

CST TECHNOLOGY TIMES

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

"passionate NOT pushy"

By Lisa Brown, CEO & Founder

How are you keeping track of tasks? I mean honestly, how are you ensuring your employees/team members are doing their jobs with the same vigor and excitement you are? I certainly have high expectations on customer service, and I make assumptions every day that my team is meeting those expectations and for the most part, they are incredible. But how do I really know if I don't have some way of measuring it?

We are halfway through 2024 and Shawn and I have spent the last quarter auditing our processes and procedures. What we are learning is that many of our daily, weekly, monthly tasks are either not complete, or worse yet, not written which means it would be difficult to have someone else complete that task if the person who normally does it, is out. How can a company grow if we can't perform repeatable tasks with efficiency? How do I know what is working and what isn't if I haven't created specific measurable expectations?

Why is this July's topic of conversation? I have had a dozen or so conversations with small business owners who are struggling with securing and managing their technology. When asked how they are currently doing it, they ALL said, "we're not". They all expect it to work, allowing their team to be productive but none of them had considered what would happen if ONE computer were to go down not to mention if they were get a cyber-attack where ALL of their computers went down.

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5 ANNOYING TASKS YOU CAN AUTOMATE RIGHT NOW

Odds are that right now you're doing a handful of tasks manually that you don't need to, like sorting through an endless e-mail inbox. According to Microsoft, employees spend just under two hours daily on e-mail – that's more than eight hours a week spent in your inbox instead of on more creative or strategic projects.

But many businesses and employees have found a way off the relentless merry-go-round of to-dos: automation. By using software to manage repetitive tasks (without human intervention), you can complete your to-do list faster, spending less time on menial tasks and more time doing the projects you enjoy.

Task #1: Get Your Inbox To Zero (Without Wasting A Day Of Your Life)

E-mail is essential to our work today, but managing an overflowing inbox is an endless job. Automation tools, however, can quickly organize and prioritize e-mails, schedule responses and even convert e-mails to actionable tasks.

Here are a few ways to automate your e-mail tasks:

1. Automating inbox organization. In every mainstream e-mail platform, you

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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.

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can create filters and rules. Start by setting up filters in your e-mail to automatically sort incoming e-mails based on criteria like sender, subject or specific keywords. For instance, e-mails containing the word “invoice” can be directed straight to a designated folder.

2. Use labels and categorization. Most e-mail platforms have an automatic label feature that helps you categorize e-mails more dynamically than folders will allow. You can apply multiple labels to a single e-mail, making it easier to retrieve e-mails that may fall into several categories.

3. Scheduling and automating e-mail responses. Delayed send or scheduling tools automatically send your e-mails at predetermined times, which can be particularly useful for reaching recipients in different time zones. Write now, send later.

4. Automate task creation from e-mails. Automation services can integrate your e-mail with project management tools and automatically convert incoming e-mails into actionable tasks, so you never miss an important action item!

5. Utilizing AI and advanced automation. If you want to level up your e-mail automation, some automation tools let you use AI to label new e-mails based on their content, which can

streamline how you prioritize and handle incoming messages.

Task #2: Hands-Off Appointment Scheduling

We’re all busy people, but booking a meeting shouldn’t require 10 back-and-forth e-mails. Calendar automation tools remove this annoying exchange by enabling people to book directly on your calendar and sending automatic event invitations and reminders.

With calendar automation tools, you can:

1. Allow clients to book directly into your calendar. With automated calendar tools, customers or team members can view your available time slots and book directly.

2. Sync schedules across devices and team members. These tools can also sync with most e-mail platforms, ensuring all team members are updated in real time when a time or location changes.

3. Send automated appointment reminders. Calendar tools also support sending automated appointment reminders. These can be customized to go before the appointment, reducing no-shows and making sure everyone is on time and prepared.

Task #3: Streamline Bookkeeping

Tracking the ins and outs of finances manually

is tedious and can also be subject to more human error. Here are three ways automation improves bookkeeping:

1. Automatically import and categorize transactions. Automation software can automatically pull in and categorize transactions from your bank accounts and credit cards, dramatically reducing the need for manual entry and helping maintain cleaner, more organized financial records.

2. Generate custom financial reports with one click. Automated reporting tools also have robust capabilities for generating detailed financial reports instantly. These platforms allow for real-time insights into financial performance, enabling leaders to make informed business decisions quickly.

3. Integrate with your bank and payment processors: There are tools that also provide comprehensive integration with banking systems and payment processors that track cash-flow management and ensure that all transactions are automatically recorded and reconciled in your accounting software.

Focus On The Work You Enjoy

E-mail, appointments and bookkeeping are critical to running your work and business, but they don’t need to be a mind-numbing time suck. Use simple automation tools to take manual tasks off your plate so you can focus on the creative and strategic parts of your business you enjoy most.

