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Welcome to Projections!

It's been another busy month at APCS. Firstly we'd like to welcome some new clients to the APCS family - [AGL](#), [Carbine Collection](#) and [WASCA](#). And, of course, we managed to secure first place in [ZDNet Australia's Best IT Employer Award](#). It's interesting to note that the top three finalists, [Westnet](#), [Techex](#) and us are all small businesses.

This month we are running the first of our Business Continuity Workshops as a follow up to the breakfast seminar that we held in October. The workshop is designed to help middle and senior managers understand the potential risk profile of their IT infrastructure. Please contact [Margaret Selianakis](#) directly if you are interesting in finding more information about this event.

While we're on the topic of risk management - ChaseWaterford, one of our partners, are running a fraud management seminar this month. While we all would prefer to ignore the possibility of fraud the statistics are compelling - if not frightening! You can find out more about this seminar [here](#).

Greg Fonti from [EyeAccess](#) is this month's guest columnist. EyeAccess is perhaps best known as a boutique Australian technology company, however their alliance with Malaysia's SQM Systems has enabled them to bring some innovative auditing and health check tools to the market that are derived from SQM's Quality Management products. This month Greg describes the [TAG Climate Report](#) - a tool that can be used to generate rapid and repeatable business health checks.

We also talk about [email content security](#), [peak load resourcing](#) and close with the third part of Scott Coleman's popular series on [Project Management Principles](#).

Until next time.

[Craig Dennis](#)

PS: If you find APCS Projections interesting you might like to forward it to a [friend or colleague](#).

Where Is Your Business Today?

By guest columnist [Greg Fonti](#)

**Managing Director
EyeAccess Pty Ltd**

DO YOU KNOW WHERE your business is today? Do you know what needs to be addressed so that you can make that aggressive move in the market? Do you know where your problem processes are? Are things improving or declining?

Ideally, most of us would like to be able to take a periodical "snapshot" of our business that could be used as a point of comparison. Unfortunately it is generally difficult to do this in an efficient and meaningful manner.

Working with our partners, including APCS and SQM Systems (Malaysia) we have developed a generic, rapid-fire, repeatable business health check consulting tool that can be applied to any business. The TAG (Technologies Avant Garde) Climate Report evaluates 91 individual criteria that, when viewed collectively, provide a solid, high level view of your organisation.

Each of the 91 criteria is evaluated and assigned a percentage score for two key result areas: Implementation and Deployment and Actual Results.

Implementation and Deployment considers issues such as use of proper methods and techniques that are aligned with a quality program, are the practices relevant and effective for all targeted areas (production, customer service, supply chain management etc.). We also determine whether your business practices have been fully integrated into your organisation.

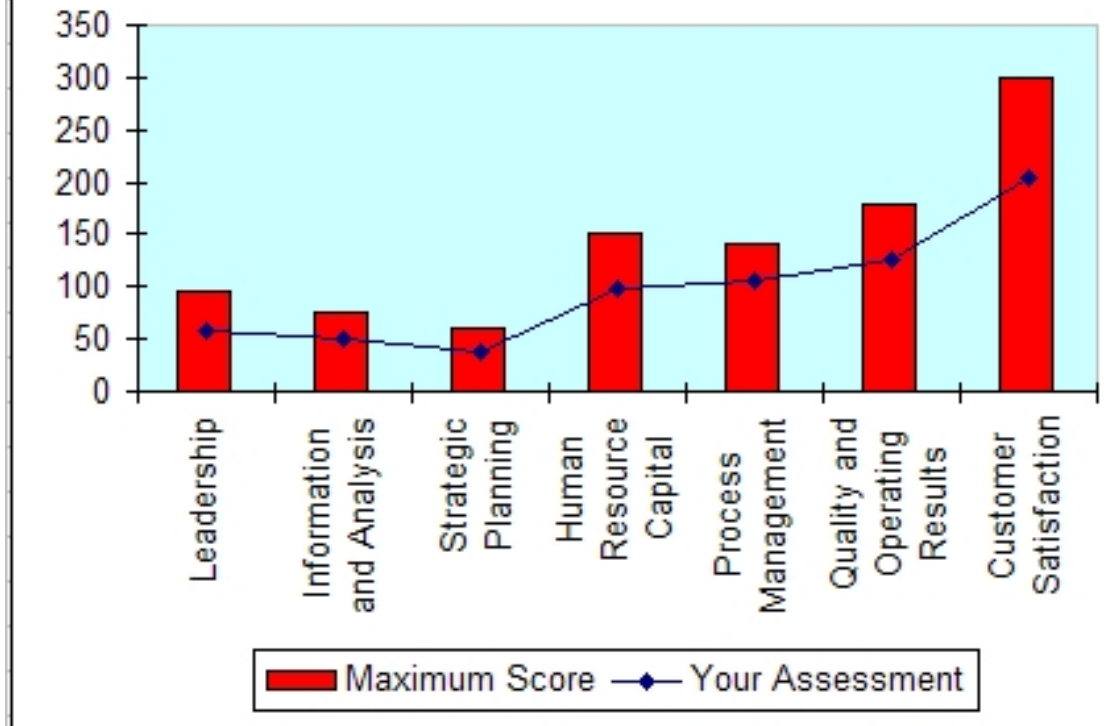
Actual Results reviews measured outcomes and performance levels with a view to clearly demonstrating improvement (or otherwise), whether the improvement is sustainable and the reliability of manual feedback systems.

