

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 A Marksman and a Sharpshooter
- 2 Phrases That Are Harming Your Business
- Client Spotlight: Jen Suddreth
- 3 DIY Indoor Air Quality Products Could Mean Trouble
- 4 Will You Buy Microsoft's HoloLens?

HOLOLENS GOES WIDE

NOW YOU CAN BUY MICROSOFT'S INTRIGUING DEVICE

When Microsoft's HoloLens was reintroduced to the public in early 2016, after being unveiled in 2015 as a prototype, it was only available to a select few — namely software developers. Interested developers could submit an application to Microsoft, then Microsoft would vet the application. There was no guarantee the applicant would have the opportunity to buy the device.

In August, Microsoft opened up access to the much-lauded HoloLens. Everyone in the U.S. and Canada can now buy the device. All you have to do is accept the \$3,000 price tag and agree to the terms of use. When you buy the HoloLens, you accept that the sale is final. The headset does not come with a warranty, and there are no returns. And one more thing — you can't resell it either.

These limitations effectively make the HoloLens a \$3,000 risk, but if the call of

holographic computing is too much to resist, that risk might be worth it. More developers are now gaining access to HoloLens, more applications are available, and even more are expected in the future. Microsoft sees HoloLens playing an integral role in business and IT.

What is HoloLens? It's an augmented reality headset.

Unlike virtual reality headsets like Oculus Rift and the HTC Vive, which rely on high-resolution screens inside the headset, the HoloLens headset is transparent and allows you to see everything in front of you. The device projects holographic objects, images, and other elements into the real world for you to virtually interact with.



While the device isn't ready for mainstream commercial use, it's already making an impact in the airline industry. There, it's being used as a training tool for mechanics and flight crews. Microsoft sees potential in a number of different industries, but how HoloLens is applied all comes down to the specific needs of any given business.

A MARKSMAN AND A SHARPSHOOTER

The Comfort of Protection, Camaraderie, and Safety

Around seven or eight years ago, I found myself going through some pretty scary areas of Texas for work. I would be driving long distances across areas in South and West Texas, where you could go for an hour or more without having any cell service. Having car problems while driving to Eagle Pass, Del Rio, or even El Paso, could spell serious trouble if you're unprepared.

My family mentioned their concerns for me while travelling, so I knew I needed to find a way to protect myself. Although I'd never considered it before, carrying a handgun became a very real option.

Shortly after getting my first handgun, a friend from church suggested I come out shooting with him and his friends. He said it would be a great way to practice and refine my skills. I took him up on the offer because, at that point in time, I had no shooting skills to speak of. When I was growing up, my dad taught me how to use a shotgun on hunting trips, but any other type of firearm was beyond my skill level.

My Wednesday nights were soon being spent with my friend and about 30–40 other people shooting competition handgun stages. I quickly learned not just how to safely handle a gun and shoot effectively, but also how to operate under pressure and take the steps to improve my skills. Most of the people I was shooting with were also competitive shooters, so it wasn't long before I entered my first competition pistol match.

As with any competition, there are levels of achievement. In competitive shooting, those include novice, marksman, sharpshooter, expert, and master levels. Shooters can reach



a new level either by outshooting everyone else at their current level — at a major competition — or by mastering a “standard” set of stages on a shooting range.

I have less than perfect eyesight, so I'm really only ever competing against myself. That hasn't prevented me from climbing up the competitive shooting ladder though. I currently claim the rank of sharpshooter with two different handgun models and marksman — working toward sharpshooter — with a third.

Larger pistol matches can be incredibly competitive, but they're also a lot of fun. At the same time, there's an enormous amount of safety and responsible gun-handling emphasized in this world. There is a time and a place for guns and the people at these competitions practice every degree of safety. You can also find a great deal of camaraderie. At pistol matches, I see kids as young as 10, and “super-senior” competitors of 70

competing against other people in their skill level. And there is no shortage of hanging out and swapping lies, tips, and stories. It's a great experience, and I love being a part of it. For those interested in getting into competitive shooting themselves, I recommend visiting the IDPA.com website.

Beyond the enjoyment of competing and spending time with friends, I truly appreciate the reassurance that competitive shooting has giving me. Whether I'm in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, or Arkansas, most of the time I'm travelling on my own. I now feel much more comfortable than I did a decade ago, because I have the ability to protect myself if needed.

Train West

3 Buzzwords YOU NEED TO STOP SAYING

Buzzwords are easy to slip into any pitch or business letter. These are words like “disruptive,” “innovative,” “strategic,” and “value-added.” Best-selling author and marketer Seth Godin says, “The vast majority of buzzwords exist for one reason: to hide. By obfuscating, lying, confusing, or just plain avoiding the issue, business people can avoid communicating.”