“UPCOMING FREE WEBINAR”

Risk Assessments What Are They and Why You Need One ASAP!

Wednesday, July 10, 2024
at 9:00 am

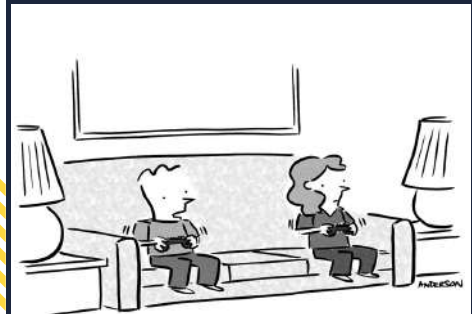
What is your level of risk from a cyber attack? Wouldn’t you like to know where the holes are in your network?

If your company handles personal identifiable information, then you NEED to know your risk level. Here is what you will learn:

- Do I need a Risk Assessment?
- How do I get a Risk Assessment and how much do they cost?
- What gets reported in a Risk Assessment?
- What happens after the assessment is done?
- Are there any risks of doing a Risk Assessment?

For complete information and registration, visit us online at:
www.cstsupport.com/webinar

CARTOON OF THE MONTH



“It’s interesting - Mom hates early Christmas sales, but she loves early back-to-school sales.”

DR. JORDAN PETERSON

ON WHY CHALLENGE IS THE KEY TO A FULFILLING LIFE



Although it can be difficult, we don't protect our children from every challenge they face. We let them fail, learn and grow. Otherwise, they'd never really know what they are capable of. As adults, however, we tend to shy away from challenges, seeing them as obstacles to a better life. But clinical psychologist and University of Toronto professor Dr. Jordan Peterson warns, "All the avoidance in the world isn't going to save you from your fate... There are endless pathways to tragedy, and that's the basic condition of life in some ways."

It sounds hopeless, but Peterson explains that it's the opposite: people bold enough to face challenges head-on hold the key to unlocking life's most tremendous potential. Peterson has made significant contributions to psychology, religion, ethics and growth with his renowned books, including *12 Rules For Life: An Antidote To Chaos* and *Beyond Order: 12 More Rules For Life*. He recently spoke at an industry conference and explained how, by embracing difficult circumstances with an "upward aim," we have the opportunity to find true satisfaction and meaning while having the adventure of our lives.

How To Face Challenges With An Upward Aim

A bad boss, a fight with a loved one or even being let go from a job – it feels like something is always standing between us and happiness. But Peterson encourages us not to avoid challenges. By opening our eyes to them and mustering the courage to overcome them, we transform into better versions of ourselves and move closer to a more fulfilling life.

"That's how you find the pearl of greatness," Peterson explains. "You face up to the genuine catastrophes of existence, and what happens is

you find out that you can do it... No matter how hard or how bad it gets, there's more to you than to whatever it is you have to face."

However, Peterson explains that when we face challenges, it's important to approach them with an "upward aim" or vision. This prevents us from becoming bitter or resentful during the process and lets us see the path through the challenge more clearly.

"You see the things that will help you, the things that will get in your way and the opportunities for transformation," he explains. "The aim specifies the landscape, and that's something remarkable to know."

If you're not clear on your aim or vision, Peterson suggests spending time thinking about these questions:

- If you could have what you need and want in work, life and your relationships – within reason – what would it be?
- What do you need to keep you going another day, another year?

We embark on a transformative journey by confronting our fears and flaws and taking responsibility for our actions. This practice of self-improvement benefits us and ripples out to our families and communities.

"Remember, everything you do is an up-aim ... The way you talk to people, the way you look at your wife, the way you greet your customers, the orientation for the money you make, your attitude toward yourself – every single bit of that, all devoted to that upward aim," Peterson says. "Then life reveals itself as an upward adventure – and that's the truth."

SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH

Atomic Bear Paracord Bracelet

If you've ever started an epic hike only to realize halfway through that maybe you've bitten off more than you can chew, you aren't alone. Unless



you are alone...lost in the woods without a cell signal. Recommended by survivalists on Masterclass, a survival bracelet is a must-have for campers, backpackers or your little nature scout!

The Atomic Bear Cobra Survival Bracelet is not just for you, it's for your whole family. It adjusts from 8 to 10.5 inches, making it suitable for men, women and children. The bracelet combines four camping must-haves into one compact design: a fire starter (comprising a striker and ferro rod), a reliable compass, a loud emergency whistle and 12 feet of military-grade paracord. Add the Atomic Bear Cobra Survival Bracelet to your hiking essentials and embrace adventure with confidence.

Happy Anniversary

Help me congratulate two of CST's finest as they celebrate work-aversary's.

JESSICA ALTVATER - Business Development - 4 years

SARA NICHOLS - Sales Development - 3 years

Our office wouldn't be the same with out you!

