tag TRENDS

Your I.T.!

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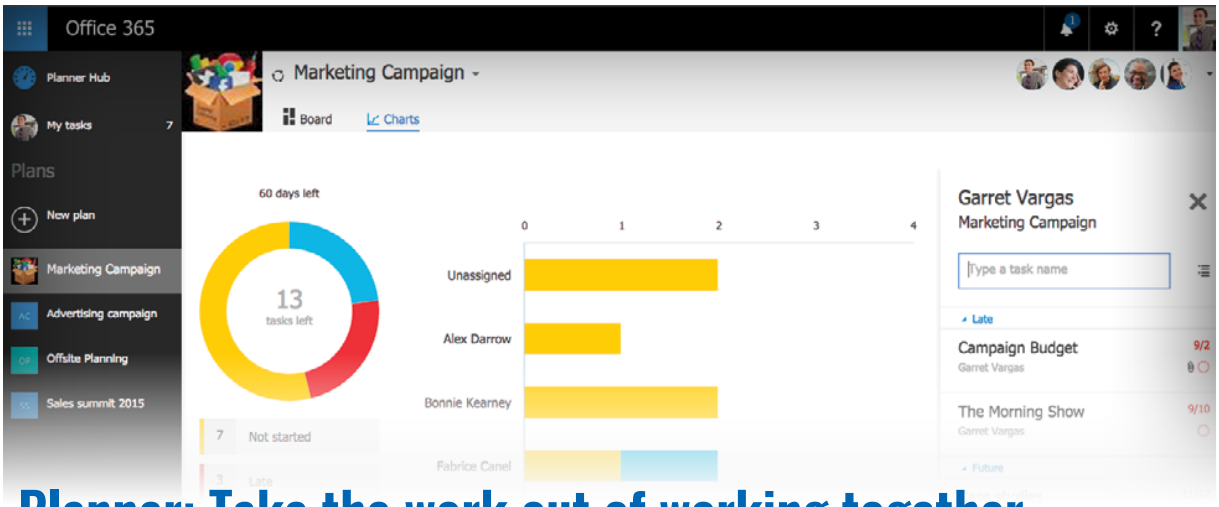

Planner: Take the work out of working together.

Office applications are great for…well, pretty much anything.

Presentations…check.

Communication…got it.

Scheduling…of course.

Reports…why not.

The 2016 version of Office takes all of these and amplifies them by—cue drumroll—365% (**Ba-Dum-Tish**). In fact, Microsoft is claiming Office 2016 is so efficient that it "**takes the work out of working together**" and one of the ways they claim to have achieved this is through their entirely new platform, Planner.

This platform is like the **Facebook for teamwork**… or, at least, it looks a whole lot like it. Each project has its own board and tasks and ideas are initiated through post-like cards within these boards. You can attach documents or pictures to these cards and a preview will appear much like a post on Facebook would preview a link to a website.

The documents attached to these cards can easily be **edited and viewed straight from Planner** without leaving the application. These documents are **automatically saved to SharePoint**.

Conversations can also be attached to the cards. Communicate with team members inside Planner and tie them back to a specific task or idea. Every conversation will **integrate with your Outlook** applications.

Prioritize your cards into separate columns, color-code them by urgency and assign a due date to each activity. **Transfer this information into easy-to-understand charts** that can show your team if anything (or anyone) is behind or if everything is right on track.

Office 365 "will be available in preview to Office 365 First Release customers starting next quarter."

Planner is a visual platform designed to **enhance teamwork** and **organize projects**. Here's a few things you can do in Planner:

- Establish a plan, project or idea.
- Create to-dos and assign them as tasks.
- Share files, chat about ideas and receive updates on projects, plans and tasks.
- Visually track progress from a color-coded histogram.
- Automatically notify members through email of new ideas, impending projects and upcoming events.

