



Main Street

MAGAZINE

Edition 1 March 2005

Latin Fever Goes Country

Success of a sweeter kind

Relax Your Mind & Grow
Yoga in the Workplace

Flavours of Sudan

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Main Street



Welcome to the first edition of Main Street - a magazine that brings together the views, news and reviews from the community and business sectors and profiles the work of our organization.

Every town has a Main Street. It's a place to trade, for people to meet and somewhere to pass through on our daily travels. Changes are inevitable and over time people move in and move out, businesses open and close. Main Street was chosen as the title for this magazine to reflect this dynamic nature that is intrinsic to our community.

Our perspective changes too. With change there is your view and mine. What I think is right and what you like and don't like becomes the collective voice of our community. Businesses need to respond to these changes and carry the products of the day, the brands, style and taste of their current customers.

Main Street captures these elements. I invite you to take a walk down Main Street and discover these changes yourself.

In our first edition we highlight the achievements of women who have migrated to Australia and set-up their own businesses. We take you to Ethiopia on a humorous travel expose. The nexus between business and community is explored.

I hope that you enjoy reading of the achievements, experiences and aspirations of our community in this magazine. I am most grateful for the assistance and contribution of the volunteers, staff and students and the people in business who gave of their time to bring this publication to fruition.

We all have our own Main Street.
Now we have a magazine too.

Irene Ross
EDITOR

blacktown mrc
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Ethiopian Travels

by Peter Legzdins

So I'm back and it's time for a little reflection, which is all I'll be able to afford for a while, my dentist has just made a fortune replacing fillings weakened by three weeks of eating unbelievably tough food. Ethiopian cattle, goats and sheep aspire to the same qualities as their athletes, the desire to be lean and sinewy, qualities I'm unhappy to report they achieve in spades.

Firstly the flight to Addis, totally jampacked. Ethiopian Airways is a major feeder for routes throughout Africa, there was barely room to breathe and the poor guy next to me (from Nigeria) had the misfortune of a malfunctioning overhead light, so he was spot-lit for the entire journey. We didn't speak much till the last half hour of the trip when I was filling in my immigration docket and he noticed that I had an Australian Passport, at which point he asked if I'd sponsor him to come to Australia. I suppose 20 plus year olds are the same the world over.

Addis, the capital is really spread out. The Italians built a city centre and so did the Derg, which gives you a choice of

1930's Art Deco or 1980's Marxist International Style, whichever you prefer. The city is under Mt Entoto about 3,500 metres high and entirely covered in Australian Eucalypts. From the top of Mt Entoto you can see the fine mist of pollution over the city, caused by the endless burning of wood fuel. You can also see the wonderful highways and overpasses, which you should not get used to because they only exist in the Capital and a little to the south. As the north was the area most anti-Derg, it has the unpaved roads which can be a little frightening when you are beetling around hair pin bends and burnt out tanks (remember the civil war was only finished a decade or so ago).

The National/Imperial Cathedral, St George is unique, it's built in the basilica style, which is unusual in Ethiopia, most churches are circular and develop out of the style of the grass hut. This also means Mass is always said in the round. St George's is a 1950's building which combines Italian and Flemish Renaissance with 1930's Beaux Arts details, I told you it was unique. It also has the tombs of Hailie Selassie and the Empress Taitu, which are copies of Napoleon's tomb in

the Invalides and murals of Hailie Selassie addressing the League of Nations and the surrender of the Italians in 1941 which Stalin would have admired.

It's a shame the National Museum has artifacts from everywhere with no context. Imagine being in a big tourist shop, lots of barbaric silver and amber jewellery including a direct rip off of Vivienne Westwood, a necklace made of safety pins. The monastery treasures had better objects and there (in the treasures) they were at least given a provenance. It does however have Lucy's skull, she didn't say much, I suppose that comes with being dead for three and a half million years.

