Tabush Group

What Being an EMT Taught Me about Running an IT Business

*By **Morris Tabush**, Founder and President*

In 1999 I became a NY state certified EMT and was a member of various volunteer EMS squads from 2000 to 2016, responding to hundreds of emergency calls, no two ever alike. At the same time I was spending my days (and many nights) starting and growing Tabush Group, the managed IT and cloud services business that I continue to focus on to this day. One of my passions was providing medical treatment and transport to patients in need, and the other was supporting the IT (and later on, cloud) needs of businesses in the New York metro area. The two were completely unrelated entities – or so I thought.

As I look back on my EMS experiences, I realize that aside from helping people in time of need, my original reason for becoming an EMT, there were so many lessons that helped me in building my company.

PROCESS AND SYSTEMS

In the EMS world there are formal processes. A dispatcher receives a phone call, asks specific questions to assess the situation, and dispatches EMTs (and sometimes paramedics) to the scene. Upon arrival, further assessments are made, treatments administered, and information documented. Then, the patient is transported to the nearest hospital. While this is a very high–level overview and different situations, such as a patient in cardiac arrest, dictate variations in the process, the structured process ensures that things are done properly and nothing is overlooked.

HIGHLIGHTS

At Tabush Group we've developed processes and systems for dealing with everything from network operations, to support tickets, to projects, to procurement. These processes are constantly evolving and help ensure that we act in a consistent manner and do not accidentally omit critical steps or details.

CONTROL

I'll never forget how nervous I was at my first EMS call. It was a Friday night around 9:00 PM and the patient was a woman in her 40s complaining about pain in her arm and shoulder. My knees were shaking the entire time as I kept repeating in my head the steps for assessing a trauma situation. Fortunately, the other responders were much more seasoned than me and they remained calm and cool while the patient was treated and I stood by and observed. As the years went on, I learned that when someone calls 911, regardless of the actual medical urgency of the situation, to the patient, it is a true emergency. It's up to the professional responders to remain calm and deliver the proper care.

While Tabush Group's helpdesk does not get calls for head trauma, chest pains, or car accidents, often our callers are in a panic over their inability to work or access their systems – that's the nature of our business. By being professional, caring, and maintaining control, we are able to properly assess a client's situation and ensure it gets the appropriate care and support needed to resolve it.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing education is required for EMTs to ensure we not only remember the basics, such as how many compressions to do in between CPR breaths or the things we may rarely need to do, such as applying a traction splint in the event of a femur fracture, but also to keep us up-to-date on the latest protocols, standards, and laws. For example, when I first started practicing, EMTs in NY were not allowed to administer NARCAN to drug overdose patients, but several years later the laws were changed and we had to be trained in proper administration protocols. Aside from actual medical education, we also took courses to help develop other necessary skills, such as CEVO (Certified Emergency Vehicle Operator) to teach us how to drive an emergency vehicle with lights and sirens.

Similarly, we've incorporated professional development at Tabush Group and see great benefits from it. New employees go through six weeks of onboarding where we teach our methods, checklists, quality standards, and all of the little things that set us apart. New hires are paired with seasoned team members to become familiar with our clients' history, needs, and ways of handling certain situations. At the same time, we learn from new team members as well. Often times they bring different experiences or methods that we're able to utilize to improve ourselves, our methods, and our solutions.

Routine professional development is also a part of life at Tabush Group: everything from training on new products and technologies that our team will be working with, to better ways to utilize our systems and tools, to customer service and communication skills, to open forums where everyone can present ideas and suggestions. The right people on any team are critical, but even the best athletes need coaches and training to stay at the top of their game.

LEADERSHIP AND PURPOSE

One thing that is conspicuously missing in the volunteer world is pay. Among the dozens of volunteers who I served alongside with over the years, I've seen such passion, initiative, and care – all from people who would never see a financial reward for their efforts. Through this I came to realize that volunteers are driven by shared vision and purpose and are further motivated by effective leadership.

In business, all too often everything becomes about money. In fact, in many organizations it's the only thing keeping people coming back every day. I was determined not to let that be the case at Tabush Group: it had to be about much more than just the paycheck. Realizing that I had to not only lead, but I had to enlist others to lead alongside me. Together, we would build a culture of shared values and purpose, and through that, ensure we have the right team on board. This brought about a tremendous change in our organization, and to this day, we constantly remind ourselves that our team is here voluntarily and that we have to treat them as such, making sure to maintain a work environment that everyone wants to be a part of, achieve, and grow.

