

business solutions

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The Trust Company Builds Wealth and Relationships



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Strong relationships are the muscles that lift companies higher. At Networks Plus, we put a big emphasis on building relationships with our team members as well as our customers, vendors, and community partners.

In this issue of *Business Solutions*, we share a few ways to enhance the internal relationships at your business. On page 6, you'll discover why **Cross Training Builds Strength** as well as promotes teamwork and improves morale. Check out page 7 to learn how to **Have More Fun, Get More Done**.

We share a **Business Spotlight on The Trust Company** on pages 4 and 5. This wealth management company knows the value of relationships can be priceless, so it puts client relationships at the top of its priority list. We share this priority at Networks Plus and are honored to enjoy a strong, long-term relationship with The Trust Company. You can read about the SafetyNET services and other solutions we provide on page 5.

No matter how sophisticated technology becomes, relationships with people will continue to propel businesses forward. Let me take this opportunity to thank you for choosing Networks Plus and invite you to contact us with any questions you have.

Sincerely,

Brian Thomason
CEO



PARE DOWN PAPER

*Save time and trees
by becoming a
reduced-paper office*



The goal of a paperless office isn't entirely far-fetched, but it's not entirely realistic either. Rather than trying to go completely paperless, aim to become a reduced-paper office. This is relatively easy to achieve and still yields many benefits including reducing costs, increasing efficiencies, helping the environment, and reducing clutter. Creating a reduced-paper office involves shifting processes and learning new skills. For best results, consider the following areas:

Planning

Thinking ahead can mean the difference between making your life easier or more difficult.

- **Decide about what you hope to achieve by reducing paper use.** Which processes can be most easily automated and will save you the most time? Which are currently taking up the most space? Start by converting one area of your business and then move to others.
- **Consider the additional costs for storage space.** Storing electronic

documents may require increased storage space or additional servers.

- **Discuss how new processes will affect each employee.** Make sure everyone understands and is on board with the switchover, and that employees have time for conversion activities.
- **Leave plenty of time for the conversion.** Set realistic goals in terms of how many documents to process per day, week, or month.

Equipment

The key to paper reduction is converting hard-copy documents into electronic files. To do this, you need specific equipment, some of which you may already own:

- **Scanner.** Look for one that is fast and allows automatic sheet feeding and duplexing. Additional software may be needed to operate it.
- **Shredder.** Find one that can handle large volumes and is reasonably secure.
- **Off-Site Data Backup.** Make sure to protect critical data and electronic files with a secure offsite data backup service.

- **Document Management System.** This feature is part of software programs and enables you to "tag" files with information that can be used to track them later.

Workflow

Now that you have everything in place to convert your documents into electronic files, use a process that will make the most of it:

- **Devise a filing system.** Make sure you know how to categorize each electronic file, and post it in the appropriate folder immediately.
- **Develop and follow a regular backup routine.** With no paper duplicates, backing up electronic files becomes critical.
- **Maintain procedures for hard-copy documents.** Keep them as long as necessary to fulfill compliance requirements and then shred them.

*Looking for data backup services?
Ask about SafetyNET Assure
solutions from Networks Plus.*



The Trust Company

For this company, lasting relationships are the first priority

The Trust Company abides by this philosophy: *Not all of our friends are clients, but all of our clients are friends.* Headquartered in Manhattan, their team offers a variety of services including financial planning, retirement plans, establishment of trusts, portfolio management, estate planning, and charitable planning.

Locally owned — most of the staff are shareholders — The Trust Company is an independent advisory firm that helps clients manage all facets of their financial life. There are no commissions or hidden fees, and clients have direct access to the professionals who manage their portfolio.

In fact, clients are considered partners at The Trust Company, and building strong long-term relationships with them is priority one. This emphasis on relationships is shared by Networks Plus, which provides services to The Trust Company.

To discuss the close relationship between The Trust Company and Networks Plus, we sat down with Michelle Duggan,

Operations and Network Manager; and Todd Chyba, Compliance Officer and Retirement Plan Specialist.

What led The Trust Company to begin working with Networks Plus?

