Taking the Stress Off Your Computer
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If you are like most business people today, you depend heavily on the efficient functioning of your desktop and/or laptop computer to get through your daily routine. As the saying goes, "technology is great….when it works."

The following are a few tips to help increase the operational capabilities of your computer and speed up its functions:

- **Check Your Available Hard Disk Space.** Windows and other powerful software packages can suck up your temporary files and slow down operational speed. Make sure that you have at least 200MD free. To check you current levels, go to Start, then My Computer. Check the *details* on the left side of the screen for your C:\ drive. You can also Right click C:\ Drive, and then Select Properties.

- **Remove Unwanted Shortcuts From Your Startup Folder**. Items that load automatically when you start you computer take up valuable memory and impair processing speed. To remove any shortcuts right click on the Start button, then select Open. Double click on the Programs folder, and then double click on the Startup folder. Select and delete any of the shortcuts you would like removed.

- **Remove Unused Programs.** Like shortcuts, some programs run automatically or in the background. These take up valuable Hard Drive space. To remove them, click Start, then Control Panel.

- **Select Add\Remove Programs.** Select any program you want to remove, and then click the Add\Remove button. Erase Temporary Internet Files and Cookies Regularly. These scraps of files or place holders can take up valuable space. To delete them, run Internet Explorer, select Tools, and then select Internet Options. Go to History and click on Clear History. Make sure that you have made a copy of all passwords for programs and websites before deleting your cookies since this is where those passwords are stored. If you do not have them written down, you may forget what they are when you have to log back in on a website.

- **Clear Your Recycle Bin Periodically.** Failing to empty the trash regularly ties up your working memory needlessly. Deleted programs and files sit in the Recycle Bin until you toss them. To accomplish this, Right click on Recycle Bin on your Desktop. Select Empty Recycle Bin and select OK.

- **Run Disk Defragmenter at Least Once a Week.** As you move around between programs and files, data can become scattered or fragmented on your hard Drive. This can slow down access time to your information when you need it. "Defragging" can consolidate data streams and enhance the operational speed of your computer. To Defrag your hard Drive select Start, then Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and Disk Defragmenter. Next select the drive that you want to consolidate; typically C Drive. You cannot use other programs while

defragmentation is occurring so it is best to do this last thing in the day before leaving the office and let it run. When you return, the process should be complete.

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