CST TECHNOLOGY TIMES

Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably

PREPARE YOUR KIDS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR

Tech Tips To Maximize Learning Potential

Back-to-school season has finally arrived, and it won't be long before our kids are back in the classroom, learning all sorts of different subjects. Although it's an exciting time for our kids, this transition – back to school – is often difficult. Many of them enjoy summer more than any other time of year because they get more freedom to participate in their favorite activities. When school starts, they have additional responsibilities to keep up with to ensure future success.

As a parent, you play a vital role in your child's success, and there are some tech strategies you can use to help give them an advantage. Whether we like it or not, technology plays a part in our children's education and lives, so it's in our best interests to get familiar with the tech our

kids use regularly and create guidelines to ensure they stay on task.

We've gathered some of our favorite back-to-school tech tips to help you prepare your children for a successful school year.

Protect Their Devices.

If your children have a smartphone, tablet or computer, they will likely use the Internet and visit various websites. Some of these websites may be unsecured and could download malware or a virus to their device, which can cause even bigger problems down the road. The device will likely stop working as efficiently as it

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"passionate NOT pushy"
about your technology

By Lisa Brown, CEO & Founder

"I have an IDEA!" are four of my favorite words. My staff would say just the opposite, but I think I am turning them around. You see, I love ideas – from anyone and everyone that has them. I believe it is with them that growth happens and without it, we sit stagnant, doing the same thing, day in and day out. Who in their right mind would want to do that? I know that for us to grow, we must change and for the change to be positive, we need lots and lots of information so we can make great decisions. Now I know information is at your fingertips with access to the world wide web, but understand, the "internet" doesn't know you, your business, your goals, your mission in life.

So, who are you getting your ideas from? Are you talking to your clients/customers, vendors, or employees? What about your other resources? I'm talking about your associations and peers. They should certainly understand your business and be able to give you some great ideas.

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CST Group Inc.

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OUR MISSION:

CST Group Inc. is a PROACTIVE technology management firm that specializes in helping municipalities and compliance-driven industries to SECURE, PROTECT and MANAGE their technology.

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should, and your family's personal information may become compromised. It's imperative that you download some type of antivirus or security software. Most web browsers offer free security features, but you can also buy enhanced security plans if you want extra protection.

You should also look into restricting certain websites and apps on your network and your children's personal devices. You don't want them to stumble upon a website that's not age-appropriate or is unsecured.

Set Rules Around Screen Use.

Many experts agree that children ages 5 to 17 should not be on a screen for more than two hours per day. Screen overuse can lead to mental and physical health problems that could hinder your child's development. That being said, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry reports that, on average, children ages 8 to 12 in the United States spend four to six hours a day watching or using screens, and teens spend up to nine hours.

As the parent, it's your responsibility to enforce guidelines around screen time usage. While you might have been a little more lenient

> ## "The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry reports that, on average, children ages 8 to 12 in the United States spend four to six hours a day watching or using screens, and teens spend up to nine hours.

during the summer months, now is the time to set ground rules. Give them a certain amount of time they're allowed to use their devices for personal use, and make it so they can only use the screens in public areas of the house, not a bedroom. That way, you can monitor what they're doing and how long they use their devices. Keep in mind that you will have to follow these guidelines to a similar extent, or else your child will find your rules unfair.

Back Up Their Data And Update Software.

Your child likely has a lot of important information and documents on their laptop or personal computer. Make sure you're regularly

backing up their data so they don't lose it if something happens to the hardware. It's also a good idea to store and save everything to a cloud storage service so they can access their homework and other important files from other devices.

Finally, check their devices to see if any software needs to be updated. Companies are constantly releasing updates to their software to plug any cyber security holes and ensure it runs to the best of its ability. Keeping your devices up-to-date will offer additional security and allow them to run faster. Help make the upcoming school one to remember and set them on the path to success by implementing some of the above tech tips!

"Free Up Coming Webinar"

Join Lisa for a 30-minute LIVE webinar on:

"Smarter NOT Harder - Things That Make You Go Huh!"

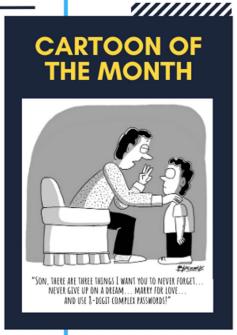### Wednesday, August 16, 2023

During the webinar, you'll learn...

- Tips and Tricks to make your day run smoothly...
- STOP doing these three things...
- Get through your day stress-free by implementing ONE simple rule...

Who should attend...

Small Business Owners who are looking for ways to make their technology run smoother, perform at its optimal, and leave stress behind.

Secure your place by registering now at www.cstsupport.com/webinar

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

"SON, THERE ARE THREE THINGS I WANT YOU TO NEVER FORGET... NEVER GIVE UP ON A DREAM... MARRY FOR LOVE... AND USE 8-DIGIT COMPLEX PASSWORDS!"

THE SECRET TO MOTIVATING YOUR EMPLOYEES?

Look At Your Management Systems

"How do I motivate employees?"

Academics and managers have pondered this question since the dawn of the study of management. After advising thousands of successful and unsuccessful leaders for nearly 30 years and analyzing their performance, I have observed a pattern that stands out.

Great leaders don't ask this question. First, the term "employee" sounds condescending and patriarchal, so great leaders call their coworkers "colleagues," "associates" or "teammates." Second, great leaders see management systems as the prime movers of colleague behavior and the resulting outcomes. They don't place the blame on "employee motivation." Below-average managers wonder how to motivate employees, and they are achieving below-average results typically due to one or more management system failures.

