

# CST TECHNOLOGY TIMES

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

**"passionate NOT pushy"**

By Lisa Brown, CEO & Founder

## Embracing Change: A Smarter Approach to Time Tracking & Billing

When it comes to technology, change is inevitable. In fact, 64% of technology startups don't make it past their first five years.\* Why? Because failing to adapt—whether to new trends, security protocols, compliance requirements or software advancements—can mean the difference between success and failure.

For those of you who know me, you've seen firsthand how passionate I am about technology. I love what I do, and my team shares that same enthusiasm. It's one of the reasons CST has been in business for 25 years.

Over that time, we've made a lot of changes—some smooth, some more challenging—but always with the goal of improving the way we serve you. One of the more recent changes involves how we track and bill our time, and I want to be upfront about what that means for our clients.

## A Look Back: The Evolution of Time Tracking

When I first started this company, I tracked my time the old-fashioned way—with pen and paper. As you can imagine, this wasn't the most efficient method, and it led to a lot of unbilled (but valuable) time. Even after we implemented a ticketing system, gaps remained. While our clients appreciated the extra time and effort we provided, it became clear that if CST was



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*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.**

# HACKERS HATE THESE 6 SMB CYBERSECURITY TRICKS

(AND WHY THEY WORK)



The perception that SMBs have limited resources, smaller budgets and often a "that won't happen to us" mindset makes them attractive to hackers. Although it's true that SMBs don't have the resources of Fortune 500 companies, you don't need that kind of money to protect your business. Here are six simple strategies hackers hate because they're affordable, surprisingly easy to set up and highly effective.



## 1 Two-Factor Authentication

The #1 way hackers get access to business accounts is through stolen credentials. Two-factor authentication (2FA) and multifactor authentication (MFA) have existed since the mid-2000s and remain among the best ways to protect your information. 2FA requires things to log in – your passwords and a second factor, like a text message code. If a hacker guesses or

steals your password, they still can't get past that second layer of protection. Many platforms, including Google Workspace and Microsoft 365, already offer 2FA for free. Still, it's underutilized by SMBs, with an MFA adoption rate of only 34% or less, compared to 87% among large companies, according to JumpCloud's 2024 IT Trends Report. 2FA is very simple and effective – don't sit this tip out!



## 2 Updates

Cybercriminals love outdated software because it's full of unpatched vulnerabilities they can capitalize on. Ransomware attacks are notorious for targeting vulnerabilities in operating systems and applications months after security patches are available. Set up automatic updates for your systems, apps and software so you're always running the latest version. Employee awareness

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training, regular reminders and even revoking access until patches are installed can help hold employees accountable.

### 3 Employee Training

Over 90% of data breaches start with phishing e-mails, CISA reports. Designed to look like real e-mails from banks, retail companies or coworkers, they are stuffed with harmful links designed to steal your passwords and data. Cybercriminals bank on naive employees who can't tell real e-mails from fake ones, and AI is making these e-mails even harder to detect. Regular employee awareness training is one of the top defenses against phishing attacks and can reduce phishing risks from 32.5% to 5% in 12 months, according to a recent study by KnowBe4. Research shows that the most effective employee awareness training includes real-world examples, simulated attacks and regular reinforcement through short, interactive training sessions.

### 4 Data Encryption

The modern world operates on data, and encrypting this data is the most effective method to protect it. In fact, most cybersecurity

insurance policies require it. Encryption is like turning your information into code that only authorized people can unlock. Even if hackers intercept your e-mails or customer data, encryption keeps it useless to them. SMBs often hesitate due to costs or complexity, but modern tools like Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 make it simpler and more affordable.

### 5 Limit Employee Access

Every employee with open access to every folder, file and document significantly increases the risk of accidental (or intentional) changes to your system. Setting up limited access can feel inconvenient initially, but it doesn't have to disrupt employee workflows. An experienced IT team will ensure that employees can run all the applications they need while having access only to what's necessary. For example, a marketing intern doesn't need the ability to access payroll data or network settings. If employees need access to complete specific tasks or projects, consider using a system that grants temporary admin access. Once their project is done, the access goes away.

