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GET AHEAD AND BE PREPARED

WRITTEN BY EDULOG STAFF

The time has come for 2023-2024 school startup planning. Edulog can help you plan for the road ahead. Our Account Management and Service Level Management teams will be reaching out soon to schedule a brief 10-15-minute conversation. We can get your tickets scheduled for priority placement in the support queue. Be ready because we will be calling.

What we need from you:

1. Your availability for a brief 10-15-minute meeting.
2. An idea as to which data set(s) you will be using for fall planning.
3. Whether summer school planning is needed.
4. A timeline for when you want to get started.
5. A schedule for when your student information system will be rolling students to the 2023-2024 school year.
6. A list of upcoming changes at your district (i.e., boundaries, schools, or grade placement).
7. Your excitement to start and finish planning ahead of time.

Ready to harness that New Year energy and make a change?
Interested in data to see how far you've come?

[Click here to reach out to our Advisory Services Team](#)

CYBERSECURITY!

WRITTEN BY LAM NGUYEN-BULL



You may be thinking - wait, aren't you guys in student transportation software? Why am I hearing about cybersecurity from you?

The reality is everyone needs to be invested in understanding cybersecurity. It's the same way anybody who lives in a dwelling with a toilet or a sink has to understand how to troubleshoot plumbing issues, even if you never trained or planned on being a plumber.

This issue's cybersecurity briefing is about phishing. There's an easy solution to phishing, isn't there?



But, sadly, checking emails is a core job responsibility for most of us. So, on to Plan B.

Step 1: Know your sender. Is it a sender you know? Does the email reply-to -address match the address for the sender you know?

Step 2: If it has hyperlinks, do the URLs match what the link says it's to?

Step 3: If it has an attachment, were you expecting it?

Step 4: If you're not sure about the answers to Steps 1-3, reach out to the sender (preferably by phone) to verify if they sent the email.

The two most likely forms of phishing you might see that involve senders who falsely appear to be from Edulog are: Payment-related communications purporting to send an invoice or suggesting that your account is delinquent and services will be terminated if payment isn't received yesterday. Please always reach out to us by phone to verify any payment related email communications. What if it's your licensing anniversary and you're fully expecting to receive and pay an invoice? These days, it's better to be safe than sorry. Social engineers have gotten really good at their craft and time their communications to match normal cycles. What might appear to be a valid invoice could be a link to a Trojan horse, or the invoice might specify changed EFT/ACH information (a definite red flag!). We always like to hear our clients' voices, so don't be shy about picking up the phone and calling your account manager or service level manager.

Automated messages prompting you to reset your password or update your account from any of our cloud services (e.g., Parent Portal or Athena, etc.). It can be very hard to tell which of these are real and which aren't, as the real-deal emails do in fact come from a generic-seeming email address. At this time, all of our emails of this type will come from Edulog System (no-reply@edulog.com) and contain a footer informing you that questions can be sent to support@edulog.com. However, please do not hesitate to reach out to your account manager or service level manager if you have ANY doubt about whether the notification is a bona fide Edulog communication.

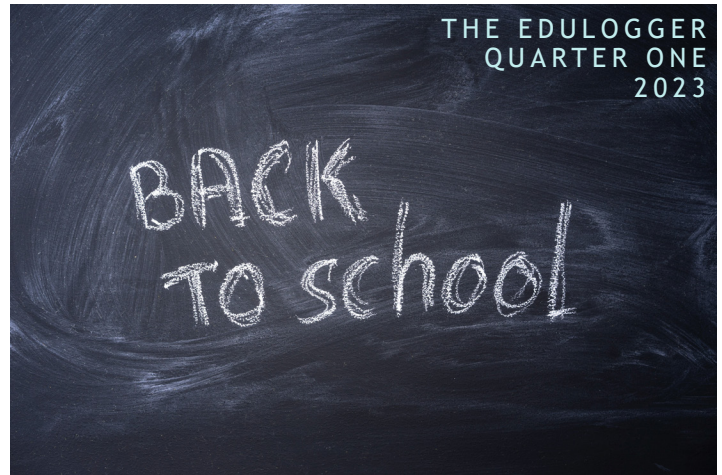


TIPS FOR SCHOOL STARTUP

WRITTEN BY EDULOG STAFF

We know that school start-up can be a stressful time for transportation professionals. The big question here is “When should you start preparing for this?”

