

CST TECHNOLOGY TIMES

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

"passionate NOT pushy"

By Lisa Brown, CEO & Founder

Accomplishing a "bucket list" item is a huge deal and this month; I am checking one off my list.

I wrote a book! As you know education is important to me and providing valuable information in this grand scheme is something I have always wanted to do. After a year in the making, it is finally done!

"From Exposed To Secure" is due for release on March 21, 2024 on Amazon!

In 2023, I was asked to co-author a cyber security and compliance book where industry leaders all came together to give our readers the most up-to-date information on the cyber security crisis and how compliance is necessary for every business, no matter its' size.

This book is a compilation of real-life scenarios, practical recommendations, and expert advice on a shared level that honestly, I am so proud to be a part of.



We are hoping to get this book to number one status on Amazon and I could certainly use your help with this. The Amazon launch date is March 21st. I will be sending out a series of reminder emails with links to pre-order the book and/or purchase the book on March 21st. Here is the link to sign up:

<https://www.cstsupport.com/from-exposed-to-secure/>.

There are many options including Kindle for just \$.99 cents. I am also offering FREE gifts if you purchase on that date to include a FREE network assessment for small businesses, a FREE dark web scan on your domain and THREE FREE reports with valuable information:

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CST Group Inc.

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



OUR MISSION:

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



TRUST IS THE NEW CURRENCY

How Wealthy Are You?

Today, most business transactions – whether buying shampoo or tonight's dinner – are faceless. That's why in our digital world, trust is the new currency. This shift in consumer behavior, sometimes called the "trust economy," is more than the quality of products or services you offer; it's about constructing a bedrock of reliability and transparency so customers choose you over competitors.

"Trust keeps society running. Even the most trivial interactions rely on small acts of trust," the Economist reported. This isn't lost on company leaders either. PwC's 25th Annual Global CEO Survey reported that behind industry conditions, consumer trust is the most important predictor of a company's past and future financial performance.

However, trust is increasingly difficult to earn. Thanks to the recent emergence of AI, frequent mishandling of personal data by companies and relentless cyber-attacks,

customers are more skeptical than ever. As product and service providers, PwC points out that we are constantly evaluated by our customers on whether or not we are "forces for good in society." Make one slipup and that trust is gone, perhaps for good.

How you handle data and use technology to influence your customers' experience will decide your fate in the trust economy. Prioritize the most important drivers of trust – empathy, reliability and integrity – and grow your customer loyalty this year and in the years to come.

Technology's Role In Improving Customer Trust

Our dependence on technology is undeniable, yet this very reliance makes us vulnerable. Computer pioneer Willis Ware once said, "The only computer that's completely secure is a computer no one can use."

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This statement hits a nerve, especially for businesses navigating the complexities of digital security. The challenge, then, is to harness technology in a way that boosts, rather than undermines, customer trust.

Be Transparent About Data Usage

Ever been shopping for a new shirt only to have an online ad pop up later for the same shirt? It’s not a coincidence – it’s data. Although customers expect you to collect data, they want a say in it. According to a report by Qonsent, 94% of consumers feel that having control over the data they share with companies is important.

Make sure you have a clear privacy policy that tells customers:

- What data you collect
- How you use it
- Who you share it with
- How they can adjust what data they share with you

Additionally, don’t collect more data than you need, and ensure your team is well-versed in data security, drawing from clear internal processes around data management. Slack’s “Privacy Policy” page is an excellent example of data transparency. It’s written for the consumer (not in legalese), and it clearly explains what

data is collected and why, and how users can change their preferences.

Take Cyber Security Seriously

Customers want to know if you have a good reputation for protecting their data and information. According to a 2022 McKinsey survey, 53% of consumers will only engage with a company after checking for a good security track record. Even one breach could mean losing a significant amount of your customer base.

