

ACTION!



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In honor of all the beautiful days we've been having recently, this April return the favor and do something wonderful for the environment.

If you don't already recycle, **START!** For most residences, recycling is free and very easy. See our helpful tips for recycling on page 2. If you can't recycle, try reducing your waste by buying products with compostable packaging, eliminating any residual waste. Don't forget, Thursday, April 22nd is Earth Day. See <http://www.epa.gov/earthday> for tips and information on how you can protect the environment and celebrate earth day in your community!

Stephen Johnson
President
Advanced Concepts Training Corp.



Social Networking and Your Business: Getting Started

In our last issue, we touched on joining social networks and building your company's profile in an effective manner. While setting up your profile is a great step in the right direction, simply having a page/profile is not enough to truly get the most out of what social networks can do for your business.

Tempting as it may be, do NOT start "spamming"-- asking people you do not know to be "friends" with or a "fan" of your business. People can and will notify administrators of these actions, which can get you kicked off of the network. The ideal way to begin building a friend/fan base is through your friends. Ask your family, neighbors, friends and colleagues to add your business as a "friend" or to become a "fan" of your business.

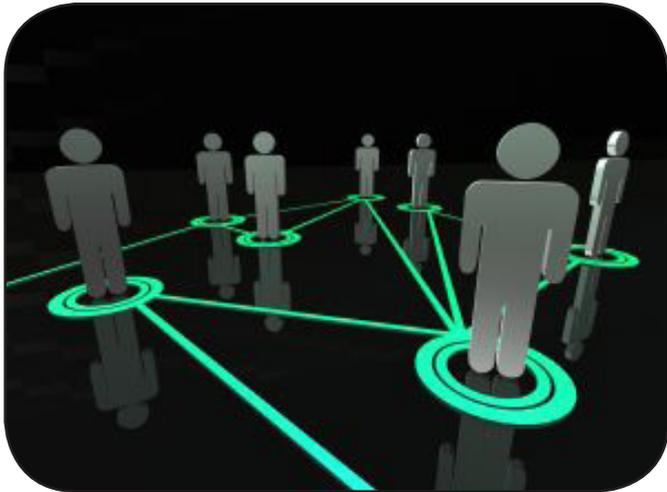
Is there a group/organization for local businesses in your area? Join up with them and get your name out among the established businesses in your community (i.e. look into local merchant's associations, Chamber of Commerce, etc.). Odds are, some businesses that don't know about your company could use your services/products. Simply joining one of these groups increases your potential customer base! Look into those local businesses as potential vendors as well. If you send business their way, they're likely to feel more inclined to return the favor.

Conversely, it's also beneficial to look up your competitors (local and otherwise) and see what they've done with their page. Spend at least 10 minutes looking at each company's page or profile. What did they post pictures/videos of? How do they engage their clients? What image are they portraying? How many "fans" do they have? How active are those fans when it comes to said company's page? What do they do to keep those friends/fans? Compare the profiles of those with few fans and those with many. What is it about the more popular profile that would work for your business?

(continued on Page 2)

Social Networking: Continued from pg.1

Gather some ideas and do some brainstorming; just don't be a clone of your competitors. The name of the game with social networks for business use is *Interactivity*. This is especially the case for your individual or consumer fans (as opposed to your company's business/vendor fans). Unlike with a website, you cannot simply set up your profile and walk away (although, doing so with a website isn't the best practice either). Social networking requires time and input. If you, personally, do not have the time to



dedicate to keep up with the site, get your employees involved! Let them give input on what they can offer your customers outside the realm of their typical duties.

What are the specialties of your company/employees? Give them the opportunity to offer your fans and friends information they can use by:

- Posting how-to videos.
- Blogging about troubleshooting for common problems.
- Uploading pictures of your company and its employees doing what they do best!
- Offering special discounts and/or coupons to all friends/fans (be sure to highlight this on your page).
- Hosting contests.
- Posting links to events your company is participating in and invite your friends/fans.

If you aren't sure as to what you should post, you can always ask your fans directly. Part of the beauty of social networking is that it allows you to ascertain the interests of your customer base (sometimes instantaneously), giving deeper insight as to where your company should be heading and what it should be

doing to pull in and hold on to more customers.

Once you've started to expand your customer base, thanks to all of your hard work through social networking, it's time to think about your next move. In next month's issue, we will discuss the middle ground between starting a business and necessitating a new hire.

Looking Forward: Virtual/Resident Office Options vs. Leased/Purchased Space



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MAKE YOUR WORLD A LITTLE GREENER

-CONSERVE ENERGY!

