TECHNOLOGY TIMES

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

What's New

'Compliance season' in the IT world is roughly the same as construction season in Chicago (which I am pretty sure has been going steady since like 1952 or so :P) the new PCI DSS 4.0 compliance standard will be a requirement for ALL businesses of any kind who accept credit cards. There are 63 new requirements (oh and yep, all of the old ones are still there) The ACS team is working towards becoming certified to conduct those audits and will be beginning them for our clients in the next few months.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of: Thomas Tassi President/CEO Absolute Computer Systems

Our Mission: To help protect 1000 local businesses from 'nere-do-wells' looking to steal, not simply your data and your money, but your reputation, your memories (pictures, etc.) - in short, very often your life's work. We feel like that goal, and its associated work is so very much more than simply 'worth fighting for' - if we can help you or yours, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Help Your Business Thrive

With Co-Managed IT Services

Over the past few years, awareness about IT services has significantly increased. Businesses of varying sizes recognize the need for and importance of utilizing IT services to protect sensitive data, keep day-to-day operations running smoothly, increase productivity throughout various departments and stay up-to-date with the most recent technology trends. Without IT services, companies put themselves and their clients at risk. So, if you're looking to add these kinds of services to your business – or are in need of an update – you may wonder what your options are.

IT Services Providers Available For My Business

When it comes to adding IT services to your business, there are essentially three main options. Sure, you could try incorporating new practices yourself, but this will take you away from other projects, so it's best to turn to the professionals for what you need. One option that's becoming rare is hiring an in-house IT team. This allows you to have an IT professional or team working at your business on a daily basis. They can handle most minor tech issues in a timely manner and will always be available to answer questions. You'll also maintain control over the different practices, programs and protections that are in place.

Another option is to hire a managed services provider. MSPs come with a host of benefits and take much of the stress out of your IT needs. MSPs can help your systems operate more efficiently, reduce costs related to managing IT software, improve your cyber security efforts and answer any questions you may have. MSPs are third-party companies that must adhere to certain industry standards, but they don't work directly out of your business. This means if you utilize MSP services, you will

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Start Investing Today With This 4-Step Process

Many of us are looking for a secondary source of income to supplement our lifestyles or support our families. Some have started working part-time jobs, while others have attempted to play the stock market to try striking it big. If you've attempted this yourself and felt confused, don't worry –you're not alone! Here's a four -step process you can utilize to invest in the right stocks for your situation.

1. **Determine Investment Goals**
   Before investing, you must figure out what you want from your stocks. Do you want long-term gains or a quick turnaround? And how much are you willing to invest?
2. **Research**
   Don't blindly buy stocks. Find companies that have a stable financial standing in a prosperous industry.
3. **Diversify**
   Avoid putting all your eggs in one basket. Spread your investments across various businesses, industries and countries.
4. **Monitor**
   Keep an eye on your stocks after you've invested in them. Pay attention to how the company is doing so you can determine the best time to sell.

Building Better Client Relationships In A Remote Setting

Does your business operate remotely? Do you work with clients you've never met in person? If so, you might have wondered how you could build more meaningful long-term relationships with your clients. In most cases, it all boils down to communication. Your clients want clear and consistent interactions with you and your team, so be transparent and up-front when talking with them. You should also find out how your client prefers to communicate. Some may exclusively want to talk through e-mail, while others might prefer text or phone calls.

If you really want to exceed your clients' expectations, be proactive. Don't wait for them to contact you for every little thing; reach out weekly or monthly to ensure you're meeting all of their needs. Possibly, the most crucial aspect of communication is reliability. People want to work with someone they can trust and rely on. Don't give them a reason to doubt working with your business. By improving communication, you'll have a much easier time building strong, long-term relationships with your clients.

Who Else Wants To Win A $25 Gift Card?

You can be the Grand Prize Winner of this month's Trivia Challenge Quiz! Just be the first person to correctly answer this month's trivia question and receive a $25 gift card.

Ready? Call us right now with your answer!

What is the most commonly used password?

A. password
B. 123456
C. Google
D. qwerty

Call us right now with your answer! 262-942-8572

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relinquish many of your IT decisions and responsibilities to the experts.

The final option is the best of both worlds, and it's called co-managed IT services. This option allows you to outsource some of your more critical IT functions while still maintaining an in-house team. You can have the outsourced IT service manage your network infrastructure, which ensures your routers, firewalls and other network devices continue to work correctly. With co-managed IT services, an MSP can manage and monitor your data backup and recovery solutions, cyber security practices and defenses, cloud management and optimization and even IT project management. They can be available at all hours of the day to offer support and guidance for any needs you may have. And you'll get to experience all these benefits while still maintaining an in-house IT department. Your in-house team can handle all quick problems and offer immediate assistance while the MSP handles everything else.

