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ON FIRE IN ALL THE RIGHT WAYS

A Look at Samsung's Latest Smartphones, the Galaxy S8 and S8+!

Back in April, Samsung released its next generation of Android smartphones: the Galaxy S8 and S8+. They were unveiled to significant fanfare as Samsung attempted to return from the Galaxy Note 7 debacle in 2016.

Last year, shortly after the release of the Note 7, users reported a battery defect. The battery would overheat, expand, and, in rare cases, explode. The device was banned on airplanes, and the company issued a recall. Many in the tech industry criticized the company for a slow and confusing response to the issue.

With the S8 and S8+ on the market, those in the industry that criticized Samsung are now applauding the company. Respected tech publications, including The Verge and AnandTech, have issued positive reactions and reviews.

The two phones are brimming with new and interesting features. They feel like a step forward in

a "sea of sameness" among smartphones. At a glance, the most apparent new feature is the expansive screen (5.8 inches on the S8, 6.2 inches on the S8+). The Edge screen maximizes display space, while reducing the front bezel to mere millimeters.

The internals are where the phones really shine. Both phones carry a 4-bit octa-core (2.35GHz Quad + 1.9GHz Quad) Qualcomm Snapdragon 835, along with 4GB of RAM. In other words, they're speedy. The phones are also packed with Bluetooth 5.0, which means they support two Bluetooth devices at once (headphones, speakers, etc.), while boasting increased range and connection quality. And, in case you were wondering, the phones do come with a headphone jack.

The real question, however, is "How's the battery?" No, it's not going to catch fire or explode. You can be sure Samsung stepped up their quality



assurance and re-vetted battery suppliers. In a battery-life test, PhoneArena found the S8+ lasted a solid eight hours of continuous use. If you use the phone periodically through the day, a single charge will last you several days, keeping you connected.

TALE OF 2 BUILDINGS

WHEN PUTTING IT OFF PUTS YOU IN HOT WATER

In 2014, I visited a building on the Texas Gulf Coast to see if the air quality was being affected by mold on the ceiling of a four-story atrium. This problem began in 2009, when an outdoor air vent was left wide-open over the weekend. This vent allowed large amounts of humid outdoor air into the building, only to turn into condensation when it cooled. The following Monday, people came to work to find it raining inside the building as condensation dripped from ceilings. Most of the ceilings were cleaned, except the atrium, which the building managers decided would be too expensive to reach. Unfortunately, as the atrium ceiling dried, mold developed on the surfaces.

Since that time, two separate consultants confirmed that same mold on the ceiling, though their reports stated the mold wasn't airborne. Rather than clean it up as recommended, management put off addressing the problem, always claiming they would find room in the budget "next year." I heard this budget excuse myself when I insisted the mold needed to be cleaned up in 2014. This past May, I was called out to address a different IAQ issue and was asked to look at the mold again. This time, a woman whose company occupies the top two floors of the building said to me, "We can't help but wonder if the mold on the ceiling is the reason a lot of us have been diagnosed with cancer in the last five years."

To be clear, I am not aware of any research that indicates mold causes cancer. However, because budgets weren't issued to simply wipe the existing mold from the ceiling (as first recommended), they now must deal with questions about a much more serious health issue. Management will now have to meet with occupants in an emotionally-charged atmosphere to address the cancer concerns.



"... because budgets weren't issued to simply wipe the existing mold from the ceiling (as first recommended), they now must deal with questions about a much more serious issue."

Struggling with budgets to address this kind of hot-topic issue is the complete opposite of the proactive response recently displayed by the manager of a different high-rise. When five people complained about feeling sick while in the building, the building manager wasted no time. She spoke with the tenants in person and took a look around the spaces herself. Three days after receiving the complaints, the manager and her staff had not found any problems, so she called us to come out and use our experience to investigate.

After our inspection and some simple air tests, we recommended a number of changes that could be done to improve air quality. These included cleaning carpets, removing piles of papers so the custodians could clean office areas, getting rid of overwatered plants (which were growing mold), and moving desktop printers off desks so they wouldn't kick chemicals and powdered ink into the air next to someone's face. The manager and tenant both agreed to correct these problems, and we made plans to return at a later time to check the air quality for improvements.

There's a right way to handle IAQ in your building, and there's a wrong way. The first example shows how ignoring your problems can cause them to grow. The other shows the benefit of a manager and tenant working toward a common goal. When you do everything in your power to correct a potential problem, your tenants feel better knowing you've heard them, and in the end, you protect yourself from future complaints or claims.

Train West

Stop the Clock

Why Speed May Not Be the Most Important Factor in Customer Service

As technology continues its rapid progress, customer service tools have become more sophisticated. There are now corporations with support teams made up of hundreds or even thousands of employees, with a massive number of service requests coming in daily. In response, a lot of businesses have streamlined customer service to its purest form, railroading you through a labyrinth of robotic operators to arrive — if you're lucky — at an actual human voice, who hurries through the motions to pacify you and get you off the line as fast as possible. Call times are measured to the millisecond, so employees sweat to keep those numbers within the tiny range of time allowed and will do anything to get you off the phone.