What brings managers to wonder how to motivate employees typically follows a breakdown in hiring systems, clarity of expectations or rewards/results alignment. Let me illustrate with an example first. Let's say Pat is an employee at a company that sells and installs solar panels on houses. The average employee sells and installs solar panels on three homes per week. But Pat is only completing one house per week. Why?

First, Pat doesn't like to talk with people but instead prefers to use tools and complete installation projects. Second, it's unclear whether Pat is expected to sell or not. Third, Pat recognizes that the company's fixed salary pays the same no matter how many houses are completed in a week. Wise leaders can immediately see Pat doesn't have a motivation problem. In contrast, the manager has a

management problem that can be fixed in three easy steps.

Hire Right: Poor hiring systems lead to hiring someone like Pat (who doesn't like talking to people) for a job that requires selling. Perhaps Pat would be a star performer if the job were designed to focus just on installations and not on selling.

Clarify Expectations: Is Pat supposed to sell or just install? This sounds like a ridiculous question, but many large and small organizations have poorly defined job expectations that result in a diffusion of energy by colleagues. A clear set of measurable outcomes, with results reviewed frequently, is an antidote to unclear expectations.

Align Rewards To Results: If it is more valuable to an organization for a colleague to deliver higher output, then it only makes sense for the organization to reward the person accordingly, if not proportionally. Attempts to "push" employees to deliver greater output without any increase in rewards they can expect is disrespectful and illogical. If you're a manager wondering how to motivate your team, start by looking at your management systems. They could be causing your lack of morale.

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Dr. Geoff Smart is the chairman and 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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You see, although I listen to ALL ideas presented by EVERYONE in my life, I don't always implement them, and you don't have to either. Honestly, some ideas are downright awful while others are inspiring. How will I know if I don't hear them or implement them?

So, I HAVE A TECHNOLOGY IDEA....for YOU! Create a budget! A technology budget will give you a realistic view of what you will need to spend on securing your technology and protecting your data.

Let me give you an idea of what you should be spending. If you are a small company, with fewer than five computers, you should be spending between $6,000 and $12,000 a year. The numbers obviously go up from there with the more computers you have. If you are not allocating money to your technology, you are probably not investing in it or securing it as you should.

If you don't have a tech budget, this is the perfect time to create one as we are coming into budget talks and end-of-year spending. Be sure you consider replacing older computers (one or two a year is better than all at once), have a proactive security solution that protects you 24x7x365, a hardware firewall is a must for compliancy, and someone to call is a bonus.

If you need help establishing a budget or are not sure what you have vs. what you need, please reach out. Visit www.cstsupport.com to schedule a FREE network assessment. I will provide as much information as I can during that time. Remember, information is key to making great decisions and I've got lots of information just waiting to share.

Have you noticed our newsletter redesign? We thought it deserved a beautiful refresh and hope you like it. Remember, I love ideas so if you have one for me, feel free to send me an email at lbrown@cstsupport.com. Also, remember our monthly Webinars on the third Wednesday of every month at 10 am. You should be getting an invitation to these so if you have not seen one, please check your spam folders.

As always,

"passionate NOT pushy"

Lisa

GIVE YOUR CUSTOMERS SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Every business leader wants to create an ideal environment and experience for their customers. More customers means more referrals, which often equals more sales and higher profits. Figuring out how to go the extra mile for your customers can be difficult at times, especially when you're working with someone who is unhappy. Luckily, there are a few strategies you can implement to help improve the customer experience at your business.

See the situation from the customer's point of view. It's your business, and you know how it operates, but that doesn't mean you know everything about every situation or can disregard your customers' concerns. Think about it from their perspective before you respond in a manner that could reflect negatively on you and the business. If you wouldn't want another business owner or manager to say it to you, don't say it to your customers.

Give your customers the attention they deserve. Your customers won't like being passed off to other associates or being treated disrespectfully. Give them your full, undivided attention, and take what they say seriously. If you find this difficult, pretend you're talking to a relative, boss or someone else you hold in high regard.

Don't be afraid to ask for feedback. Sometimes, your customers won't tell you when you're doing something they don't like. Send out surveys or directly ask your customers for feedback. You'll be surprised by what they say and may even discover a few ways to improve your business.

Time to start harvesting that garden and double check that school supply list, August is here.

This time of year, our summer vacations are coming to an end, and back-to-school shopping and sports are sneaking up. This is also a great time to "reset the house" as my family lovingly refers to it.

Around the beginning of August my house (and now the office) is in the transition process. I start to go through the house organizing and preparing for the next season of the year both activities and weather related.

If you know me well, then you know I love a good checklist. So, of course, I have a checklist that helps me keep track of what I want to get done and when a task is completed. I like to ease my way into it too. I will start by picking up the house, usually while the kids are at Camp Grama's. Starting with a clean house really helps!

Then I go room by room. Washing curtains, carpets, and linens. Here in Northern NY, the weather can change overnight into fall, so I keep the AC's but swap out summer bedding for fall bedding. Putting away any toys or activities the kids have not been using. I get the kids involved too! They go through their rooms and pull out things they don't want or use anymore. We donate what we can and get rid of the rest.

Taking a few days to do this really helps me feel more prepared for the school year. The beginning of the school year is always chaotic with new schedules and activities and sometimes we are out all day for a sport. Knowing that my house is prepped ahead of time helps the house run smoothly even with all the running around.

=Jessica=