

Malware can be a confusing word. It covers a lot of different things, including viruses, worms, spyware, ransomware, Trojan horses and more. Malware in any form can destroy data, take control of your computer and cause major headaches.

Most small businesses aren't equipped to handle a devastating malware attack. Even a simple virus corrupting your hard drive can set you back a few days, and that's only if you act quickly to contain and eliminate it. Some forms of malware, including those that scan and steal data from your systems, can end up destroying your business entirely.



Websites and networks are attacked every single day. By some estimates, there is a cyberattack every 25 minutes – a number that increases in frequency every year. The best thing you can do is educate your employees about the dangers of malware and prepare your business for an attack. *Small Business Trends, Oct. 12, 2019*

### 3 TELLTALE SIGNS YOUR COMPANY CULTURE IS TOXIC

**1.** There's a high turnover. If your business is a revolving door of employees, you've got a big (and very costly) problem. A high churn rate is a clear sign your company culture is broken. It's almost always a top-down issue: management needs to ask themselves what they are doing wrong. If it's not fixed, it can destroy a company.

**2.** Everyone's confused. Communication is key, and when management can't clearly communicate strategy or they



manage behind closed doors, employees suffer. It can lead to serious mistrust between employees and management, and projects are prone to falling apart.

**3.** Management is purely reactive. When an employee makes a mistake, punishment isn't the answer. Ideally, it should be a learning opportunity. When managers swiftly react, and suddenly there's a bunch of closed-door meetings, this equals stress for everyone else. If it gets to the point when employees don't bring up problems to the management team, this means there is a complete lack of trust and employees fear the backlash. *Inc., Oct. 20, 2019*

### 4 TIPS TO SUCCESSFULLY LEAD YOUR TEAM TO NEW HEIGHTS

**1.** Keep communication open (and honest). Whether you talk face-to-face, hold regular meetings or rely on chat software, always have a communication option open between everyone at the company in some capacity.



**2.** Be willing to delegate. You can't do it all yourself. You hire people with experience to help your business succeed, so let them shine!

**3.** Anticipate conflict. Conflict can't be avoided, but it can be addressed before it becomes an issue. Train your team on ways to deal with conflict among themselves, with customers and beyond.

**4.** Embrace mentoring. The best leaders are also mentors to people around them. If someone leans on you for guidance, embrace it! *Business Insider, Oct. 18, 2019*

# TECHNOLOGY TIMES

INSIDER TIPS TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS RUN FASTER, MORE EFFICIENTLY, AND ULTIMATELY, MORE PROFITABLY

JANUARY 2020



## 3 PLACES YOU SHOULD NEVER CUT CORNERS WITH IT



"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we come in! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"



Will Nohren  
Founder & CEO  
Vector Choice

We all know how easy it is to cut corners in business; we've all done it somewhere. But we also know we shouldn't cut corners. You'll eventually have to face the consequences, whether they're small or large. The same applies to IT. When you cut corners, the consequences to your business can be major. Here are three places where you never want to cut costs.

#### Equipment

You want to set up a wireless network at the office, but you don't want to spend more than \$50. So, you spend that \$50 and call it good. While this new router may deliver a wireless signal that reaches every employee, you could be making a huge mistake that may cost you dearly.

Routers are a good example of technology you want to put extra thought and money into. You want equipment that not only makes sense

for your business's network needs but will also perform reliably and securely. Cheap routers aren't known for their security features. You want something that will complement the firewalls or security software you have in place (and you *should* have them).

This same idea applies to all other equipment, as well as software. When you cut corners, there's a good chance you'll be opening your wallet again to fix the problem in the near future. On top of that, it puts your data at risk if you're buying cheap, potentially faulty equipment. Do research, ask questions and work with an experienced IT company to make sure your equipment is up to snuff.

#### Growth Of Your Business

Whether you're just getting started or you've been in the business for a while now, you always want to invest in hardware and software

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that will scale *with* your business. It's safe to say that most businesses want to grow, which means adding more customers and more employees. When that's the plan, scalability becomes a big deal.

**“Whether you're just getting started or you've been in the business for a while now, you always want to invest in hardware and software that will scale *with* your business.”**

Part of it comes back to the first point: cheap equipment isn't typically designed with scalability in mind. It's a quick-fix investment. It's not made for the long haul. Where do

you plan on being in five years? What are your growth goals? You have to ask these kinds of questions to determine what kind of investment you need to make, whether it's in billing software, customer service software, workstations or your network infrastructure.

If you don't think about scalability, as soon as you start really growing, you'll be hit by growing pains. You'll have to reinvest in technology, and you'll be spending far more than you needed to, once for the first investment (on non-scalable tech) and once for the second investment (to catch up with your growth). But because your business has grown since that initial investment, you'll be left with a hefty bill – for much more than you paid the first time. Don't make this mistake!

#### Data Security

Just because your data is locked away in the back room doesn't mean it's safe. For one, small businesses are the biggest targets for cybercriminals because most small businesses skimp on data security, making it easy for cybercriminals to steal data and cause a lot of problems.

