

Eliminate Presentation Chaos

When I returned to my hotel room after dinner to check emails on my laptop, the unthinkable happened: My laptop did not boot up. Trying not to panic, I called Robert, my IT Specialist (and husband), who ran me through a series of tests. At midnight, no progress had been made, so we called it a night. The boot sector was corrupted and Robert could not fix it remotely.

I was scheduled to speak at 10:45 a.m. on Microsoft Outlook with Business Contact Manager—live on my computer. This was not a PowerPoint® presentation. My presentation had been completely customized using the Business Contact Manager (BCM) software add-in for Outlook. I customized the database and all of my screens with specific examples for the industry's conference, and also had a custom set of data I had imported to use for my examples.

If bad came to worse, I knew I was in a place where everyone could relate to my situation. I was at the NSA 2009 Fall Conference in Phoenix.

Ironically, the title of my presentation was *Eliminate Office Chaos: Use Microsoft Outlook 2007 with Business Contact Manager to Take Control of Your Business, Time and Information*. Now, if only someone could eliminate my chaos.

I informed Cara Tracy, CMP, CMM, NSA's director of professional development, about my dilemma and she suggested that I "tweet." So, I sent a "tweet" that I needed a laptop with



Outlook 2007 with Business Contact Manager. Within minutes, I had one loaded with the software I needed, courtesy of attendee Cody Hill of Positive Momentum, Inc.

“ So, I sent a “tweet” that I needed a laptop... within minutes, I had one loaded with the software I needed. ”

I gave Cody a big hug for saving my day. With only an hour to “show time,” I dashed back to my room to customize the software and import my data. I was able to remote into our servers on Cody's laptop and retrieve a copy of the data I customized and then exported to an Excel spreadsheet, just in case! Within minutes, I had the data imported into Cody's laptop in a new database and I could customize the BCM interface for the examples I planned to demonstrate.

I can't remember how I had planned to start my session. Instead, I started by

describing the events that had transpired during the last 12 hours. I talked about why backups are critical in case of an emergency. I also learned the power of Twitter that day.

Although my data was backed up, my presentation would not have been possible without a laptop that would “boot up” and have the same software I use. If you can't access your data remotely or don't have a backup system in place—preferably one that automatically and routinely backs up your computers—make this a priority for 2012.

Lesson learned? You can never be too prepared.



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