Addis has the Mercato, which is the largest market in Africa. Our guide wouldn't let us wander through it, he said it was too dangerous, but from a speeding bus you don't get that feeling. Lots of small booths selling more colourful stuff than you can imagine and a couple of large Department Stores once again in the 1930's style favoured by Mussolini, which isn't surprising because, the Duke of Aosta ordered the markets to be built.



Photos: Gaynor Robson

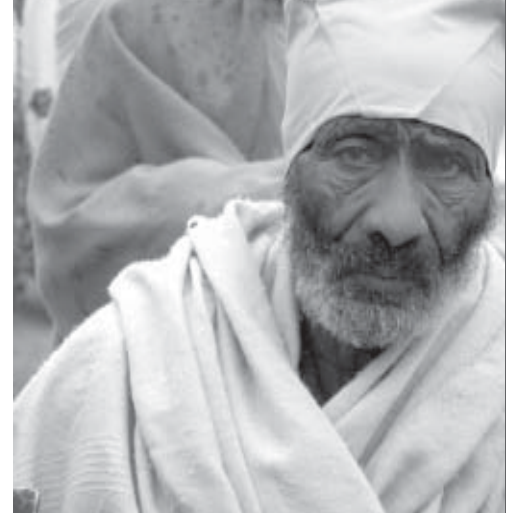
So let's leave Addis and go to Dessie, capital of Wolo province. It is mountainous and forested, rather beautiful, and as Wolo and Tigre were the main rebel provinces it also is surrounded by burnt soviet tanks. At Dessie, I got my first view of the Rift Valley, a sheer drop of 2,000 metres to the floor of Africa, which due to the heavy mist we couldn't see, in fact the visibility was only about three metres. That and the number of gum trees meant we could easily have been at Katoomba, though the hair pin bends in the road did help focus the mind.

Lalibela is a must to see. Epiphany was spectacular. It was just like being in Pharaonic Egypt, very stirring, for me not in a religious way, but as a vision of a totally different society and way of living. Here for the first time we learnt that running water was turned off for the town for most of the day, but then you get used to that. We also had our first visit to an African cabaret, the Torpedo Bar. The singer was gorgeous, great voice and knew how to move, what else could you want, and when you give her a tip she takes the money puts it to her forehead then bows deeply then dances around the room, it worked for me!

Following Lalibela, we went to Gondor. Impressive palaces, most of which looked like Portuguese castles which is in keeping, because the Portuguese helped design them. By the way Gondor was sacked by the followers of the Mahdi in the 1880's (you know Gordon and Khartoum and all that bother) well when the invaders were approaching this church to burn it and kill the priests a swarm of enraged bees settled on them, which convinced them of the power of apiculture and to leave the church alone!

After Gondor, the Semian Mountains, spectacular views, Gelada Baboons, armed guards and communal toilets. Industrial strength Lomotil was a great benefit here. The town is very colourful and called Debark, I leave you to make your own cheap jokes at its expense. You may wish to make puns about the Semian Mountains as well, I am transliterating the Amhara script into English in the most inoffensive way. There are more amusing transcriptions.

Then Bahir Dar, on Lake Tana, Hailie Selassie wanted to move the capital there in the 60's, so you have planned streets fringed by palm trees and



impressive buildings (many from after the fall of the Derg). We saw the Ura Kidane Mehret Monastery built in the thirteenth century, which was small circular and made of dried mud and cattle dung, with interesting murals, painted on cloth over the wattle and daub, and if you wanted to make a suitable donation you could put a new mural over an old one. We also visited Hailie Selassie's palace, the guards preferred we move on, ran into a wedding party or more correctly a wedding party ran their car into our bus resulting in 45 minutes of impassioned debate in Amharic while we were prisoners in the bus. All's well that ends well, we ended up bopping to their band on the hill overlooking Bahir Dar!

Then the source of the Blue Nile which mercifully hadn't been turned off that day, it feeds one of the major Hydro-electric power stations in Ethiopia, forget about those documentaries that show a mighty cascade, except in the wet season it can barely raise a trickle, and I'm not too sure about the wet season either. Travel books talk about the unique micro-climate there, once perhaps?