When I signed up for my first EMT training course in 1999, I had visions of responding to emergencies, treating patients, and helping my community. Never did I realize how much everything I was involved in was actually doing for my own personal and professional development. A little over a year ago, as the EMS organization I was most recently a member of continued to grow, I made the decision to focus my community service on other causes. Through these other organizations, I continue to learn valuable lessons and hope to further use them to develop myself both personally and professionally. Every time I see an ambulance pass by with its sirens wailing, I can't help but smile, knowing that it's going to help not only the patient, but the first first responders as well.
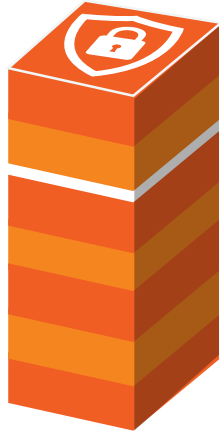
2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

TabushGroup

Innovative business leaders trust Tabush Group to meet their private cloud and managed IT needs.

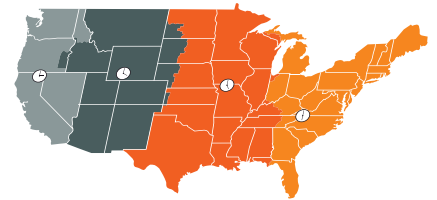**102 TB**
DATA PROTECTED
in our private cloud

3–MINUTE AVERAGE
response time to mission critical emergencies

7 LAYERS
in our managed security stack with 2 new layers added in 2017

98% REDUCTION IN MALWARE
infections since 2012

CLIENTS IN EVERY U.S. REGION
and time zone

BOXTOP

Boxtop moves a company's PCs to the cloud, simplifying its IT, so business owners and managers can focus on what matters.

100%
ultra fast SSD storage

30%
fewer support tickets *vs.* traditional managed IT

MIN   MAX

100%
UPTIME IN 2017
*99.99% uptime since launch

203%
YOY GROWTH

INDUSTRY AWARDS

THE CHANNEL CO. CRN MSP 500
2017

THE CHANNEL CO. CRN TECH ELITE 250
2017

TL NewsWire™
Top 25 Products

A LOOK AHEAD: THE CLOUD IN 2018

By Darragh Fitzpatrick, EVP and Partner

It's three years after 2015 – the year Marty McFly rode the hoverboard in *Back to the Future Part II* and yet we still have not seen one come to fruition. Many tech trends are being discussed for 2018, but what are the key trends that will impact small to midsize businesses?

IT INSURANCES, IT FATIGUE, AND CLOUD

IT is becoming more complex, yet essential, in the day-to-day operations of small to midsize businesses. An increasing investment of time, money, and resources is needed to ensure that systems are accessible by staff, as well as to protect the business, clients, and enhance overall productivity. This has led to what I refer to as an increase in both IT insurances and IT fatigue.

Regardless of the business size, the threat of service interruption due to a system crash, loss of data, or a natural disaster is something that keeps executives up at night. Preparing for these circumstances requires an investment in IT insurances, such as disaster recovery and business continuity platforms, which have become an expensive necessity. The resources that a decision maker has to invest in IT, even for a small firm, is much more than it used to be due to the increasingly complex and integral nature of IT.

Many of these decisions are repetitive, which leads to IT fatigue. A lot of time and investment are put into things like security, backup, business continuity, and hardware upgrades. Many business owners are realizing that the cloud makes IT simpler and addresses the need for these insurances inherently, and thus, reduces the time and decisions they have to make about IT. Just like Oliver Twist, "MORE" is what everyone will be asking for when it comes to the cloud in 2018!

COMPLIANCE, PRIVACY, AND CLOUD

Until recently, many businesses avoided leveraging the cloud. Among the reasons why: compliance and privacy. As more line of business application providers (an application built for a specific industry, such as a case management platform for a law firm or a project management application for a construction company) turn to the cloud to deliver a better version of their application, it is becoming more evident that the cloud enhances the ability to meet compliance requirements and ensure the privacy of data. With more firms leveraging the cloud, many expect businesses they work with to do the same. In the legal, real estate, and construction industries, we see a lot of firms looking to leverage the cloud due to the demand of their clients and business partners. This is something that will continue to occur – and in an increasing manner – in the year ahead.

CYBER SECURITY AND THE CLOUD

Cyber security is still the primary concern of businesses and will continue to be, especially in industries where client data is stored, accessed, and distributed. The increasing interest in security is fueled by the many high profile breaches that occurred more frequently and with greater impact in 2017 than ever before. Unfortunately, this is likely to continue in 2018.

