CST Tech News

What's New

Have you ever struggled with decision making? Knowing if you are doing the right thing? Making assumptions that others are also doing the right thing? It really doesn't matter if it is personal or professional. We make a ton of assumptions every day that "stuff" is just happening and everyone is doing the right thing. But are they?

As owner of this company, I wonder sometimes if tasks are getting done, projects are scheduled, communication is happening with clients and partners and most importantly are all of you happy.

I also make assumptions that businesses I hire are doing what they promise to do. I have no idea how to fix that rattle in my car, but I assume my mechanic does. I go to the doctors and assume she is doing what is best for me. There are so many examples of people I assume are doing their job and I must trust that they are. Yup, there's the word... …....TRUST!

You recognize that CST knows technology. Better yet, we know YOUR technology and although we have a huge variety of clients, our focus has always been about building our knowledge and being the best tech company, providing the best service in our industry. What we have learned in the past 20 years is that you must trust us.

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February 2021

This monthly publication provided courtesy of Shawn & Lisa Brown, Owners of CST Group Inc.

Our Mission:

To provide outstanding technology services to our customers allowing them to focus on their business.

CST Group Inc.

How To Enable Remote Work Without Exposing Your Entire Business To Cybercriminals

A record number of businesses said goodbye to the traditional in-office work model in 2020. They embraced the remote work model as they adapted to the new COVID-19 reality. It was a huge shift that came with many challenges, and some of those challenges are still felt today.

One of those challenges was – and is – cyber security. Businesses wanted to get their remote workforce up and running, but there were a lot of questions about how they would keep their newly remote employees secure.

So, how can you enable remote work while keeping your business and your employees secure? How do you keep cybercriminals out? The answer is multifaceted. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to cyber security — that would make things much easier! But there are several steps you can take to help your remote team stay productive while keeping the cybercriminals out. Here are three things you need to do:

1. Skip the public Wi-Fi. This is Cyber Security 101. Never use unsecured, public Wi-Fi, especially when working. For remote employees who have the option to work from anywhere, using public Wi-Fi is tempting. It's just so easy to access, but it comes with huge risks, including the potential to expose your device to intruders.

Thankfully, there are plenty of options to help keep employees connected without having to worry about snoops. The most popular is the VPN, or virtual private network. VPNs allow remote workers to securely access the Internet, even through public Wi-Fi. VPNs are ideal for remote workers who need to routinely access your network.

Another option is the personal hotspot. This is a portable Wi-Fi access point,

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usually paired with data service through a telecom like Verizon, AT&T or T-Mobile. It gives remote workers flexibility to work anywhere they can get high-speed data service. Because the remote worker is the only person on the hotspot (and should be the only person), there is less worry about hackers snooping for your data.

2. Have a strong device policy. When it comes to cost-cutting, it can be appealing to let employees use their own devices while working remotely. Avoid this, if possible. The bring-your-own-device (BYOD) approach has its benefits, including keeping costs down, but the security costs could be massive, especially if an employee gets hacked or misplaces crucial data. In short, BYOD can get complicated fast, especially for businesses unfamiliar with the BYOD approach.

That said, many businesses work with an IT services company or managed services provider to create a list of approved devices (PCs, laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) that employees can use. Then those devices are loaded up with malware protection, a VPN, and other security solutions. So, while employees may be using a variety of devices, they all have the same security and other necessary software in order to perform their duties.

The best device policy, however, is to provide employees with work devices. This ensures that everyone is using the same hardware and software, and this makes it much easier to keep everyone up-to-date and secure. It takes a little more effort logistically, and it has a higher up-front cost, but when it comes to keeping your business secure, it's worth it.

3. Don't forget about physical security. While a lot of businesses are focusing on digital security right now, they're not putting a similar focus on physical security. They may have a team of people working remotely spread across different neighborhoods, towns, states or countries. This mobility comes with the risk of device theft or loss.

If employees will be carrying their work devices with them for any reason, those devices should be kept nearby at all times. That means *never* leaving work devices in vehicles or unattended at a café or airport (or any location). Never leave a device where it has the potential to be taken.

It's also important to remind employees to not only keep their doors locked but also keep work devices out of sight. You wouldn't want to set up a home office in a room facing the street outside while leaving the windows open and the door unlocked, because you never know who may walk or drive by. Just as cybercriminals are always looking for ways to break into your network, criminals are looking for opportunities to walk away with high-value items.

