

TECHNOLOGY

# focus

VOLUME 1 | FALL | 2005

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## Introducing Stratum Solutions and Technology Focus

The last time I looked, there were over 25 computer companies and “experts” serving the Bozeman market. Growing up in Montana I have often felt disadvantaged to learn about our ever-increasing high tech world. Since the age of 10 I have had a keen interest in electronics with a special interest in personal computers. My father owned an insurance and financial services business and was continually implementing the latest and greatest technology. In the late 1970’s this consisted of early model Radio Shack TRS series computers. Then at the age of 11 something very special appeared in my life; an IBM 5150. Yes, my father finally upgraded, and after touching, smelling, and typing on the keyboard, I knew I had found my true calling.

Fast forward to 1988 when I started my undergraduate degree in the college of engineering, and you read that right, engineering and not computer science. As everyone knows, changing interests and situations guide us in different directions. However, after starting college, my interests in personal computers were elevated to the next level from one simple and relatively new concept, a network! Wow, you mean this computer can talk to this one? 1990 led to the creation of Executive Micros, my first small enterprise dedicated to selling, networking, and writing custom software to improve my customer’s productivity. At that point I was developing office automation long before the term was coined.

Moving forward a couple more years, I took a job at a local company called Skyland Scien-

tific Services to be in their newly formed Computer Software and Control System Validation Group. Among my primary responsibilities, I also received a lot of hands on network design and administration time with an early Novel network operating system. Lasting less than two years, my entrepreneurial spirit drove me into co-founding Computer Compliance Inc. Our mission was two-fold: (1) to provide increased value in computer and control system testing to the life science industry and (2) to provide advanced networking and software development to the local and regional business communities. After serving over 140 local customers with the second part of our mission, we passed that torch to a Billings company while we focused on larger pharmaceutical software development projects for clients such as Pfizer, Tyco Healthcare and Protein Design Labs.

At the request of our previous clients and from the company to which we sold our local business, we reentered the Bozeman market and rebranded the division as Stratum Solutions. Our new mission is to help our clients achieve higher levels of success by developing strategies and implementing technologies to increase quality and productivity. This newsletter is our effort to extend to you our knowledge and experience with current and forecasted technologies that will enable you to improve your business.

-Lance Tinseth



## Time Management Tips

### DAILY SCHEDULES

Document all of the necessities; work, meals, etc. Schedule priority items for a time when you are energized.

### DON'T BE A PERFECTIONIST

Trying to be a perfect person sets you up for defeat. Nobody can be perfect. Difficult tasks usually result in avoidance and procrastination. You need to set achievable goals, but they should also be challenging. There will always be people both weaker and stronger than you.

### LEARN TO SAY NO

You want to say no, but you hate turning people down. Politely saying no should become a habit. Saying no frees up time for the things that are most important.

### LEARN TO PRIORITIZE

Prioritizing your responsibilities and engagements is very important. Some people do not know how to prioritize and thus become procrastinators. A "to-do list" places items in order of importance. One method is to divide the list into three sections; A, B, or C. The items placed in the A section need to be done that day, The items placed in the B section need completion within a week. The C section items are those things that need to be done within a month. As the B and C items become more pertinent they are bumped up to the A and B list. Try it or come up with your own method, but do it.

### COMBINE ACTIVITIES

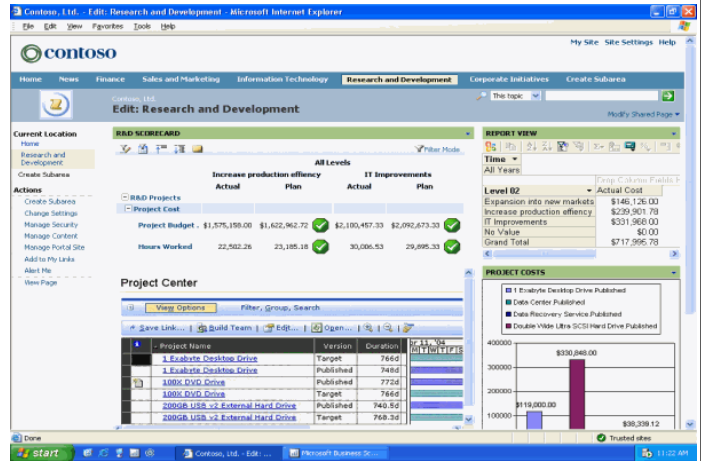
While showering make a mental list of the things that need to be done. When you watch a sit-com, laugh as you pay your bills. These are just ideas of what you can do to combine your time, but there are many others. Above all be creative and let it work for you.

## Strategy to Action - How Can Technology Help Me?

These issues arise at every tactical meeting: I need a better way to measure effectiveness against our strategies. I need to know how everyday decisions affect key performance indicators. I need a better way to empower my employees with business intelligence. I need to gain deep contextual insight into business drivers that matter to my business.

Can technology help with these issues? The answer is a resounding "Yes!"

