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IT Times

Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier & More Profitably

Designed For Digital: How To Architect Your Business For Sustained Success

By Cynthia Beath, Jeanne Ross And Martin Mocker

Digital is the reality of businesses today. More businesses have embraced a “digital” way of thinking in order to adapt. *Designed For Digital: How To Architect Your Business For Sustained Success*, by Cynthia M. Beath, Jeanne W. Ross and Martin Mocker, is a guide to help businesses get their footing in the digital world and not get lost in all the noise. The authors discuss several major elements of success, including:

- Understanding changing customer trends in a digital context
- Using digital technologies to improve systems and processes
- Expanding offerings to customers through digital platforms

But in addition to that, they get into how businesses can use these elements. They lean on five years of research and case studies to bring it all together. It offers valuable insight for every business.



Your #1 Threat Of Being Hacked Is INSIDE Your Own Organization

April 2020

Small businesses are the biggest targets of hackers and cybercriminals. They are targeted because they are less likely to have strong – or any – security in place. But in so many cases, hackers don’t need to use malicious code or cracking skills to get what they want. Instead, they rely on your biggest vulnerability: your own employees.

The #1 threat to any business’s IT security is its employees. It all stems from a lack of training. Employees don’t know how to spot threats, or they don’t know not to click unverified links in their e-mails. Most of the time, these actions are simple mistakes – but mistakes aren’t excuses and can result in MAJOR costs to your business.

Here are three things you can do to turn your employees from your biggest IT threat to your biggest IT asset:

Establish Regular Cyber Security Training.

First and foremost, get *everyone* in your business trained up on IT security. Wesley Simpson, the chief operating officer of (ISC)², an international cyber security certification group, suggests thinking about IT education as “people patching.” Just as you continually update and patch your software and security, ongoing education serves to update, or patch, your employees. He says, “If you don’t get your people patched continually, you’re always going to have vulnerabilities.”



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Brian Bratchie, president of B&L PC Solutions, Inc.

Our Mission:

We take care of technology so you can take care of business.

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But don't put the training solely on your shoulders. Work closely with a company that specializes in IT security. Doing it yourself can be stressful and time-consuming. An experienced IT firm is going to come in with all the education and resources you need to successfully train everyone in your organization on cyberthreats targeting your business today.



It's all about utilizing systems you already have in place to keep your team informed and this important topic at the forefront.

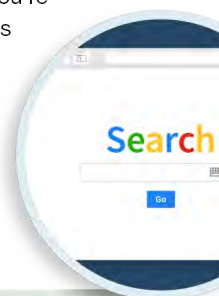
Emphasize Safe Internet Usage Habits.

This should supplement regular training. Employees should always know the best practices when it comes to using the Internet, e-mail or anything else that brings them in contact with the World Wide Web. Part of it involves keeping the lines of communication open. If an employee sees something out of the ordinary come into their inbox, encourage them to bring it to the team's attention – whether they're telling their direct supervisor, manager or you. The easier the communication between everyone on your team, the easier it is to identify and stop attacks.

The goal is to eliminate guesswork. If an employee isn't sure about an e-mail, they should be trained to ask questions and verify.

On top of that, you should have a policy in place that prevents employees from installing unverified software, which includes apps and app extensions (such as browser extensions), without permission. And one more thing – stress safe Internet usage habits not just in the workplace but at home as well. This is especially critical if your employees are bringing in their own devices. If that's the case, you should absolutely have a "bring your own device" (BYOD) security policy in place. It's just another wall between your business and potential threats.

How do you get all this started? Good question! It all starts with reaching out. If you're ready to lock down your business and you're serious about educating your employees and turning them into your best defense, we can help. The best IT security you've ever had is one phone call away.



"The #1 threat to any business's IT security is its employees."

Keep Cyber Security Top Of Mind.

While you may have training or educational sessions once a quarter or biannually (regular sessions are recommended), you still need to keep IT security in the minds of your employees on a weekly basis. During weekly meetings, for example, talk about a cyber security topic. Or, if you share news or links with your employees in a weekly, company-wide e-mail, for example, include a cyber security story or tips article.

Do You Safeguard Your Company's Data And Your Customers' Private Information BETTER THAN Equifax, Yahoo and Target Did?

If the answer is "NO" – and let's be honest, the answer *is* no – you are leaving yourself and your company open to massive liability, *millions* in fines and lost business, lawsuits, theft and so much more.

Why? Because you are a hacker's #1 target. They know you have access to financials, employee records, company data and all that juicy customer information – social security numbers, credit card numbers, birth dates, home addresses, emails, etc.

Don't kid yourself. Cybercriminals and hackers will stop at NOTHING to steal your credentials. And once they have your password(s), it's only a matter of time until they destroy your business, scare away your customers and ruin your professional and personal life.



Why Not Take 4 Seconds Now To Protect Yourself, Protect Your Company And Protect Your Customers?

Our 100% FREE and 100% confidential, exclusive CEO Dark Web Scan is your first line of defense. To receive your report in just 24 hours, visit the link below and provide us with your name and company email address. Hopefully it will be ALL CLEAR and you can breathe easy. If your company, your profits and your customers are AT RISK, we'll simply dig a little deeper to make sure you're protected.

Don't let this happen to you, your employees and your customers. Reserve your exclusive CEO Dark Web Scan *now!*

Get your free Dark Web Scan TODAY by calling 631-239-4120.

Cartoon Of The Month



SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH**NexOptic DoubleTake Binoculars**

Binocular technology has remained the same for a long time – and for good reason! It works well. But now, one company has decided to bring binocular optics into the 21st century and give it a technological makeover.

