorways, trees, etc.) to frame the main subject of the photo.
6. Perspective. Try changing your position to get a new perspective on a photo; even just moving a little to the left or right can completely change a picture.
7. Color. Color is important; they create emotion and moods. What emotion are you trying to convey in your photo?
8. Symmetry. Sometimes, symmetry is more important than the rule of thirds; take, for instance, the center of a flower. It generally looks better smack dab in the middle of the photo, than off center.
9. Have fun! Enjoy your pictures.

With these guidelines in mind, you can take some beautiful- perhaps even breathtaking- photographs that you will love to show off.

Have You Installed Microsoft Office On Your iPad Yet?

After years of rumors, Microsoft finally unveiled Office for iPad in late March. This is a huge addition to the iPad, as demonstrated by the more than 12 million downloads of the product in the first week it was released.

The iPad Just Got More Business-Friendly

One of the biggest business complaints about the iPad has been that it's great as a personal device and for catching up on e-mail, but you really couldn't do real work on it. You can now use the core 3 of Word, Excel and Powerpoint on your iPad fairly seamlessly. Microsoft has integrated Office for iPad into their Office 365 suite of products with an annual fee of only \$100, which includes online file storage (or you can simply view files in Office for iPad, but not work on them, for free).

Just about everything you're used to within the Office Suite is here on the iPad, optimized for touch screens. These three apps are feature-rich, powerful business tools. And while a menu item or two might be out of place, you'll soon quickly adapt to the user interface. If you've used an iPad and you've used Office on your desktop, you'll be just fine. Advanced features such as change tracking, find and replace are all there, and while there still may be a few things you need to do on your desktop, we're hard-pressed to find many of them.



The Lighter Side: Did June Know This?



1. Did you know it is **Candy Month**? Go ahead and satisfy your sweet tooth – you're supposed to!
2. Also, the polar opposite: it is also **Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Month**.
3. Aside from that, **June is National Turkey Lovers' Month**. Americans consume *more than 353 million pounds* of turkey during National Turkey Lovers' Month.
4. Marilyn Monroe (*Norma Jeane Baker Mortenson*) was born June 1st, 1926.
5. On June 19th, 1997, **Cats** became the longest-running show in the history of Broadway.
6. **The American War of Independence** began in June of 1775 with the battle of Bunker Hill outside of Boston.
7. The very **first baseball game** was played on June 19th, 1845, across the Hudson River in Hoboken, New Jersey.
8. June 1st also marks the start of **Atlantic Hurricane Season** – be careful!
9. And, of course, we can't forget the **holidays** in June – Flag Day is the 14th, Father's Day is the 15th, and the first day of summer also falls in June!

Who Else Wants To Win A \$25 Gift Card?

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is Aletris Stanley of Aletris Stanley CPA in Denton! She was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month: **Famous May baby Paul David Hewson is better known to the world as ...?** The correct answer was d) Bono.



Now, here's this month's trivia question. The winner will receive a \$25 gift card to AMC Theaters

Which of the following stones are not considered a June Birthstone? a) Moonstone b) Alexandrite c) Sardonyx d) Pearl

E-mail Us Right Now With Your Answer!
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