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Increase Productivity with Dual Monitors

When it comes to our personal lives, the screen size of a smartphone, tablet and even a laptop will do just fine. Usually, we aren't creating projects from spreadsheets and spreadsheets from pages and pages of information. Instead, playing Clash of the Clans, checking our bank balance, reading our emails and browsing the latest news outlets are more typical.

However, as more and more of our work tasks migrate to a screen of some sort, one 17-inch monitor simply won't cut it anymore. We need two monitors to maximize productivity and to enhance the overall flow of our work processes.

Employees

If you haven't already done so, it's time to implement dual monitors within your work environment. Why? Well, for starters, dual monitors will bring your staff members an easier, faster way to complete their work tasks. No longer suffer from the constant back-and-forth—from Excel, to Word, to the internet, to your CRM platform, to your email, back to Excel.

This back-and-forth motion will only create stress, exhaustion and a lack of total understanding. How can an employee effectively see the total picture if he can't ever see all the pieces at the same time? On that same note, if your employee just went from Excel, to Word, to the internet, will he even remember what he was just doing an Excel? Will he remember to come back to it? Will he forget to add a crucial piece to the puzzle?

Activities

Wondering what activities a dual monitor will help you with and why? Here's a few for you:

1. **Make mistakes less**: On one monitor you have Excel, on the second monitor you have your CRM platform. Easily create spreadsheets based off of data inputted into your database. Decrease the number of potential mistakes—input the right numbers, in the right columns, for the right client.
2. **Design more realistically**: On one monitor you have code, on the second monitor you have your page. Create code, refresh your page and automatically see the updates. Identify areas of concern and fix typos with ease.
3. **Never miss another email**: On one monitor you have your Email displayed, on the second monitor you have your other work activities. See emails as they arrive and never miss an important update from a client, staff member or partner. Decide whether an email is worth leaving your task, without actually leaving your task.

Dell recently compiled research conducted on the productivity and effectiveness of dual monitors in the workplace. Here are the results:

- Dual monitors save time and increase accuracy
- Most employees prefer dual monitors, increasing user satisfaction
- Studies have found a 44% boost in productivity for text tasks
- Studies have found a 29% boost in productivity for spreadsheet tasks
- On average, dual monitors allow tasks to be completed two and a half minutes faster, 40 minutes per business day

Gadget of the Month:

smarthalo

Smartphones, smartwatches, smart cars and smart socks… why not throw a bike into the mix?

And, that's exactly what CycleLabs thought... Why not?

CycleLabs brings to you SmartHalo—a way to put a **bit of smarts into your bike**. This innovative gadget turns your two-wheeled transport into a modern, color-coded cycling GPS. It permanently attaches to the handlebar of your bicycle and syncs with your phone's GPS, as well as a fitness tracking app.

As you ride—for health, amusement or need--SmartHalo will show you directions, weather alerts, personal notifications and fitness progress. All this is **represented in colors and shapes to provide minimal distraction** during your cycling journey.

Because SmartHalo is paired with a smartphone application, your phone moonlights as your **lock, security alarm** and **parking reminder**. As you approach your bicycle, the gadget will automatically unlock itself. If another person decides to ride away on your bike or if they think your wheels would look better on their own bike, SmartHalo will sound off an alarm until you disable it.

When you begin to pedal, the gadget syncs with your application to **monitor your fitness goals** and **cycling progress**. It will track time and distance traveled, average speed and calories cycled off. The application also allows you to set fitness goals; as you ride, the gadget will notify you once you've cycled one off the list.

SmartHalo was designed to **withstand harsh weather** and was built to maintain a **long battery life**. When the battery does die, it recharges itself through a USB port. Right now SmartHalo is available for $99 at a special pre-order price.

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Keep your phone alive with these 5 tips

Protect thy screen.
A screen protector will not make your phone invincible; however, it will postpone those inevitable scratches and cracks. The longer you keep your phone scratch-free and without cracks, **the higher your ROI is**. And, considering the most popular phones are nearing the $400 mark, a higher ROI is good by anybody's standards.

