

CST Tech News

What's New

Have you ever been in a store where the customer service is absolutely horrible? Shawn and I recently had an experience where we had to hunt down an employee to help us with the purchase of some landscape brick. We needed a palette of this material and considering it is a high ticket item you would think customer service reps would be everywhere in that department but NO.....not one employee was seen in the 45 minutes it took me to make up my mind. Yes, the struggle is real and there were too many choices. In those 45 minutes, while we are standing in a specific aisle, discussing, analyzing, picking up and putting down material, you would think one employee would have walked by to inquire or even guide us in our options. But no....not one employee! So, after the decision was made, I had to hunt someone down to get some help. How is this possible? We were spending money (thousands) in their store and it is not like I could wrangle this material myself (trust me, if I could have, I would have). So why wouldn't they have someone in that department making sure we were taken care of. And oh, we were not the only ones.

July 2021



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Shawn & Lisa Brown, Owners



Our Mission:

CST Group Inc.

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



Take Your Business To The Next Level With These Technology Solutions

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When you set goals for your business this year, there's a good chance one of those goals was tied to growth. It's a common goal. You have your eyes set on acquiring new customers. You're ready to take their business to the next level. The challenge, however, is getting to that next level. If you do a web search on how to grow your business, you'll find more results than you know what to do with. It can be frustrating and overwhelming.

This month, we're here to take away some of that frustration and share a few ideas on how you can use technology solutions to put

together a growth strategy that works for your business, its needs and *your* overall goals. There are four areas where technology really shines: automation, access, engagement and security.

Automation

There are automation tools that assist with everything from invoicing to customer service. One great example is the chatbot. Thanks to major strides in artificial intelligence (AI), chatbots are more useful than ever. All you have to do is plug one into your website, and it can handle a surprising amount of customer service issues. It can even direct customers and leads to real humans within your organization. When you can direct leads accordingly, it makes it easier to

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track and follow up with those leads, possibly increasing your sales and growth.

Access

Thanks to the cloud, you have the potential to access virtually any part of your business from anywhere, including your employees. This makes the remote work model (as well as the hybrid model) much easier to implement. Plus, if you back up critical data to the secure cloud on a regular basis, you never have to worry about losing that critical data. But the truly great thing about the cloud is that it's automatically scalable and fully customizable. The cloud grows with you, which means you save serious money when you're no longer bound to traditional models of scaling.

Engagement

It may be wedding season, but we're not talking about a marriage – at least not in the “wedding bells” sense. Technology allows you to engage with customers and leads in a way you've never been able

to before. Social media platforms especially give you tools to engage with customers. From Facebook to LinkedIn, these platforms have tools to connect with specific demographics. You can post videos, share content, and simply interact with customers and your community. These kinds of things put you and your brand out there in front of new customers.

Security

We saved this one for last because it's a big one that not everyone thinks about, but it's absolutely crucial. As your business grows, your IT needs grow and change too. You need to make sure your network is ready for the challenge of growth. On top of that, you need to be sure that your employees have the tools and resources they need to keep your business secure. There are a lot of threats out there, from the internal threat of hardware failure to the external threat of malware and cybercriminals. With more business shifting to remote or a hybrid work model, your IT security needs should be top priority.

Final Thoughts

As you fold different technologies into your business, remember that you never have to do any of it on your own. If you need help or want to maximize the benefits of technologies you're using or interested in using, work closely with us or your managed service provider or IT partner. We are there to answer your questions and to help you optimize your business for your growth goals.

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Free Cyber Security Audit Will Reveal Where Your Computer Network Is Exposed And How To Protect Your Company Now

At no cost or obligation, our highly skilled team of IT pros will conduct a cyber security audit to uncover loopholes in your company's IT security.

After the audit is done, we'll prepare a customized “Report Of Findings” that will reveal specific vulnerabilities and provide a Prioritized Action Plan for getting these security problems addressed fast. This report and action plan should be a real eye-opener for you, since almost all of the businesses we've done this for discover they are completely exposed to various threats in a number of areas. Remember, there is no cost or obligation....just piece of mind!

**To get started and claim your free assessment now,
call our office at 877-954-4100**

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There were two other couples also looking to spend hundreds/thousands of dollars.

And dare I mention having to call a business for assistance? Pressing 1 for this and 2 for that just about sends me over the edge because I know I am entering an abyss of number pressing never actually getting an opportunity to talk to someone. It is maddening.

My point here is this, customer service should not be this hard! If you are offering a service or product and you actually want people to buy it, why wouldn't you ensure that when the time comes, there is someone there to help?

CST is growing and as we add employees one of the things we discuss over and over again is our level of service. I never want our clients, anyone calling our office or someone stopping in, to struggle with actually talking to a human. I insist on providing the best possible customer service we can. As technology changes, much of this communication is done via email where delays can be expected but if someone takes the time to call or swing in, then a member of my incredible team will be there to help. We LOVE helping people so give us a call anytime.