The Benefits Of Co-Managed IT

Now that you're more familiar with co-managed IT services, you might wonder what the benefits are so you can determine if it's the right fit for your business.

> **"With co-managed IT services, an MSP can manage and monitor your data backup and recovery solutions, cyber security practices and defenses, cloud management and optimization and even IT project management."**

One of the first benefits is that co-managed IT can save businesses quite a bit of money. Maintaining a full in-house IT department or depending on an MSP for every IT need can get expensive. But by outsourcing specific functions, you can lessen the number of people on your in-house IT team, and many MSPs provide differently priced packages depending on your company's needs. This will help you find the right balance that also fits your IT budget. You'll have more control and flexibility over your IT infrastructure as well, so you can choose who handles each responsibility and what functions the third-party team manages.

Another great benefit you'll gain from a co-managed IT service is a double layer of expertise and security. Not only will you have a team on the ground able to provide quick fixes to common problems, but you'll also have an MSP holding down your back line and ensuring everything else runs smoothly. Both your in-house and outsource team will have experience and knowledge to guide you through any dilemma that may arise.

No matter what the IT needs are for your business, there's an IT option that's bound to help your business find more success. We can help if you're still unsure which option is best for you and your business. Once your IT needs are met, you can focus your attention on the daily operations of your business and find new ways to become more profitable and efficient.

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, e-mails, 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 before 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 e-mail 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 at
www.acskenosha.com/dark-web-scan/

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

The Ring Battery Doorbell Plus

Video doorbells are all the rage right now. They offer an extra layer of security while providing users with a constant video stream of their front door. The Ring Battery Doorbell Plus is an affordable option that competes with every other doorbell camera on the market. This video doorbell has 1080p HD video with enhanced HDR and color night vision, so you can get clear and detailed footage of the area around your door. Thanks to the camera's wide field of view, you can even spot packages on your doorstep. It provides you with customizable motion detection so you'll know whenever anyone approaches your door. It even comes with a rechargeable battery pack! If you've been waiting for the perfect video doorbell, this might be just what you're looking for.

Become Better At Hiring And Coaching

BY AVOIDING THESE 3 MISTAKES

Leaders make common mistakes with job descriptions when hiring and reviewing performance. The consequence is an increased probability of hiring mistakes or providing someone with useless performance feedback. Leaders often fall into this trap to avoid accountability or because they fear a performance expectation is flawed.

Most of these errors are entirely preventable. Here are three mistakes every leader should watch out for.

Describing A Job In Vague Terms
"Supporting the marketing team in promoting our products" is too vague. What does that mean? What level of performance is considered poor, good or great? Watch out for "-ing" verb tenses, as they are often too vague. Instead, consider a more specific statement of the job, such as "To help our customers modernize their inventory management systems by increasing sales of existing customers by 20% per year through new product introduction." We would consider that an essential statement of the role's mission, which is a high-level but specific explanation of why the job exists.

Focusing Only On Actions, Not Results
Some leaders make the mistake of wording their expectations in terms of only actions, not results. "Contact at least 20 existing customers per week and conduct an account review with at least five customers weekly." That is a perfect expectation of an "input" or an "action," but it is insufficient if all expectations are just actions, with no eye for the expected results. The risk is that people go through the motions of doing prescribed actions without feeling the urge to deliver a specific outcome. And your organization succeeds or fails based on results in critical areas, not actions.

Solely Focusing On Results, Not Actions
Other leaders make the mistake of wording their expectations in terms of big-picture results without regard to the actions that are likely to achieve them. "Grow revenue at least 15% per year" is a very specific "what." But to make that expectation more achievable, you must also list several actions that are expected to help achieve that result.

Instead of creating job descriptions, I encourage colleagues and clients to follow a practice called writing a "scorecard." A scorecard has a clear mission for the role. It identifies 5–7 outcomes you expect a person to achieve by a specific date. The outcomes are a mixture of actions you want the person to take and the results you expect them to achieve. This makes it easy to "score" whether someone has achieved the outcomes. Using a scorecard will improve your ability as a leader to hire and coach people to embody the organization's purpose and take actions that achieve results.

Dr. Geoff Smart is the chairman and founder of ghSMART, a leadership consulting firm that exists to help leaders amplify their positive impact on the world. Dr. Smart and his firm have published multiple New York Times *bestsellers. He stays active in his community and has advised many government officials.*

Client Spotlight: Kenosha Animal Hospital

Dr. Carlisle and his team are quite simply the very best at what they do. We are proud to list them as a client and recommend them whenever we can knowing that they will care our friends, families and clients' furry loved ones as well or better than we care for their IT needs. I know they would welcome the chance to help you and yours. Reach out - and tell them we sent you - for a special first time visit gift (courtesy of ACS). Visit www.kenoshaanimalhospital.com or call 262-658-3533 (new patients only)