Dire Dawa is now the provincial centre and quite charming, it is also the home of our guide whose parents had us over for a traditional coffee ceremony, which involves the servants roasting the coffee in front of you to your satisfaction, then pounding it and preparing the drink, traditionally they also serve popcorn and a type of chapatti made with flour, tomatoes and chili.

Respecting the local customs I limited myself to four servings of the festive bread which was really delicious.

Back to Addis and then to Wondo Genet, via Lake Ziway. Lake Ziway has lots of the sacred blue lotus of Egypt, which is more than you can say for Egypt. It also has pelicans, kingfishers, cormorants and storks, having established that the storks were in fact Latvian nationals I felt quite at home.



Wondo Genet, Hailie Selassie built a palace in this incredibly lush oasis watered by a warm mineral spa in the 1950's. We stayed there, think the science fiction movie "Forbidden Planet" with Walter Pidgeon and Robbie the Robot and you'll get an idea of what it looked like.

Then a drive to Arbaminch, via Shashemene which is where the Rastas of the "Return to Africa Movement" in the 1950's settled. It just an ordinary town noted for prostitution and marijuana. It would have been interesting to talk to the locals about what it felt like to return to (well not their roots most slaves in Jamaica would have come from West Africa) the "homeland" to live through the fall of their Emperor, the Derg and a couple of famines which got a bit of press coverage.

As for Arbaminch and the Bridge of Heaven, incredible, it's so beautiful on a ridge between two lakes (Chamo and Abaya), and visiting the Nechisar National Park, seeing zebras, gazelles, buzzards, hartebeest, you name it. Though unfortunately not enough of them, but the park has now been given to a foreign company to operate and they are moving the people off the reserve so the wildlife should recover more rapidly. A thing that is hard to describe is the sense of drama of the plains, we have vast plains in Australia, but none ringed by formidable mountains, you want to say that incomparable line "That is the road to the forgotten city of Zenge", I mean it calls out for it! The feeling of history and mystery, how many caravans have crossed those plains bearing ostrich feathers and ivory, lions and slaves of

princes and traders in barbaric costumes and in splendour, and not just the loud shirt I was wearing.

Finally Lakes Chamo and Abaya. Don't ever let anyone tell you crocodiles aren't spooky, they are! And if you're in a clapped out boat with engine trouble they are even more frightening. As for hippopotamuses, hey I can be blasé, you've seen one hippo you've seen them all. By the way blasé is strangely appropriate word it used to describe a dilettante from St Petersburg. So I can't help showing off, sue me!

Would I return or recommend it to others?

Yes, But spend more time in Lalibela, Gondor, Lake Tana and the south. ■

Latin Fever Goes Country!

By Lisa Saremel

Dolly Clebsch arrived in Australia from Paraguay in May 2002, with Spanish as her only language. Barely twelve months on, she opened her own dance school in Griffith, NSW.

Now Dolly spends extra time with some of her students rehearsing for public performances such as Brazilian Samba at Griffith's Regional Theatre as part of Australia Day events. While living in Sydney after arriving with her husband and four children, Dolly learnt English through the Adult Migrant English Program with help from Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre.

A professional dancer in Paraguay, Dolly felt comfortable continuing her dancing here as her English developed. "Dancing was easy for me because I moved to Australia and couldn't speak any English. This was the first door that opened for me at that time," Dolly says.

While undertaking further dance training in Australia, Dolly was assisted by staff from Blacktown MRC to compile a CV of her experience and attend auditions, and coordinate public performances for Dolly in the Blacktown area.

Dolly says the help provided by the MRC definitely furthered her career path to where she is now. "I was very lucky for this support," she says.

Dolly's family relocated to Griffith, where her husband grew up, and in June 2003, only 13 months after immigrating, Dolly's Dance Academy was opened. At the end of her first year of operation, she had taught 14 students, and during 2004, a total of 32 students passed through the academy.