Are these breaches relevant to my business? Are my business and my client's interests protected from an IT security standpoint? What more should I be doing? These are typical questions I am asked by business owners. For many, the thought of leveraging the cloud is innately linked to their security fears. Moving to the cloud means outsourcing some or all of their IT security, which can be a scary thought if an IT partner is not readily available to provide information or answer questions. The understanding that outsourcing security to the cloud is a positive thing – as it is something best managed by experts in a more controlled cloud environment – is a process that is addressed through engagement with the right IT partner

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PARTNER

Not all solutions and vendors are the same quality and performance, and therefore, not all cloud services and service providers will elevate your business from an IT standpoint. No doubt, the better IT partners and cloud service providers will continue to rise to the top in 2018. At Tabush Group, we see ourselves as part of this elite group. Selecting the right partner to educate you, navigate your business to the cloud, and ultimately support your business is the most critical step one makes with regards IT.

RANSOMWARE

The most relevant type of security breach for an SMB is a ransomware attack. These attacks were more frequent in 2017 and became more costly due to the rise in the value of Bitcoin, the cryptocurrency used to pay the ransom. Unfortunately, ransomware attacks will continue to rise. The question is how the aftermath will evolve as newer iterations of ransomware appear. Will it cause more damage rather than only encrypt? Will it take your information from your network or identify what information is more valuable and take that?

The good news is that the security tools to protect a business's systems and data are improving at a rapid rate specifically regarding how malware is detected. Currently, a centralized platform updates the security tool running on your desktop/servers/network with the identity of known malware and then scans for this know malware and quarantines it if found. Increasingly, security tools will scan for malware and recognize it simply by detecting abnormal or malicious behavior. This will equate to more intelligent and effective protection.

BROADBAND AND WIRELESS

Internet speed, quality, and availability are essential for business operations. Investment and growth in broadband will continue; however, a more significant change is the rise of 5G mobile networks that will increase the speed and performance of cloud services to the devices in our pockets, further enhancing the mobility and flexibility cloud provides.

DAAS

Having launched our own cloud service in 2016, Boxtop, we obviously believe that DaaS (desktop as a service) has many efficiencies to offer. DaaS allows a business to fully leverage all of the advantages a cloud service can provide, further enhanced by the ability to access your Windows PC, its files,

and applications from any device and from any location. Forget cumbersome remote access back to your office. DaaS provides seamless access to all systems all the time from the cloud. We experienced 300% growth of our Boxtop service in 2017 and expect even stronger growth in 2018.

OTHER TRENDS

You will likely hear about other trends such the evolution of the Internet of Everything (IoE), the continued advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data, the rise of blockchain, and the increased use of both augmented and virtual realities (AR/VR). While these emerging technologies may not revolutionize IT directly for SMBs in 2018, they are certainly technologies to watch, as they will affect the technologies we interact with.

Every year, improvement is our starting point. We look to continue to advance in our service and support, our management and security, our private cloud, Boxtop, and most importantly, our team who excels every day to ensure IT service delivery to all companies we partner with is of the highest quality.

RUNNING TABUSH GROUP'S DATA CENTERS

*By **Mahmut Sarigedik**, Chief Technology Officer*

If you ask me what a data center is, I would say it is complexity, which brings simplicity. Almost 10 years ago I was tasked with setting up our first data center. At the time, I knew little about how to start so I began researching. Today, I feel like the data center is my second home. Every time I visit one of our three data centers I am faced with new challenges and also learn something new. I enjoy looking at what we've built over the years and feel a sense of gratification, knowing that all of our systems are working are working without any disruptions.

WHAT IS A DATA CENTER?

A data center is a facility that contains many computer servers for business-critical applications and information. But a data center is more than that. It is a repository of uninterrupted power that houses computing facilities, like servers, routers, switches, and firewalls, as well as supporting components, including backup equipment, fire suppression facilities, and environmental controls for temperature and humidity. The importance of a data center lies in the how it is designed, how it is secured, and how it is connected: infrastructure, reliability, and overall service, including security, uptime, support, capacity, and redundancy.

TABUSH GROUP'S DATA CENTER

Our cloud services are not simply a one-size-fits-all model. Rather, we take the time to learn about our clients' business models and their needs, and only then do we make an action plan. There are thousands of services and functions that can run out of a data center, but what matters is providing our clients what they need to function in the most optimal way.

CONNECTIVITY

Before anything can be put in a data center, there must be connectivity. At Tabush Group, we have redundant high-speed internet connectivity, configured to best serve our clients.