NexOptic's DoubleTake blends binoculars with common smartphone technology. With 10x digital zoom and a wide field lens, DoubleTake delivers outstanding 4K video and high-resolution photos. Plus, it's packed with a powerful imaging processor to ensure your videos and photos look fantastic every time, and its compact size makes it ideal for travel.

DoubleTake's battery provides three hours of continuous use, meaning it will last most people several days or more before the next charge. Images are saved to an onboard memory card and can be sent over WiFi to your phone or other device for easy sharing or personal use. Learn more at NexOptic.com/doubletake.



Anticipating Customer Needs

What is the best way to create a loyal customer base and, therefore, a more profitable business?

Anticipate Customer Needs.

Anticipating needs is the best way to let your customers know that their success is your priority. When you deliver something customers need without asking, you create a sense of ease and let them know you have their best interests in mind – it's a proverbial "I have your back."

The most effective way to anticipate the needs of your customers is to know them well. How else will you know what their expectations are?

You have to create a relationship with them to identify what their demands are and fulfill them before they even know what they wanted. So, how do you go about this? Here are just a few examples.

Establish A Relationship.

In most of my books, I have a call to action. I ask readers to e-mail me to make their commitment to improving their businesses. Developing this dialogue with readers is an act of accountability on both of our parts. Moreover, it is a big leap of faith for some, and I am honored they trust me. They tell me why they are committed, and I let them know I am here and interested in helping them succeed. My hope is that they feel less alone in their struggles as business owners and more motivated to make the necessary changes they need for a successful business.

Exceed Expectations.

The responses from readers when they receive e-mails or videos from me has been overwhelmingly positive. It seems that most



assume their e-mails will go into a black hole, never to be answered. Not only do I answer, but I also include a ton of resources that basically equal free coaching. There is an FAQ, links to my *Entrepreneurship Elevated* podcast, links to find a Profit First Professional and become a Profit First Professional, links to Clockwork resources, links to Pumpkin Plan resources ... You get my drift. And while it could be interpreted as marketing, anyone who knows me knows I am out to empower others and help their businesses become more profitable. I often get e-mails from readers who are pleasantly surprised – they are getting answers to questions before they even knew they had them. See? Anticipating needs!

Ask For Feedback.

I often request reviews of my books. Is this because I want to hear how great they are? No. I ask for reviews because I want honest feedback. How the heck else will I know what to write next? How will I know what problems need solving and what business solutions entrepreneurs are seeking if I don't ask? Getting reviews enables me to focus on the key areas where business owners are trying to improve.

Are Browser Extensions Safe?

Browser extensions let you customize your Internet experience. You can find extensions to help with productivity or block ads. But how do you know if an extension is safe or not? Thankfully, there are red flags you can look for. Here are two common examples.

Permission Pop-Ups

After downloading a new extension, you may see a pop-up asking to "access your browsing activity" or something similar. While most extensions don't have malicious intent (they aren't going to sell your data), others might. If you aren't comfortable with this, you can deny permission or uninstall the extension.

An Extension's Legitimacy

There are a lot of copycats out there – scummy developers use icons or names similar to popular extensions and hope people download them by mistake. Read all the details on the extension download page and verify that the developer (or "offered by") name is correct.



MIKE MICHALOWICZ (pronounced mi-KAL-o-wits) started his first business at the age of 24, moving his young family to the only safe place he could afford – a retirement building. With no experience, no contacts and no savings, he systematically bootstrapped a multimillion-dollar business. Then he did it again. And again. Now he is doing it for other entrepreneurs. Mike is the CEO of Provendus Group. He is also a former small-business columnist for The Wall Street Journal; MSNBC's business makeover expert; a keynote speaker on entrepreneurship; and the author of the cult classic book The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur. His newest book, The Pumpkin Plan, has already been called "the next E-Myth!" For more information, visit MikeMichalowicz.com.

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Ready To Transform Your Business With Technology? Follow These 5 Truths ...

Investing In Tech Is A Must. Investing in your own IT infrastructure is critical, but you get what you pay for. Go cheap, and you'll expect to buy again. Go quality, and you'll be more pleased with the results.

It's Not Easy. Shifting a business mindset from analog to digital is hard, especially if you've been doing things one way for a long time. When you prepare yourself and your team for a challenge, you'll be able to better meet that challenge.



It's Fast-Paced. Tech moves *fast*. You see buzzwords everywhere – “5G” or “blockchain” – and it can be confusing. You may feel pressure to keep up, but don't jump in without a plan. Do

research and make changes that truly apply to your business.

Cyber Security Is Essential. Stay up to date on security trends and solutions. Remember that cybercriminals target small businesses, but when you stay ahead of the curve on IT security, you stay ahead of the bad guys.

Leadership Is As Important As Ever. Technology is only as good as the people who use it. As you learn about new tech or invest in it for your business, make sure your team is learning too. Understand how your customers use technology and be willing to learn and adapt to them. *Inc.*, July. 30, 2019.

DO THESE 4 THINGS TO IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS

Read. There are always new things to learn or perspectives to gain. The top entrepreneurs in the world read every single

day. Read books, blogs, articles, anything – but always be reading.

Listen To Podcasts. Podcasts are more popular than ever, and there is a podcast for just about every topic. This is a great way to hear from industry leaders on issues that are affecting them and may be affecting you.

Continue Your Education. How can you improve yourself? Take a class or a seminar! Keep your skills and knowledge base sharp by incorporating continuing education into your yearly plans.

Be Open-Minded. Be willing to give and receive feedback and critique on how you work, manage or anything else you want to improve on. The more open-minded you are, the more comfortable your team will be in giving you feedback – and the better you will be at applying it. *Small Business Trends*, Dec. 30, 2019.