

The Efficient Practice

Newsletter for
Financial and Business Professionals

Managing Change

Consider this scenario: you walk into your office one day carrying a book and your employees groan, roll their eyes and make snide remarks about change coming to the office. If this has happened to you, it is likely because change has been mishandled in the past. The analogy of a boss reading new books (or attending conferences) and then imposing frequent, office altering changes is common in financial practices. The scenario should more aptly be described as change mis-management. And, the negative effect on the firm could be devastating in the long run. Most office employees resist change. It requires a new learning curve. It means a loss of productivity during the learning phase and it

means disruption of daily activities. Therefore, unless there is an overwhelming reason for change, most employees will be uncomfortable with it. Some employees not only resist change but actively fight it. In cases where change is imposed, employees may feel threatened by change. This may be a reaction to a loss of control or a perception that their job is going to go away once the change is effected. For this reason and others, implementing change in an office environment requires careful preparation and sensitivity to the perception of those who will be affected by it.

You cannot sell change to your employees. Selling

change to employees is not a sustainable strategy for success. When office workers listen to the boss 'selling them' on some revolutionary new way of doing things, most will smile and appear to accept the news, but quietly to themselves are thinking, "no way is this going to work."

Change needs to be understood and managed in a co-operative environment.

Instead of selling change, the owner or manager should be focused on being a settling influence as change is introduced. Firm owners and/or managers need to check that people affected by the change(s) agree with, or at least understand the need for change,, and have a chance to ...

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Password Management: A Key Element in Data Security

A new study by security firm Trusteer (www.trusteer.com) found that 73 percent of Web users take their online banking password and use it at other Web sites. And about half of all consumers utilize the same password and user name at online banking sites and other sites. The survey also found that when a bank permits users to pick their own user ID, 65 per cent will re-use this username with a non-financial website, a figure that drops to

45 per cent even if a bank chooses the user ID for its customers.

What this means is that if a user enters the same password/user ID combination at other, less secure sites, such as social networking, they stand an excellent chance of suffering financial losses from 'cyber-crooks' who target such practices. For financial advisors, using the same or similar passwords to enter otherwise secure sites that contain critical, private

client information could be disastrous to your practice and the trust placed in you by your clients.

Information (identity) theft is a huge, growing threat, particularly in the financial services profession, where more and more information is being stored and retrieved from the Web. On a recent visit to a financial advisor's office in Texas, the open reception area, containing a desk with a workstation for the receptionist was littered with sticky notes ...

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Special points of interest:

- > Managing Change
- > Password Management
- > Exploring
- > Tools for Efficient Business
- > Commentary

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Password Management: A Key Element in Data Security

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Anyone, including the night cleaning crew would have easy access to this information.

More alphanumeric characters are preferable to less in increasing the security of your password.

containing handwritten passwords to various secure websites. Anyone, including the night cleaning crew would have easy access to this information. Worse, the clients would be likely to spot such a security breach.

Hackers sometimes use a type of software called Brute-Force Dictionary to uncover the most common passwords of users. However, statistics (courtesy of the Chicago Tribune) show that even this may not be necessary as the ten most common passwords used online are:

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| 1. pass- | 6. monkey |
| word | |
| 2. 123456 | 7. myspace1 |
| 3. qwerty | 8. password1 |
| 4. abc123 | 9. blink182 |
| 5. letmein | 10. (your first |

Other common practices are to use pet names or birth date numbers or combinations therein. The Brute-Force password cracker will cycle through each letter of the alphabet and each number 0 – 9 for as many combinations of letters and numbers are needed to 'hit' the right password combination.

So, depending on the number of characters and combinations, it is only a matter of time or is it? The irony is that such software programs are not only legal, they are plentiful. The reason is, that these are commonly used to crack forgotten passwords with such programs as Microsoft Word, Excel, etc. Most such programs can be password protected.

However, there is no clear way to bypass the password if it is forgotten. Thus, the brute-force software is used to recover the password and the document, all perfectly legal.

Online software companies have stepped up security in response to this threat by disallowing multiple attempts to type in a password. In some cases, access is denied for a period of time or until unlocked by the software company. Despite this, the threat is still real. Brute force is only one of several methods of extracting a password.

