



OVER THE EDGE

The Ultimate April Fools' Day Prank

"It was the ultimate April Fools' Day prank but, more importantly, one of the best days of my life."

It was April 1, 22 years ago. The weather was overcast and my girlfriend (now wife) and I were heading out to the lake, which had some surrounding cliffs and a point where the rocks met the water. It was a great spot to sunbathe and even go swimming. Along the way to get to the point, there were even little cliff areas where you could jump off into the lake. It was the perfect place to spend an afternoon.

I had decided that day would be the day I was going to propose to the love of my life. I packed everything up I needed for this perfect day. I placed the beautiful ring I had picked out for her into a

cardboard box and a \$20 ring I bought at Walmart into the really nice box that came along with the real ring I purchased. I put both ring boxes out of sight in my sunglasses case and slid my sunglasses onto my face.

To get to the point, we had a little bit of a hike, roughly a mile, through a wooded area first. Being that it was a bit cloudy outside and we were in a tree-covered area, it was a bit dim and shady. With my sunglasses on, it was even more difficult to see, and I kept getting hit in the face by tree branches. A few times, my soon-to-be fiancée suggested that I take a moment to put my sunglasses away, and to cover my tracks, I kept making up excuses. After all, I did have a bunch of things in my hands and I assured her I'd be fine.

When we got to the point, we laid our towels down and began taking in the view, all while I was mustering up the courage. Once I felt ready, I got down on my knee, and with the beautiful nice box with the cheap Walmart ring, I proposed. She was so beautiful as she beamed with happiness and was excited and crying. I began to slide the cheap ring on her finger, and when I got to the knuckle, I stopped and said, "I can't do this," and took the ring off and chucked it into the lake. "April Fool!" I shouted.

"Oh, my God, my ring!" she exclaimed. "What did you do?!" I then got the real ring out and put it on her finger. It was the ultimate April Fools' Day prank but, more importantly, one of the best days of my life. Now, I joke that if anything ever happens to me, the new guy has some pretty big shoes to fill!

-Ben Golden



**APR
2022**

Go Green AND Get Noticed

3 WAYS YOUR COMPANY CAN STAND OUT IN 'GREEN NOISE'

Earth Day is a great opportunity to give your customers what they want: proof that your brand genuinely and authentically cares about your local economy and the planet.

Many companies promise to "go green," but these days, a simple recycling program just won't cut it. To win over eco-friendly prospects, you must continually prove that your business doesn't take a day on this planet for granted! Here are three ways to do just that.

1. Bring your whole team onboard.

To become a "green-thinking" business, you should start from within. It's not authentic to promote recycling or planting trees if your employees don't believe in it, too. Start by launching an internal incentive program with a different challenge each month (like recycling at home or driving less to reduce emissions), then reward the employees who recycle the most or carpool, bike, and walk to work. To really go the distance, consider volunteering at a cleanup or local conservation event together. This creates meaningful change and builds strong employee relationships.

2. Create a green task force.

Could you be doing more to protect the environment? The answer is probably yes, and you can start by developing a task force of employees dedicated to examining your business's processes and products. They can determine how to improve your systems to make them more sustainable and bring local experts to help!

Here's an idea to get your group started: Food waste has a tremendous impact on the environment. Approximately 38% of land on Earth is used to produce food, but about 32% of all food that is produced is wasted, according to Recycle Coach. That wasted food emits carbon dioxide in the landfill, but you can fight food waste in your employee kitchen by donating uneaten food to local pantries, creating a community garden, and investing in a compost system.

3. Take your efforts community-wide.

In today's business world, going green looks good! According to First Insight, 73% of Gen Z customers are willing to pay more for sustainable products, and other research has shown they and millennials want to work at/with green companies. You can leverage your new eco-image by engaging your local community, hosting events, and offering incentive programs.

Consider hosting a community Earth Day event like a 5K to raise funds for a local conservation group or planning an environmental lecture, trash cleanup, or sustainable farm-to-table dinner. To ensure this benefits your company as well as the planet, partner with other businesses, offer prizes that include your products and services, and/or make an offer to customers who attend the event to boost your retention. Beyond events, you could offer special promotions for customers who choose eco-friendly options like going paperless.

Once you have developed strong internal and external practices, don't be shy about the work you're doing. Promote it on social media, in your newsletter, and in conversations with your clients. Be proud of the work you do to protect our planet — you just might create a strong movement behind you.

What's the

THE IRS' ANTIQUATED COMPUTER SYSTEM

Millions of Americans waited months to get their economic impact payments, and delays are extremely likely for citizens to receive their 2021 tax returns. Employee shortages and the pandemic are likely to blame. However, a contributing problem lies in the age-old computer systems the IRS relies upon.

The IRS' Individual Master File holds decades of data belonging to approximately 1 billion taxpayers and is also responsible for dispersing federal tax refunds. It's pretty much an antique with a design that dates all the way back to the 1960s. The IRS' equipment is old enough to be a grandparent! Each year, the IRS collects roughly \$3.5 trillion in taxes. It's preposterous to rely upon such old technology to do this job!

