

CST Tech News

What's New

Starting a new year is a mindset.

Honestly, the only thing that changes is the last two digits of a number, but we put significant value on it. Yes, it is the advancement of time but it is not like a season changing where you visually and physically see the climate change, flowers bloom, snow fall or leaves change. Celebrating the "new year" started about 2000 B.C. and originally occurred at the time of the vernal equinox at the end of March. It was later changed by Caesar to January, in part, to honor the month's namesake, Janus, the Roman God of New Beginnings. Therefore, a new year represents new beginnings and provides us with a reason to start new goals and evaluate accomplishments and failures, but shouldn't we be doing this all year?

CST had a handful of goals for 2022 but one was vital for both of us and that was finalizing and enhancing our security protocol - a goal we HAD to accomplish for your safety and ours. This is not a one and done by any means. Hackers are getting more sophisticated by the minute and securing your technology is never ending. We will evolve as it evolves.

Now we move on to our 2023 goals. As always, Shawn and I have established S.M.A.R.T. annual goals; they are

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January 2023



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.



Prepare Your Business For A Successful 2023 With These 3 New Year's Tech Resolutions

If you don't have goals for 2023, there's no better time than the first month of the year to make them. Whether you want to increase sales, customer loyalty or another essential key performance indicator, you must be intentional about your resolutions. If you keep it vague, you probably won't achieve your goals, so you need to be specific and start small. From there, you can build on your foundation until you've reached your objective.

Thankfully, there are some great tech resolutions you can implement to help your business accomplish its yearly goals.

Improve Your Customer Experience

Does your business have a website? The answer for most companies is yes, but is your

website actually driving any sales? Do your customers enjoy the experience they gain from using your website? These are all questions you need to ask yourself because if you can answer no to any of them, then you need to reevaluate your website and digital customer experience.

If your business sells products, you must ensure the web pages are easy to navigate and the checkout process runs smoothly. If your business does not sell products online, utilize the space by writing and posting blogs to inform your clients about the industry or talk about events within your community.

Additionally, look into artificial intelligence chatbots if you don't already use them. Chatbots work around the clock to provide your

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customers with answers to their questions about your business, products or services. Some chatbots are even capable of learning, allowing them to provide more personalized communication.

Invest In Cyber Security

Cyberthreats and attacks occur daily. While large businesses that get attacked garner a lot of attention, small businesses are at equal risk. You must do everything you can to protect your business and customers. This month, take some time to evaluate your cyber security practices and determine where you need to improve. If your hardware is old and outdated, it might be time to update. When your software informs you it needs to be updated, do not wait. Most of these software updates include patches to better protect you from new cyberthreats.

Possibly the most critical part of your cyber security plan needs to be employee education. Your entire team needs to know and fully understand your cyber security practices and why you have them in place. If you don't run your team through cyber security training at least once a year, 2023 is the time to implement it. Make sure they know about password

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security, phishing scams, social media etiquette and the importance of protecting company and customer data.

Get Help With Your IT Needs By Hiring A Managed Services Provider Like Us

MSPs provide an excellent solution for small-business IT needs as they can handle everything behind the scenes, allowing you and your team to focus more on your important work. MSPs will take care of your data backup and disaster recovery, improve the quality of your computer systems and networks and ensure your team has all necessary software updates downloaded. MSPs can identify issues and fix problems before they become much more serious. Hiring an MSP is one of the few surefire ways to ensure your business stays protected from cybercriminals. And they've even become more affordable over the past few years. If you've been interested in hiring an MSP, there's no better time than the present. You'll be fulfilling a New Year's resolution while significantly improving and protecting your business. If you don't already have our services, give us a call to learn more!

The new year provides us with an opportunity to reset and refocus our attention back on improving our business. You have to make plans if you want to improve, though. Give some of these resolutions a try, and you'll quickly notice the benefits they bring to your business.

FREE 30-MINUTE WEBINAR AND A CHANCE TO WIN \$100 AMAZON GIFT CARD

Join Lisa for a 30-Minutes LIVE Webinar on

Wednesday, January 11th at 2pm

Registration
now
OPEN!



DOCUMENTATION YOU MUST HAVE AS A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

The days of you not having access to YOUR accounts are over. As a small business owner/decision maker, it is time to take control of your information. Spend 30 minutes with Lisa on what documentation you should have, where it should be kept and how you should protect and distribute that information when needed.

Register at: www.cstsupport.com/webinar

As an attendee, you will be entered to win a \$100 Amazon Gift Card

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Or give us a call at 877.954.4100

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Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-measured. We will also ask for your help as some of what we will be doing will have an impact on you as we move through a more security conscience climate.

Here are a few things we are working on:

1. Two Factor Authentication – we will be forcing all of our Microsoft 365 clients to implement two-factor authentication on your account. As email is the primary gateway for hackers, we need to ensure yours is protected.
 2. Password Management – how many of your passwords are the same (or some variation of the same)? We will be offering an administrative tool for you to lock down all users' passwords making them more complex yet easy to access along with being able to see and change them quickly in the event of an emergency.
 3. Advanced Security Package – This customized advanced package will provide that extra level of security needed for our clients with compliancy requirements.
 4. Security Awareness Training – You and your employees are our greatest risk. We have been providing security awareness training for our clients since 2020 so if you want to know who is putting your company at risk, this training is the way to do it.
 5. VOIP Phones – we will soon be able to provide you with Voice Over Internet Phone options allowing you to have ONE vendor who takes care of all your technology needs... including your phones.
 6. Penetration Tests – In cooperation with Galactic Advisors, we offer network penetration tests to gain knowledge on how far a hacker could go if they were to get through your network. This is valuable information and allows us to patch any holes we find.
 7. Monthly Webinar's – with a variety of technical and non-technical topics, we hope to use this as a tool for educating our clients and prospects.
- As you can see, we have big plans, and we will provide updates as we move forward.