I'd also like to welcome our newest team member, Chad Hogeboon. Chad is part of our technical support team so he will be your first point of contact for anything technical. We hope you will give him a chance to acclimate to our crazy life. Be sure to introduce yourself so he can build the same awesome relationships our other team members have with all of you. We are proud to have him as a member of the CST Team.

On behalf of our entire crew, we hope you have a beautiful July 4th holiday.



Soft Skills, Solid Results

Parenting seems unrelated to business, but in my experience, it is very much related to people skills – and people skills are necessary for business. There are four key people skills, often called “soft skills,” that I want to talk to you about:

- Gratitude
- Listening
- Grace By Margin
- Vision

Gratitude

How do you feel when you get a thank-you note? People never forget when they get a handwritten thank-you note. A text or e-mail is nice, but they last a day. People love to feel gratitude. They love to share it and to receive it. Thank-you notes remove barriers, so make it a habit.

Listening

Listen longer and listen better. When you're speaking with someone, encourage long pauses. Let the silence do the heavy lifting. You don't have to rush into an answer or response before thinking about what a person is saying. This is helpful in sales and with direct reports. Allow yourself to stay quiet so the other person can do the talking. Don't be afraid to ask open-ended questions like “How did that go for you?”

Grace By Margin

This is all about things that save you time. Consider using the “while” system as a way to multitask. For example, place an under-the-desk bike to work out while you work at your desk. Another thing to consider: timed e-mails. Schedule an e-mail to be



sent out at a specific time and add links in e-mails to schedule time on your calendar. One more time-saving tool is speech-to-text transcription. This ensures you have a record of every conversation that you can reference as needed.

Vision

Break down your vision into small parts. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by something large, choose one smaller goal for the month. Do this with everyone in your organization. Break down everyone's goals into smaller parts. This makes it easier to track over the course of a quarter or year. Even go as far as creating a vision board. Add images of what you want to achieve. Make your vision visual. Lastly, write down your achievements as part of your vision. Where are you now and where do you want to be over the next three years?

P.S. Don't forget to check out the “Soft Skills, Solid Skills” Petra Coach webinar at PetraCoach.com/soft-skills-solid-results-with-bea-wray.



Bea Wray is an entrepreneur, innovator, mentor and author of What An MBA Taught Me... But My Kids Made Me Learn. She founded (and sold) SourceHarbor Inc. and has consulted with over 300 companies around the globe. She's the former chair of ForbesBooks and has hosted The Front Porch podcast, Savannah's: Engage SGTV, TEDx and the GeekEnd Innovation conference. With years of experience and an MBA With Distinction from Harvard Business School, she's always on the lookout for the next opportunity.

Are You In The Cloud Yet?

Some businesses have tried to avoid the cloud. There are lingering fears that cloud-based services aren't as secure as their non-cloud counterparts. However, cloud services are more prominent than ever, and service providers are fully aware that they must meet the IT security needs of today.

For those businesses still unsure, it's estimated that 97% of businesses already use cloud services. You might not realize it, but cloud services are in the mainstream. Even businesses that are hesitant to join the cloud may already be a part of it. Most e-mail and communication apps are cloud-based. If you use virtually any Google or Microsoft service, you've joined the cloud.

The bottom line is that digital security is top priority for cloud platforms. Not only do these providers need to meet the requirements of their clients, but they must also follow international rules and regulations. If you want to keep your data backed up and secure, the cloud is your answer.

Forbes, April 1, 2021

3 Key Ways To Keep Your Business In Growth Mode

1. Talent. You must hire a team willing and able to meet the challenge of growth. You want people who are not only talented in their field, but who also fit within your company culture, who are eager to learn and ready to solve problems, and you have to be just as willing and able to reward them for their talent.

2. Innovation. When you have a talented team at your side, innovation comes easier. You need to continuously develop products and services that customers want to buy. Understand your customers and their problems at the highest level so you can bring solutions to the table.

3. Accountability. As your team and business grow, you must put greater emphasis on accountability. Track everything and have key performance indicators (KPIs) attached to every goal and project. But don't just hold people accountable to meet certain goals – hold them accountable when they succeed; that is to say, make sure the wins are celebrated along the way.

Inc., April 8, 2021



It's BBQ Time!

July 4th tends to be the biggest grilling day of the year and with it being just a few days away, we need all the details!!

What games will you have? Will there be fireworks? What foods will you be serving? Obviously the food is our highest priority.

CST has established lots of traditions and one of them is.....ALL ABOUT THE SNACKS!

We will be celebrating Independence Day on July 3rd in the office (as we are closed on the 4th) by traveling to Snaxville. We will all bring in different snacks and appetizers and then graze on them throughout the day. Feel free to stop by and grab a treat!

So whether it is simple burgers and hotdogs or a southern seafood boil let us know. Take a picture of your festivities over the holiday weekend and tag us at [#redwhiteandtech](#) on our Facebook or Instagram page.

Jessica



"He opened his email and saw the attachment from an unknown source. His hand slowly reached to click on the paper clip. He had no idea what horror awaited him..."