To build trust with your customers, make sure your company’s cyber security strategy includes:

- Multi-factor authentication
- Proactive security software that stops attacks before they happen
- Regular security awareness training for all employees
- Frequent backups (local and remote, ideally)
- A disaster recovery plan to help you respond quickly and with authority, decreasing the risk of losing your customers after an incident

Leverage Technology To Improve Your Customers’ Experience

According to a 2018 report by Deloitte, customers spent 140% more with companies they had a positive experience with. Additionally, companies with positive

interactions reduced customer service costs by as much as 33%.

Technology enables businesses to offer personalized, seamless experiences that resonate with customers. Consider how e-commerce platforms use encrypted payment transactions and tailored shopping recommendations to provide secure and helpful interactions. Or CRM systems that act like an assistant who never forgets a face or a conversation, so you can manage customer interactions with greater personalization.

Above all, though, it’s the quality of every interaction you have with customers that builds trust. Whether over the phone, by e-mail or across a store counter, remember that your customer wants to trust you. You just have to deliver.

Embrace Trust And Earn Loyalty

Nearly half (46%) of consumers say they’ll consider another brand if data practices are unclear, according to the McKinsey survey. On the flip side, organizations prioritizing digital trust are more likely to experience a 10% annual boost to their top and bottom lines. Listen to your customers. Prioritize a trust-based approach to your business and digital security, and you’re not just winning trust now, you’re setting up for years of loyal customers.

Join Lisa for a 30-minute LIVE webinar on:

“FREE UP COMING WEBINAR”

"Our NEW VOIP Solution - What is it and How Much Does it Cost?"

Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 10:00 am

- A VOIP Option is NOW available
- What do you need to have in place to implement VOIP Phones
- Should Your Office Consider VOIP
- What features will VOIP Provide



For The Full Details And To Register, Go Online To: www.cstsupport.com/webinar

MIKE ROWE ON THE POWER OF AUTHENTICITY



In today's marketplace, where consumer trust is the linchpin of success, authenticity emerges as a key differentiator for businesses. Who better to break down the power of authenticity than one of the most down-to-earth TV personalities in America – Mike Rowe?

Known for his unscripted, real-life experiences, Rowe has had a career – spanning from his unconventional presentations on QVC to his adventures in Discovery's *Dirty Jobs* – that offers rich lessons on the power of authenticity in life and business.

Balance Authenticity And Authority

In 2001, Rowe worked at San Francisco's KPIX-TV. Eventually, he started a segment called "Somebody's Gotta Do It," where he interviewed tradespeople. Rowe imagined that he, the host, would explain the interviewee's work to the audience. After all, that's how his hosting experience had been so far.

Down in the sewers of San Francisco with Gene Cruz, Rowe began his opening line for the show. Just then, human feces splattered across his face. In response, Cruz said something that later became Rowe's mantra: "Down here in the sewer, it's best to keep your mouth shut." But Rowe kept trying his line – and failing. Between invasive cockroaches and rats, he couldn't get it right. Finally, Rowe gave up and let Cruz do the talking. The show was a massive hit and later became Rowe's foundation for his legendary performance on *Dirty Jobs*.

Instead of talking as the expert, Rowe let the real expert talk. In the city sewers, he realized he had to strike a new balance between expert authority and authenticity in order to connect sincerely with his audience.

"At that moment, I transitioned from – what I would call in cable TV anyway – the age of authority, where all the information came from an expert or a host, into the age of authenticity we're living in today, where the viewer is more skeptical and prefers to get their information by watching a conversation instead of a lecture," he explains.

Somewhere between authority – knowing your business and having all the facts – and genuine authenticity – being completely yourself with no offense (which your audience doesn't want to see anyway) – is where authenticity lives, Rowe says. The key to building a loyal audience is to figure out how to strike that balance.

Authenticity Is More Than Passion

In an early episode of *Dirty Jobs*, Mike plunged into a septic tank alongside Les Swanson. After 15 years as a guidance counselor and psychologist, Swanson had left his career to start a septic-tank-pumping venture near Madison, Wisconsin.