On a final note, I am grateful for each of you and proud that we ended another year on a high note and look forward to building our businesses together in 2023 and beyond.

"Passionate NOT Pushy"

Lisa

Become A Better Listener

To be a great leader, you need to have phenomenal listening skills. If you're a fantastic listener, hiring talented teams, leading people and closing on your big sales is more effortless. Listening might even be the most crucial skill for getting hired at your dream job and achieving career success.

Throughout my work, I've observed different degrees of listening skills. To be the best listener, you need to listen to the highest degree possible. Here are my five degrees of listening skills, listed from worst to best.

1. **Not Listening:** It's tough to listen when you are the one making all the sounds in a room. Don't be the one doing all the talking.
2. **Not Talking:** Your future boss may think you are not smart enough to keep up or you don't really care if you just sit there and don't talk.
3. **Nodding And Saying 'Mm-hm':** Oh, good, at least you're alive. But just nodding and making moaning noises is not super-insightful and does not build rapport.
4. **Reflecting On What You Heard:** If someone says, "Our growth strategy is primarily through international expansion," then a pure reflection would be to say, "So your growth strategy is international." Your future boss will say, "Yep," and will be only mildly impressed with you.
5. **Reflecting On The Emotion Behind The Statement:** Understanding why someone is saying something with a

specific emotion can give you further insight and the ability to read between the lines and give them a proper answer.

Here's an example. Imagine if your future boss just told you the industry is changing extremely fast and the company has been struggling to keep up. Degree 4 would be to say, "The industry is changing fast. The company has to change fast." This is child's play compared to Degree 5 listening.

Degree 5 listening would be something like, "It sounds like everything is changing so fast. It must be stressful keeping up."

Your future boss will say, "Yes, it is."

Then you add, "You need to count on your team and know they can keep up with the speed of change."

Your future boss will say, "Exactly." Once you first hear the word "exactly," the probability you will receive a job offer is at least 80%. That is because your future boss feels that you understand them, you care and you are the person to deliver them something good or remove something bad.

We seek safety with others. We need to know whether someone is an ally or an enemy. Reflecting on the emotion behind a statement can help leapfrog you right into "ally" mode with your future boss and get you your dream job.



Dr. Geoff Smart is chairman & founder of ghSMART, a leadership consulting firm that exists to help leaders amplify their positive impact on the world. Dr. Smart and his firm have published multiple New York Times bestsellers. He stays active in his community and has advised many government officials.

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How To Create More Meaningful Conversations

The best way to learn more about other people is by talking to them. Not everyone is a gifted conversationalist, though. When you struggle to hold conversations, you're less likely to build meaningful relationships or leave an impact on people. Thankfully, there is a foolproof way to improve your speaking skills. It all relates to the questions you ask.

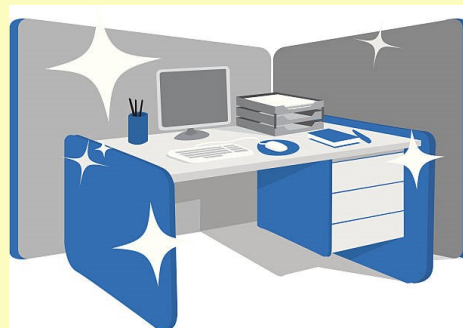
When you meet someone new, how do you approach them? You probably ask, "How are you? What do you do? Where are you from?" While these questions help you understand basic information about someone, they won't produce a meaningful conversation. Instead, be more specific or intriguing with your questions. Try asking others, "What's your story? What do you consider a defining moment in your life? Why did you choose your line of work?" These questions will spark more conversation and make you appear more interesting. You can even use them while interviewing potential new hires to learn more about who they are.

The New Year is Upon US!!

Let's get organized people. This time of year is always a very busy time for businesses. Budgets are being made, tax prep is beginning, and everyone wants to start the year off with an organized lifestyle.

We love to get organized! We have been doing a little decluttering of the CST Office as well, getting it fresh and clean for 2023.

When you are cleaning, don't forget to take a look at the files on your computer. We all know that one co-worker with 50 files on their desktop. Take a few minutes to go through your saved documents and get rid of ones you don't need and organize the ones you do. You'll thank me later!!



Happy Cleaning,

Jessica

BARTENDERS CHOICE: The Bloody Caesar

Headache from a long night of partying? The Caesar is the cure!

Rim Options:

Celery Salt

Seasoning Salt

Montreal Seasoning

1-2 ounces of either Vodka, Gin, or Tequila

Tablespoon of pickle juice

Teaspoon of each- Horseradish, Tabasco and Worcestershire

Splash of Lime juice

Pinch of Black Pepper

Fill the glass the rest of the way with Clamato Juice

*Do not forget the garnish. Pickles, Olives and Pepperoncini's are traditional. How about Bacon, Shrimp or Onion Rings?

