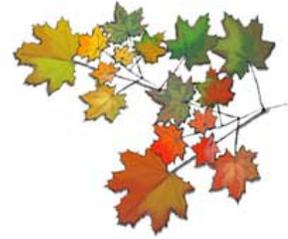


# E-Center News



*Fall/Winter 2004*

## Welcome New Tenant

**CRST Logistics** is a logistics company arranging the trucking aspect of moving FAK (freight all kinds) from point A to point B. The company was founded and is managed by Cindy Lloyd who has vast experience in the transportation business with multiple international corporations.

Ms. Lloyd states, "Although a new enterprise, we can provide a full range of logistics services, route optimization, information technology, freight payment/auditing, benchmarking, transportation management and intermodal/LTL shipments." "The services of the Entrepreneurial Center allows me to concentrate my energy on growing my business," she added.



Cindy Lloyd of CRST Logistics



## Recent Events



Potluck Summer BBQ—Food and Fun in August



E-Center tenants and guest speakers from a local bank join us for a training lunch in October

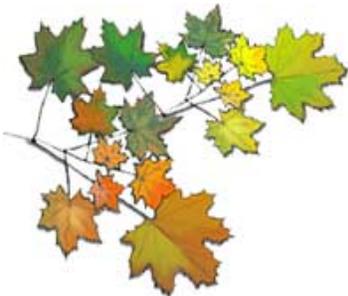
# NOTES FOR START-UPS



## Suggestions to Improve Cashflow by Neal Cummings, banker for BB&T

One of the biggest challenges a small growing business will face is the constant need to manage cash flow coming in and out of the business. This is most important when you consider that a lot of small businesses are not well capitalized and many rely on internal cash flow to fund their growth. Here are some ideas for improving your business's cash flow:

- 1.) **Bill promptly.** Many business owners find themselves so busy building their business and making deadlines that they don't get around to billing on a regular basis. If you don't already have a system in place, start (or assign an employee to start) billing for projects on a regular basis. When taking on longer-term projects or clients, negotiate in advance for regular payments instead of allowing the amount due to build up until completion of a contract.
- 2.) **Create incentives for faster payment to you.** Small businesses can sometimes significantly cut the time spent waiting for a payment by offering a discount for quick payment. Offering your clients discounts of 1% or 2% for payment within 10 days can be a pretty good incentive for them to pay promptly.
- 3.) **Avoid slow pay/no pay customers from the start.** The best way to avoid cash-flow problems because of customers or businesses not paying you is to weed out those slow pays/no pays before they become clients. So if someone is about to become a significant client or customer, do your homework. Ask for – and check out – credit references. Call other businesses that have had a relationship with the client. You might even pay for a credit check from an organization such as Experian or Dunn & Bradstreet.
- 4.) **Use barter instead of cash.** You could reduce the strain on your immediate cash if you need goods or services from someone and can barter goods or services of your own in return. Of course, this is not a way of cutting any tax bills – you're still required to report the value of the barter transaction on your tax return.
- 5.) **Trim your inventory.** Don't carry more than necessary since money spent on inventory is money that isn't producing any interest or savings for you. (Possible exception: You can gloat about your "excess inventory" if you loaded up on heating oil last year at 85 cents a gallon.)
- 6.) **Consider consolidating your loans.** If you have several loans related to your business, review the rates and terms on each one. You may be able to consolidate two or more loans into a lower-interest account and improve your cash flow.
- 7.) **Take advantage of your suppliers' terms.** Accounts payables can be a low cost form of financing. If your supplier is offering 30 day terms, hold on to your money and put it to use for a few extra days. However, if you have typically paid your bills within 30 days, but you are being offered a 1% or 2% discount for paying within 10 days, this is good for the bottom line and good for the business's cash flow, too.



**Knowledge and demand for that knowledge have created an entrepreneurial opportunity for an employee of an E-Center tenant company.... James Harkins has started his own computer services company...Please read on below....**

## ***Plague carriers: Most users unaware of PC infections***

By [Robert Lemos](#) Staff Writer, CNET News.com

**A study of home PCs released Monday found that about 80 percent had been infected with spyware almost entirely unbeknownst to their users.**

The study, funded by America Online and the National Cyber Security Alliance, found home users mostly unprotected from online threats and largely ignorant of the dangers. AOL and the NCSA sent technicians to 329 homes to inspect computers.

"No consumer would walk down the street waving a stack of cash or leave their wallet sitting in a public place, but far too many are doing the exact same thing online," Tatiana Gau, AOL's chief trust officer, said in a statement. "Without basic protections like antivirus, spyware and firewall software, consumers are leaving their personal and financial information at risk."

Nearly three in five users do not know the difference between a firewall and antivirus software. Desktop firewall software regulates which applications on a PC can communicate across the network, while antivirus software detects malicious code that attempts to run on a computer, typically by pattern matching. Two-thirds of users don't have a firewall installed on their computer, and while 85 percent of PC owners had installed antivirus software, two-thirds of them had not updated the software in the last week. **The study found one in five users had an active virus on their machines.**

The study comes during October, which the NCSA is promoting as National Cyber Security Awareness Month. The NCSA is a joint endeavor among industry, academia and government.

"Protecting the safety of our technology infrastructure means protecting the computers of individual Americans," Dan Caprio, deputy assistant secretary for technology policy at the U.S. Department of Commerce, said in a statement. "This study highlights just how important it is for individual Americans to take their cybersecurity seriously, not just as a matter of personal safety, but as a matter of our country's security as well."

If you need help making sure your computer is protected and clean of malicious software I will be glad to check your home or office system. Very reasonable rates.

Harkins Computer Services  
1400 Commerce Blvd.  
Anniston, AL 36207  
Phone: 525-6657  
E-mail: [james@goinsolo.com](mailto:james@goinsolo.com)

**Please visit the links on this site for more information  
about the Entrepreneurial Center or contact us at  
(256) 831-5215.**