

# CST Tech News

## What's New

My goal in writing and publishing this newsletter has always been to educate and inform. I feel like there is a serious gap in understanding technology and its' role in your business. I think all of you understand that without it, your day can be difficult. If it isn't working correctly, it drives you crazy and causes you stress. Plus there is the added stress of virus and ransomware attacks, email phishing, malware, online pop-ups, keylogging, browser hijacking, web scripting and a slew of other risks that honestly, keep me up at night. That is where CST thrives on a daily basis. We are your IT Department, and we take that responsibility very serious.

For our existing clients, I hope you know and understand all that we do to keep you safe and functioning at your best even though you may not talk to us every-day. There is so much that we do behind the scenes and our goal is for you to not have continual problems and therefore not have to call. I try to communicate that during our Quarterly Business Reviews (QBR's) and if you ever feel like I am not successfully doing that, please let me know. I am, after all, trying to find a happy medium between providing too much information and not enough. I have lots of reports and data I could present, and Shawn and I are working hard at getting you that information if

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## December 2021



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



CST Group Inc.

### Our Mission:

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

## Hackers Are Stepping Up Their Game This Holiday Season

The holiday season has almost arrived, and more Americans are expected to turn to online shopping this year than ever before. The ongoing pandemic, combined with convenience, makes online shopping an obvious choice for most consumers.

Unfortunately, online shopping has been muddied with hackers and cyberthieves since its debut. There are still safe places on the Internet where we should feel comfortable to shop, though. If you are careful about where you spend your money or share your personal information, online shopping can feel just as safe as entering a store.

Here are our five best tips to ensure that your online holiday shopping is safe and secure.

### Stick To Secure Websites

When shopping online, you want to

ensure that every site you visit is secure. Look at the browser bar when entering a new site. If there is a small padlock icon to the left of the web address, the site is secure and you should feel safe to continue. Google Chrome goes an extra step and will label unsecure sites as "not secure" so you know to stay away. Another quick way to tell if a site is secure is by looking at the web address. If it begins in "https," you're good to go. If the "s" is missing at the end and it starts with "http," the site is not secure, and you should find somewhere else to shop.

### Don't Be Afraid To Use Your Phone

You can shop on your phone just as easily as you do on your computer, and the portable aspect should not worry you. Major corporations like Amazon and Walmart have secure

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or give us a call at 877.954.4100

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apps with seemingly unlimited items to purchase. Making purchases directly on apps avoids the hassle of going to the company's website, where your connection might not be as secure. It also helps to set up an Apple or Google Pay account, as businesses will not be able to get your bank account information from these sources.

If you do decide to shop on your mobile device, make sure that you are not on public WiFi. Public WiFi is rarely secure, and using it could make you an easy target for hackers. They could get any personal information you enter while on the WiFi. It's better to bookmark the products and purchase them when you are on a private connection.

### Use A Password Manager

To keep your information secure, it's imperative to utilize strong and complex passwords that are difficult to crack. Avoid using personal information and using the same password across accounts. To make things easier for yourself, utilize a password manager to keep track of all of your different passwords. This way, you can create complex passwords that even the best of

**"If you are careful about where you spend your money or share your personal information, online shopping can feel just as safe as entering a store."**

hackers can't figure out. Make sure to use a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and special punctuation to make the most secure password possible. CST is putting together a password management option for our customers so be looking for that first quarter 2022.

### Take A Pass On Amazing Deals

If you come across a price that just seems too good to be true, chances are it probably is. If you search for an item on a search engine, you may see prices way lower than those of major retailers. These options could be on unsecured sites as a front to try to steal your information or it could be someone who doesn't actually have the item trying to make a quick dollar. While the deal might seem like something you can't pass up, it may cost you more in the long run, and you might not even get the product.

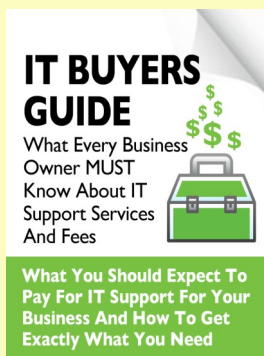
### Pay Attention To Bank Statements

You won't always know when someone gets access to your personal information or bank accounts. By paying attention to your bank statements, you can catch overcharges or purchases that you did not make. Always use a credit card when shopping online because hackers will not be able to access any of your actual money. Most credit cards come with fraud protection that prevents you from being liable for charges you never actually made.