- Start preparing in the spring.
- Get a seat at the table early if boundary changes and bell-time changes are being considered.
- Using a data area other than your Live area to start rolling over students and adding new students.
- Taking care of these things during March and April alone will assist in minimizing the pandemonium of school start up.



ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN BY LEXIE DUVALL

It's that time of year again, when the joyous sound of children's laughter begins to fade, and the transportation departments begin their tireless efforts to prepare for next year. We know it takes a great deal of work and want to help you through the herculean task that is School Startup for the 2023-2024 school year. The account management team is here to help you through the process.

In the next few weeks, the account management team will be contacting you regarding your plans for 2023-2024 School Startup. We are committed to making the transition from this year to next year as easy as possible. The team will be updating your district's information in our systems as well as planning and implementing your technical support requests.

School startup is not the only item we can help you with. Account management is the hub for client activities and requests for Edulog. Our main purpose is to facilitate the goals your transportation departments have set and help you achieve them. It is important for us to help you achieve the objectives your district has set each school year. We pride ourselves on being your liaison and advocate within Edulog.

We coordinate between the districts and the departments within Edulog. We facilitate meetings between our clients and the sales department to address software questions and requests. We create tickets for services with our product support and implementation teams. We also manage concerns involving the departments and management that are applicable for quick resolutions.

Our team also sets up and coordinates trainings such as the Virtual Learning Academy and our User Group discussions. With your input we are able to determine your training requests and give you the best options available. We coordinate with the training staff to fill in the gaps in software knowledge and to give you quality follow up on your questions and concerns.

With our partnership, we develop strategic outlines specific to each district's needs. We endeavor to accomplish this by building rapport with you and your team as well as opening and maintaining lines of communication between Edulog and your district. We are your champions, and work to maintain a positive experience for you, your department, and your district.





ASK ME ANYTHING

WRITTEN BY SHAWNA KNUDSON

In this quarter's article of Ask Me Anything (AMA), I want to address a question posed to me by one of my colleagues: What is one absolute truth you believe?

Because this is a professional article, I am not going to answer this in a personal way. Rather, I am going to take you wandering through the curious mind of Shawna Knudson. The one absolute truth that I believe is: "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

What does this mean and why do I believe it is an absolute truth? Honestly, my experiences tell me that regardless of what is happening in my life, Monday still follows Sunday. My life has changed radically over the past 53 years. I am no longer the dewy-eyed young lady of my youth, I have aged, I have more experience, and technology has advanced. Life seems to be slower and much faster simultaneously. But, regardless, Monday still follows Sunday.

Life is generally predictable, we have routines, we have patterns, we have problems, we find solutions. Sometimes problems have no solutions, but that has been the situation since the beginning of time.

Where did I learn this philosophy? From a book, of course! The Prince by Machiavelli. While there are many take-aways, the most fascinating to me was not getting frightened in the face of adversity. I have morphed this particular saying into "Panic in the proper order"! Or in my case, let's not panic at all. Why? Because in panic, we make emotional decisions, not rational decisions.

If we make emotional decisions, we may not be taking into consideration the number of factual considerations we can't see because of our heightened emotional state.

Machiavelli also shared that he had a low opinion of flatterers and honestly, not much has changed since the 1530's. Most of us know the difference between honest flattery and deception.

He also called on the princes to avoid contempt and hatred and to be suspicious of everyone when hostile attitudes emerge. I think that I found this most true as I was rearing children. The angrier one of my children grew when I asked about something, the more inclined I was to believe it was true, despite their denials.

So, you can see, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Life might be different in 2023 than it was in the 1530's, but a remarkable amount of it has stayed the same. After all, Monday still follows Sunday.

KNOW THE WHOLE STORY

Safe & Secure

Reduce Costs

Smart Substitution

Real-time Notifications

Critical data for your district and your community.