Congratulations and CHEERS to many more years!

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They all think that an attack would never happen to them. I can't explain how ignorant that is, but what if something else happened; hard drive crash, fire, flood (just ask some of our Florida clients) or theft.

Every small business needs to keep every aspect of their business protected...especially your technology. It is the most vulnerable thing you own thanks to the Internet. For all non-clients reading this newsletter, please consider how your technology is being secured, updated, scanned, patched, and BACKED UP! If you can't verify it is happening and hold someone accountable to ensure it does, it probably isn't.

Even if CST is managing your technology, we cannot read your mind or know what, who or if something has changed. Please make sure you notify us when any changes happen that affect your technology. This is just another reason we LOVE the Quarterly Business Reviews. It gives us an opportunity to chat...hint, hint – if you haven't scheduled your QBR, please do – they are important. If you don't have an IT provider or you simply want to know my top 5 things every business should be doing to protect their technology, give me a call.

Now, as a business owner, don't forget all the processes and procedures that do not include your technology, such as financial tasks or sales and marketing tasks. If only ONE person is doing something for you, be sure they have a written process with clear, step by step instructions. You will thank me later.

As some of you know, I have been working on a documentary highlighting the fallout of cybercrime on small business. I am honored to announce the premier of *Cybercrime: Fallout*, a full length documentary from award winning director, Jeff Roldan. It will be hitting the big screen July 17th in Nashville, TN (and select theaters) with a release on Amazon shortly thereafter. I am so proud to be an Executive Producer and MSP expert on this important film to educate the public and specifically business owners on the lurking dangers and onslaught of cybercrime that is spreading throughout the world. I will provide you with updates on its' release on Amazon as soon as they become available.

As Always,

“passionate NOT pushy”

Lisa

SMARTPHONE SOLUTIONS FOR DESKLESS WORK

Business isn't happening exclusively in the office anymore. People work from almost anywhere and they're doing it from their phones. As more employees move toward a “deskless” work life, smartphones are no longer just communication tools but are the epicenter of many business operations.

According to a 2020 report by Emergence, about 80% of the workforce worldwide is deskless, meaning they don't have a traditional office or workplace. Many deskless employees are service techs, sales, retail, construction, or health care workers. However, data shows that 60% of deskless workers aren't happy with the tech that employers provide them, and a whopping 78% said tech is a crucial factor when choosing a job. Embracing a mobile mindset isn't just a business advantage – it's essential to staying productive and competitive.

Support Your Workforce With Mobile Apps

With just a few taps on a smartphone, your team can clock in, communicate, manage tasks, revise documents and stay connected, regardless of their physical location.

Productivity Apps: Project management tools revolutionize team collaboration, allowing for real-time updates and seamless coordination. **Mobile Payments:** Payment apps make transactions smoother, more secure and more flexible to customer preferences, supporting sales anywhere, anytime.

Operations Management: Operations apps track inventory in real time. These tools are crucial for maintaining accuracy and efficiency in inventory management, and they can be used directly on a smartphone.

Marketing: Engage with audiences through mobile-first marketing apps that let marketing



team craft and monitor campaigns from their phones, including managing social media activity, scheduling posts and tracking engagement across platforms.

CRM And Sales Enablement: CRM platforms ensure that customer information and sales tools are always in your team's pocket so they can access detailed contact insights, pipeline management and sales actions anytime.

Keep This In Mind Before Buying

First, check that an app is compatible with your existing systems. Then, make sure it's customizable to fit your business processes and requirements. You'll also want to consider the app's cost, including any initial setup fees and ongoing subscription charges, to ensure it's within budget. Above all, security is paramount, especially for apps that handle sensitive data, like payment apps. Look for robust security features and compliance with relevant industry regulations.

Enhance Business With Deskless Tech

For business leaders navigating today's versatile work environment, integrating mobile apps into daily operations is not just for the fully deskless workforce. It's a forward-thinking move for any company aiming to streamline workflows and stay competitive. By providing the right tools that work as effectively on the go as they do at a desk, leaders can future-proof their businesses, ensuring their team has the resources they need to succeed in the increasingly mobile-centric world of work.

MOST E-MAIL PLATFORMS STINK AT KEEPING OUT DANGEROUS E-MAIL ATTACHMENTS

In 2024, computer and network security company SquareX ran a study testing the effectiveness of popular e-mail platforms in keeping out e-mails with dangerous attachments. One hundred malicious documents were sent through a third-party e-mail provider to platforms including Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo!, AOL and Apple iCloud Mail. What they found was that the majority of the harmful documents successfully evaded e-mail



provider antivirus and malware scans. “It truly scared us that it was this easy,” the company wrote. Remember, you are the last line of defense in your inbox. Never click on an attachment you weren't expecting, verify the sender before opening and ensure your device is protected with the most up-to-date security software.