"It was Les Swanson who said to me, 'I'm not here because I'm passionate about septic tanks,'" Mike reflects. "'I'm here because I wanted to do something different.'"

Rowe's journey mirrored a similar path. He'd crawled into sewers and septic tanks, using his skills in conversation to shine a light on others' important work.

"The lesson isn't to not have passion. Passion is important to follow – bring it with you in all things," Rowe says. **"But real job satisfaction comes from finding an opportunity and finding a way to be great at it, and then finding a way to love it."**

SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH

HP Sprocket Portable Photo Printer

The HP Sprocket Portable Photo Printer is a little gem for photo enthusiasts. This pint-sized printer brings your digital snaps to life directly



from your smartphone. Its Bluetooth connectivity is a breeze, and the ZINK Zero Ink tech means no more splurging on cartridges. What you get are vibrant, smudge-proof 2" x 3" sticky-backed photos, ready to stick anywhere.

But here's the kicker – it's not just a printer. With the HP app, your photos can get a makeover with funky filters and stickers, making each print uniquely yours. Ideal for parties, this gadget lets multiple friends connect and print simultaneously, each with their own LED color cue. Super portable, it's like carrying a photo booth in your pocket. Charge it up, toss it in your bag, and you're set for 35 prints of fun.

FREE REPORT DOWNLOAD:

21 Critical
Questions
Your I.T.
Consultant
Should Be
Able to Say
"YES" to



You'll Learn:

- The "dirty little secret" of the I.T. support industry that most people don't know and will never be told by their I.T. guy (this will surprise you).
- Hackers, ransomware and data theft: what you REALLY need to know to protect yourself from a costly, devastating ransomware attack.

Claim your FREE copy today at
<https://www.cstsupport.com/21-questions/>

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- *The New Breed of Cybercriminal – What YOU Can Do To Protect Your Business From Being Held Hostage, From Lost Profits And From Reputational Damage.*
- *7 Urgent Security Protections Every Business Should Have In Place Now*
- *How To Create, Manage And Remember A Hacker-Proof Password*

I appreciate YOU and know that every small business can benefit from the information in this book. Visit [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and purchase "From Exposed To Secure" on March 21st.

VOIP Solution:

I know my Book was BIG news, but CST has also been busy with our new VOIP phone solution. You asked for it, and we made it happen. CST can provide you with your telephone system and now, all your IT services are with ONE company. Plus, you get our great service.

The features of this new VOIP solution are incredible so if you are either struggling with the cost of your current phone system or want some features your current system cannot provide, please reach out by calling the office or emailing michelle@cstsupport.com. Michelle will be able to provide you with additional information and see if you are a good fit for this solution.

FREE Webinar – March 13th 10am to 10:30am:

If you want to learn more about our VOIP solution, I will be hosting a webinar on March 13th at 10am to provide you with lots of information on what a VOIP phone system is, what features it has and costs associated with it. Visit <https://www.cstsupport.com/webinar> to register for this FREE event.

FREE Business Over Breakfast In-Person Event – March 20th 8am to 10am:

Wanting to make great technology decision on cyber security and compliance? I am hosting a FREE in-person Business Over Breakfast Event at the North Country Chamber of Commerce on March 20th from 8am to 10am. I will be giving you five tips to reduce your cyber security risk by over 88% without spending a dime! You will also learn the Cyber Security protocols you should have in place NOW and compliance requirements you can expect in 2024. Come join me for Breakfast and walk away with a full tummy and lots of valuable information. Go here to register: <https://www.cstsupport.com/seminar/> - there is a limit on attendance so please register NOW.

As we end first quarter, I hope all of you have accomplished something on your list of 2024 goals. Please reach out with any of your technology concerns. Remember, information is FREE and education is our 2024 goals.