Some of the other techniques include Reset technique, Smart Force Attack, Known Plain Text Attack, Guaranteed Recovery, Password Variation and many others. The simple fact is that as soon as we come up with a effective way of preventing passwords from being stolen, hackers invent a new way to steal them.

However, most of these Brute-Force (and other) Password cracker programs take an inordinately long time to crack a complicated password, especially one created from a random generator. More alphanumeric characters are preferable to less in increasing the security of your password.

The problem for most financial practitioners is the sheer volume of passwords and need to find effective ways to safely store and/or remember them. For that, there are two notable solutions you may wish to check out. First is RoboForm (www.roboform.com). RoboForm (\$29.95/39.95 for 2Go) is a best choice from PC Maga-

zine and comes with a 30 day money back guarantee. RoboForm has several versions to choose from. RoboForm Pro seamlessly works with websites, web forms and other password dependent utilities to store and use login details with a single click. The Pro version can generate random passwords and even encrypt passwords to achieve higher levels of security. With this version, you can backup and synchronize passwords between computers as well. RoboForm2Go offers all of the same features as Pro except it can be loaded onto a flash drive and carried with you anywhere, used on any computer. RoboForm also offers similar versions as the 2Go version for iPhone/iPod Touch and for many other popular cell phones.

The most recent version is RoboForm Online. RoboForm Online allows users to maintain their entire complement of passwords, logins, and identities on both their computer and in a secure online "vault" that is now accessible from any computer, anywhere in the world. RoboForm Online further extends the power of RoboForm, the widely used one-click form-fill and password management solution. In addition to other advantages, RoboForm Online provides three distinct benefits to users:

- * Keeps passwords and other information in sync between multiple computers
- * Ensures there is always a backup copy of passwords and identity information
- * Allows data owner access to that information from any computer, anywhere in the world.

(Cont'd on next page)

Password Management: (cont'd from Page Two)

"With users running more applications and storing more information in the cloud, strong passwords and the security to protect those passwords is more critical than ever before," said Bill Carey, Siber Systems VP of Marketing. "RoboForm Online is a breakthrough that balances convenience and accessibility with the tightest possible personal data protection."

"By combining RoboForm and RoboForm Online, we have created a password management solution that is head and shoulders above any other available option," added Carey. "Server-only solutions are limited by server availability and latency issues, while software only solutions don't offer online flexibility." The second solution is TK8 Safe (www.tk8.com/safe/). TK8 (\$19.95/29.95pro) employs state-of-the-art security.

