



IT Times

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



When was the first SMS text message sent?

- A. June 1984
- B. September 1989
- C. December 1992
- D. August 1998

Answer on Page 2



THE COMPLIANCE BLIND SPOT: What You're Missing Could Cost You Thousands

Many small-business owners operate under the misconception that regulatory compliance is a concern solely for large corporations. However, in 2025, this belief couldn't be further from the truth. With tightening regulations across various sectors, small businesses are increasingly in the crosshairs of compliance enforcement agencies.

Why Compliance Matters More Than Ever

Regulatory bodies like the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Payment Card Industry Security Standards Council (PCI SSC) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have intensified their focus on data protection and consumer privacy. Noncompliance isn't just a legal issue — it's a financial and reputational risk that can cripple small businesses.

Key Regulations Affecting Small Businesses

1. HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)

If your business handles protected health information (PHI), you're subject to HIPAA regulations. Recent updates emphasize:

- **Mandatory encryption** of electronic PHI.
- **Regular risk assessments** to identify vulnerabilities.
- **Employee training** on data privacy and security protocols.
- **Incident response plans** for potential data breaches.

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OUR MISSION:

We Take Care Of Technology,
So You Can Take Care Of Business.

... continued from Cover

Failure to comply can result in hefty fines. For instance, in 2024, the HHS imposed a \$1.5 million penalty on a small health care provider for inadequate data protection measures.

2. PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard)

Any business that processes credit card payments must adhere to PCI DSS requirements. Key mandates include:

- **Secure storage** of cardholder data.
- **Regular network monitoring** and testing.
- **Implementation of firewalls** and encryption protocols.
- **Access control measures** to restrict data access.

Sources say noncompliance can lead to fines ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000 per month, depending on the severity and duration of the violation.

3. FTC Safeguards Rule

Businesses that collect consumer financial information are required to:

- **Develop a written information security plan.**
- **Designate a qualified individual** to oversee security measures.
- **Conduct regular risk assessments.**
- **Implement multifactor authentication (MFA).**

Violations can result in penalties up to \$100,000 per incident for businesses and \$10,000 for responsible individuals. Scary, huh?

Real-World Consequences Of Noncompliance

This isn't just talk. Consider the case of a small medical practice that suffered a ransomware attack due to outdated security protocols. Not only did they face a \$250,000 fine from the HHS, but they also lost patient trust,



leading to a significant drop in clientele. You have to take responsibility for and control of your data!

Steps To Ensure Compliance

1. **Conduct Comprehensive Risk Assessments:** Regularly evaluate your systems to identify and address vulnerabilities.
2. **Implement Robust Security Measures:** Use encryption, firewalls and MFA to protect sensitive data.
3. **Train Employees:** Ensure your staff understands compliance requirements and best practices.
4. **Develop An Incident Response Plan:** Prepare for potential breaches with a clear action plan.
5. **Partner With Compliance Experts:** Engage professionals who can guide you through the complexities of regulatory requirements.

Don't Wait Until It's Too Late

Compliance isn't just a legal obligation — it's a critical component of your business's integrity and longevity. Ignoring these requirements can lead to devastating financial penalties and irreparable damage to your reputation.

Don't let a compliance blind spot jeopardize your success.

FREE REPORT DOWNLOAD

The Ultimate Guide To Choosing The Right VoIP Phone System

Read This Report To Discover:

- What VoIP is, how it works and why the phone company may force you to switch to a VoIP phone within the next 3-4 years.
- Four different ways to implement VoIP and why you should never use three of them for a business phone system.
- Hidden costs with certain VoIP systems that can negate any savings you might gain on your phone bill.
- Seven revealing questions to ask any VoIP salesperson to cut through the hype, half-truths and "little white lies" they'll tell you to make the sale.



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Answer: C. December 1992. The first SMS text message was sent on Dec. 3, 1992, by Neil Papworth, a 22-year-old engineer, to Richard Jarvis, a director at Vodafone. The message was "Merry Christmas."