As Always,
"passionate NOT pushy,"

lisa



BIG TECH COMPANY ADMITS IT'S LISTENING TO YOU

We've all suspected our devices are listening to us. How else could the clothing company you just told your sister about over brunch show up as a targeted ad on your Instagram feed? The tech community has largely denied listening without our permission. In fact, in 2017, Facebook had to publicly deny that it listens to its users (that's what they use location services and ad tracking for).

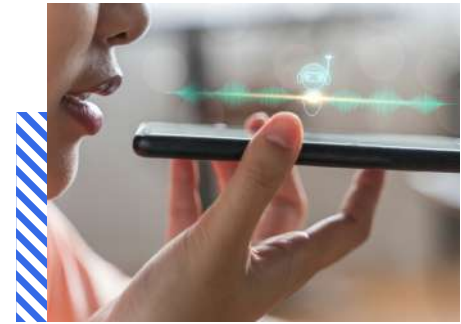
But Cox Media Group (CMG), a multibillion-dollar media empire that owns and operates TV and radio stations worldwide, admitted it's doing just that.

How Are They Doing It?

404 Media gathered published marketing information from CMG and determined that it uses AI to identify conversations via smart devices – collecting information about our spending behaviors, interests and how we spend our time – to deliver ads to us. CMG calls it "Active Listening." Though any mention of CMG's Active Listening platform has been removed from its website, the archived information is still accessible.

A document published by CMG's VP of digital strategy said, "Yes, our phones are listening to us," and "CMG has tech capabilities to use to your business advantage." For example, it claimed to use audio data to create detailed customer profiles, which benefits consumers (fewer irrelevant ads) and businesses (targeted marketing). Still, no one knows *exactly* how they do it, technically speaking. Would it still adhere to safety restrictions imposed by companies like Apple that prevent other companies from listening to its devices? No one knows.

CMG later published a statement saying, "CMG businesses do not listen to any conversations or



access to anything beyond a third-party aggregated, anonymized and fully encrypted data set that can be used for ad placement. We regret any confusion..."

Business Insider states, "It's important to note that it's not clear whether this technology and marketing is actually happening." Nevertheless, this incident is an important reminder to refresh your privacy settings and pay attention to the real possibilities of companies listening in.

Adjust Your Privacy Settings Now

Although tech leaders like Google and Apple have policies around how and when they listen to you, fake apps and shady companies do not. Any app with access to your microphone could listen to your most private conversations.

Take a moment and really look at the permissions you've given your apps. Ask yourself, does this app really need to listen in? If it's not essential, it's better to revoke that microphone access in your device's settings. Another smart move is to tweak your settings so that an app can only use the microphone while you're actively using it. Finally, never download apps unless you know how, when and why they collect data about you, especially voice data.

March is the month of luck and I am sure we could all use a little of it.

With all the talk of Leprechauns, rainbows, and gold coins you must be feeling that positive vibe in the air. Have you been thinking about trying something new? Why not now? This is the perfect time to take a few chances.

I am here to give you that push towards greatness. Wonderful things don't happen by sitting back and watching the world go by. Everyone should take that jump of faith at least once in their lifetime whether it be for love, a career or checking off something on your bucket list (Like our CEO did this month).

Sometimes all you need is 30 seconds of insane courage to get you going. Literally 30 seconds of jolting bravery. Go ahead and do something crazy and when you do, we want to know about it! So when you get the nerve and are feeling lucky, be sure to share it with us.

Maybe you will inspire others and I know we could all use some inspiration!

Use #theluckofCST and tag CST in your post.



TYLER'S TECH TRICKS

Does your computer take a long time to start up?

You might want to check to see if there are too many start up apps slowing it down.

- Simply type "start" in your windows search bar and click "Startup Apps"
- Then go through and turn off any apps that don't need to open when you first turn on your computer.

Programs and Apps like Spotify and Skype can be turned off at start up, which then frees up memory on your computer resulting in a faster experience.

Remember, you can always call the office if you need assistance. We'd be happy to take care of this for you.



