IT — A Love-Hate Relationship

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First, for those familiar with the work of Stephen King, the IT I mention here is not the terrifying Pennywise the clown, who haunted my dreams for about a week after seeing the movie *IT* that was based on the famous horror author's novel. Rather, I'm talking about that equally wonderful and frustrating art of information technology — and the only time its impact ever seems to be really appreciated.

For those on the techie side of things, I'm sure you don't care for this genre of data control and organization being classified as an art, but as I've learned as of late, it at least needs to be appreciated as one. You see, we've had an interesting couple of days here at Advantage Business Media in dealing with e-mail and phone systems that have been sporadically inoperative. My apologies if you've been a victim of not getting a prompt response from someone here.

What's been interesting is how the viewpoint of these communication portals, which at least for me can at times foster uninspired remarks about an overloaded inbox or numerous voicemails in need of return, has been transformed from villain to hero. It seems that the mass quantity of information delivered through Microsoft Outlook is even more important than I realized — and not just as an outlet for receiving information — but in organizing, archiving and retrieving it as well. Cliché as it might be, you really don't know what you've got until it's gone.

Similar to a dysfunctional work cell in your plant, this inability to effectively send and receive information has caused some serious productivity issues, and reinforces how vital these things that we take for granted really are.

We've all been privy to the constant reinforcement of concepts and best practices

that revolve around implementing preventive maintenance programs, reinvesting in equipment, integrating greater elements of automation and advanced manufacturing technologies, and a number of others relative to embracing the impact of new technological developments. And while few would debate the merit of these topics, it's equally easy to understand how the redundancy of these messages could lead to a certain level of ambivalence.

That is, until something goes wrong, and those resources are no longer available.

I'm not looking to further inundate you with a message about the importance of those topics mentioned above — you already know how significant they are in keeping your plant running smoothly. Rather, it's simply to reinforce an appreciation for these systems, and the individuals responsible for integrating and troubleshooting them. It's easy to complain about downtime associated with scheduled overhauls and upgrades, but try to remember how life would be without them, and maybe take an extra moment to appreciate the tech installing and maintaining them.

Have you experienced a similar situation at your place of work? Did it make you appreciate your IT-based world, or despise the information overload even more? Let me know at jeff.reinke@advantagemedia.com *[1].*

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