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According to an article posted in the April 3, 2011 (Fort Lauderdale, FL) *Sun Sentinel*, those hands-free faucets popular in restrooms all over are, based on research performed at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore (MD), "more likely to be contaminated with Legionella bacteria than the old-fashioned manual type" of faucet. When the hospital discovered this they replaced their electronic hands-free faucets with the more traditional manual models, and new clinical buildings due to open in 2012 will be fitted with traditional – not electronic - faucets.

The statistics comparing the two types of faucets are rather glaring: the noted bacteria were present in 50% of the electronic faucets but only 15% of the manual faucets. The researchers believe that the higher levels of bacteria in the electronic faucets were due to the fact that they have a more complicated valve system that is more difficult to clean and thus offers more places for bacteria to settle and grow.

Aside from the apparent increased health risk I often find these hands-free devices don't work and I'm forced to make contact with them to get them to activate or, as in the case of the towel dispensers, I go for the manual feed.

This reminds of a scene in the movie *Star Trek III – The Search For Spock*. Briefly, our heroes – minus Spock – are aboard the Enterprise preparing to hijack the ship to retrieve Spock's coffin from the Genesis planet that was created in the previous movie where Spock sacrificed his life so the Enterprise could escape destruction. (Sorry if I spoiled the movie ending for anyone.)

Aboard a damaged and soon-to-be decommissioned Enterprise, James Kirk signals his faithful and reassembled crew to leave space dock. They are warned by the captain of Starfleet's newest ship, the Excelsior, to stand down. Given the Excelsior's newer engines the Enterprise, especially in its current condition, would be like a tortoise to a hare in a race. As the Enterprise leaves under impulse power for the Genesis planet, the Excelsior follows in pursuit. The Enterprise then goes to warp but when the Excelsior matches the maneuver their engines shut down. The scene changes to the bridge of the Enterprise where Scotty – having sabotaged the Excelsior - removes a handful of parts from his pocket and says to Kirk: "The more they overthink the plumbing, the easier it is to stop up the drain."

Often I find my clients have overthought and sometimes overbought (or are about to) when it comes to technology and operational solutions to solve their problems, picking overly complicated options when simpler and more cost-effective choices are available. I reframe and dissect my clients' troubles and get to the root cause of the chaos by inserting myself in the thick of things. With a clearer understanding of the problem I can recommend the right fix which is often overall simpler than what they were considering. (Sometimes my clients have lots of technology but are not utilizing it to the fullest potential.) With an overly complicated solution it's difficult to realize the benefits, if there are any. More disruptions and greater inefficiency are likely to be the more visible effects. Deconstruction without critical disruption to the operations can be a considerable balancing act when trying to remove and replace something already implemented such as a heavily-modified legacy software system.

If you or a company you know of is suffering excessive costs and chaos maybe it's because there are too many pipes and the plumbing is backed up. If so and someone is needed to break up the blockage and allow a smoother flow of information, goods, documents, etc., let me know. My waders and plunger are standing by. :-)

Thanks.

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