### 6 Data Backups

Ransomware is one of the biggest threats facing SMBs today, with 46% having experienced

attacks, according to a recent report by OpenText Cybersecurity. Hackers lock up your data and demand payment to get it back, but even payment isn't a guarantee you'll see your data again. Use the 3-2-1 rule – keep three copies of your data on two different types of storage media, with one stored off-site, such as in the cloud or on an external hard drive disconnected from your main network. Just as important: test your backups regularly.

Nothing's worse than restoring your data after an attack, only to discover that your backups are incomplete or corrupted.

**These simple, cost-effective strategies are a nightmare for hackers and a boon for SMBs looking for more peace of mind. If any of these strategies are missing from your cybersecurity, now is the time to integrate them into your business.**

**Please reach out to us if you need assistance. CST is here to help! 877-954-4100**



## FREE 30-MINUTE WEBINAR

### Client's Only - A Must Watch, Need To Know Webinar

Sharing information and educating is a priority for CST so please join us for this FREE "Client's Only" Webinar

**APRIL 9, 2025 AT 9AM**

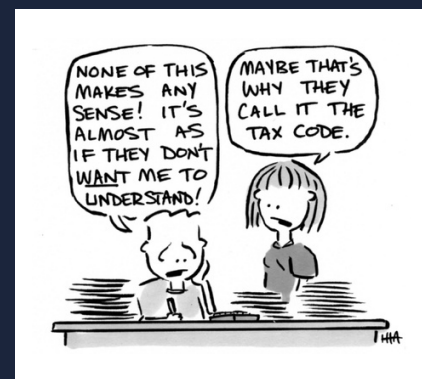


- SOME CRITICAL INFORMATION AND UPDATES
- UPDATES FROM YOUR TECH TEAM
- SECURITY PROTOCOL HIGHLIGHTS
- WE NEED YOUR COOPERATION....

Register at [www.cstsupport.com/webinar](http://www.cstsupport.com/webinar) or

Call Our Office At 877-954-4100.

### CARTOON OF THE MONTH



# ROCKING THE BUSINESS WORLD:

## GENE SIMMONS' GUIDE TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP



There's no denying Gene Simmons is a quirky character, even without the makeup. Globally renowned as a rock star in the band Kiss, it's no surprise he showed up to his interview at a recent industry conference clad in all black and wearing dark sunglasses that seemed glued to his face. But behind the moody persona, Simmons is an incredibly successful entrepreneur with a net worth of \$400 million. However, it wasn't always this way.

Simmons opened up about his childhood, revealing a depth often masked by his public persona. "The fire in your belly, it never burns hotter than when you can remember what it felt like to be hungry," he explained. Simmons rose from a poverty-stricken childhood in Haifa, Israel, where he sold fruit roadside to survive. The son of a Holocaust survivor, Simmons learned early on that perseverance was nonnegotiable. In fact, he's critical of anyone with a passive work ethic. "There [are] so many opportunities. We're just sitting there going, 'I wish somebody would give me a chance,' and the chances are just going right by you," he said. What differentiates regular people from uber-successful ones, Simmons insisted, is their willingness to fall in love with the labor that success requires. "The most successful people in the world are no different than you are, except they work longer and harder, that's all."

Many Americans aren't taught about taxes or the workings of the economy during their school years, but that's no excuse to let opportunity pass us by. According to Simmons, understanding business is a personal responsibility – or, as he put it, an "inferred

fiduciary duty to yourself." This means always looking for knowledge that positions you strategically for success. "Be at the right place, with the right thing and the right time. That's on you," he said.

For any business leader, staying informed and having a continuous improvement mindset is critical to navigating the ever-shifting landscapes of capitalism and economic turbulence. This includes being open to diversification, another of Simmons' strategic business tips. His investments are not siloed in the music industry. Instead, they are spread from restaurant chains to reality TV. This approach cushions financial risks and opens up multiple revenue streams. "It really is because all the knowledge...is available on [the Internet] for free. The rest is just hard work," he pointed out. For Simmons, the secret is simple: tap into the vast online reservoir of information, pair it with relentless effort and keep innovating.

