

DIRECT

Hit



The **SUCCESS** Spotlight

NAME TO A GOOD LOOKING FACE: CHRIS GORDON

Chris Gordon is one of our star players at Midwest. He came on in April of 2016 along with the C.TRAC team and brought all of his data knowledge with him. Chris is always positive and willing to help anyone around Midwest. We're grateful to have this code "coach" on our team!

What do you officially do at Midwest?

I am responsible for a lot of fun data projects that range from database administration, building custom data warehouses for Midwest and external clients, application development, and data analysis. I'm involved with anything from turning data feeds from our sorters to actionable information, to building marketing automation for external clients. I also frequently work with Shane Willoughby on automating IT processes.

Editor's note: We wish you could see him in action. Chris loves diving into SQL files at his desk wearing his headphones, eyes flicking up and down between the biggest whiteboard we've ever seen and his screen. When someone shows up with a new problem to solve, he's been known to "hood slide" across his desk and draw out a solution on his whiteboard with a handful of colored markers. It literally brings a smile to his face to be presented with a new challenge.

How do you survive the cold winter months in Ohio? I patiently wait for spring and the baseball season to begin! I do help coach my son's baseball team so I'm up at the team indoor facility a couple of days a week during the winter working with the team. We are starting our sixth season together.

Editor's note: Chris is also the guy that usually starts the sports discussion in the data department as a fan of all Cleveland sports teams.

What would your dream vacation be?

Primitive camping somewhere super remote. I love getting off the grid and doing activities like hiking, exploring, fishing, and canoeing.

Tell us about your family. My family is everything. I have my wife Sharon, and my

two children Ryan (13) and Brenna (8). We live in Strongsville, OH.

Editor's note: Chris' wife, Sharon, is a master baker who loves to send her latest cake or cookie creations into the office with Chris. Just another reason why he's the most popular guy in the data services department.

What's your favorite movie? The Shawshank Redemption. This is my "Fight the good fight and good can triumph over evil" movie. Great film soundtrack too!

Tell us about your journey to join Midwest Direct. What did you do when you first started? What do you do now? I joined Midwest along with C.TRAC in April 2016 (Huge thanks again to everyone who worked behind the scenes to make that happen!!!) My role hasn't changed that much since I started here two years ago. My work revolves around new internal data and programming projects or projects our clients need help with – such as custom programming for data analysis. I get involved with projects when clients need access to data and reporting on a daily (or more frequent) basis. I make it easy for them to access custom reporting online.

Editor's note: Several times a day there is a "take-a-number" line at his door with staff members, from the lettershop to customer service seeking his help on a database issue or a client request. You know what happens next? See "What do you officially do at Midwest!"

Describe what a typical day is like for you at Midwest. LOL, I stare at a computer screen and drink too much caffeine. I also yell across the hallway to Gary Seitz. Most of what I do requires me to be working directly with databases, servers, text files, and web services. If I'm on the move, I'm probably heading over to discuss a project with Shane Willoughby or Sean Gebbie.

What changes have you seen in the company in your time here? What keeps you coming back? A lot of what I do is project based which creates new challenges all of the time. I love the work and the people that I get to work with on the projects.

Editor's note: Aw, shucks! We love working with you, too!

What is one recent success that you are proud of? The work I did with Stu Brown on a database engine to manage undocumented mail pieces (according to the USPS) is something I'm proud of. The project required a lot of hard work with very challenging business requirements rules with lots of different data feeds. I really feel like this engine provides our organization insight into a process that is probably a mystery for a lot of our competition.

Editor's note: It sure is, Chris! We're so grateful for the work you put into our One Pass Portal project. It's great!

What parts of your job do you find challenging? Project-based work provides a new and different type of challenge every time. I love it and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Editor's note: ... and that's our Chris – such a positive outlook that the word "challenging" makes him smile!



Team Treats



SWEETHEART CINNAMON ROLLS!

Everyone loves a good cinnamon roll so why not make them into the shape of a heart. We swear they taste even better shaped like hearts!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 package refrigerated pizza dough
- ½ cup cinnamon sugar (½ cup sugar, 2 Tbs cinnamon)
- Maple syrup (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

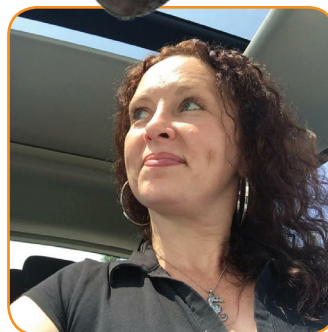
1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a nonstick baking mat.
2. Unroll pizza dough into a rectangle on a work surface. Sprinkle cinnamon sugar evenly across.
3. Using your fingertips, roll up the long edge halfway, and repeat on the second long edge. The two rolls should now be touching.
4. Using a sharp knife, cut the roll into 1-inch segments. Place them face-up on the baking sheet.
5. Bake 15-20 minutes until golden brown. Remove from oven. Serve and enjoy.