There seems to be strong interest in the various styles of dance Dolly teaches. "I'm teaching every latin style of dance, rumba, mambo, merengue, from ballet, hip hop, jazz, rock and roll, contemporary, tap," she says. Her youngest student is 3 years old, her oldest 65.

Four days per week Dolly holds classes between 4.30pm and 8.30pm, and on Friday's she holds extra rehearsals for students preparing for performances. She is excited about her students performing at the Regional Theatre for Australia Day as it will be the first time Brazilian Samba has been performed in the town.

But dance is not Dolly's only talent. She is also a Master Reiki practitioner and conducts Reiki at a local health shop in the mornings. Accountancy is another area of expertise, and she would like to one day attend a course to update her skills. "My dance academy takes a lot of time, but it's going very well," she says.

Dolly says English was the key to settling in to life in Australia and getting to where she is now. "When you can talk, when you can share what you think with other people, it's easy," Dolly says.

She left Paraguay for Australia because she describes the political and economic situation there as 'not good'. "It was the best decision for my children and for us too," she says.

Of her situation now, Dolly says, "it's getting better every day." ■



Success of a Sweeter Kind Business Growth with a Twist

By - Prabhjot Jay Singh

I share with you today a dark, dark secret of my success. I sold myself to make my business a success.

In the infancy of my business, with a twinkle in my eye I had made a goal to get an incredibly large number of customers. I figured, more customers meant more business which meant more profits.

Was I ever wrong!

I learnt quite quickly that keeping a customer was much better than trying to find a new one. The trick was to keep them happy and coming back for more. In a world where customer loyalty changes at the click of a keystroke, this proved an interesting exercise. I would stay awake at night coming up with new ways to promote and propose only to find that four dozen other business people had the same flashlight go off the night before.

Sometimes I get a mental image of the guy upstairs having a great laugh. "I know, let me drive Jay crazy today. I'll let him have an idea, give it to 50 other people and then let them chase each other to the finish line."

For me, as with many small businesses, differentiation is a question of survival. The guy upstairs had set the dirty four dozen behind me. To win I could not make small talk. I needed to take a bold position, embody change and demand to be noticed.

With my marketing budget smaller than Murdoch's maid's pocket money the task seemed impossible. As I sat down to do one of the important tasks of an aspiring business person; procrastination, an email appeared on the computer.

"Success of a sweeter kind", screamed the subject line.

I swung my chair around in the best high-flying executive style that I knew but it is difficult to do on a garden chair.

"Social Responsibility grows businesses" read the headline as I opened the email. Thinking this is one of those emails sent by people who seem to have all the time in the world, to wanna-be executives who have nothing better to do with their time, I started reading.

"There is a growing body of data – quantitative and qualitative – that demonstrates the bottom-line benefits of socially responsible business performance."

This was a sign from God! Finally he/she/being had decided to give me a break and had sent this email especially for me. I just knew there was a message in there somewhere.

I was already providing IT services to the community sector and took that as a pathway to become more involved in the community, as a

socially responsible business. The contributions I made sometimes seemed ambitious for a small business and too small and insignificant in the bigger picture to make a difference. To make matters worse, on my first day of joining a group dealing with some local issues, I found the “dirty four dozen” already there. The metal of their cowboy boots and gold teeth nearly blinded me. Dressed in black denim they started shouting for me to move away. I could see this was not going to be easy. I stepped away from the projector lens and pulled up a chair.

What happened after that was an incredible journey. I realised that the “dirty dozen” were actually decent people trying to make a difference. I lodged a joint proposal with one of them. Another gave a few referrals whilst another introduced me to his best customers, all 400 of them.

The work we did was picked up by the media and we also did some press releases which generated calls even after three months of the release.