As long as you take the necessary precautions, shopping online is a safe and financially responsible practice. If you follow these tips, your holiday shopping will go as smoothly as possible.

## Free Report Download:

### The Business Owner's Guide To IT Support Services And Fees



You'll learn:

- The three most common ways IT companies charge for their services and the pros and cons of each approach.
- A common billing model that puts ALL THE RISK on you, the customer, when buying IT services; you'll learn what it is and why you need to avoid agreeing to it.
- Exclusions, hidden fees and other "gotcha" clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to.
- How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn't anticipate.

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you want it. Accountability is so important and if you want to learn the technology ins and outs, we are more than happy to do that. We just think you shouldn't have to.

Speaking of accountability, I have had dozens and dozens of conversations as we prospect new clients. One of things I stress is that no matter who your IT "person" or company is, please make sure you are holding them accountable to you. They should be providing you with monthly reports, quarterly business reviews, regular updates and information on what new strategies are happening because, guess what, technology is NOT and never will be a one and done! It changes too quickly for that. Risks change and evolve and get nastier and nastier and your IT company cannot sit idly on what they did a year ago, a month, a week ago. My only point here is that although there is a significant trust level, there also must be some reassurance that stuff is actually happening as was promised at the time they sold services to you. Remember, we are partners in the cyber security landscape so you all have a role as well. We do try to make it easy for you but some stuff is completely your responsibility.

Along with accountability, we hope to be transparent with all of you and we are always willing to share information at any point. We believe that you can't make great technology decisions without information and that works both ways; we can't fix something we are not aware of.

As we end another year and begin a new, it is more important than ever to ensure your technology is protected. You need to be aware of the risk assessment levels, disaster and recovery timelines, backup of data, email security, network firewall and security protection and education. And lets not forget about compliancy! The State and Federal Government (and even your insurance company) are applying more policies and laws that enforce cyber security protection.

Just know that CST is modifying our managed service packages to add additional security options for those of you who are security conscious as well those who are compliancy conscious. You will be learning more about this first quarter 2022.

On behalf of the entire team, Merry Christmas. We wish you all the happiest of holidays and our prayer is that it is filled with lots of love and laughter.

We appreciate your business and when it comes to your technology, we will always have your back!



# A Winning Strategy To The Game Of Building A Business

Life isn't always easy. Sometimes we sit back and expect things to happen for us or we simply do as we're told and expect great things, but it's not always that easy. While defensive mindsets can be beneficial in some areas, if you want your business to grow, then you need to play aggressive offense.

I first got into real estate not long after Black Monday and the recession that hit in the early '90s. At the time, many other realtors relied on defensive tactics. They waited by the phone for prospective buyers to contact them or they waited at an open house for potential buyers to walk in. But that's not how you get business.

I had no prior training in real estate when I entered, but that didn't stop me from becoming a dominant force in the field. We didn't have millions of dollars to buy subscribers or begin a widespread advertising campaign. Instead, we went after highly targeted strategic partners and I keynoted at large conferences to build our subscriber base. We came out of the recession with more than 5 million subscribers because of our aggressive actions.

During various recessions, companies that have made a point of being aggressive in their campaigns have seen great growth. During the Great Depression in the 1920s, Post was the dominant leader in the breakfast market. They decided to cut their advertising while one of their competitors, Kellogg's, decided to double theirs. Kellogg's profits grew by 30% during the recession, and they became the top dog in the market, where they have remained ever since.

During the energy crisis of the 1970s, Volkswagen, the car import leader of the time, cut growth spending. Toyota decided to double its spending focused on marketing and growth and became the #1 car import company. Volkswagen was bumped down to fifth. Toyota is still the leader of car imports and is three times larger than Volkswagen.