FUN FACTS:

GREAT THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES!

February is the shortest month of the year, but it is also the month of love. This proves that great things come in small packages including the things on this list.

- The Poison Dart Frog is the smallest and most poisonous frog in the world.
- The Channel Islands, north of France, houses Sark Prison which has room for two prisoners and was constructed in 1856.
- The world's smallest camera was created in 2011 in Germany and is as small as a coarse grain of salt, one cubic millimeter.
- The Paedocypris is the smallest know fish species ranging from 6.2-10.3 millimeters.
- The Peel 50 is known as the smallest car ever approved for street use and only weighs 150pounds.



Melinda's

MOTIVATIONAL MOMENT

Melinda wanted to share her thoughts on love through poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

"Love keeps the cold out better than a cloak"

Health & Safety Tip of the Month:

CHOCOLATE

Chocolate tastes great and can actually be good for you. Dark chocolate is loaded with nutrients that can positively affect your health (just don't over-do it!)

- Chocolate is believed to contain high levels of antioxidants.
- Some studies suggest chocolate could lower cholesterol levels and prevent memory decline.
- Small dark chocolate consumption has been shown to lower blood pressure of hypertensive diabetics and decrease blood sugar.
- It's full of fiber so dark chocolate can help keep you full so you eat less.
- Dark chocolate has antioxidants that can protect your skin from UV damage from the sun.
- It improves your mood.

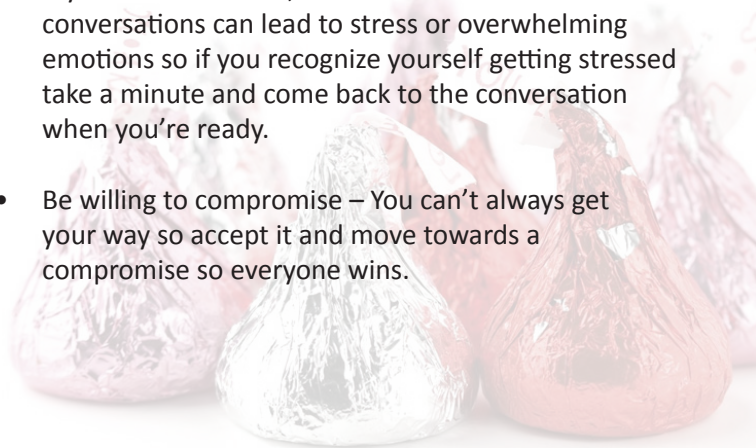


Communication Tip:

COMMUNICATION FIND YOUR SOULMATE

February is known as the month of love. The best way to find love is to know how to properly communicate with those around you. We put together some tips on how you can communicate effectively with anyone, including your potential soulmate.

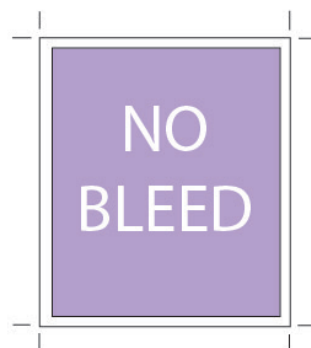
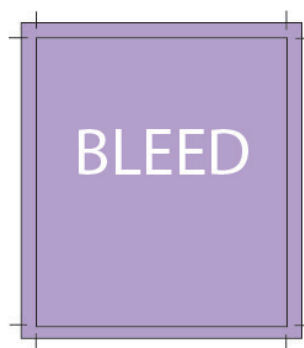
- Try to find the right time – If something is bothering you don't blurt it out in the middle of the next board meeting. Find a time when you are ready to talk about the topic in a calm way.
- Use active listening – Make sure you're not distracted when someone is talking to you. The better you listen the more constructive the conversation can be.
- Talk face to face – Avoid having a serious conversation over text message or email that can be misinterpreted.
- Check your body language – The way you hold yourself says a lot about you. When you're having a conversation with someone sit up, face them and make eye contact to show them you are paying attention.
- Provide feedback – Repeating back what someone said in your own words is a great way to make sure you are understanding them properly, "What I am hearing is..."
- If you need a minute, take a minute – serious conversations can lead to stress or overwhelming emotions so if you recognize yourself getting stressed take a minute and come back to the conversation when you're ready.
- Be willing to compromise – You can't always get your way so accept it and move towards a compromise so everyone wins.



Jack's Print Puzzles:

The Art of Bleeds

What does "bleed" mean? If you've seen an ad that has color extending to all edges of the sheet, you've seen a bleed. The printer will actually print beyond the dimensions of the paper, typically by 1/8", to ensure that the color "bleeds" to all edges of the sheet.



DIRECT Hit



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PRESORTED
STANDARD
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Inside This Edition...

Sweetheart Cinnamon Rolls!

Fun Facts!

Chocolate is good for you!



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and save!

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