Important Dates in March

- 8th International Women's Day
- 10th Daylight Savings
- 13th Webinar with Lisa
- 17th St. Patrick's Day
- 20th Business Over Breakfast at NCCoC
- 21st LISA's BOOK LAUNCH & Sara's Birthday
- 31st Easter Sunday

BIG REWARDS

For Your Referrals



Full Details Here:
<https://www.cstsupport.com/about-us/referral-program/>
 or call us at 1-877-954-4100

TRUST

By Hernan Diaz

We'll pause from your regular stream of business book content for an award-winning fiction novel called *Trust*.

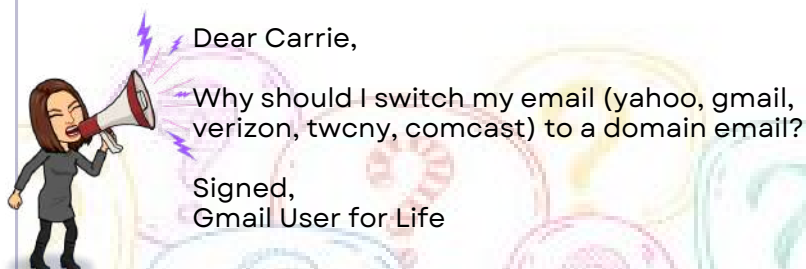


Trust by Hernan Diaz is an enthralling Pulitzer Prize-winning novel that masterfully blends genres and timelines. Set against the backdrop of New York's roaring '20s and the Great Depression, it delves into the lives of Benjamin and Helen Rask, a power couple whose fortune is as immense as the mysteries surrounding it. Diaz skillfully weaves a complex narrative that challenges readers to discern fact from fiction, exploring themes of wealth, power and deceit.

This literary puzzle captivates with its deep dive into class, capitalism and the influence of power on reality. Both a gripping tale and an intellectual journey, *Trust* offers a fascinating exploration of personal relationships and societal constructs, making it an exhilarating read.

Q & A with Carrie

your friendly Account Manager



Dear Carrie,

Why should I switch my email (yahoo, gmail, verizon, twcnv, comcast) to a domain email?

Signed,
Gmail User for Life

Dear Gmail User for Life,

That is a great question. Ten years ago, Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, and even AOL emails may have been ok, but with the knowledge and drive of hackers now, those emails are super easy to hack. Once you click send on an email, it goes out into the internet and there is a risk of it being intercepted by some not so nice guys who want to steal your info, or even money. By having a domain email (think yourcompanyname.com) we here at CST are able to add security and encryption so not only are your emails protected, but any sensitive data you send as well.

TURNING DOWN THE VOLUME ON STRESS: Why Leaders Are Choosing Mindfulness Over Hustle

Meditation and mindfulness practices have been studied in a range of contexts – from college students to hardened marines (who showed faster stress recovery with mindfulness-based mind fitness training). Leaders who meditate think more clearly, stay calm in chaos and make smarter decisions. You don't need a mountain retreat to channel the Zen; meditation apps like Headspace, Calm and Insight Timer provide pocket-sized guided sessions to ease into this practice anywhere, anytime.

Want to meditate without interruptions? Just hit "Do Not Disturb" on your phone. On Android, swipe down and tap "Do Not Disturb." Apple folks, find it under "Settings" > "Focus" > "Do Not Disturb." Customize it to keep those calls and notifications quiet. This way, you can meditate peacefully and stay sharp for those big business moves.