Interestingly, my current customers are bargaining less, paying quicker and referring more. They say they like the way we do business. I imagine it has less to do with our business with them and more about the work we do in the community. Around the globe many businesses, large and small, are realising the benefits of being socially responsible.

When a business takes on social responsibility, it makes a strong statement about itself. This work provides you with the platform on which you can build great customer loyalty and a brand for your business. The only condition is, do it sincerely. I sold myself to service and my business succeeded. Give and you shall receive. ■

Here are a few stats for you to ponder over:

A 2001 Environics International CSR Monitor survey showed that the factors most influencing public impressions of companies were social responsibility (49%); brand quality/reputation (40%); and business fundamentals (32%). The answers in the survey represent the percent of respondents mentioning these factors as one of their top two.

While Businesses must first satisfy customers' key buying criteria – such as price, quality, availability, safety and convenience – studies also show a growing desire to buy (or not buy) because of other values-based criteria.



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Flavours of Sudan

Food is central to Sudanese culture. There would not be one function or even a visit by guests to a Sudanese home where food is not provided. As part of the culture it is common for women to come together and prepare and cook food.

Over the past four years the Blacktown MRC has been working closely with a number of Sudanese women who have been preparing and providing Sudanese food for various community functions.

One of these women is Leila Samaan.

Leila arrived in Australia in 1995. The Blacktown MRC got to know her well as she attended craft classes, information sessions and many other functions held at the centre. Leila catered for one of our functions and it was so delicious that everyone was talking about it for days. That was the start of her journey. Leila now has her own catering business and continues to provide wonderful Sudanese food for us and other organisations as well as her own community.

“After catering for quite a few MRC functions I started to get phone calls from people who had attended the functions and were looking for a caterer for their own function. These included Blacktown City Council and many other small and large organisations. I made brochures and menus and distributed them to customers. A lot of my business came from word of mouth”, said Leila.

Like other Sudanese women involved with Blacktown MRC, Leila was provided with formal training from Western Sydney Institute of TAFE on food handling, running a small business and marketing. Both courses included an English support component.

“I first attended a Food Hygiene course organised by Blacktown TAFE and the Blacktown MRC where I graduated. I then completed an Occupational Health and Safety course for small business. I experimented with different types of food, Lebanese, Asian and Indian.”

The women were assisted to form a group and develop viable catering and food businesses. Leila's success is a model for others in new communities. Leila looks forward to a bright future for herself and her family. “I would like to have my own shop where I could sell take away food but also continue with my catering business.” ■

Bassboussa is a sweet served at festive occasions

Sugar Syrup

Boil together 2 tablespoons lemon juice + 3 cups of sugar in 1 ¼ cup of water + 1 tablespoon Molasses. Boil mixture for 15 minutes. Cool down before using on the Bassboussa.

Mix together dry ingredients

1 cup semolina
½ cup desiccated coconut
½ cup flour
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 tablespoon vanilla essence

Mix the following with dry ingredients

½ cup light olive oil
½ cup yogurt (or orange juice)

Mix together until mixture resembles a dough. Spread evenly over a baking tray. Cut into diamonds or squares. Insert almond onto each square.

Bake in 200 degrees oven for 20 – 25 minutes until dough is light brown.

When dough is baked and hot pour on it the cool Sugar syrup. For very Sweet Bassboussa pour the whole amount of sugar syrup and saturate. For a dryer and less sweet Bassboussa only pour ½ the Sugar syrup.

Peace, Celebration & Freedom in the new Sudan



Sudan's government and main rebel group signed an historic peace agreement on 9 January 2005, paving the way for a final end to 21 years of civil war and ending Africa's longest-running conflict that has cost more than 2 million lives since 1983.

A Peace celebration by the Sudanese community was held at Parramatta Park on 15 January to mark this occasion. This event was organised by the Peace Committee under the umbrella of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army.

Community leaders, ministers and political leaders spoke of the importance of the agreement.