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The image shows a smartphone displaying a bus route map with various icons and text. The phone is centered on a background of a school hallway. The text 'KNOW THE WHOLE STORY' is at the top. Below the phone, there are four callout boxes: 'Safe & Secure', 'Reduce Costs', 'Smart Substitution', and 'Real-time Notifications'. At the bottom, there is a footer with the text 'Critical data for your district and your community.', the website 'www.edulog.com', the email 'info@edulog.com', the 'EDULOG' logo, and a QR code with the text 'Learn More'.

ADDING SERVICE LEVEL MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN BY KARL THORNE

Do you have software and tools but don't have quite enough time or resources to use them properly? Do you need a little boost to get yourself back on your continuous improvement program, or a little flex help to start, maintain, or complete a project? Do you find yourself needing just a little more of the same thing at the same time (school start, anybody?) every year?

Have we got the answer for you! You probably know us best as a software company. But we don't just provide software, we provide solutions. And that means we meet our clients' teams where they are and as they are. We know that not everybody is resourced the same, but we want every one of our clients to be able to extract as much value as possible out of the software tools you've invested in.

A key component of the solutions we bring to you is our Service Level Management (SLM) team. SLM is dedicated to providing our clients focused and targeted services to help them meet the challenges of continuously evolving transportation needs. They work hand-in-hand with your entire team from transportation to communications, to business services to understand the dynamics of your internal business processes. We provide support tailored to each district's needs to deliver made-to-fit solutions.

The SLM team is proud of our track record of handling clients' day-to-day requests in a timely manner. Our services include helping you navigate changes in transportation personnel, preparing for summer and fall planning, and working on technical issues as they arise. Whether it be adding new schools, grades, and programs, assisting with map work, answering other "how to", "how can" or "what if" requests, including offering advice on how other Edulog software options will meet your needs.



Is your district poised to meet the current challenges of transportation and the informational needs of your students, parents, and internal personnel? The SLM team can partner with you to offer solutions and provide focused and targeted services to help alleviate these challenges. Contact your service level manager or account manager to see if service level management is a viable solution for you.

CORY EMLLEN'S MATH JOKE SHIRTS



In getting to know our coworkers we find some pretty interesting topics to talk about. At our last employee appreciation lunch, our project manager Cory Emlen wore a math-joke shirt. Come to find out, he has at least 40 math shirts to bring joy to everyone who likes math,

or even a good pun! The one in the image was given to him by his high school math department upon his graduation in honor of all the shirts he wore throughout his time there. Below are a few more jokes that he would like to share to hopefully make you chuckle.

- Math puns are the first Sine of madness.
- Never trust an atom. They make up everything.
- Math: it's the only subject that counts. (Fun fact, my favorite branch of mathematics is Combinatorics, which is also known as the mathematics of counting.)





MADISON IRWIN

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

WRITTEN BY ANDREA BRUNSON

Favorite food: Brussel Sprout Tacos from Top Hat

Favorite color: Green

Dream Vacation: Egypt/ Jordan

Favorite Quote:
“Perhaps it was not a destination I sought, but merely a continuation.”—Ocean Vuong

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
Climbing, fishing, camping

Where are you from/where did you grow up?
I grew up in Thousand Oaks, California.

If you could compete in the Olympics, which sport would you choose? Climbing

What are two things on your bucket list?
Backpack Europe and Australia/New Zealand.

Do you have any pets, if so what type/name?
I have a golden-doodle pup named French Toast.

If you could pick up a new skill in an instant, what would it be? I would be fluent in ASL.

If you had to delete all but 2 apps from your phone, which 2 would you keep? Spotify and Photos

How would you describe your job at Edulog?
Getting to build knowledge bridges between our products and the client.

Favorite Edulog product or favorite part of working here: Favorite product is Athena.

Edulog advice (to clients or co-workers): Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it; we might be a software company, but not all of us are tech-minded.

Madison Irwin joined Edulog in September 2022 as a Training Specialist. Madison is responsible for internal and external training, documentation, and assisting with curriculum development.

Madison graduated from the University of Montana with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Secondary Education. She was a permanent substitute teacher, as well as an English Literacy Volunteer with the Peace Corps in Western Samoa, teaching primary education. Madison has several years' experience in Training and Curriculum Development.