SCHOOL'S OUT

School is over and its time to kick off to the summer. The warmer weather gets us excited for all the fresh and grilled foods. And with July 4th being a big grilling day, we need all the details!!

What games will you have? Will there be fireworks? What foods will you be serving? Obviously the food is our highest priority.

CST offices will be closed for the 4th so you can be sure we will be grilling up a feast to celebrate. We are looking forward to all the snacks, food and desserts!

So whether it is simple burgers and hotdogs or a southern seafood boil let us know. Take a picture of your festivities over the holiday weekend and tag us at **#redwhiteandtech** on our Facebook or Instagram page.

~Jessica~



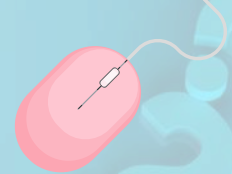
Q & A with Carrie

your friendly Account Manager

Dear Carrie,

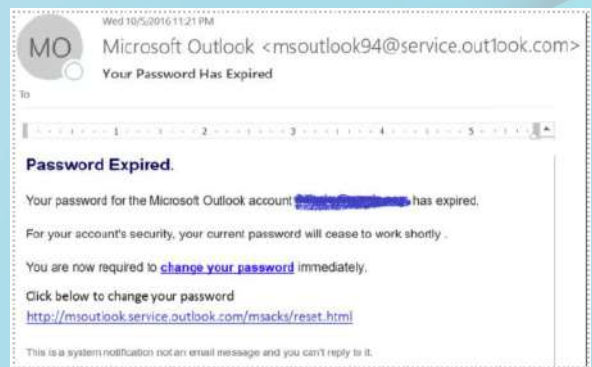
I keep hearing people getting scammed by emails that appear they are from places like Amazon and their banks. How can I tell a real email verses a scamming email? What should I do if it is a scam?

Sincerely,
Click Happy



Dear Click Happy,

Scam emails are a very rampant thing right now and they are making it super hard to determine if they are real or fake. If you get an email from a company or even someone close to you with a clickable link in it, call them 1st to make sure they were the ones who sent it or login to your account. If you are still unsure, you can hover over the sender name and that will show you the actual email address that it is coming from. When in doubt, DO NOT click on anything. Example below is one of those emails that you would NOT click on - this is a scam that looks real but it is not real.



Important Dates in JULY

- 1st- International Chicken Wing Day
- 4th - Independence Day (OFFICE CLOSED)
- 10th - Webinar with Lisa
- 21st- National Ice Cream Day

Tech Humor...

QUESTION:

Why did the computer take up gardening?

ANSWER: It wanted to improve its root access!

WE ARE AIMING HIGH AND NEED YOUR HELP

CST has launched a customer satisfaction rating platform where, YOU, our customers can rate our service levels.

At the bottom of our email, you will see this “How am I doing?” image, simply click the rating and fill it out.



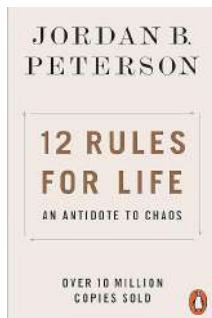
WANT TO SEE HOW WE ARE DOING?
VISIT: [HTTPS://WWW.CSTSUPPORT.COM/OUR-CLIENTS/](https://www.cstsupport.com/our-clients/)



12 RULES FOR LIFE: An Antidote To Chaos

By Jordan Peterson

In 12 Rules For Life: An Antidote To Chaos, Jordan Peterson, acclaimed clinical psychologist and one of the world’s most influential public thinkers, distills complex theories on human personality into 12 practical principles. This book, grounded in knowledge from psychology to religion to mythology, challenges the pursuit of happiness and instead emphasizes finding meaning amid life’s inherent suffering. Through a blend of personal anecdotes, clinical insights and ancient wisdom, Peterson crafts a compelling book that encourages taking individual responsibility to combat the chaos of modern life. His straightforward style and deep dives into cultural and psychological issues make this book a profound guide for anyone looking to bring more order and fulfillment to their life.



EXCITING NEWS FROM LISA

“CRN Recognizes Lisa A Brown of CST Group Inc. on being named to the 2024 Women of the Channel List!”



Lights, Camera, Cybersecurity!

The highly anticipated red carpet premiere of "Cybercrime Fallout" is set for July 17th at 7:00 pm CST at the Regal Green Hills Cinema in Nashville, TN.

The film features prominent MSP business owners including Charles Henson, Lisa Brown, and Scott Beck, who bring real-world cybersecurity challenges to the big screen.

As cyber threats evolve, the movie showcases the expertise and strategies of leading cybersecurity professionals, highlighting their relentless fight against digital crime. The film underscores the critical importance of robust cybersecurity measures for businesses of all sizes.

Watch on
Amazon this
Summer