CARTOON OF THE MONTH



JESSE COLE

On How To Create Raving Fans



Jesse Cole built the iconic Savannah Bananas brand from nothing by doing things differently. The key to his success was his “fans first” mindset, which centers on creating an incredible experience for each individual fan.

“[Fans] aren’t buying because of the product,” Cole explained. “They’re buying it because of how we make them feel. That’s the differentiator.”

Here are his takeaways for businesses who want to create raving fans, too.



Eliminate Friction

Put yourself in the customer’s shoes and eliminate the friction they experience. Just like Walt Disney used to walk around Disneyland every day to find things to improve, businesses should go through the sales and onboarding process to look for friction points — and reduce them whenever possible.



Entertain Always

The heart of entertainment is to provide enjoyment, according to Cole. “How do you map the journey for your customers, every step of the way, to provide enjoyment and make their lives better?” he said. Think about the little details; there are many stages of the experience of working with you, from first impressions to onboarding. Try to make every stage remarkable. Those interactions set the tone when someone starts working with you.



Experiment Constantly

And don’t just experiment — try the exact opposite of what’s normal. Not every experiment will work, but the ones that do have the opportunity to become groundbreaking successes. And people only remember the successes, not all the failures along the way.



Engage Deeply

“Do for one, what you wish you could do for many,” Cole said. The Magic Castle Hotel in Hollywood is a master of this tactic as well;

their CEO says the key is to “listen carefully, respond creatively.” By creating tailored experiences for individuals, you show your entire fan base that you care deeply for the people who support you.



Empower Action

“Stop standing still, start standing up,” said Cole. “None of [the rest of it] matters if we don’t empower first ourselves, and then our team.” To this end, he advised businesses to not underestimate the power of a thank you — to your team, your mentors and your clients — when it comes to building raving fans.

SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH

Withings Omnia Smart Mirror

The Withings Omnia Smart Mirror is a concept health device that centralizes wellness tracking at home. It performs daily 360° health scans, measuring heart metrics (ECG, AFib, vascular age), body composition, sleep quality, activity, and nutrition. Integrated with the Withings ecosystem, it delivers personalized insights via an AI voice assistant and allows users to share data with clinicians through the Withings+ app. Features like 24-hour cardiologist reviews are included via Cardio Check-Up. Though not yet available for purchase, select features will launch in the Withings app later this year. Omnia was unveiled at CES 2025.



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YOUR PHONE CAN BE TRACKED – AND IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK

Most people carry their phones everywhere, unaware they might be quietly monitored. Whether it's a cybercriminal, disgruntled employee, or jealous partner, phone tracking is more common — and stealthier — than you'd think. For business owners, it's not just about privacy. It's about safeguarding operations, clients and reputation.

How Phone Tracking Works

Attackers don't need high-level hacking skills. Common tactics include:

- **Spyware Apps:** Installed secretly to monitor texts, calls and app use. Some even activate your mic or camera.
- **Phishing Links:** Clicking a malicious link in an e-mail or text can silently install tracking software.
- **Location Sharing:** Many apps — and even old social media accounts — may still share your location in the background.
- **Stalkerware:** Disguised as harmless apps, these are designed to remain hidden while collecting data.

How To Stop Phone Tracking

You can take action right now:

- **Run A Security Scan:** Use a reputable mobile security app to detect and remove spyware or malware. These tools can also monitor your device in real time and alert you to new threats.
- **Check App Permissions:** Go through your app list and review permissions. Disable unnecessary access to location, microphone and camera — especially for apps you rarely use.
- **Update Your Phone:** Security updates often include patches for vulnerabilities that spyware might exploit. Make sure your phone is running the latest OS.
- **Perform A Factory Reset:** If spyware is confirmed and can't be removed easily, a factory reset is the most thorough option. Just make sure to back up critical data, complete the reset and then change all important passwords.
- **Set Up Security Controls:** Use biometric logins (like Face ID or fingerprint) and enable



multifactor authentication on critical business apps and accounts.

How To Protect Your Business

Your phone likely holds sensitive emails, passwords, bank access, and client data. If compromised, the damage could extend far beyond you — affecting your entire business.

Taking steps now can stop tracking before it costs you a deal, a client or your peace of mind.