Madison's goal is to “help clients build bridges of knowledge between the training concepts and its application, with the hope of building upon their unique skills and abilities to eventually leave them feeling confident when independently navigating Edulog systems.”



Top 10 Reasons to Tap Into Edulog's Training:

1. *Improve confidence in using the software.*
2. *Boost productivity.*
3. *Discover new processes and procedures in the software.*
4. *Increase job satisfaction reported by employees when provided training opportunities.*
5. *Increase office morale.*
6. *Prepare employees to move into different roles, promoting role flexibility.*
7. *Communicate to employees that they are valued.*
8. *Reduce employee turnover.*
9. *Advance office communication.*
10. *Keep up with changes in the industry.*



**Recipe: Chocolate
 Chip Muffins by
 Jasmine Brown**

Ingredients:

- ½ C (1 stick) Melted Butter
- 2 Eggs
- 1 C Milk
- 2 C All Purpose Flour
- ¾ C Packed Brown Sugar
- 1 Tbsp Baking Powder
- 1 Tsp Salt
- 1 Tsp Vanilla
- 1 Tsp Cinnamon
- ½ C Semisweet Chocolate Chips

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Spray muffin tin with cooking spray, or add liners.
2. Melt butter in microwave 30-45 seconds. Let cool for 2 minutes.
3. Crack eggs on side of small mixing bowl. Add milk, butter and vanilla.
4. In a separate bowl, combine flour brown sugar, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon.
5. Add wet ingredients into dry mix until combined. Mix in chocolate chips.
6. Bake 18-20 minutes; until toothpick comes out dry.

Do LESS with LESS

Written by Lam Nguyen-Bull

How many times have we heard others grumble about needing to do more with less? How many times have we struggled to do more with less ourselves? I'm here to tell you that when you have less, perhaps the first step is not to figure out how to do the same amount and range of activities with less, but to reassess whether the full range and number of activities you were doing are still required, or even advisable. In other words, should you be doing LESS with less? This is not to say that being efficient isn't important, but increasing efficiency alone is not enough, and not even the best solution to working with resource constraints. Whole business school courses have been taught on this subject, namely, the LEAN method of refining business processes.

Some of you may be shaking your heads and thinking, "LEAN isn't for me. I'm not a business. I'm just running buses." That's where you're wrong! Do you have budget management responsibilities? Do you have to manage resources? Do you have to deliver services? If so, you are a "business" in all the ways that matter. LEAN is a lens of looking at what you and your organization are doing and finding the ways in which waste has nosed its way in when nobody was looking. To read Lam's full article, and learn more about waste, click [here].

Missing a Piece?

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ODE TO THE SKI BUS: A LOVE LETTER

WRITTEN BY SPENCER JENKO

THE EDULOGGED
QUARTER OF THE
2023



I hope I'm not late.

Snowflakes fall steadily around my car as it idles at the stoplight, the red glow standing in contrast to the dark-blue landscape in the earliest hours of the morning. Driving fast in these conditions would be reckless, and in an attempt to distract myself, I reach for the coffee mug, which is emptying itself far more quickly than I'd prefer.

The snow forecasters weren't joking about this storm, and the local ski hill's morning report trumpeted a large amount of new snow. All signals were pointing towards excellent riding conditions, albeit one major hurdle; the road up to the mountain was treacherous, and the ski hill was encouraging utmost caution with travelers. And as the last bits of coffee emptied from my mug, I decided to take a last-minute option: the local ski bus.

Now, fancier ski resorts like Jackson Hole and Big Sky have their own private fleet of buses for shuttling tourists around. They are typically modern, clean, and wrapped in the company logo to fit their high-end branding. Some even border on the luxurious with leather seats and custom builds. But our local hill is not one of these places. As a small ski area in Montana, the better words to describe it would be "steep, deep, and cheap". It is not a place for the wealthy, and it has always strived to remain a place for locals. Using a second-hand school bus seems to be entirely on-brand then.

