

Three Things Every Computer Savvy Independent Consultant Must Know

As an independent consultant you must be constantly concerned about personal development and continuous growth. If you aren't you will be passed by those who are. In this mission, the personal computer remains an essential tool in the independent consultant's toolbox. If you were actively working in this occupation during the 70's and 80's, you realize how arduous it was in maintaining contacts with your clients, preparing individual proposals, letters, and articles as well carrying out other related activities. The effective use of technology has made your work a lot easier and allowed you to become more productive. However, if you are new to this occupation, be thankful that you didn't have to experience that state of affairs.

In becoming more productive, three things are essential in using your personal computer: learn to use the keyboard effectively and cease being a slave to the mouse; learn to keep your computer fast and clean, and therefore minimize the possibility of instability and crashes; and learn shortcuts for your commonly used programs and operating system.

For your operating system, here are three keyboard shortcuts for the Windows key:

Winkey + F - To search for a file

Winkey + R - To open the Run window

Winkey + E - To open the computer

Keeping your computer fast and clean is also a necessity. Here are five strategies for doing so:

Uninstall Unneeded Software. RevoUninstall is one of the best programs for doing so. I highly recommend it.

Declutter and organize your desktop. Set up an Icon labeled "Extra Icons" on your Desktop and sweep all your little used icons into it.

Reduce the number of Auto Starting Programs. Go to "Run" type in msconfig, go to Startup and uncheck all the program you don't want to be loaded during Startup.

Update your Programs regularly. Go to Control Panel. Look for Update and click to see what programs need to be updated.

Clean up your Registry. CCleaner is one of the best programs for cleaning up your registry and is another one I highly recommend.

Both RevoUninstall and CCleaner are free programs.

If you use Gmail (and if you don't, you should consider doing so), here are some Gmail shortcuts:

Shortcut Key, /, search - puts your cursor in the search box

Shortcut Key, g then c, - lets you go to "Contacts"

Shortcut Key, g then d, lets you go to "Drafts"

Shortcut Key, g then i, lets you go the "Inbox" or returns you to the "Inbox"

And finally, here are five tips for saving time when using Vista:

CTRL + ESC - Opens the Start menu

CTRL + Shift + ESC - Opens Windows Task Manager`.

ALT + TAB - Switch between open windows

ALT + SPACEBAR - Opens the shortcut menu for the active window.

These are just a few of the keyboard shortcuts and strategies that allow your computer to be friendlier and help you in your personal development and growth as an independent consultant. There are many more, but these are just a few of the ones I use regularly.

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