Lisa Brown's **BRAND NEW BOOK!**

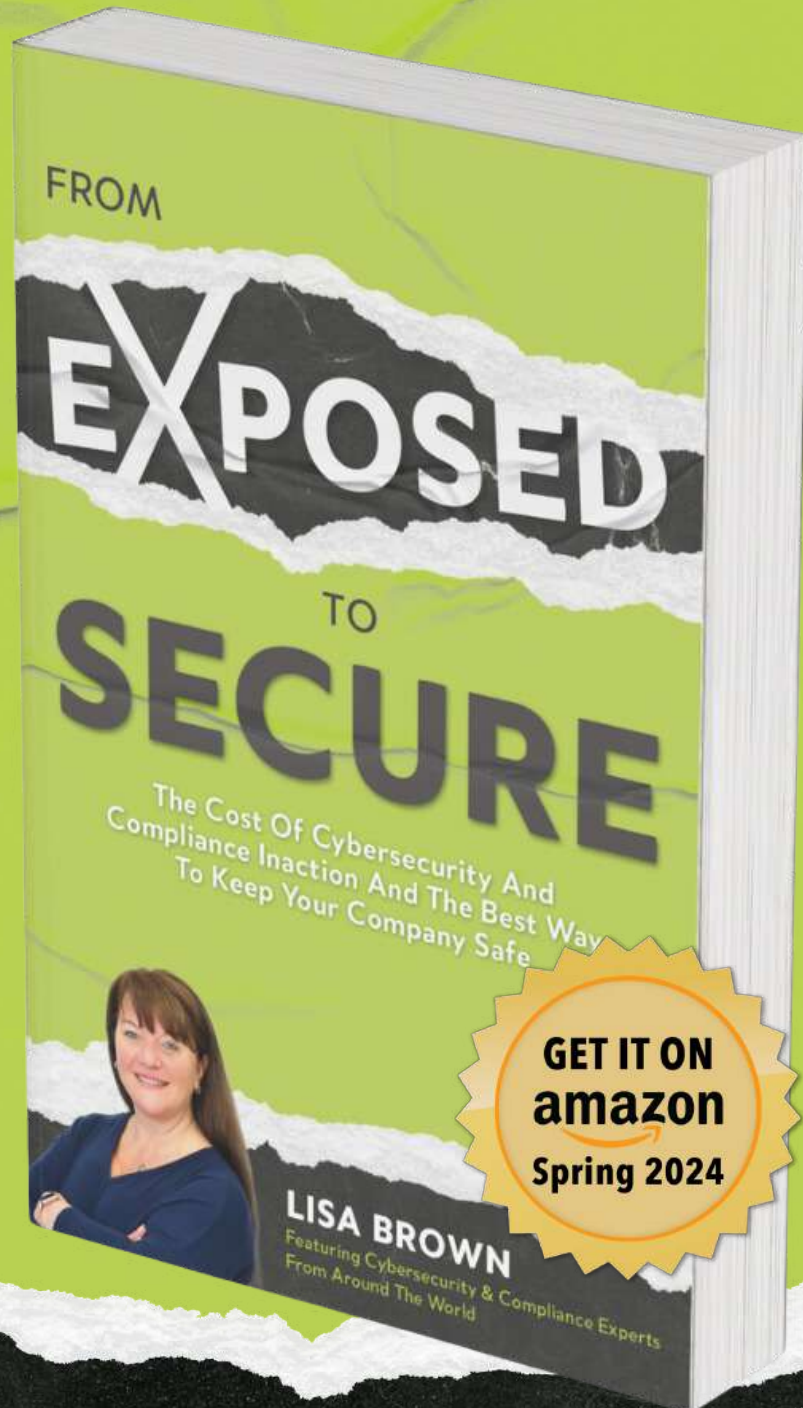
Cybercrime has developed into a billion-dollar industry. And as long as it's profitable to be a hacker or a scammer, these criminals *aren't* going away.

Featuring cybersecurity and compliance professionals with of experience, ***From Exposed To Secure*** reveals the everyday threats that are putting your company in danger and where to focus your resources to eliminate exposure and minimize risk.

These experts share their experience in utilizing data protection regulations and security measures to protect your company from fines, lawsuits, loss of revenue, intellectual property theft, *and* reputational damage.

Find Out Where Your Business Could Be At Risk For A Cyber-Attack By Scheduling A Call:

<https://www.cstsupport.com/discoverycall/>



RELEASES ON MARCH 21ST!

<https://www.cstsupport.com/from-exposed-to-secure/>