Most people consider business success strategic and tactful, not a particularly creative pursuit. But Simmons argued otherwise. "Business is art. Every step you take is either going to make you money or it's going to cost you money," he said. It's a delicate dance, and Simmons' rising journey from selling fruit in Haifa to building a vast empire exemplifies how determination and smart decision-making can turn adversity into opportunity. This underlines a vital truth for all entrepreneurs: success comes from seizing opportunities, continuous learning and unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence.

### SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH

## Halliday Smart Glasses:

### Redefining Wearable Technology



The highly anticipated Halliday Smart Glasses were a massive hit at the Consumer Technology Association's annual CES conference at the beginning of the year. It's easy to see why, as the AI-packed, pocket-sized tech (weighing only 35 grams) can handle everything from hands-free directions to translating foreign languages in real time. Featuring an invisible, discreet display, they seamlessly deliver information without compromising privacy. With over 12 hours of battery life and compatibility with prescription lenses, they are as practical as they are stylish. Even better, their preorder price of \$369 (\$499 MSRP) makes them surprisingly accessible compared to most smart glasses on the market.



## NO FOOLS HERE!

As much as we like a good joke, our technology is nothing to fool around with. You may not think twice about it but technology is everywhere and you use it more than you realize. When is the last time you did an update, cleaned out files or dusted your computer off?

Spring has officially sprung as April gets underway and we are realizing our computers need a good clean up. As a technology company, trust me, we have tried our fair share of software to help organize our stuff. Between all our processes for the tech team and all that marketing material for sales, we need to make sure our documents are easily located.

We have found that SharePoint is a great option for individual use but more importantly for company/office use! SharePoint is a Microsoft 365 product which most companies already use. You are also, able to organize your documents, share out files and folders securely, create task lists and so much more amazing features.

What's the greatest part of this? If you have a Microsoft 365 account, you already have SharePoint! We know change can be hard but if it makes your life easier and your business run smoother why not give it a try. Don't worry about learning it all on your own; we can help. Training your staff on how to effectively use SharePoint can be as in depth as you need. Send me an email ([jessica@cstsupport.com](mailto:jessica@cstsupport.com)) to request this feature be setup and configured for use. Once it is launched, we will schedule a personalized training session so you and your staff can get the most out of SharePoint.

*=Jessica=*

## Important Dates in April

1st- April Fools Day  
10th- National Siblings Day  
11th- National Pet Day  
16th- Stress Awareness Day  
20th - Easter Sunday  
23rd- Administrative Professionals Day

## Tech Humor...



## Introducing "Passionate Not Pushy" – A Podcast for Bold Thinkers!

I'm thrilled to introduce my new podcast, Passionate Not Pushy—where bold ideas meet authentic conversations!

In business and life, passion is a powerful force—but there's a fine line between being driven and being pushy. This podcast is for entrepreneurs, creators, and anyone who wants to lead with heart, build meaningful connections, and make an impact—without the pressure.

Each episode, we'll explore real stories, strategies, and insights that help you stay true to who you are while turning passion into success.

The Podcast is now live! Tune in and let's redefine what it means to be passionate, not pushy.

Stay connected for launch details!

## Q & A with Carrie

your friendly Account Manager



Dear Carrie,

I've been receiving text and emails from FedEx, EZ-Pass, and even the IRS, with clickable links. How do I respond?



Sincerely,  
Click Happy

Dear Click Happy,

NO! Never click on anything!! No company will email or text you to verify any personal or account information. Those links open you up to being hacked and your information stolen.

- Carrie

<https://www.facebook.com/CSTGroupInc>

## CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF YOUR ONLINE IDENTITY? YOU SHOULD BE!

If you've been following the latest news in cybersecurity, you know that attacks have only continued to grow in both size and sophistication. However, you might not be aware that small and mid-sized businesses like yours are the most targeted by Dark Web criminals. Would you be among the 60% of SMBs that would be bankrupted by the average cost of a data breach?