- Be sure to turn off all lights, appliances, electronics and power strips when not needed.
- Unplug your phone charger when not in use (the outlet still supplies the charger with power when your phone is not attached).
- Use compact fluorescent bulbs instead of your usual kind. If you don't like the fluorescent bulbs, go with a dimmer, lower wattage bulb than what you currently use.

-CREATE LESS TRASH/WASTE!

- When going shopping, bring your own reusable bags to the store. If you must use grocery store bags (plastic or paper), be sure to recycle them, rather than throw them away.
- Go paperless! Remove your name from junk-mailing lists and have your bills sent to you via email.
- Start your own compost pile in your backyard or on your rooftop (if able).

-SAVE WATER!

- Turn the water off when not in direct use (i.e. when brushing your teeth or shaving, turn the water off while actually brushing and shaving).
- Install low-flow showerheads and low-flow faucets in the sink (& even a low-flow toilet).

Oracle Instructor's Corner!

By Terry W. Stough, ACT's Senior Oracle Instructor

In our last article, we took the preliminary steps to be able to gain access to directory information so that we could manipulate files without knowing their names in advance. We reviewed specifically how to grant access to the package and view needed and created a directory alias for use with the UTL_FILE package. We also created a collection, called a nested table that could be used to pass up to two billion filenames and paths.

In this article, we will look at the stored procedure we used to do that and explain how it works. We will then talk about how to use it.

First, let's look at the code for the stored procedure and then discuss exactly what it does:

```
CREATE OR REPLACE PROCEDURE
DirList
```

```
(p_DLT IN OUT DirListType,
 p_Dir VARCHAR2) IS
 NS VARCHAR2(1024);
 Target VARCHAR2(1024) := p_Dir;
BEGIN
SYS.DBMS_BACKUP_RESTORE.
SearchFiles(
Target, NS);
SELECT FNAME_KRBMSFT
BULK COLLECT INTO p_DLT
FROM SYS.DirListing;
END;
/
```

That is a relatively short procedure. However, if you are not familiar with PL/SQL, maybe a little explanation would be in order:

* DirList will be the name of the stored procedure.

* The first line of the command says to CREATE the procedure if it does not exist or REPLACE it with our new copy if it does exist. This eliminates the need to drop the procedure each time we want to revise it.

* The p_DLT parameter is an IN OUT parameter meaning that it takes a value and returns a value to the calling environment.

* The type of this parameter is DirListType, the nested table we created in the last article.

* The p_Dir parameter will be the directory for which we want the listing.

*In the main body of the procedure we

call the SearchFiles procedure of DBMS_BACKUP_RESTORE. You may notice that we preceded this package name with "SYS." This was required because unlike most Oracle supplied packages, this one does not have a synonym. Since it is owned by SYS, we have to explicitly say that or we will get an error.

As we mentioned last week, the result of running SearchFiles is to place the directory information into an X\$ table which can be read through the view we created called DirListing.

We then do a BULK COLLECT to place all of the file paths into our p_DLT parameter. Since this parameter is IN OUT, whatever actual parameter was used in calling this procedure will be populated with the file paths obtained by this procedure.

Rather than go through all the detail of how to write a global search and replace procedure, let's look at the code to do a simple directory listing to show that the procedure works. Then, if you would like a more full blown example, let me know and I can send it to you.

Here is a simple anonymous procedure that would give us a directory listing:

```
DECLARE
 DLT DirListType;
BEGIN
 DirList(DLT,'C:\Temp');
FOR i IN 1..DLT.COUNT LOOP
 DBMS_OUTPUT.PUT_LINE(DLT(i));
END LOOP;
END;
/
```

Here, we declare a variable of the type created earlier. Then we run the DirList procedure supplying it with the nested table parameter and the path of the directory we want to explore.

Then we use a FOR LOOP and step through all the elements in the nested table, printing them to the screen. If we wanted just the file names without the paths, we would create a variable like "Target" to hold the target directory and then call DBMS_OUTPUT as follows:

```
DBMS_OUTPUT.PUT_LINE(SUBSTR(
 DLT(i),LENGTH(Target) + 2));
```

I look forward to seeing you in a class soon so that we can explore the wonders of Oracle together!

FUN RANDOM FACTS

The most common street name in the United States is "Second" (as in 2nd street).

The average honey bee will only make one twelfth of a teaspoon of honey in its entire lifetime.

If a month begins on a Sunday, it will have a Friday the 13th.

New York is home to the world's largest mass transit system. The New York City Subway consists of 468 stations and 842 miles of track.

The "black box" found in planes and helicopters is actually bright orange, so as to be easily spotted. Contrary to popular theory, it was not named for its creator (whose name is Warren, not Black), but was supposedly coined by a journalist at a press conference.



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