Elon Musk is one of the greatest offensive businessmen of the last century. In 2016, South Australia's electrical grid was knocked out due to a devastating storm. Elon tweeted that he could provide 100 megawatts of storage in 100 days or less. This would have been the largest battery in the entire world at that point, and Elon won the bid. He produced the battery within 60 days.

The greatest way to grow your business into an empire is by taking an offensive approach. It's been proven time and time again by some of the greatest names in business.

*While Darren Hardy was growing up, his father always told him to be the exception. He has taken this philosophy and applied it to his many pursuits in the world of business. Darren has remained at the forefront of success media for over 25 years and is not stopping anytime soon.*

## CST is Growing....Again!

We would like to welcome Natasha Shinn to the CST family. Tasha is our Marketing Assistant and will be responsible for most of the website and social media aspects of CST. She will also be maintaining our CRM, customer demographics and producing our marketing material.

Tasha is from Massachusetts but now lives in Chateaugay with her two children Jack and Juno. She enjoys traveling with family to new places and any activities that take her outdoors, including fishing with her kids. In her free time she enjoys watercolor painting, gardening, beekeeping, and cooking!



## DID YOU KNOW...

Did You Know, CST offers Security Awareness Training? Curious about which staff could potential put you at risk by clicking on stuff? This training can provide us with lots of data so give us a call to get yours scheduled.

If you are looking for in person training for your staff, let us know. It could be training in Excel, Email or cyber security risks. Give us a call - We love to educate!

Did You Know that every business should have a hardware firewall in place? And did you know that if you do have a Firewall, it needs to be regularly updated? If those updates are not done, you put your entire network at risk.

Did You Know, we have a referral program? If you know of a business that could use our help, let us know and if your recommendation becomes a client, you get \$100 VISA card.

Windows 11 is out but we prefer our business clients wait on doing an upgrade or purchase of new computer with Win 11 on them. We will be sure to keep you in the loop when we feel it is safe to upgrade. Our moto, if it isn't broken, let's not fix it!

Do You Know where your backup is located? Are you doing a backup of your data? Backup's are more important than ever and they should be OFF-SITE! Please do not use an external hard drive and keep it plugged in to your computer. Backups should be automatic and off-site and someone should be ensuring they are happening every day! Let us know if you need help with this.

End of Year Checklist should be happening now. Be sure to evaluate current computers for upgrades and if you need to spend money by end of year, technology upgrades are always a good idea. Maybe upgrading a router, access point or firewall is in order? Please reach out if you need assistance with this.

Did you Know you should have an onboarding checklist for new employees? When you hire, create a list of all the things that need to be accomplished. Accounts that need to be created, like email, accounting and vendor software they will be using, add payroll items that need to get done, and internal protocols that need to get done. This way, there is a clear checklist and nothing gets overlooked.

Along with an onboarding checklist, you should also have an offboarding checklist for when an employee leaves (whether on good terms or bad). This will basically reverse all access an employee has. As I have stated in the past, this is an important checklist to ensure an ex-employee does not have access to something once they are gone. Please be sure you are gathering password information from this person so you do not lose access to something important. Note: In the future, CST will be deploying a password manager and this will no longer be an issue but until then, please be sure employees do not randomly create passwords for accounts without your knowledge.

## TIS THE SEASON

The bright colored leaves in the North Country have fallen and suddenly, we have collapsed into winter. With snow ready to show its face any day now, we are all feeling the chilly air and the desire to hibernate.

It is this time of year when your mailbox is full of sales and discount flyers from numerous shops and brands. This is not one of them. Instead, we want to wish you some well deserved time-off to indulge in the holiday spirit. Whether it is overeating, watching holiday movies, playing board games, or spending quality time with family and friends- have an amazing holiday from all of us at CST.

## PREPARE FOR THE NEW YEAR

As your Account Manager, I am hoping to make it easier for those on our managed services solution by providing you with options on paying your bill each month.

Here are three ways to make that happen:

1. Schedule an ACH with your bank to auto pay your CST invoice. If you need help with this, please let me know.
2. Pay with your credit card just know that doing this does incur a fee.
3. Click the Pay Now button when you receive your invoice in your email. This is by far the easiest and fastest way to pay.

Please reach out if you need anything.

Happy holiday's everyone!

-JESSICA