Mr Anglo Makuac Cawuop, Chairperson, Community of Southern Sudan and other Marginalized Areas NSW Inc who stated "this is an historic moment where we should know that we are blessed people by god. Many liberation movements end up either crushed without achieving their goals or in a weak position and get absorbed in the mainstream system". He went on to say "now we have this peace in our hands we have to handle it with great care and responsibility".

The efforts of the international community particularly America, Britain, Australia and other European countries and the United Nations were also acknowledged by Mr Makuac Cawuop. ■

SUDAN – A background

Sudan is the largest country in Africa. The north is sandy desert and the south is tropical forest. Sudan is rich in natural products. It is the largest exporting country of gum Arabic, has the worlds largest sugar factory and exports the best quality cotton.

Culturally it is a loose association of around 700 tribes and 200 languages and dialects. Arabic is the official language, however, English is more prevalent in Southern Sudan.

Sudan has been at war since 1956 with a lull between 1972 and 1983. Years of civil war have left 4 million Sudanese internally displaced in the South. More people are internally displaced in Sudan than in any other country.

The first major influx of Sudanese to Australia was in the early 1990s, with the majority coming from the Coptic community in the north of Sudan. Since 1997 there have been greater numbers of Southern Sudan and Northern Muslims.

At present the Sudanese comprise the single largest refugee group being processed from Africa to enter Australia under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program.

World of Healing



Have you ever used remedies passed down to you by your mother or grandmother for your aches and pain and did it work? Have you ever thought if others use the same methods or how people from other cultures deal with similar problems?

These questions were posed to seven groups meeting at the Blacktown MRC in 2002 - Chinese, Croatian, Kurdish, Maltese, Spanish, Turkish and Ukrainian. The same questions were asked of the Sudanese, Tamil and Liberian communities in 2003-04 as well as our two English conversation classes.

Each community was asked about their traditional methods of healing for colds/flu, coughs, headaches, fever, burnt skin, sleeplessness, toothache, stomach pain, period pain, infection, cuts, sore throat, sore eyes backache as well as skin care and hair care.

Take for example, colds and flu. Our research showed that there are many different traditional methods of dealing with cold/flu. These methods differ due to different nationalities, cultures and geographic position of the country. It is interesting to note that most of the seven original cultures that were involved in this research had some common methods when dealing with cold and flu. Some of the most common methods were to drink a lot of tea, lemon and honey and 'sweating'.

Some of the suggestions put forward by the groups:

Chinese

Drink lots of water and Chinese herbal or ginger tea
Eat some garlic
Drink lemon juice
Use steam as therapy
Lots of sleep

Croatian

Eat some garlic
Drink a mixture of tea, honey, lemon and sugar
Steam with chamomile tea
Eat onion
Drink boiled white wine
Boil beef bones together with carrot and parsley and drink

Kurdish

Drink lime tea
Keep the person warm by covering with blankets until they sweat
Melt a teaspoon of honey in lemon juice and gargle
Put some pine tree gum into hot water and use as steam therapy for a blocked nose
Rest

Maltese

Drink lemon or chamomile tea
Eat some honey
Massage chest with warm oil
Add some brandy to hot milk, drink and cover yourself with blanket till you sweat

Spanish

Drink lemon or eucalyptus tea
Eat honey and/or garlic
Drink a mixture of beer, lemon and salt
Wash feet in warm then cold water
Add brandy to green tea

Turkish

Drink mint tea, lemon & honey
Wash feet in warm water
Keep warm by covering with blanket till you sweat
Drink lots of water
Mix honey with lemon juice and eat it

Ukrainian

Drink lemon juice
Massage chest with the mixture of vinegar and water and cover chest with a warm towel
Cut up onion and mix it with sugar. Leave it in a warm place till juice starts coming out of the onion and drink the juice

This research is being collated into a *World of Healing* publication. If you know any other methods used or would like to have other groups included in the publication please let us know on 02 9621 6633. The *World of Healing* will provide a view on some of the traditional and non-medical practices for healing used by people from culturally diverse backgrounds. ■



Relax Your Mind & Grow Yoga in the Workplace

It has been a hard day at work. The kids need to be picked up. Friend needs to talk to you and your partner says you don't do enough. Life seems to be getting more and more demanding and it's easy to lose balance and focus to do the important things that make your life worthwhile.