In November, Microsoft released Microsoft Office Business Scorecard Manager. The product's goal is to take a once complicated task of delivering business intelligence (BI) and make it easy to use for small to medium sized business. "Business Scorecard Manager empowers employees to build, manage, and use their own scorecards, reports, and visual resources using familiar tools. With these tools, employees can analyze relationships between key performance indicators (KPIs) and tangible business objectives (Microsoft)."



### Articulate, Monitor, Analyze, Collaborate and Act

A Web-based solution, Business Scorecard Manager provides organizations with a cost-effective stage on which to articulate goals, priorities and strategies, monitor business activity through performance metrics, identify and analyze issues, and collaborate and act on business intelligence.

- **Articulate** - Clearly define a business strategy using scorecards, identify and map KPIs, and leverage existing business intelligence hidden within other systems.
- **Monitor** - Easily monitor business performance and KPIs with detailed views of performance and accountability, custom scorecard views, and personalized notification of status changes.
- **Analyze** - Gain insight into business drivers and perform group analysis using detailed, contextual business analysis from reports, charts, and spreadsheets, as well as unstructured contextual data.
- **Collaborate and Act** - Share strategies, enable collaborative group analysis, assign and monitor tasks, and put insight into action to improve business performance and execute strategic plans.

### The Benefits of Business Scorecard Manager

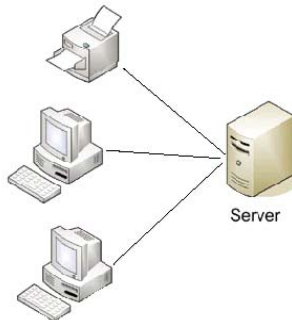
Business Scorecard Manager provides the tools and platform for a practical, low risk, and complete business performance management (BPM) scorecard strategy for high impact and fast results. To align actions with business strategy, Business Scorecard Manager helps enable employees, processes, and systems to understand business drivers, shape solutions, and execute shared plans.

- **Define and improve business performance** - Understand the organization's drivers, challenges, and opportunities with scorecards and KPIs.
- **Improve decision-making** - Use a collaborative environment to analyze data in context, formulate strategies, and execute strategic plans.
- **Make scorecarding a part of all business activities** - Empower end users to build, manage, and consume scorecards using familiar, easy-to-use applications such as Office and Microsoft SharePoint® technologies.
- **Save time and money** - Leverage existing skills, technology, and investments to realize low-risk cost and timesavings (<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/assistance/HA012225141033.aspx>)

## Is Your Business Ready for a Server?

A server is a single, specialized computer that is used to centralize information and resources. This computer is loaded with server software that is designed to perform special tasks such as file sharing, print processing, and Internet connectivity for each of the network's "clients"—which include individual computers, mobile devices, and printers. To assess if you need a server, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you have two or more computers in your business that you need to connect?
- Do you need to save money by sharing equipment and resources such as printers, fax machines, and Internet connectivity?
- Do you need to back up information?
- Do you need to restore accidentally deleted files or previous versions of files?
- Do you need to access company information and resources while away from the office?
- Do you need to store, access, and share information in one central location?
- Do you need to easily schedule group meetings and communicate efficiently with colleagues?
- Do you need a tool to share ideas and information with your colleagues?
- Do you need to communicate more effectively with customers, partners, and suppliers?



## Industry Buzzwords

### CO-EVOLUTION

*A theory that a company can create new business, markets and industries by working with direct competitors, customers and suppliers.*

### DEFENESTRATE

*A 17th century word, now back in fashion, that means to throw someone or something out the window. As in: "Let's defenestrate this marketing strategy."*

### OPTICS

*How things appear.*

### TSZUJ

*(Pronounced "zhoozh") To tweak, finesse or improve.*

### VALUE STREAM

*Six Sigma term that encompasses every step in the process of producing and delivering a product or service (whether it adds value or not).*

### VALUE MIGRATION

*Used in industries where there is little market growth, the term refers to the movement of growth and profit opportunities from one company to another.*

### WHITE SPACE OPPORTUNITY

*New high-potential growth possibilities that are related to but don't quite match the capabilities and skills of the organization.*



### Customer Spotlight:



Cafe Courier provides the Delivery Service for some of the best restaurants. Whether it's a meal for you or for 100 people, Cafe Courier is ready to deliver. Just pick your meal from the restaurants available, then call or order online.

Stratum Solutions is the IT solution provider for Café Courier. Since the beginning of our relationship, Stratum has relocated Café Courier's Bozeman call center and has provided VPN connectivity for their new Billings and Missoula dispatch centers. We have worked with Café Courier to install new security and remote access solutions to help protect their online ordering systems from unauthorized access. We have also helped Café Courier with the selection of new voice and data providers in their current and future markets.

Stratum monitors the Café Courier network 24/7 to ensure that all critical services are running at their optimal performance. We can also detect and repair system errors before they cause unnecessary downtime.





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