You can score an inexpensive pack of 10 plastic screen protectors for about $5 or you can go up a level and purchase a high-quality tempered glass screen protector for about $30.

Sleek and modern or bulletproof?
Yes, your phone is quite nice. It's **shiny and slim, with curves in all the right areas**; it's a smokin' hot piece of technology. But, just how good looking will it be when it cracks out and loses its ability to think?

Not so good looking, right? So, let's keep it covered in a **rock-hard, nothings-getting-through-this, brick of a case**.

Well, hello there toilet. We meet again.
According to CNET, **75%** of people use their phone while on the toilet. Of this 75%, **19%** will then drop their phone inside the toilet. This will not leave your phone in a very good spot—both mentally and physically.

So many pockets, so little space.
Pockets are never a good idea. But, if you must put your phone in the pockets of your pants, **pocket wisely**. Back pockets are a certified and definite absolute no, never, not ever. You sit directly on your back pockets. In other words, you sit on your phone. Sounds like a good way to break it.

Also, as you sit, your pocket curves. During this process, anything too big inside your pocket falls out. Translation? Your phone falls out—**onto the hard floor, into the liquid-filled toilet, towards a broke-down, cracked-up future**.

Your front seat loves a good show.
A great majority of phone breakers **suffer from the Spidercrack Syndrome**. If your phone is too cracked, it becomes useless, unreadable and untouchable. Many times this happens as you get out of your car: Your phone is on or near your lap and as you move to exit your vehicle, it **gracefully falls from your lap straight onto the pavement**. If this happens, your phone will see the likes of the Spidercrack Syndrome. Avoid an early grave and keep your phone away from your lap.

Cybersecurity: Have you remembered these 5 things?

You've finally implemented a comprehensive security system. It comes with advanced features, administrative privileges and an entire setup dedicated to your privacy. At this point, you feel like your business is operating on an island, inside a locked vault, on another planet, guarded by the entire Marvel lineup. So, you've taken the liberty and placed all security related "things" in the back of your mind. All you have to worry about now is your clients…like it should be, right?

Wrong.
You see, securing your technology and all that data isn't just about the firewalls, antivirus programs and network protocols. It's also about your **mindset**. There are aspects of your security that should **permanently stay at front and center**… not pushed into the cobwebs of your mind. Here's a few of the things you should keep in mind on a daily basis.

Remember the Internet of Things.
Have you addressed all those devices floating around your business? Accessing your database, emailing private information and reviewing critical files? Let's hope so. The Internet of Things is taking over and if you want to succeed, grow or compete, your business will welcome its dominance with open arms; however, you have to remember that this naturally includes a large security risk.

Have you delegated which devices can access what? Do they have remote wipe capabilities? Are they locked, audited and secured? You may want to find out.

Remember to rank.
You can't have total security over absolutely everything. This is why it's a good idea to know which parts of your business come first on the digital chopping block (although—fingers crossed—none of them ever make it there).

Which aspects of your operations need less regulation, less security, less control? Which parts can be seen in public with little to no setback? Focus your security on the aspects that can absolutely, never, not in a million years be out in public.

Remember who.
You can secure your data better if you're always aware of **who** would most likely target it and **why**. Use this to rank your processes and information. Depending on the **who** and the **why**, you *should* be able to ascertain the **what**.

Remember to give it a status.
Whether you outsource this or bring it in-house, there should be someone, somewhere entirely dedicated to the security of your business. While it's good that your staff members individually have the capacity to protect your data, it takes more than that. There has to be a bigger picture—an overall understanding of what's going on and how you can make things more secure for you and your clients.

Remember to remember.
Everyone throughout your entire company—from top to bottom, laterally and vertically, from one side to the other—should remember the security staples of your business. What data is okay to access? With what device and how? Is public Wi-Fi acceptable? Can an email be sent when they're outside the office? What types of projects can be worked on from home? These types of questions should dictate how your employees remember to keep your data safe.

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