Research has shown that taking a break allows you to collect yourself and utilise the time you have better. Yoga in such a situation can help greatly. Looking at one of the most common symptoms of stress, headaches, yoga not only provides relief for the pain and cause of headaches, but can also prevent headaches from occurring in the future.

Most headaches are due to stress and tension held in the head, neck, shoulders and upper back. When these muscles are continuously contracted, they constrict the flow of blood, oxygen and prana (energy) to the head. Since the brain is the first part of the body that will die if denied this blood and oxygen, it gets cranky really fast and usually lets you know via a pain in your head.

When you feel a headache coming on, the first thing to do is stop what you are doing and take a break. Close your eyes, relax and take a few deep breaths through the nose into the belly. Scan your upper body for tension and tightness and consciously allow it to release and relax. Adjust your posture; reach the crown of the head up to lengthen the spine, let the

shoulders drop down and back to open the chest. If you cannot consciously release the tension, you may want to give yourself a shoulder, neck and face massage. Gently press and lightly circle on the tops of the shoulders, the back of the neck, the third eye and temples.

A general yoga practice is the best preventative medicine for headaches. A general practice will reduce stress and tension in the whole body while increasing circulation and absorption of oxygen.

Talk to your doctor if you are having more than two or three headaches per week, or if a bad headache lasts for several days. Migraines and cluster headaches can be helped with yoga, but you must have the supervision and approval of your doctor. ■

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6 Simple Steps to Securing your Small Business

By - Prabhjot Jay Singh

Small businesses rank office computer security as amongst their biggest concerns, according to recent survey by Walia Pty Limited, an Australian IT company.

Research shows that small businesses are more vulnerable to security attacks such as worm or virus outbreaks. Also, security at large companies is much better than in the past, which encourages hackers to view small to medium businesses as an easy target.

Following are 6 steps to securing your business:

1. Install anti-virus software and update it regularly. This software scans incoming emails for virus signatures and, if a virus is found, deletes or quarantines it. It's critical to update this software regularly with new definitions because there are hundreds of new viruses each month.

2. Set up an Internet firewall. This is your company's first line of defence and protects your local network from outside attacks by screening and blocking all traffic between your network and the internet that isn't allowed. The firewall also hides computer addresses and makes them invisible to outsiders. Installing a hardware firewall is simple as it connects between the cable/DSL modem and computers on your network.

3. Cryptic passwords are best. It's hard to remember passwords, but why make it easy for hackers by using common words? Never devise passwords based on your real name, username or company name, or use easily guessed numbers such as 1234. Change your password at least once a month, and use passwords that are eight letters or more in length with lower and upper case letters, numbers and symbols.

4. Download computer updates regularly. Older computer systems, such as Windows 98 or 95, should be discarded in favour of Windows XP Professional, which is more robust and secure. Security updates are downloadable from vendor sites. Sign up for Walia Security Update, a free email alert service designed for small businesses.

5. Teach employees to safely use email. The first rule of thumb is never open suspicious or unsolicited attachments. Avoid responding to spam, too, especially links that claim you will be removed from the spammer's mailing list. The second rule of thumb is to never provide credit card numbers, passwords or personal information in response to email messages. Finally, check regularly for email updates and be sure to install anti-virus software.

6. Perform quarterly security assessments. Have a reputable IT provider ensure that any current computer/network vulnerabilities are identified and corrected. ■



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Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) is an independent, community-based organisation dedicated to empowering people from culturally diverse backgrounds and promoting a culturally rich and diverse Australia. Operating from a base in Blacktown we service people at our centre, through people's homes and from a number of strategic bases around Sydney.