Duggan: When The Trust Company separated from First Savings Bank in 1992, we realized we needed to establish a network system of our own. I visited with a few companies about the project, and it was clear that Networks Plus was the one that really wanted to work with us. I chose Networks Plus, and they designed our network from the beginning. Over the years, I've been approached by other companies wanting to provide network services to us, but we're loyal to Networks Plus.

What do you appreciate about the service Networks Plus gives you?

Duggan: Networks Plus provides us with IT expertise, background, and depth. Their team has gone above and beyond, working after hours and on weekends for us so we're not interrupted during our business hours. When there's an emergency issue, their responsiveness is great.

Chyba: The Trust Company is a small company with 32 employees in five locations. We don't have a full-time IT person, nor do we want one. Instead, I can rely on Networks Plus for expertise. Plus, there are cost savings there versus having an IT person on staff. It's great just knowing we can call or email Networks Plus with any questions we have and get a response back quickly.

In what ways does Networks Plus assist with your job responsibilities?

Chyba: My job involves compliance responsibilities including disaster recovery and business continuity, and these issues are huge on my mind. So using the Networks Plus SafetyNET Assure service is vital to us. It gives me peace of mind in terms of business continuity to be working with Networks Plus. The bottom line is that The Trust Company simply can't be down; we always need access to our network. And since financial services deal with confidential client data, the security of our network is critically important.

It gives me peace of mind in terms of business continuity to be working with Networks Plus."

— TODD CHYBA, COMPLIANCE OFFICER AND RETIREMENT PLAN SPECIALIST

How would you describe the working relationship between the two companies?

Duggan: I feel like Networks Plus is part of our team. They have an interest in keeping us running smoothly and keeping our data secure. They're experts in their field, and it's really nice to be able to ask questions of Networks Plus whenever we have them. I can count on their local technicians to respond in a timely manner.

Chyba: Networks Plus has been with us a long time. Their technicians know our software and how we use it. They also know what we need and understand our business. It's a strong relationship between The Trust Company and Networks Plus, and we value it very much. Our two companies share a belief in the importance of building relationships, both with individuals and with communities.

I feel like Networks Plus is part of our team. They have an interest in keeping us running smoothly and keeping our data secure."

— MICHELLE DUGGAN, OPERATIONS AND NETWORK MANAGER

THE TRUST COMPANY TRUSTS NETWORKS PLUS

Networks Plus is pleased to provide these services to The Trust Company, enabling it to focus on clients while we focus on technology:

- **SafetyNET Assist** is a proactive monitoring and management service installed on equipment. It provides anti-virus and anti-malware software, automates security patch updates, and performs hardware and software audits to alert Networks Plus of issues to resolve before they impact network performance. SafetyNET Assist helps to maintain uptime, protects against cyber security threats, and improves workplace efficiencies.
- **SafetyNET Assure** is an all-in-one solution for managed backup, disaster recovery, and business continuity to meet the needs of businesses of every size, regardless of infrastructure. It's designed with scalable storage options, predictable cloud pricing, and 24/7/365 support.
- **SafetyNET Aware** is a managed service that provides firewall monitoring and management. Networks Plus keeps a close eye on network traffic to learn which attacks are out there and what's being done to stop them. We also monitor the sites visited by your users and determine how this activity impacts your business.
- **IT Consulting** includes master engineering to optimize network performance and get the most out of software and applications.
- **Turnkey Solutions** start with research on computers, software, and other network equipment to determine what fits best. Then everything is purchased directly from Networks Plus and is prepped to be ready to go when installed.

For more details, call a Networks Plus Business Consultant at 800-299-1704.

Cross Training Builds Strength

Companies benefit when employees broaden their skills



Has your business settled into a routine where each employee is only responsible for specific, well-defined activities? While this approach can lead to higher efficiency, it can also create challenges when employees are sick or on vacation and you must perform without them. This is why many businesses implement the practice of cross training—teaching employees to perform the job duties of selected coworkers.