To make matters worse, if you get hit with a cyber-attack or data breach, it can be incredibly difficult to recover, and many small businesses *don't* ever recover. They struggle for a few months before finally closing their doors.

You need to invest in firewalls, malware protection, data encryption, data backups, password managers and, as mentioned above, good equipment that is designed with reliability and security in mind. And no, you don't have to figure it out by yourself. It can be a lot, and as you dive into the topic of data security, you'll have questions.

This is exactly why you want to pair up with an experienced IT company that specializes in security. It is very hard to run a business and try to be a data security expert at the same time. Thankfully, you don't have to do that. You can get the most out of your equipment, you can be prepared for future growth and you can be ready for the threats to your data! You just have to make that first investment.

## SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH: ORAL-B GENIUS X RECHARGEABLE POWER ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSH

Believe it or not, electric toothbrushes are all the rage right now — and they're more advanced than ever! Electric toothbrushes have gone past just cleaning your teeth. Now, they connect to your smartphone and actually give you a report on your brushing!



The Oral-B Genius X is a toothbrush for the connected era. The Genius X learns your brushing habits, and, through your smartphone, wirelessly offers personalized tips to brush in certain spots for longer, to apply more or less pressure or to spend more time brushing. With sensors built into the brush head, it can tell how well you're brushing. It's like having your own personal dentist right there in your own bathroom. The Oral-B Genius X is available now from most major retailers.

## 6 TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR THE BUSY ENTREPRENEUR

Face it, there will never be enough hours in the day to accomplish everything you need to do. But if you methodically review how you spend your days and instill focus and discipline while completing daily priorities, you will soon find more time to work on the long-term success of your business. Here are six ways to do it.



**1. Conduct a time audit.** Sit down and review three months of activity. The data from the analysis will show where you spent your time (which projects, tasks and priorities demanded your attention) and with whom you collaborated to get the work done. The audit will also shed light on areas where you were distracted, where you were the most productive, and which tasks/projects took more (or less) time than anticipated.

#### 2. Eliminate time drains.

These are the kinds of things that sneak up on you and steal time and can be better put to use growing your business. Look for these time drains: not delegating tasks, not managing meetings efficiently (tip: always have an agenda!) and spending too much time writing/responding to emails. If you've done your job as a leader, members of your team can handle a majority of meetings and emails. You hired great people. Now let them do their jobs.

#### 3. Take control of your calendar.

Remember you drive your schedule; don't let others drive it. Block time throughout your day and guard against changing your schedule to work on tasks that are not important or urgent. The way you allocate your time has a direct correlation to your effectiveness as a leader and, ultimately, the performance of your business. Prudent

calendar management will also send a strong signal to your team that you take this seriously.

#### 4. Plan your day.

When you know your priorities for the day, you will be better prepared to reset your work schedule if the unexpected comes your way. Once your schedule is set, block off chunks of time to work on your priorities. I recommend 90-minute blocks so you can concentrate on big-picture items or work on a group of related tasks. Stay disciplined and don't allow yourself to go over that allotted time.

#### 5. Limit interruptions.

Now comes the hard part. Once you start working on each priority, you need to remain focused. Close the door and don't answer the phone unless it's a critical issue. Avoid checking email. Don't let distractions slow you down.

#### 6. Hold yourself accountable.

Share your tasks, priorities and deadlines with a colleague. Meet with that person at least monthly to review how well you managed your time. The probability of success increases when you have someone watching your progress and coaching you cross the finish line.



Andy Bailey is the founder, CEO and lead business coach at Petra, an organization dedicated to helping business owners across the world achieve levels of success they never thought possible. With personal experience founding an Inc. 500 multimillion-dollar company that he then sold and exited, Bailey founded Petra to pass on the principles and practices he learned along the way. As his clients can attest, he can cut through organizational BS faster than a hot knife through butter.

## VECTOR CHOICE NEWS

## TRIVIA



Our CEO Will Nobles was featured on the Nasdaq Jumbotron in Times Square!



On Fox 44 Baton Rouge, Will shared his top 5 tips on preventing cyber attacks!

### Who wants to win a \$25 gift card?

You can be the 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 Amazon gift card!

The keyboard layout designed by Sholes is:

- A. DVORAK
- B. YUIOP
- C. SHOESLAY
- D. QWERTY

Ready? Call us right now with your answer!  
**877.468.1230**

## Business Trends To Watch For In 2020

#### Automation software takes the forefront.

Automation software is more adaptable than ever. It can be used in everything, from accounting to marketing.

#### Remote work is the new norm.

It's become a popular benefit offered by companies, and employees are eating it up. Flexible schedules are attractive and boost productivity!

#### Generation Z is part of the economy too.

Gen Z is coming of age. They're entering the workforce, and they have money to spend. They should be marketed to, but not pandered to.

#### The freelance gig economy gets bigger.

People are spending more time outside of their day-to-day jobs working. Many are turning to freelance work for freedom, which is something a lot of employees strive for.