I pull off the access road into the muddy lot next to the gas station, feeling relief to see it hasn't left yet. The large class-C bus idles away, its faded yellow color speckled with mud and snow after years of wear. It sits like a lumbering beast, with a growling engine and flickering headlights that illuminate the people scurrying about. A line has already formed, and indeed most have already boarded by now. Skis and snowboards stick up awkwardly out of cages mounted to the side of the bus, which consist of a series of metal racks welded together by a local shop. As I place my gear in there, I can only pray that it survives the journey.

Being among the last to board, I'm greeted by the faces of parents, kids, teenagers, and everyone in-between as I move past the front rows.

Excitement hangs in the air like an electrically charged current as the snowfall picks up the pace outside. The chatter calms down a bit as I reach the back of the bus and find an empty spot for myself. Slipping the headphones in, I look around to take in the surroundings.

The bench seat is nearly worn through with rips and tears along its seams. The classic vinyl floor has been scuffed and scratched every which way, with oddly colored stains that one could only hope was not from a human body. A moldy smell pervades this section of the bus, with the odd smell of cheese rising occasionally from the seat behind me. Passengers around me are in various states, most ranging from half-asleep to hungover. Some attempt to sleep but are foiled by the rocking and jolting motion of the bus as it pulls out of the dirt lot.

It's old, it's ragged, and it's never my first choice when driving to the ski hill. But as the yellow bus pulls out of the lot, I look out the window and can only see a blizzard raging outside. The driver knows these roads well and understands well the trust required when getting behind that wheel. Years of work at the local school district gave him a steady hand when driving in terrible conditions and his reputation was one that helped keep passengers calm and confident that they would make the journey safely. Regardless of whether you are child or an adult; it is a bond of trust between passenger and bus driver, and in these conditions, I will always be thankful for it.

STAFF UPDATES

WRITTEN BY JASMINE BROWN



Starting off in the new year, **Travis Meyers** joined the Project Management Team in January as a Project Manager. Travis graduated from the University of Montana with a BS in Geography and with a certificate in GIS Sciences and Technology. Prior to his move to Missoula, he lived in the Denver Metro area, exploring the Rocky Mountains out his back door! We are excited to have Travis apply his education, management experience and tenacity to the PMO, particularly with the newest additions to the Edulog suite of products.

Also joining the Project Management team is **Ben Burkhalter**. Ben's joined us in March as a project manager coordinator. Ben graduated from Montana Tech with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in December 2022. As a non-traditional student, Ben had previously been an active Marine and has worked in the automotive industry as a mechanic.



New to the Product Support team, let's recognize **Larry Mendenhall**, who joined us in January as a Support Analyst. Larry lives in Philipsburg, MT and has over 30 years' experience in the computer industry. He is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys skiing, hiking, fishing, rafting, travelling, cooking, and reading. We are excited to see him utilize his experience and knowledge in this new role.

Additionally, joining the Product Support Team as a Support Analyst is **Jeremiah Goldson**. Jeremiah lives in Missoula, MT and has several years' experience in customer technical support. He is also a freelance Web Developer and Comic Book illustrator. We are excited to see him bring his experience and creativeness to the Product Support Team.



We are very thrilled to see our administrative team for Edulog and Logisys grow with the addition of **Asheley Nordby**! Asheley is a Missoula native and is currently taking classes in QuickBooks and learning upholstery (family business). She loves the outdoors and hiking, especially Glacier!

Staff Updates continued on Page 6.



STAFF UPDATES (CONTINUED)



We would like to welcome **Dewayne Porter** to Edulog's Sales Team. Dewayne is the former senior transportation director of the Richmond County and Columbia County school systems in Georgia. He's been a transportation administrator/director for 27 years and was the GAPT president in 2008-2009. Dewayne is eager to provide his assistance and knowledge to school transportation professionals on how to get the most out of their route management solutions, on-vehicle software and hardware technology, and parent facing applications.

Also joining the Edulog Sales team is **Stephen Maciag**. A native Montanan, Steve has spent the past three years in RV Sales business management here in Missoula. He also has four years of experience in residential/commercial real estate sales. When he isn't working, Steve enjoys playing golf, spending time with his newborn son Blake, and enjoys everything family! We are excited to have Steve apply his understanding of business development challenges and opportunities to the task of introducing new and existing clients to the benefits and advantages of the Edulog product suite.