A Way to Avoid Communication

Buzzwords aren't just used in sales pitches or to describe the latest “innovation.” They are also used when you communicate with your team and when your team communicates with one another. Certain phrases can do more harm than good. They can “disrupt” the flow of communication in your organization. Here are a few of the worst offenders:

“Drink the Kool-Aid.” It's no surprise this phrase made its way into the business world. Loyalty is a hot commodity and staff are often encouraged to take a “drink.” The phrase has dark origins. In November 1978, over 900 people committed suicide after consuming flavored drink mix laced with cyanide. Call it unquestioned loyalty. Some businesses use the phrase in a tongue-in-cheek way, but it raises a few eyebrows. Members of your team may wonder if your company is fostering a culture or running a cult. Seriously.

What to say instead: Tell your team you value their loyalty. If your company culture is built around people who share many of the same philosophies and values, make that clear.

“Think outside the box.” This cliché is the bane of every person who has been on the receiving end of the phrase. It was once defined as “finding a solution without relying on the obvious or conventional.” Today, it doesn't mean anything. We have all spent so much time thinking outside the box that “outside” is now inside.

What to say instead: Tell your team you value creativity. If they can develop an unconventional solution to a troubling problem, great! If not, that's okay, too.

Synergize. Thankfully, fewer businesses rely on this crutch of a word. Stephen Covey is credited with coining the term in “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.” If you haven't read the book, it's Habit 6. What does it mean? It's rooted in the idea of cooperation, or as Stephen Covey puts it, “two heads are better than one.”

What to say instead: Tell your team you value cooperation. If they can be more productive and arrive at amazing results by working together, encourage it! In all cases, be clear, be direct, and say what you mean.

Jen Suddreth:

Vice President and Group Manager for Property Management



Over the course of my 20 years of experience in the property management industry, I have become an instructor for BOMI International. Part of my role is to teach property managers throughout Texas different aspects of the industry so they can be properly certified. Travis West is a guest I have brought in on a number of occasions because I want property managers to know the best place to turn to if they need indoor air quality assistance.

Several years ago, when a high-profile tenant thought the building's air was making her staff sick, I gave Travis West a call. We felt we were doing everything we could to maintain healthy IAQ and wanted a third-party opinion on the matter.

Travis sent out a team to test several floors throughout the building. They were great — very professional and very discreet. After running their tests, they provided a thorough report that we showed our tenant, demonstrating there wasn't an IAQ problem. Reassured, the tenant went back and began asking her staff questions. Turns out, they'd brought in plants from home, and those plants were triggering allergies and making people sick!

For almost 15 years, the Building Air Quality team has been helping us prove to tenants that air quality isn't always to blame. On the few occasions when we have had a problem — for example, mold resulting from water damage — the team has been wonderful, doing their job transparently and without causing hysteria among tenants. This isn't a skill every company possesses.

Once, when we used a different company, the first thing they did after coming into the building was tell everyone they had to clear out because they could all die. The company's dramatic overexaggeration turned the event into a real fiasco. The problem was easily fixed, but it took more time than necessary to reassure the tenants after that company scared them.

This has never been the case with Building Air Quality. They're always extremely professional, knowledgeable in their field, and aware of the sensitivity of their job. They handle problems safely, without ever creating undo hysteria.

As a property manager, you hope to never have a problem, but when you inevitably do, it's great to have a company you can count on to get the job done right. I'm thankful to have Travis West and Building Air Quality, and I will never be able to recommend them enough.

Trouble on the Horizon BE AWARE OF DIY INDOOR AIR QUALITY PRODUCTS

In the last decade, the subject of indoor air quality — IAQ — has become a more common concern for the general population. More and more people are taking measures to improve their health by making sure the air quality of their environment is ideal. In the wake of this, many “do-it-yourself” IAQ testing products have entered the market.

One relatively inexpensive product, Awair, tests the surrounding environment for dust, carbon dioxide, temperature, humidity, and volatile organic compounds, or VOCs. These factors can all contribute to the IAQ of an environment. And the unit sells for a very reasonable \$199.

For all it claims to do however, Awair is a relatively low-cost product. As a comparison, professional equipment for accurately testing CO, CO2, temperature and relative humidity — the more common IAQ indicators — can cost as much as \$2,500.

None of this is to say Awair or any do-it-yourself IAQ testing equipment is a scam or ineffective. The device does have the potential to help alert users of a potential problem. But the inexpensive price implies that the sensors being used are not that accurate. Consequently, it would be ill-advised for building occupants to view these devices as the “final say” in regards to indoor air quality.

Building managers should be aware that individuals may bring an Awair or similar device into their office to check air quality. And if a tenant reports an IAQ issue based on the results of a device like Awair, managers should remember the drawbacks of DIY technology.

A building manager should by no means disregard a complaint. Rather, you should acknowledge the concern, but keep control of the situation by bringing in a qualified professional to give a second opinion. Responding with something along the lines of: “That's a good indicator, but it may not be as accurate or as thorough as you would expect it to be. We can provide someone with the background, training, and equipment to check any concerns you have.”



Because indoor air quality is a genuine tenant concern, building managers need to keep their eyes on the future and prepare themselves to respond to the concerns raised by inexpensive “screening” equipment when tenants report them.



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