



Letter from the Editor:

Macs, housecalls, and HR-related practices...three ways to get that next nine towards the ultimate in protection.

We're not biased. We just find people only have good things to say about

Macs. Maybe the best compliment of all, these days, is that they last more than the three or four years Dells or HPs customarily do. They don't get spam or viruses, either—so says Steve Verrastro, one of Another 9's service engineers in the field. Steve knows. He makes customer house calls for us. His insights into what goes wrong may not be earth-shattering to a regular reader of these pages, but, it is the sounds of drums beating in the distance.

On the security front, we'll provide some quick notations on what not to do when it comes to new hires or on the HR front. It seems the Social Security Number (SSNs) may be much more in need of shoring up and protecting than people realize. How many firms ID people with SSNs? A lot. So just in case, REMEMBER: keep the credit cards, SSNs and any other data offline!

[NINE LIVES]

Steven Verrastro: House calls still made with Another 9.

"Rest, drink plenty of fluids...." How many times did you hear or see these quaint notions on TV when you were younger—courtesy of the black bag carrying general practitioner? He's gone. So too are the house calls he made.



"Don't open e-mails from banks..." We've mentioned that in these pages on several occasions. "Employees at many companies know there are e-mails they shouldn't open. They forget. They know they shouldn't open these e-mails, but they do anyway. It *might* be important, they think. But it could be a virus, it could be spyware," according to Steven Verrastro, who has been with Another 9 since April 2006. This client service engineer spends most days outside the office, on the road. He's the client's point man when there's a problem that requires a physical visit. For the larger accounts, this doctor is always in—making routine weekly visits. Surprisingly, his diagnosis for many customers is the same: watch out for spam, empty the e-mail inbox, and replace computers entering a fourth or fifth year. It starts with a "ticket" in-house. Maybe the problem can be fixed over the phone or internet. Maybe not. "Facetime" always puts a smile on customers' faces. Computers make us

[TECH TOUCH]

Attention HR people and others who screen staff and new hires:

Data theft is growing!

Below are "Another 9" tips for safeguarding the workplace:

1. Don't ask for your customers' Social Security Numbers (SSNs). And don't use your employees' SSNs as their ID

[TECH TOUCH] *continued*

numbers, time card numbers or passwords.

2. Develop a crisis management plan to be used if sensitive data on employees or customers is lost or stolen.
3. Pressure service providers, including insurance companies or retirement funds managers, to stop using employee SSNs as identifiers.
4. Institute a clean-desk policy, especially in the HR department. Require password-activated screensavers.
5. Conduct background checks on employees and new hires who have access to sensitive information.
6. Store sensitive personal data in secure computer systems. Encrypt the data.
7. Store physical documents in secure spaces such as locked file cabinets.
8. Dispose of documents properly, including shredding paper with a cross-cut shredder, "wiping" electronic files, and destroying computer disks and CDs.
9. Conduct regular staff training for new and existing employees, temporary employees and contractors.

[NINE LIVES] *continued*

very upset when they don't work, and it still takes people—dependable people—to fix them!

"Steve" went to Port Chester High School, Iona College and SUNY Purchase. He has worked as a deejay, and likes the "warm" sound of vinyl records (you can't spin CDs). Previously, he worked as a web designer on the intranet at Pepsi in Somers, where he was part of a five man team (very much like the one he is with at Another 9 today). There, on the "client" side, he was responsive and customer-focused no differently than on the

"supplier" side. Much like with his "higher ups" at Pepsi, at Another 9, Steve is still given goals to meet, and criteria to follow: solve the problems as quickly as possible; recognizing the customer comes first. Verrastro continues: "You get to the appointment on time. You make sure you're organized. You know what the customer's problems are, what it's going to take to solve them, and inside an hour-and-a-half to a two-hour visit, you accomplish what you're supposed to. A lot of times, there's something else that needs attention once you get there. And, some days, I'm summoned for a service call when it's previously scheduled later in the week, only this day I have to go. We get phone calls every day, all the time."

He emphasizes the need for new employees especially to be trained correctly in how company IT policies affect them—what are the rules of the road, what is correct procedure, and what isn't.

Macs are his passion. There aren't a lot of Mac clients at Another 9, but almost all of them "run through me," he notes. Macs, "don't get spam, and never get viruses." When asked why? "The phishers and spammers don't bother with the Mac world—there's not enough market share to matter to them. Nobody I know ever got a virus on a Mac. In the past five years, the Mac has become a lot more compatible with the PC for business applications. Even iPhone users can synch up with Microsoft Exchange. You can run Windows in the little program windows on a Mac. Any software that's strictly Windows you can run there, on your Mac. The operating system is more stable, and more secure with Macs." Steve's Macs haven't had a virus in fifteen years.

Verrastro sums up his role philosophically: "[The client] is down. We get there. It can be a little thing like a failed switch or firmware. But soon enough they're back up, and everyone is happy again."



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