The way we work is changing, so we must be prepared for whatever happens next. Implementing these three steps will give you a starting point, but they aren't the end point. Work with an experienced MSP to get the most out of your remote work approach. Many businesses will not be returning to the traditional in-office model, so the more steps we take to secure our businesses and our remote teams, the better off we'll all be.

> **"There is no one-size-fits-all approach to cyber security — that would make things much easier!"**

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If you are considering cloud computing or Office 365 to save money and simplify IT, it is extremely important that you get and read this special report: **"5 Critical Facts Every Business Owner Must Know Before Moving Their Network To The Cloud."**

This report discusses in simple, nontechnical terms the pros and cons of cloud computing, data security, how to choose a cloud provider and three little-known facts that most IT consultants don't know or won't tell you about cloud computing that could end up causing you MORE problems and costing you more money than you anticipated. **Even if you aren't ready to move to the cloud yet**, this report will give you the right information and questions to ask when the time comes.

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Here's the reality of it though; sometimes we make mistakes, sometimes I assume tasks and projects will take a certain amount of time, and it just doesn't work out like I plan. Sometimes, I interrupt your entire day, recommend things you may not understand…but I ALWAYS HAVE YOUR BEST INTEREST IN MIND! Know that I and my staff make meticulous lists and processes to ensure we know how we are impacting your business, but we are not perfect.

There is another assumption we are making; we assume all of you are doing, what we consider, elementary technology tasks. What we have learned is that many are not. So, here are few tips to help us communicate with you, our current clients and our future ones, some things we are assuming are happening on your end.

1. If you have a regular Monday-Friday work week. Keep your computer(s) ON! This helps us do all the background tasks after hours to ensure your technology stays up to date. If you do not work the weekend, feel free to shut your computer(s) off on Friday at end of day. FYI, if your computers are off too long, you will get a call from my office to find out what is going on.
2. Because your computers are on, at the end of each day, turn off your monitor. Not only will this save on power but it will help protect confidentiality and most people will assume (there's that word again) that your computers are actually off when in fact they are not.
3. If you do not have one already, please add a computer password and SIGN OUT when you are away from your computer for any length of time. Although the public rarely has access to your technology, you just never know if someone is in the building that could access your data.
4. Your computer(s) should not go to sleep! If you think they are, we need that feature disabled. If you do not know how to do that, call us! If your computer sleeps, we can't do our job.
5. If your computer is misbehaving, restart it before you call us! A restart will often fix common issues like slowness and pop-ups. Our software resolves so much when you do this. If the problem does not resolve itself, you can either call us or submit a support ticket by emailing the help desk at support@cstsupport.com

We really appreciate the fact that you trust us with an integral part of your company. We take that very serious and we also thrive on communication, so please reach out anytime you have a question!

Happy Valentines Day! We hope your day is filled with love and laughter.

Lisa

Communication In Times Of Fatigue

In light of all the Zoom and videoconferencing meetings, communication is changing both internally and externally.

Some companies think working remotely is the best thing they've ever done, while others say it's awful because they thrive on personal, face-to-face relationships.

Oftentimes, dominant personalities can overrun the room in person, but on a video call, the indirectness of virtual communication can help more soft-spoken team members feel comfortable speaking up.

When companies are together in person, they grab a coffee and a meeting breaks out, but when you have that on video it's awkward. There has to be more structure to the meetings because people don't want to spend an excessive amount of time like they would in person. They want to make it as short and efficient as possible.

Where people could get better is in their external messages on video chats. When you speak to your team, use a different tone. Simple things like charisma, lighting and talking *to* your audience – the things people master for TV and film – take a lot more effort than chatting with your team in person. Not having this skill is hurting some on the marketing side.

In planning for 2021, companies are running into big issues and plans may need to change.

It's time for the annual reset and the One-Page Strategic Plan (OPSP) – the gift that gives back for the next four quarters. We set our annual key initiatives – six to eight things over the next 12 months to move the business forward – but what often gets left behind is time to reset ourselves.

We need to be mindful of what we're doing with our people to keep them on track on a personal-growth level. We're all a little out of our rhythm right now, but so goes the person, so goes the business. We need to develop the *whole* person to get the best results in the new year.

Answer the question: what do you want? Don't let your logic stifle what your true goals are. Once you define it, then you can set out and figure out how to achieve it.

With upcoming changes, necessary planning and so much more, how can organizations combat the fatigue?

We must make time to take a break and step away for a moment. Set some boundaries.

It's easy for us right now to just keep working – especially working from home. You have to make yourself "go home." Do simple things, like changing your clothes after work, to turn the "work" switch off. Make yourself "commute" home. At 5 p.m., go to the store and drive back home. Give your body and mind the shift change. Honor a schedule because it is easy not to.