To conclude the new hires this quarter, we have **Tyler McClure** who joined us in February as a Training Associate on the Training Team. Tyler graduated from the University of Montana with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Management Information Studies. He has also studied coding, programming, Excel, and design and has experience in implementation, analytics, management, and training. Tyler enjoys working on cars, bikes, and motorcycles. He enjoys traveling the country and is building his van out as a camper.

In other staff news, we are very excited to see **Trevor Adams** promoted to Edulog Software Product Director. As the company has made great progress in the development of our Athena product line with a quickly increasing number of customers, it is important for the company to supplement our engineering work in software development with a focus on product delivery and coordination with all Edulog departments toward the goal of successfully meeting customer needs and maximizing our clients' satisfaction. As Trevor steps into the role of Software Product Director, his responsibility is to facilitate, from an engineering perspective, all the activities that have direct impact on the successful delivery of the company's software solutions. We are excited to see Trevor in this role, and what his experience can do for Edulog.



Additionally, we have a new Client Solution Quality Control Group, which will be led by **David Goldberg**. We would like to congratulate David on his hard work, and we are excited to see how he will mold this team! The purpose of this group will be to verify not only that each data build for Athena is technically sound, but also to understand the client's big picture goals and to test each system to make sure that we meet the goals and objectives articulated by our clients with Edulog's input.



2023 VIRTUAL LEARNING ACADEMY

WRITTEN BY ARIKA STEELE

We were fortunate to see many of our clients face-to-face in February of 2020 for our 25th conference. Little did we know that would be the last time that we would see an in-person conference for the next few years to come. Days after the conference, lockdowns occurred throughout the nation. Instead of our usual post-conference follow-up, the Edulog team found themselves acclimating to a sudden shift to remote work, creating the new normal.

The proposal of a virtual conference was met with honest hesitation. Our conference in Clark County, NV offered a retreat from everyday routines and immersion in a shared educational experience. What more could a virtual conference offer? It turns out, quite a lot. So much so, that we have kept developing and continue to offer virtual workshops. This year, we are excited to present our workshop as the Virtual Learning Academy.

Having the Virtual Learning Academy allows for a more inclusive and differently scaled event. Gone are the concerns about equipment and facilities. We can focus directly on educational content and its delivery. Anyone with an Internet connection can access the event, which also includes many from the Edulog team.

We are grateful to all of our clients for this continued experience. We aim to provide the strengths of all of the formats available to us, but, most of all, we're looking forward to working with you again.



PLANNING FOR THE YEAR

What can we do to help you and your operation in an ever changing environment?

- Build effective transportation models for your district.
- Assess your operation and fleet capacity before school return.
- Determine which riders actually require bus service.
- Develop trust and community buy-in with consistent, data driven decisions.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Advisory Services.



EASY, NOT EASY

WRITTEN BY LAM NGUYEN-BULL

WE DO THIS NOT BECAUSE IT IS
 EASY,
 BUT BECAUSE WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE EASY.

Unlike space exploration, the subject of JFK's inspirational address at Rice University (and the source of the original quote that this one mocks), our lives are much more mundane

and the reasons we do things usually much more down to earth, pardon the pun!

That isn't to say we don't have bursts of energy or inspiration to do great things. Remember how excited we were three months ago about the new year and the new beginnings that the turn of the year heralded? But now it's March, and in a large segment of the country, we're experiencing our third winter, after 5 months of it already. Those new beginnings, like the snow on the ground, are looking tired and raggedy.

In the meantime, our lives go on, and the reality is that the great majority of activities we perform and projects we undertake got started because they were in fact easy, or we had the wrong idea about how easy they would be. And that's nothing to be ashamed of. Heroic feats are amazing, and we all need that flash of excitement and something extraordinary in our lives, whether personal or professional. But let's talk about the easy things and the things we thought would be easy.

And I want to go back to what JFK originally said: We choose to . . . do the[se] . . . things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.

