

CST Tech News

What's New

Here we are with a whole new blank calendar ahead of us. What do you have planned? Personally, I am super excited because I have a plan...lots of plans actually and my team is just as excited (or maybe its pure bewilderment) as I am. Honestly, I have already started the party so be prepared for some amazing stuff in 2022.

If you don't know already, I am huge dreamer and I have enough ambition (or maybe it's just pure crazy) to execute. Luckily, I have a team of people (including my hubby) that help me accomplish it. Sometimes my ideas are related to productivity, some are adding new services, some are about ensuring our customers are happy and being well taken care of and some are all about evaluating our processes. No matter what, having a support system in place, along with a good plan, is essential to growing a business.

As I close out 2021, I am reminded of all that I have avoided that has bottlenecked my company. One of my biggest concerns is always about time management because I am constantly being pulled away to manage day to day activities. All important work, but when you are growing a business, progress is key and filtering out the most meaningful work to get you to your goals is, in fact, the goal. I am a procrastinator so time management is my nemesis. Trust me

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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.



The Best IT-Related Resolutions For The New Year

The past couple of years have been difficult for just about everyone. Business owners and entrepreneurs have had to adapt and evolve to survive in an ever-changing climate. There's no telling when or even if things will go back to what we once thought was "normal." As we enter a New Year, many business owners are putting their resolutions in place to survive and hopefully thrive in 2022.

People will focus on plans for growth and ways to bring more profit in for their resolution, but it's important to include tech- and IT-related resolutions as well. Technology might not be an obvious approach to growing a business, but it goes a long way toward making your clients and employees feel more secure about everyday interactions. This can inadvertently lead to growth as you improve customer relationships as well.

Here are a few tech-related resolutions that we think can greatly improve any business.

Use Multiple Layers Of Cyber Security Protection

There is no security approach that covers every hole or flaw that cyber security threats are looking to exploit. The best way to keep your defenses protected is to put in place multiple approaches to cover every possible gap. By using multiple programs and layers, you will ensure that every individual component of your cyber security program has a backup to counter any issues.

Your first line of defense should be a firewall. Firewalls help monitor incoming and outgoing traffic and work as a barrier between networks you trust and don't trust. They essentially shield you from malicious or unnecessary network traffic. Multifactor authentication is an important layer as well. This prevents cyber-attacks that come from weak or compromised passwords. With multifactor authentication, you and your employees may have to receive a text to your cell phones to prove that

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the correct person is trying to access the network. This will help prevent the use of employee passwords to gain access to sensitive information.

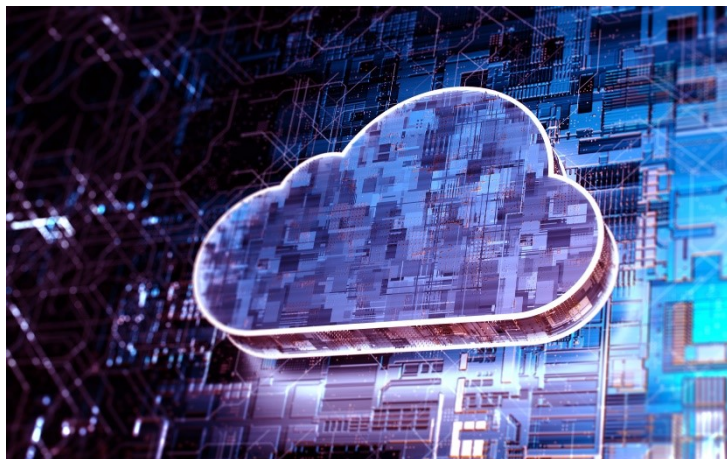
Back Up Your Data And Replace Old Equipment

Unfortunately, preventive measures don't always work. An unexpected disaster could cause your network to go down or someone could accidentally delete some important files. Plus, if your data is not backed up, you could lose sensitive information as well as time and money down the road. Customers will also be upset if you lose information pertaining to them. This could devastate your brand's reputation and cost you customers. If you do not have a backup plan or program in place, you should definitely get one for 2022.

In addition to backup plans, it's important to have equipment that is up-to-date. Using slow and outdated technology can take away from productivity and will make your job more difficult. If some of your equipment goes down, think about replacing it with something new rather than repairing it. While it might be more expensive at first, this decision will save you time and money in the long run.

Employee Security Training

If you want to run a cyber security-aware business, you'll need to train your employees in security awareness and



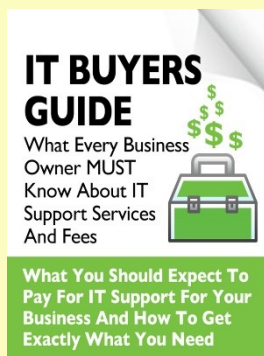
create a culture that ensures information security. Providing your employees with training related to information security can make them more comfortable and confident in their decision-making and overall employment. This rubs off on your clients and makes them feel more comfortable about doing business with you. According to information from the UK Information Commissioner's Office, human error is to blame for 90% of cyberdata breaches. Getting your employees trained in cyber security awareness can help reduce the chance of human error.

As you lay out plans to make your business more successful throughout 2022 and beyond, ensure that your tech and information security practices are updated. There are simply no downsides to improving your technology and cyber security. Adopting these practices can go a long way toward making your employees and customers feel more comfortable and confident in their decisions.

“If you do not have a backup plan or program in place, you should definitely get one for 2022.”