In short, speed is king when it comes to customer support. It's the familiar mantra of "get 'em in, get 'em out," or "time is money." But as a customer, you appreciate the speed of service too, right? Who wants to listen to that mind-numbing hold music a second longer than they have to?

The question is, what is being sacrificed? Consumer research seems to show that most businesses could probably benefit from spending a bit more quality time with their customers.

In a study Gallup conducted for a banking client, results showed that the "level of engagement" customers felt was linked with the speed of the transaction. Customers who perceived the service as very speedy were six times more likely to be "highly engaged." The company expected this.

What was somewhat surprising — or maybe, to you, not so surprising — was that, according to McEwen, "customer perceptions of the tellers' courtesy and their apparent willingness to help were far more important than speed of service in generating customer engagement." Customers giving the bank high marks on these people skills were nine times more likely to be "fully engaged."

Those support ticket times call centers track don't show whether customer interactions are generating any sense of loyalty or goodwill. According to a RightNow Customer Service Impact study, "rude, incompetent staff" is the No. 1 reason customers gave for leaving a business for a competitor. This, according to Help Scout writer Gregory Ciotti's analysis of the data, is "18 percent more ... than issues that weren't resolved in a timely manner."

Some businesses, like fast food, might really be all about speed. But other companies, especially those driven by interaction, demand a more human, careful approach. Examine your customer support program, and make sure it's giving your customers the attention they deserve. You might be surprised at the results.

Client Spotlight

AN EYE IN THE STORM

Our Client's Hurricam™ Is a Game Changer



Greg Becker isn't just an environmental peer. He's a storm enthusiast, innovator, and — most importantly — inventor. Over the last few years, he has developed a special camera that's meant to change the game when it comes to monitoring severe storms.

The Hurricam™ is a patented camera that is designed to record severe weather events from the closest vantage point possible. It can record water depth and wind speed, which makes it invaluable to storm watchers at government agencies, and it can also record property destruction in real time, so building owners and managers can see and have a record of everything happening to their property.

Becker is a civil and environmental engineer who specializes in water damage and is certified in air quality. He developed the camera in 2005 after doing structural inspections for damages after a major storm and seeing a need for it. There are other cameras on the market used for this purpose, but Greg had a vision of creating something better.

The Hurricam™ doesn't need light or electricity to capture video. This is important, because major storms often provide a shortage of both. The 6-inch camera can be strapped horizontally or vertically to telephone poles, palm trees, and most parts of any structure. Its primary purpose in private use is to eliminate insurance coverage questions about what caused property damage.

Right now, there are five of these cameras in operation. Becker is currently looking for predetermined sites to deploy the cameras along the Gulf Coast, particularly in Florida.

If you're interested in volunteering your property, you can get in touch with Greg through the Hurricam Disaster Recording System page on Facebook or @Hurricam1 on Twitter. (Storm watchers frequently use Twitter to give or receive live updates during weather events.) You can also check out www.hurricam.net, where Becker has posted riveting videos of major storms, all taken with his special camera.

The IAQ Dangers of Coffee and Microwave Popcorn

IS YOUR CUP OF COFFEE DESTROYING YOUR LUNGS?

What do Kona coffee beans from Hawaii and microwave popcorn have in common?

They may both be classified as food, but it's strange to compare one of the world's most revered coffee beans with the late-night snack of those who haven't been grocery shopping in a few weeks. However, while coffee beans and microwave popcorn don't often grace the same menu, they do share one dangerous similarity: Both are hazardous to indoor air quality.

Last year, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) published research about two alpha-diketones: diacetyl and 2,3-pentanedione. These volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are common in butter-flavoring and have led many employees who work in factories manufacturing microwave popcorn to be diagnosed with a form of lung disease called bronchiolitis obliterans. Sometimes called "popcorn lung," this disease results from the body's airways becoming inflamed and scarred and can cause permanent loss of pulmonary function. The NIOSH's research cited another source of these VOCs: coffee beans.

In the science blog Coffee Workers at Risk for Lung Disease, the NIOSH explained diacetyl and 2,3-pentanedione are both produced naturally when coffee beans are roasted. The NIOSH research identified cases where multiple workers from a single coffee processing facility were diagnosed with bronchiolitis obliterans. Researchers stated their findings may have been off, as bronchiolitis obliterans is a rare disease, and it is likely other workers have been misdiagnosed with pneumonia, bronchitis, or emphysema.

Even if you do not roast your own coffee beans, the NIOSH warns diacetyl and 2,3-pentanedione can also enter the air when roasted coffee beans are ground. This creates major health concerns for individuals who work at roasting factories, employees at coffee shops



around the world, and people who grind their own coffee beans each morning at home.

Americans alone drink 280.5 million cups of coffee every day, but mitigating the risks associated with coffee is possible. Employers in facilities where coffee beans are roasted or ground should look into the possibility of engineering or administrative controls, substitute hazardous materials with safer options, educate their team about the dangers, and provide protective equipment. Your caffeine fix doesn't have to come at the price of your lungs.



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