Analysis of the compiled results leads to the production of the TAG Climate Report. The report is delivered both in numeric and a more graphical "Traffic light" format, as shown in the example below, for ease understanding.

By repeating this process at regular intervals, perhaps every three to six months, the TAG Climate Report can become an important management tool.

	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Your</i>	
	<i>Score</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1.0 Leadership	95	59	62%
2.0 Information and Analysis	75	50	67%
3.0 Strategic Planning	60	39	65%
4.0 Human Resource Capital	150	98	65%
5.0 Process Management	140	105	75%
6.0 Quality and Operating Results	180	127	70%
7.0 Customer Satisfaction	300	204	68%
Total Points	1000	682	68%

Summary Analysis



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How Secure Is Your E-Mail Content?

By [Matthew Fisher](#)
Technology Consultant

WITH THE RAPID PROGRESS of email client and server evolution, more functionality has been written into email clients enabling them to perform a myriad of functions that they were not originally designed for. A prime example of this is embedding HTML content within email to enhance its presentation. I remember the days of simple mail clients running in either Unix or Dos that provided only basic text support. Jump to now; email clients are able to render HTML/Text/RTF, execute embedded code, macros, filtering, antivirus, formatting, etc etc... I could ramble on for hours about the capabilities of modern email clients.

The problem with all these capabilities is simply that there may be too many. Programmers around the globe who, by adding a little creative content within email, are creating mass mailing worms that are bringing the internet to a standstill. Recent well-known examples of these kind of viruses are; MyDoom, Bagle and Netsky. The good news is that a large portion of these new viruses contain linked content or content that can be filtered globally with little to no impact on your day to day business.

So how do you filter the email content? There is a range of content filtering products on the market for email that are usually combined with antivirus and spam filtering tools. Once these are in place I recommend implementing a "whitelist". A whitelist is a list of allowed attachments into your network. This will prevent unknown or untrusted attachments from entering your network.

Secondly make sure that your content filter has detection for unknown binary formats because sometimes viruses like to impersonate other files that you would normally trust. Then you have a decision to make; do you allow HTML and RTF content? Some would say "yes" and some would say "no". This really comes down to personal choice and the risks that you as a business will take to run effectively.

And finally - Don't forget to install and maintain multiple antivirus scanning engines!

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Peak Load Resourcing

By [Margaret Selianakis](#)
Business Development Manager

PEAK LOAD RESOURCING is the ability to source specific skills for a particular task over a varied length of time. It differs from using Contractors due to the nature of the engagement; it is not full time engagement for a fixed period. Peak Load Resourcing is designed to meet the specific needs of an individual requirement, be it 10 hours per week, as per a project plan or delivery against a predetermined schedule. Managers consider this option a fast and easy way to engage someone, one that allows them to respond to workload increases and emergencies with less red tape than traditional resourcing methods entail. It is normally for funded projects where the costs have already been determined these resources are therefore often used as fast hires and quick operational fixes. They are particularly well suited to operational settings, where there are fixed schedules and the work does not get done if the position is not filled.

"Yes, I know of a way you can have someone tomorrow."

Managers also use peak load employment arrangements to obtain specialised skills that they may need for only a short period of time. This helps them to use their resources more efficiently, as they can staff a core group of regular employees and bring in additional people for specific projects. This option is particularly useful in areas where staff, such as IT professionals, are expensive.

"New employees can have a revitalizing effect on an organisation."

The use of Peak Load Resourcing is an economically sound approach to meeting the fluctuating work requirements of most IT departments it allows the expertise required to be provided on a just in time basis for funded projects and reduces the amount of idle resources that would exist should the resources be maintained on staff.

APCS provide Project Managers, IT Strategists, Consultants and Business Analysts as peak load resources to a variety of our clients, not only does it provide the skills and resources required but the introduction of these experts into the core team for the required period also provides skills transfer and access to the varied skills of the APCS team.

Next Month: Cultural fit of resources. How important is it?

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12 Project Management Principles

By [Scott Coleman](#)
Managing Director

Number 3

PROJECT MANAGERS MUST FEEL, and transmit to their team members, a sense of urgency. Because projects are finite endeavours with limited time, money, resources available, they must be kept moving forward toward completion. Since most other team members will have lots of other priorities, it's up to the Project Manager to keep their attention on project deliverables and deadlines. Regular status checks, meetings, and reminders are essential.

Next Month: Communications

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