No doubt about it, this is inspiring stuff. But in the workplace, in our practical professional lives, choosing to do things merely because they are hard is nonsense and a muscularly egocentric thing that usually wastes time and resources. We should choose to do things because they will make a difference. It's better if they're easy. And that's where we end up doing things sometimes because they're easy and other times because we thought they would be easy. The little things add up. And the hardest thing about those little things is sometimes persuading everybody that they're worth pursuing.

One example of a "little thing" that had an outsized impact was from my days as a private practice lawyer. We frequently ran up against deadlines and underestimated how long it would take to, of all things, make the required number of copies of documents. Without fail, every few days, some unfortunate lawyer would belatedly realize that the copier was out of paper and be unable, in the stress of the moment, to solve the problem without throwing the entire general area into turmoil.

One of the paralegals suggested one day that we should put up a sign by the copier reminding every user to check the paper levels, and if the paper level was below 50%, to take the time to fill it if they had a spare moment. Did everybody comply? Of course not. And the pre-vote discussion about whether everybody would be a team player almost sank the idea - a lot of people didn't want to pay it forward if not everybody was going to put in their share. But we voted to give it a shot and amazingly enough people did; that the number of tantrums involving jammed paper and broken paper drawers dipped to almost zero. That was an easy thing that was worth doing!

Easy, Not Easy continued on page 13.

EASY NOT EASY (CONTINUED)

Now, how about those things we do because we thought they would be easy? I won't suggest that large software projects might fall into that category because Sales will certainly censor that article from going out! But here's a safer topic - having pets. Fourteen years ago, I was first snookered into buying a \$15 self-sufficient aqua system complete with African dwarf clawed frog, some greenery, and a couple of snails to clean the tank. The only thing we had to do was to feed the frog three tiny pellets a week. That really was easy.

Unfortunately for me, seven years later, that frog tank had been joined by a fish tank, with accidentally-on-purpose male and female swordtail fish. That wasn't nearly as easy. There are no snails that can keep up with keeping this tank clean, there is regular emotional trauma when the tank census taker realizes that the math on how many fish there are on Day 745 doesn't add up with how many fish there were on Day 697 unless there is a wormhole in our house, and the tank might sometimes be the watery repository of unwanted dinner vegetables, which means "we" have to evacuate all the fish, clean the tank and rebalance the water.

And to this we have added a senior dog. Sweet temperament, quiet, loyal, and loves his rambles in the woods by our house. We thought he would be easy when we adopted him. Is he "easy"? No. Having him adds to the work we have to do to maintain happiness and healthiness levels in our household. But the fact that none of this was as easy as we thought it would be (save for the frog), doesn't mean we should abandon it, either. It's also true that we didn't fully appreciate the benefit doing these things would bring us when we started. Sometimes, it's our misestimation of how hard things really are that enables us to actually take the first step down the road of a tough journey. I do this all the time when I pick hikes. And while I might curse myself 75% of the way through, usually I'm ok with my choice once I've finished.

So, for those of you who might be cursing yourselves for having embarked on a transportation project that seemed easy or small at first, or who are looking for some low-hanging fruit to pick in your operations, reach out to your account manager or service level manager and see if we can help! As people who work every day with complicated situations, it can be really hard to see things objectively and to identify those easy things (they may seem so easy so as to be insignificant) or to untangle why some project just got so snarled up. Sometimes you need an outside perspective, or somebody who brings different skills and experience to the table. Sometimes you just need a conversation. No matter what you need, let us be a part of your team!

Athena version release notes are available to clients who want them. Please reach out to your Account Manager if you would like a copy.





Word Search

W B S R G S I T D K Q V Y G P
 G H P P A E G R F Q Q C Z Z B
 A P R S W F F A K Y F Y U S M
 I J I A F F T D L R X B Z A U
 G D N X B I S E C T M E Z F F
 L T G J T C E S C E O R M E F
 W L P E W I R H J D H S A T I
 Y B U E H E V O T U E E T Y N
 M J P T E N I W A L G C H E S
 A B S M E C C N B O N U E J N
 K W U D L Y E S L G X R N I A
 E H E S S W S J E G A I A K K
 L R D U T I J K T E M T R T M
 H H S O O C M B S R H Y Y I X
 O S X S W H Y N G C E C M M Q

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