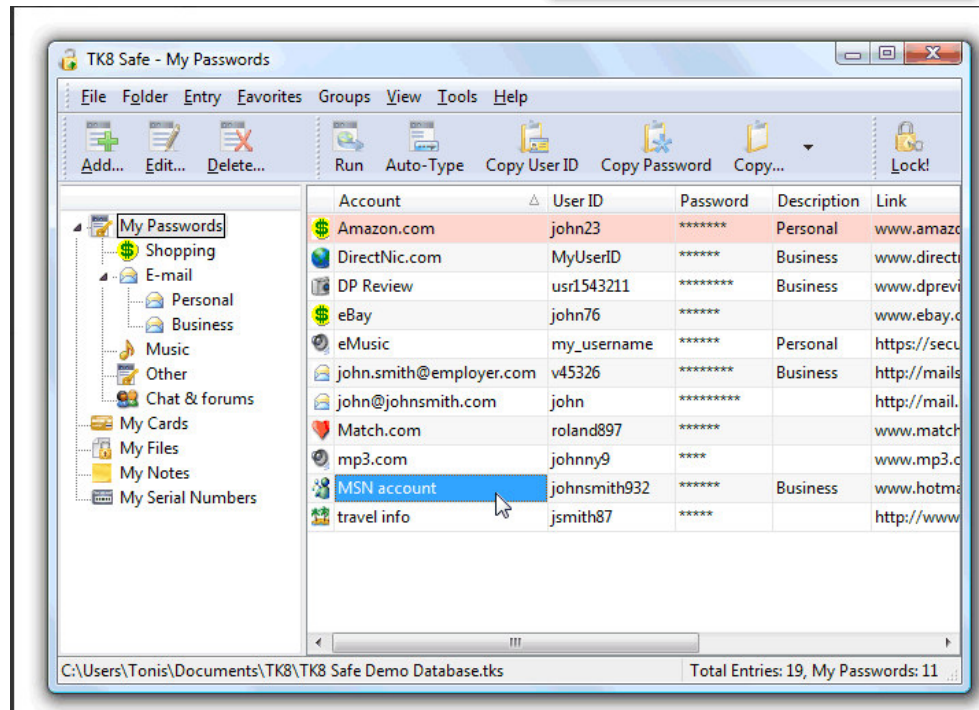
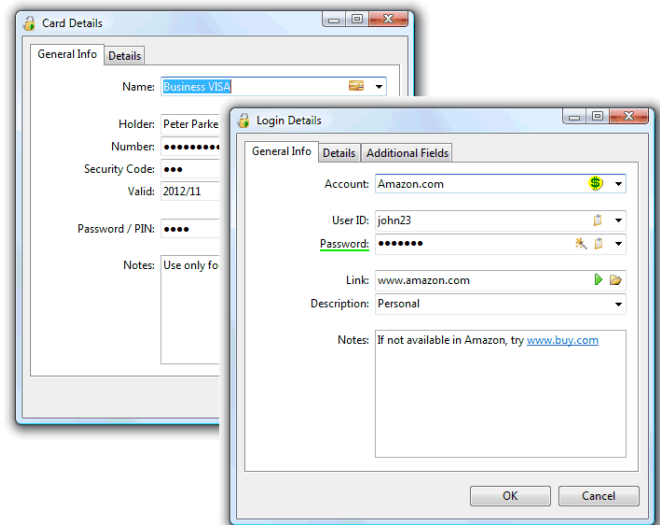
Your data is protected with the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES 256) algorithm. The U.S. Government uses AES to protect classified information up to the TOP SECRET level, which is the highest security level and defined as information that would cause "exceptionally grave damage" to national security if disclosed to the public. On top of AES, additional security measures and encryption methods are used so you can be absolutely sure your data is protected in the best possible way available today.

TK8 Safe Password Manager not only stores your information but helps you use it. A fast and easy-to-use interface allows you to find information quickly. You can also use folders to group the information better. The password file can be locked if you leave the room, so the information always remains protected. Even if you forget to lock the file, the program will do this automatically after it is unused for some time. The program is fully portable, which means you can

run it directly from any removable media like a USB memory disc. So you can carry the entire program and your passwords in your pocket, knowing only you can access the information.

If you have a free [DropBox](http://www.getdropbox.com) (www.getdropbox.com) account, your password database can be automatically synchronized over the Internet to use on multiple computers. The key though is to use the software and to update it frequently.

Because you can launch websites and login with a single click from either of these two solutions, it is an efficient time-saver to use this type of software. And, you will also increase the security of your clients information.



Managing Change

(continued from Page 1)

decide how the change will be managed, and to be involved (in one way or another) in the planning and implementation of the change.

What if change needs to be made quickly? If change is needed quickly, the first step is to probe the reasons why. Is the urgency real? Will the effects of agreeing to a more reasonable time-frame be more disastrous than trying to push through a quick (and potentially disastrous) change? Quick change often leads to problems later, including but not limited to employee acceptance and adherence. Change of any sort needs to be fully explained and justified in order to get buy-in.

For most change to be successful, creating a sense of ownership is necessary. The simple fact is that conventional organizational change, which typically involves training and development (and ‘motivation’) frequently fails. It fails because employees look at things differently than owners and managers. Some bosses actually believe that people who are paid to do a job should do what they are told to do. Imposing change on people doesn’t work because:

- it assumes that the employee’s personal aims and wishes are aligned with those of the organization or that there is no need for such alignment
- it assumes that the employee wants the type of change that the firm deems appropriate for them

Instead of imposing change on your employees, you should consider exploring ways to align the aims of the business with the needs of your employees. This does not mean that because you consulted with your employees before and during change, that you are handing over the firm to them. The reason to consult with your staff is that it saves you from yourself and your own wrong assumptions. Consulting with them gives you and them a chance to fully explore and

understand the implications and feasibility of what you think needs to change. And, it gives your employees the opportunity to see things from both sides and may just open the door to some very good ideas for doing things better than you could have thought up all by yourself. In fact, it helps **you** to see from both side too.