Chip Gallent's career has taken him through a number of C-level roles with a nonprofit, a technology development company, a publicly traded dot-com firm where he served as president and more! With an extensive background in marketing, and as a fervent entrepreneur, he's led many businesses to success. Now, as a Petra Coach, he's helping others do the same.

The Realities Of Burnout

We all feel burned out every now and again. It's the point when we feel completely exhausted with our work and need to step away. But here's a different way to think about burnout: we don't get burned out because we're working *too much*, we get burned out because we're doing too *little of what we love.*

When we do things that we're passionate about, that gives us energy and keeps us going. When our work becomes work for the sake of work, that's what drives us toward exhaustion. You may be productive, but does your productivity enrich your life in any meaningful way? To truly avoid burnout, engage in activities, projects and tasks that drive you forward and keep the passion alive. *Inc., Nov. 23, 2020*

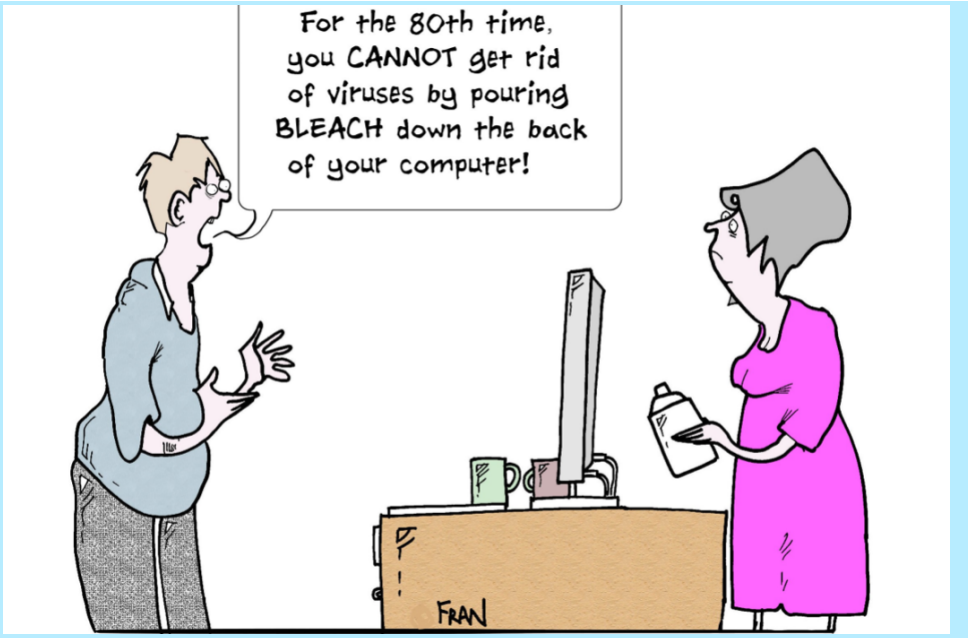
4 Traits To Keep In Mind When Hiring

1. Value-minded. They're someone who fits in with your company culture and values. They're ready and willing to learn and grow within that culture.

2. Purpose-driven. They aren't in it just to collect a paycheck. Yes, being paid is important, but there must be drive beyond that. They have their purpose and they're working toward it.

3. Standout. There's something about them that strikes you — it could be anything from their credentials to their personality, but it's something that sticks with you in a positive way. They go the extra mile.

4. Open-minded. They're receptive to feedback and criticism and use it to grow. But more than that, they're willing to give feedback to others. They're comfortable with honesty. *Forbes, Nov. 23, 2020*



Tech Bytes

February is here which means love is in the air.

When the season of love approaches you might find yourself looking for someone to share it with.

Many of us are stuck in the house where the internet occupies more of our time than we care to admit. Remember to be cautious when seeking out that perfect person to share your time with.

We all know love hurts, but so does losing a bunch of money to an online scam. There are plenty of fish in the sea, but how do you sniff out a catfish?

Scammers have a lot of free time to think up ways to get your money. Never send money to anyone unless you personally know them AND have had a verbal conversation with them.

Always keep in mind that if it is too good to be true then it probably is.

Never reveal:

- Banking information
- Date of Birth/Year of Birth
- Maiden names
- Childhood pets
- Where you were born.

These tend to be the answers to most people's security questions.

Scammers are also targeting your email so NEVER be fooled by an email. A good rule to follow...if it sounds weird or unusual NEVER open a link or an attachment. More on this next month!

Remember, sometimes a box of chocolates can be better company.