Cross training ensures that gaps in operations don't occur when employees are unavailable to perform their customary roles. In addition to lessening the impact of employee absences, cross training also:

- **Promotes a teamwork atmosphere.** Employees learn to work together and focus on company goals and objectives instead of individual job descriptions and "turf wars."
- **Helps to standardize operations.** Cross training creates a company-wide way of performing tasks, instead of each employee "doing their own thing." By having a team of employees determine best practices, you can help all employees achieve enhanced results.
- **Improves morale by giving employees job variety.** Performing the same tasks day after day can lead to burnout, which is why cross training often helps reduce employee turnover.
- **Helps employees identify additional strengths and talents.** You may have hired an employee to serve a specific role, but through cross training, you may discover he/she can

make an even greater contribution to the company in another area.

- **Increases customer satisfaction.** When employees are able to handle a broader range of tasks, the focus moves from simply "doing my job" to the bigger picture of satisfying customer needs.

Cross training does require planning and effort, and in some cases, a cultural change within your company. To be successful, be clear about your goals for cross training since altering job responsibilities may cause concern or confusion among employees. Transitioning will be easier if you focus on organizational objectives and the benefits for everyone that will be achieved. Begin the process by creating small groups of employees with similar job tasks and have them discuss the cross training objectives. The goal is for employees to gradually train each other through observations and coaching.

As your cross training activities increase, revise job descriptions and operations manuals to reflect the changes and document exactly how and when responsibilities will be shared. Make sure that supervisors or other appropriate employees keep track of computer passwords and building keys to ensure access to vital resources whenever job rotation occurs. Finally, be prepared to reward cross training results by recognizing employees who make an extra effort to step into new areas or are enthusiastically assisting their coworkers in the process.



Have More **FUN** Get More **DONE**

Laughter can offer serious benefits to your workplace

In recent years, more and more companies have begun to recognize the need for a little levity around the office. So much so that many consultants now make a living offering advice on how to infuse humor and fun into the workplace. Why?

The answer is simple. Studies have demonstrated that laughter has positive effects on both our physical and mental health. In fact, laughing enhances the immune system, lowers blood pressure, and even releases natural antidepressants and painkillers in the body. This boost to our systems can result in fewer missed days, less illness, and reduced stress.

But those benefits are just the beginning. Creating an atmosphere that welcomes humor often leads to productivity-boosting effects. Laughter improves morale, cuts down on employee turnover, reduces conflict, strengthens teamwork, builds loyalty, and fosters creativity.

What's more, laughing at work can help counteract the inevitable boredom that arises out of dull tasks and keeps people attentive during long meetings. Remember

recess when you were a kid? Think of workplace humor as the adult equivalent of recess—a way to renew energy and focus. As comedian Milton Berle once said, “Laughter is an instant vacation.”

Many employers now say that a good sense of humor is even a key factor when choosing new hires. This trait is seen as reflective of a person's flexibility at work and an ability to build good rapport with colleagues.

With just a little effort, you can make your workplace a little more fun for everyone. After all, Americans typically spend more waking hours at work than at home, so it's a good idea to find ways to enjoy it. And with all the benefits of laughter, you may be laughing your way to the bank.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVELY USING HUMOR

While at work, you need to make sure your attempts at humor don't venture into offensive or disruptive territory. Keep these tips in mind:

- **Laugh at yourself.** We all appreciate people who don't take themselves too seriously!
- **Find humor in stressful situations.** By pointing out the funny side of a task or project your team is working on, your colleagues will easily relate—and no one will get their feelings hurt.
- **Add humor to the agenda.** Devote the first two or three minutes of each meeting to humor and lighten the conversation before getting down to business.
- **Avoid sarcasm.** Sarcasm may work with your closest friends but in a work environment, it can be misinterpreted as a put-down or a thinly veiled comment on someone's actual work habits or skills. Likewise, remarks and jokes related to race or gender are strictly off-limits.



PROACTIVE IT SOLUTIONS



VIRTUAL PBX

A cloud-based phone system that makes your employees more productive and your business run smoother.



SAFETYNET

A managed service platform that can dramatically increase operational efficiency and assist in disaster recovery.



DATA SERVICES

Keep your data safe and secure, 24/7. Networks Plus provides multiple options for data storage. Let us help you find the solution to best fit your needs.



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