It's reported that for the past 40 years, the IRS has attempted repeatedly to upgrade its system without any success. Plans have failed, been canceled, or never even launched. Budget cuts and staffing restrictions have thwarted the plans in the past, but the IRS is still determined to make necessary updates.

The IRS is currently working with Congress to modernize the computer system within the next few years. For now, we must sit tight, continue to file as soon as possible, and practice patience with an ancient, slow, and understaffed agency.

One-Pan Chicken Tacos

Inspired by TasteOfHome.com



This recipe from TikTok user @violet.cooks almost broke the internet — and you'll see why! The fried tortillas make it out-of-this-world delicious.

Holdup?

SYSTEM MAY BE PARTIALLY TO BLAME



INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb chicken breasts, sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tbsp garlic powder
- 2 tbsp cumin
- 2 tbsp chipotle powder
- Canola oil (for frying)
- Corn tortillas
- Grated cheddar cheese
- Pico de gallo and guacamole salsa (to taste)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the chicken pieces, garlic powder, cumin, and chipotle powder. Mix until the chicken is coated.
2. In a frying pan, heat the oil. When the oil is hot, add the chicken mixture. Cook on medium heat for 5–8 minutes.
3. Remove the chicken from the pan, and add the corn tortillas (avoid overlapping) so they soak up the juices. Flip the tortillas and repeat. Then, add chicken and grated cheddar to each tortilla and fold it over the filling — in the pan.
4. Cook the tacos for 3 minutes per side until the tortillas are crispy and the cheese is melted.
5. Top with pico and guacamole salsa, and serve!

April Win of the Month Offer in Compromise

CASE SNAPSHOT

Client: 1040 employee in over her head

Type of IRS Issue: 1040 complications

Tax Year in Question: 2012–2016

IRS Claimed Liability: \$135,736.43

Savings: \$130,168.43

In early 2020, a woman sought out our assistance with what she believed to be an IRS liability of approximately \$70,000 for some unfiled tax returns for tax years 2012–2015. As a 1040 employee, she unfortunately did not have enough withholdings taken from her paycheck and was late on filing. When she finally filed those returns, she faced a daunting tax liability, and she was in over her head — she needed our help.



After pulling her Transcript of Accounts, our investigation revealed that due to additional unfiled tax years, her liability was significantly larger than we had thought. We took time to do a fine-tooth comb review of her financial situation, reviewed her assets and income, and decided upon a plan of action. Since she had very little in assets and income and high expenses, we determined she was a candidate for an Offer in Compromise.

Once we gathered the financial information, we submitted a \$338 offer for the liability of \$135,736.43. Unfortunately, the IRS returned the offer based upon a technicality — they claimed our client still needed to submit the return for 2015. However, due to our excellent research skills, we were able to prove she was exempt from filing for the 2015 tax year. Thus, upon submitting the offer, the IRS came back with a counteroffer. They were willing to settle the \$135,736.43 debt for \$5,568! With almost 95% in savings, our client happily accepted the offer and is now free from her IRS debt (and careful to never allow herself to be in debt to the IRS again!)





IRS Trouble Solvers™

100 S. York Road, Suite 214

Elmhurst, IL 60126

www.IRSTroubleSolvers.com

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Not Just a Condiment

If you have a belly ache, one of the last things you're likely to reach for is the ketchup bottle. But did you know that ketchup was once utilized as a cure for indigestion?

In 1834, Dr. John Cook Bennett came up with a recipe for tomato ketchup that he advertised as a cure for indigestion, jaundice, diarrhea, and rheumatism, according to his research. The ketchup was even packed into pills and his research made its way into well-respected American newspapers. Before this, many Americans were under the impression that tomatoes were poisonous and avoided them like the plague. According to the Smithsonian magazine, in the 1700s, Europeans thought tomatoes were poisonous apples.

Entrepreneur Alexander Miles discovered Bennett's research and partnered with Bennett, calling the ketchup pill "extract of tomato." The craze over the ketchup pills grew, and many other entrepreneurs began creating their own versions of the "extract of tomato" pills. Some versions didn't contain any tomatoes at all and, instead, were filled with laxatives. Americans began believing these ketchup pills were the key to ultimate health.

KETCHUP ONCE CURED ALL

Scientists then began to look into Bennett's research claims, and just when wild claims surfaced that the pills could even cure scurvy, a disease caused by a deficiency in vitamin C, and broken bones, the claims were dispelled and the ketchup pill craze died down by 1850.

Modern research today shows that tomatoes contain the antioxidant lycopene, which is linked to reducing the risk of cancer and heart disease. They also are abundant sources of potassium, vitamin C, vitamin K, and folate. While Bennett's research was exponentially exaggerated, we can say it wasn't completely inaccurate.

Today, Heinz, the leader in the ketchup industry, sells 11 billion single-serve packets and over 650 million bottles annually.

So, would you like a ketchup pill with those fries?