Often, organizations have enacted change without fully engaging the employees in the process because they perceive that there is not enough time to re-assess and re-align aims and values or that change is a response to some crisis. Crisis, though, is no excuse for compromising integrity or short-circuiting respect for the views of your employees. Crisis should be a wake-up call to enact change carefully and is the best reason to re-align your aims and consult with your staff on that change. When a firm is in crisis mode, the employees are almost always okay with doing what it takes to ‘right the ship’.

How do you enact change? Change should be handled as a project and managed accordingly. This means developing the conditions, variables and consequences of change. It also means enlisting your employees in the process of change through a thoughtful, considerate schedule that takes into account what needs to be done to successfully enact the change given the limitations and schedule implications to those employees who will ultimately have to deal with a transition. Project management takes into account a series of activities that lead to a successful outcome or change in the firm.

Building a project requires some skill. Apart from using project management software, there are practical considerations to incorporate into the planning process.

Four steps might be considered in the

process.

1. **Setting goals** is usually the first, most logical step. What do you hope to accomplish with the change in your office? When do you hope to accomplish it? This might involve a strategic planning-type meeting with staff to develop ideas and share insights. Using a third-party consultant, for instance, to facilitate discussions with staff on change can further distance you from the negative role of persuader.
2. **Setting the roles and responsibilities** is usually the second step? Who is responsible for what and how do you set accountabilities?
3. **Setting a timeline** for successful completion of the project, for instance, could be the third step. Whether you develop advanced Gantt charts that illustrate the timeline or not, success does not depend on fancy graphics, but simple, clear communication of the timeline.
4. The fourth step should be to **set up a measurement system** to determine how successful the firm is in making the change(s) and whether the result matched the expectations.

Involving your staff in every step of the process of change will greatly improve the chances of success. Try to remember before enacting change that: **change for the sake of change alone is largely useless.** To be successful, a firm does not need to jump on every new trend or idea that comes around.

Carefully evaluating those trends or ideas in light of a firm’s vision, values and the resulting benefit to the client goes a long way toward determining the validity of making a change.

Exploring The Brain

PersonalBrain (www.thebrain.com) helps you organize all your Web pages, contacts, documents, emails and files in one place so that you can always find them - just like you think of them. This saves you time and makes your life easier! With PersonalBrain you can even find related items that you worked on, but forgot existed.

PersonalBrain is simple to use. In fact, PersonalBrain gives you the power to create a Brain for your own desktop!

Free Your Mind

- PersonalBrain immediately improves your computing experience by providing the following benefits:

Think More Clearly

- Enables you to link items associatively
- Provides information context and meaning
- Uses an intuitive visual interface

The brain comes with a free 30 day trial and is \$249.95 to buy.

Work More Effectively

- Interacts with your existing files and software
- Locates data faster and easier
- Eliminates the confusion of files and folders
- Reduces irrelevant information
- Creates networks of information effortlessly

Another choice is **FreeMind**. (<http://freemind.sourceforge.net>) FreeMind is a premier free [mind-mapping](#) software written in Java. The recent development has hopefully turned it into high productivity tool. The operation and navigation of FreeMind is faster than that of MindManager because of one-click "fold / unfold" and "follow link" operations.

Current users of FreeMind use it for the following purposes:

- Keeping track of projects, including subtasks, state of subtasks and time recording
- Project workplace, including links to necessary files, executables, source of information and of course information
- Workplace for internet research using Google and other sources
- Keeping a collection of small or middle sized notes with links on some area which expands as needed. Such a collection of notes is sometimes called knowledge base.
- Essay writing and brainstorming, using colors to show which essays are open, completed, not yet started etc, using size of nodes to indicate size of essays. I don't have one map for one essay, I have one map for all essays. I move parts of some essays to other when it seems appropriate.
- Keeping a small database of something with structure that is either very dynamic or not known in advance. The main disadvantage of such approach when compared to traditional database applications are poor query possibilities, but I use it that way anyway - contacts, recipes, medical records etc. You learn about the structure from the additional data items you enter. For example, different medical records use different structure and you do not have to analyze all the possible structures before you enter the first medical record.