CUSTOMIZED

When it comes to XaaS, such as SaaS (software-as-a-service), IaaS (infrastructure as a service), or DaaS (desktop as a service), you are likely familiar with some of the leaders. Amazon Web Services (AWS), Dropbox, and Microsoft Office 365, to name a few, offer clients specific solutions. In contrast, at Tabush Group we align with our clients, eliminate the superfluous, and provide a package with security, redundancy, full connectivity, high availability, and quality service.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

We care about our client's business continuity – the ability to operate during and after serious incidents or natural disasters. One of the key benefits of utilizing cloud services is the inherent business continuity plan it provides from the high security, redundancy, and near 100% uptime.

MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE

System maintenance is as important as building a proper cluster in your data center. Electronic parts will break or fail at some point. Malfunctions could take hours to resolve. Our monitoring systems, which we continually tweak, provides warnings before any failure. Every single node in our private cloud is kept up to date and monitored 24/7/365.

When I am at the data center, I am the tech, the engineer, and the boss. I assembled the complex technologies that make our clients' lives and work easier and more secure, ultimately simplifying their IT.

IT TRENDS IN REVIEW

By *Eli Sabo, Partner*

The U.S. saw its fair share of natural disasters in 2017. From Hurricanes Irma and Harvey that ravaged the south to the wildfires in California, Washington, and Oregon that affected the west and the north, the damage extended to businesses and often hampered their ability to operate in the aftermath. In addition to the natural disasters, we have seen an increase in the frequency and efficacy of ransomware attacks, which can similarly bring a firm's operations to a screeching halt.

Over the last few years, but particularly in 2017, I have seen a trend with clients whose IT we manage. *Between natural disasters, ransomware attacks, and day-to-day business disruptions, business continuity planning, and disaster recovery solutions are becoming more integral to business operations.* Whereas firms previously looked at offsite backup and disaster recovery as a value–add proposition, it is now becoming a necessity for firms both small and large.

Fortunately, there are many ways to mitigate some of the risks in a way that allows them to continue operations in the event of a business disruption. Below are three ways I have been able to help clients to be prepared:

EMAIL AS A SERVICE (EaaS)

For most companies, email is the lifeblood of their operations. If email stops flowing, businesses are not able to communicate and transact.

After both Superstorm Sandy (2012) and Hurricane Irene (2011), we saw an increase in interest to move client email servers out of the offices and into data centers. For many firms, however, this was cost prohibitive and so email servers stayed onsite.

Today, Microsoft's Office 365 platform is making offsite email accessible to companies, regardless of their size or budget. By moving email to Microsoft's cloud, companies can leverage Microsoft's infrastructure where disaster recovery and business continuity is inherent in the platform because it is hosted out of multiple data centers and locations. This also means that as long you have a connection to the Internet, you have access to your email.

DESKTOP AS A SERVICE (DaaS)

Email is only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to business continuity and disaster recovery planning. Many of our clients move all their applications, data, and desktops to offsite hosted systems. By centralizing a company's IT infrastructure in a data center, there is business continuity and disaster recovery inherent in the solution.

DaaS eliminates all the servers and desktops from the client premise and moves it to secure data centers. Because client systems and data reside in these secure and redundant data centers, as long as users have an internet connection, they can access their desktops. Be it at the office, home, or a Starbucks around the corner, the experience to the user is always the same.

DISASTER RECOVERY AS A SERVICE (DRaaS)

Although leveraging cloud technologies has become increasingly more popular and manageable, some companies choose to maintain their servers in–house. For these companies, onsite and offsite data backup, as well as business continuity and disaster recovery is key.

In the past, backup, business continuity, and disaster recovery solutions were expensive, clunky, and too burdensome for smaller firms to implement and manage, though this has started to change. Companies, such as Datto, offer a holistic solution that combines backup, disaster recovery, and business continuity onto a single platform. Besides the traditional onsite and offsite data backup that Datto performs, their solution allows firms to run their servers either onsite or offsite in the cloud in the event of critical infrastructure failure or disaster without any additional hardware or software.

While these are only three of the IT trends that we are seeing as they relate to business continuity and disaster recovery – and they are certainly not one size fits all – they are indicative of an overall trend in IT that has emerged over the last few years: making enterprise–level technologies and services that were previously costly and impractical for many companies available to all in a cost–effective and manageable manner.

MEET OUR TEAM

Our team is made up of dedicated and passionate individuals with diverse skill sets, let by technology professionals who always ensure we deliver the best possible service to our clients. In 2017, we welcomed seven new employees to our team.

tabush.com/team

❯ Tabush Group

Innovative business leaders trust Tabush Group to meet their virtual workspace, managed IT services, and private cloud needs. For more than 17 years, small and midsize companies have been able to shift their focus from IT infrastructure to growing their business by entrusting Tabush Group with all their IT requirements. Our mission is to help organizations succeed through our passion and experience. Founded in 2000, Tabush Group is a privately held company headquartered in New York City.

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