

## Say Goodbye to the Out-of-Office Notification?

It's almost summer, and vacation planning is on our minds. You are probably ready to create your regular "Out-of-Office" notification. But did you know this can be a tool used by bad actors to steal from your business and employees? Let's explore why never using the Out-of-Office notification again might save you money.

It is great to let your customers and vendors know you are out of town, but you could be letting the bad guys know you are gone too. Phishing attacks cost large companies more than \$15 million annually or more than \$1,500 an employee! So, let's setup a scenario and play out what could happen:

Sara is the president of Widgets, Inc., and she is headed on vacation. She diligently writes in her Out-of-Office reply: "Thank you for contacting me. I will be out of the office from June 1<sup>st</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> on vacation with limited access to phone and email. If you need something urgent, please contact Joe at [joe@widgets.com](mailto:joe@widgets.com). He is taking lead for me while I am gone. Thanks!"



The jig is up! Now the attacker knows everything – he even knows who to phish. The attacker does a little research and finds Widgets, Inc. uses Acme INC to source parts because the website lists their partners. Then the attacker buys a domain that looks very close to [acme-inc.com](http://acme-inc.com) like [acne-inc.com](http://acne-inc.com) and sends an email to Joe saying something like:

"Hey Joe, I tried reaching out to Sara. We have an immediate issue we need to solve. The last payment of \$5,000 never arrived, and I need that wired today or we have to stop the shipments. Please wire the money to #Routing Number# – #Account Number# today before the wire window closes at 2pm." Joe tries reaching out to Sara, but she's not available. So now Joe takes the lead and contacts their finance department immediately. He informs them to wire this money or production will have to halt. Finance wires the money, the bad guy sends a mule to the bank to pick up the money, and the bad guys put the funds in a different bank. The money is lost!

You may think this situation would never happen in small-town Iowa, but it happens every day to companies in your hometowns. We were called in to follow up and assist on a similar situation to a company in NW Iowa within the past 6 months. (All names have been changed to protect the innocent.)

How can you inform your customers and suppliers that you are out of the office? First, maybe don't do it. It's your vacation – enjoy it! If you tell someone when you will be back, expect to be bombarded the day you return to your office. When customers contact your office, other staff can share if you are out of the office. If it is imperative that emails be responded to, like in our scenario above, I would encourage Joe to check in on Sara's email a few times a day and reply to the people that need to be replied to or handle the issues himself.

If "Out-of-Office" notifications are required for your office, I would recommend making sure you have an AI Spam Filter in place. This can help weed out some of the bad actors with brand new domains sending emails to you. Contact ANP with any questions today!

## Why Does Rebooting Work?

You know the drill – the first question any technician asks you is if you “turned it off and back on again.” This isn’t just an excuse – there are several reasons why this a first step for troubleshooting most issues. There are 3 primary reasons why this works:

- 1) It allows the Central Processing Unit (CPU) to reallocate its resources:** Sometimes there is a program that doesn’t shut down correctly due to bad programming. It can be running in the background using up your CPU. When you restart, the operating system gets all the system resources again.
- 2) It clears RAM:** RAM is fast memory that the CPU uses to run the operating system and applications. Again, if a program is written poorly, it can cause a memory leak. This ends up with the system having less and less memory to use.
- 3) Heat:** High temperatures can damage electrical components. When the computer senses that it is getting too warm, it will send a signal to lower the voltage on the CPU/GPU and slow down the hard disk. Sometimes it will even shut the computer completely off without warning. If your computer fans are especially loud, there is a good chance it is overheating.

Smartphones, your home router, video game systems, and many other devices have a CPU and RAM; so, this fix works across the board for most electronics. If a reboot doesn’t fix the issue or it is a reoccurring problem, we at Advanced Network Professionals are happy to look into the issue for you.

### Professional Development:

Investing in your employees in today’s environment is a huge benefit to everyone. Technical training is one that gets overlooked frequently. Your employees are your first line of defense of your cyber security, so is Cyber Security Professional Development on your radar???

Software Pick:  
EMAIL

Email is the most critical application most companies use and rely upon every day. Using the Microsoft platform is a great solution for companies that need email for critical daily business. Microsoft servers are secure and are designed for business productivity. You can add additional content and spam filtering to have a complete & complex solution for your company. Contact the ANP team to find the right fit for you!



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