Tools for Efficient Business: TimeDriver

TimeTrade (www.timedriver.timetrade.com) offers a unique product for busy professionals called TimeDriver. TimeTrade's TimeDriver is the personal scheduler for one professional or many. If you need to schedule individual activities, such as interviews, counseling/advising, client meetings or tech support, their TimeDriver personal appointment scheduler is ideal.

With TimeDriver appointment software you can:

- Schedule client meetings
- Schedule recruitment interviews
- Schedule review appointments
- Schedule counseling sessions
- Schedule in-office staff meetings
- Schedule interviews
- Schedule personal appointments
- Schedule consulting appointments
- Schedule sales activities
- Schedule phone calls
- Schedule service appointments
- Schedule collaboration appointments
- and much, much more

TimeDriver is a revolutionary appointment invitation system that will compel your customers and community to schedule time with you. By embedding a "schedule now" button in email messages and on Web pages, you'll drive more appointments with fewer hassles than ever before.

TimeDriver is for sales professionals, entrepreneurs, executives, consultants, service providers and anyone who wants to invite others to schedule a personal interaction with them - whether on the phone or in person.

Regardless of your profession, TimeDriver makes the most of everyone's time. As an online personal appointment scheduler, it automatically encourages people to book time with you. TimeDriver software lets you email appointment invitations or appointment requests and see appointments flow back into your Google calendar or your Outlook calendar. TimeDriver also integrates with Salesforce.com using a free tool available on the Salesforce.com AppExchange. The TimeDriver for Salesforce tool integrates TimeDriver appointment information with your Salesforce lead and contact records as well as the calendar.



Commentary: The Time is Now

Building a better business often means capitalizing on opportunities when they present themselves. This would include understanding how opportunities can present themselves as much as recognizing what opportunities there may be. History teaches us that there are always opportunities. During the most recent economic crisis, when the housing market collapsed and foreclosures were running at an all-time high, we saw the proliferation of ads touting services for those facing mortgage foreclosure, credit card debt and bankruptcy. Clearly, the opportunity presented itself to those companies that specialize in such services.

In the financial services area, many have discounted the relatively quick recovery of the stock market, pointing instead to other economic indicators, such as unemployment. Lest anyone be confused, there are leading indicators of economic recovery and lagging indicators. Employment is a lagging indicator as it almost always is one of the last to improve. If you wait until employment numbers recover, you may have missed an important opportunity.

In business, the opportunity to find highly qualified employees, perhaps at bargain basement salary rates, has never been better, given our continued 3% unemployment rate. This lagging indicator could be a signal of an opportunity for those firms looking to dramatically increase business and profits as more money flows into the economy.

Putting this concept into the old analogy of stock buying. One could buy low and sell high and not the other way around. Even though some investors panic when the market falls and pull out. The concept, if followed, might be that the investor says, “I am not going to buy while the prices are low, I want to wait until prices are high, where I am used to paying for it.” It is sheer foolishness for the investor. So why are **you** waiting? The time is now.

“I am not going to buy (stocks) while the prices are low, I want to wait until prices are high, where I am used to paying for it.”



-David L. Lawrence

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We assist our clients in realizing additional profits through a thorough analysis of your business operations from a variety of tactical perspectives that stress the efficient use of resources. We have identified **four broad areas of operational efficiency** which form the basis of our evaluative process. We do this by taking the time to learn everything we can about your business and then offer recommendations based on where you want to take it. And we offer on-going support and coaching to ensure that your path to increased profit continues unabated.

Note: No software, service, product or company mentioned in this newsletter paid for such mention. This newsletter remains totally independent.

The Efficient Practice

Consulting and Resources for
Financial Service and Business
Professionals



Phone: 877-296-6876

Fax: 813-649-8755

E-mail:

Info@efficientpractice.com

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David L. Lawrence, President

Questions or comments?
Email:
info@efficientpractice.com