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- 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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Don't Give Up On You

when I say that I am a work in progress and am completely comfortable with recognizing my own flaws and I am not afraid to fail. Failure does lead to huge successes after all. Is there something in your business that you have avoided?

A few things CST is working on....

- ◆ Major upgrades in our cyber security monitoring. This project is all Shawn and he is overflowing with information from our experts on how these serious risks are affecting all of you. We are excited to add some additional features to increase our awareness of security issues.
- ◆ New offerings are on their way for 2022. We currently offer three options for remote monitoring and management (RMM) packaged services and although that number may not change, we certainly are going to be adding (and taking away) from the current layout. We will also be adding a package specifically geared to each client that will be our enhanced security package. All the packages are a work in progress, but you will be the first to know once we have them laid out. Now, most of you are in a "grandfathered" package but you will see small increases and added security benefits.
- ◆ Revised website is well on its way as we are adding new content. Please visit www.cstsupport.com often and be sure to check out the "Meet the Team" page because this page is staff driven. They write the bio's for each other and from what I have heard, they have awesome ideas coming in the first quarter.

Although these are just a few things in the works, we want you to know that we are constantly trying to improve our services. We need you to know that we take your technology very serious and protecting it is our job. Hence our tag line "We Take Care Of Your Technology So You Can Focus On Your Business".

And finally, welcome to 2022. This is going to be an amazing year. No matter what crazy stuff is happening in our world, let's focus on all the positive, amazing things happening in our lives. You shouldn't have to dig too deep to find them. Please join me and get your 2022 party started.

Happy New Year to All!

Lisa



As you venture through your business and personal life, you'll have people tell you "no" or that your ideas aren't good enough. But remember: you know your goals, dreams and aspirations better than anyone else, so why would you let their opinions have an impact on your vision? I certainly wouldn't be where I am today if I had listened to all of the naysayers and critics. If you have a dream, don't let anything hold you back from accomplishing it.

After I wrote my first two books, *The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur* and *The Pumpkin Plan*, I approached my publisher and said I had written another book: *Profit First*. They looked it over and said, "Nobody needs another accounting book." I was a little stunned, but I wouldn't let that stop me.

I knew that I had a really strong book, and my mentor at the time told me to "make them regret it," so I doubled down and decided to publish *Profit First* myself. It ended up being a roaring success. I sold so many copies that my publisher reached out to me about buying the book after they had rejected it the first time!

We made a revised, extended edition for

Penguin Books, and it is definitely my most popular book to date. If I had listened to my publisher the first time around, I never would have made *Profit First* or any of the other small-business books I have written since then. I get calls and e-mails all the time from small-business owners who have improved their businesses through things they learned in *Profit First*. All of the money these businesses saved and the lessons they learned from *Profit First* never would have happened if I have given up on my goal.

If you come up with a product, service or idea that you think can help people in any regard, try to push forward through any negativity or criticism. Critics don't always see the big picture and may use preconceived ideas to form an opinion about your business or idea. If you think you are on the verge of something great, don't let anyone or anything stop you from pursuing your vision. You absolutely cannot give up on yourself. Push on and continue chasing your dreams.



Mike Michalowicz has always believed that he had the formula to success and has proven it on multiple occasions. He is the creator of the book *Profit First*, which is used by hundreds of thousands of companies across the globe to drive greater profits. Mike is a former small-business columnist for *The Wall Street Journal* and served as a business makeover specialist for *MSNBC*. Mike currently leads two new multimillion-dollar ventures as he puts his latest research to the test.

■ Work Smarter, Not Harder

In many cases, entrepreneurs try to do as much work as possible in order to meet their standards and succeed in their industries. Sometimes, these entrepreneurs do way more work than is necessary. Unfortunately, this may involve more busywork, on a daily basis, which will put any entrepreneur on the fast track to burnout and may even reduce profits.

If you feel like your days are bogged down with busywork, you should look into business automation tools. These will help get your business back on a profitable track while also alleviating stress. Automation tools are available to boost nearly any aspect of a business. Google Workspace and Office 365 can help with various tasks, Mailchimp and Constant Contact can make e-mailing a breeze and FreshBooks can help automate billing. If you're not using any automation tools in your business, you should start now. Do your research and find the programs that will benefit your business the most.

NATIONAL CLEAN OFF YOUR DESK DAY

Monday January 10th is National Clean Off Your Desk Day. This day is your opportunity to begin your new year with a clean and organized workspace. CST feels a clear desk promotes a clear mind.

Lets declutter!

Whether your desk is in an office, cubicle, or you're working from home, having an organized workspace is the best start to a more efficient workday. A clean workspace improves productivity and inspires us to get more done. It may give you a sense of peace. We do not want the overwhelming feeling of your work taking over you but rather YOU taking charge.

HOW TO OBSERVE #CleanOffYourDeskDay you ask?

While there are those who say they know where everything is, we all know a clean start helps give us a new perspective on how productive our workday will be.

How to get started:

- Remove everything from your desk. Yes, I mean everything.
- Give your desk a good scrub down. How long has that dust bunny been living there? As you replace items, clean them. Be sure to take extra care with your electronics.
- Now, get out the shredder and the garbage can. Go through all the papers, business cards, receipts, and documents. Shred anything with sensitive information, file all important documents or scan them, and toss any garbage.

Now all you need is a fresh calendar for the new year and your to-do list. You're ready!!!

Use #CleanOffYourDeskDay to post on social media and be sure to tag #CSTgroupinc.

Jessica