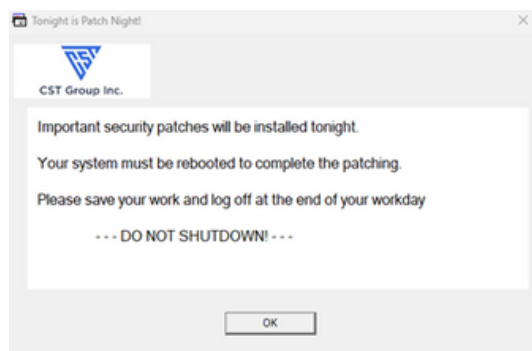
If you are reading this, you are eligible for a free and comprehensive Dark Web scan to identify how many of your credentials (DOB, SSN, User ID's and Passwords) have been compromised. To get your FREE Scan instantly, contact us today at 518-483-4100 or 941-249-3520 or email [sara@cstsupport.com](mailto:sara@cstsupport.com).



# Shawn's Security Corner

Part of CST's security protocol is our management of Windows security patches. We are hoping to clarify how the process works and what your part in this security process is and how necessary it is to ensure we keep you up-to-date and secure.

Wednesday morning everyone will see a white notification box on your screen (see below screenshot).



As the notification states, you need to, at the end of your workday Wednesday, save your work, LOG OUT and leave your computer on and connected to internet. The simplest way to achieve this is to just restart your computer at the end of your workday and walk away. This will accomplish the log out and your computer will be ready to do patches - we take care of the rest Wednesday evening after hours.

If your computer user does NOT have a password, please add one to enhance security measures.

If you follow these simple steps, you will not encounter any issues when you log into your computer on Thursday.

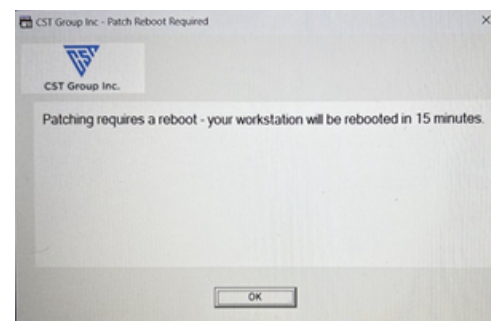
**\*\*\*NOTE\*\*\* If your system is not on and connected to the internet so this process can complete on Wednesday evening, then you are going to experience the following.**

When your system is turned back on and connected to the internet, our software is going to run the updates AND FORCE a restart of your system with a notification giving you 15 minutes to save your work. Then it restarts!

This can be very disruptive to those who do not follow the process and ignore the warning. All work they/you have done that was not saved will be lost!

We understand the struggles, but our job as your security team is to ensure every computer is updated, patched and scanned. We need your cooperation in this. Please simply restart your system Wednesday at end of day!

Dedicated to your Security,  
The CST Tech Team



## BIG REWARDS

### For Your Referrals

We'll offer you **\$50** as a gesture of appreciation, once you introduce CST Group to a qualified colleague and they complete the initial appointment whether they become a client or not.

If your referral becomes a managed client, we'll provide you with a **\$500** bonus at the end of their first month of service.

#### WHO MAKES AN IDEAL REFERRAL?

- Any business with 10 or more computers
- Needs help with security, compliance, backup, support or network
- Wants 24/7/365 peace of mind

Full Details Here:

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

## Important Backup Information

### Keep Your System Online for Scheduled Backups

To ensure the security and integrity of your business data, it's essential that your computers remain powered on and connected to the internet during scheduled backup times.

Here's why:

1. Uninterrupted Backup Execution – Your system must be online for scheduled backups to run. If a device is turned off, the backup cannot initiate, leaving your data unprotected.
2. Cloud Backup Synchronization – If your backups are stored in the cloud, a stable internet connection is required to upload files securely and ensure data is up to date.
3. Security & Compliance – Regular, completed backups help meet compliance requirements and protect against potential data loss from cyber threats, hardware failures, or accidental deletions.
4. Automatic Updates & Maintenance – Keeping your system online allows our team to apply necessary updates and monitor backup health, ensuring optimal performance and security.

To avoid any disruptions in your data protection plan, please make sure your devices remain powered on and connected during backup windows



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## TRIVIA

**This Hollywood actress is also the co-founder of a technology called "frequency hopping" that laid a key foundation for future communication systems, including GPS, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi.**



- A. Grace Kelly
- B. Veronica Lake
- C. Hedy Lamarr
- D. Ann Sheridan

**Answer: C.** Hedy Lamarr. Although she helped develop the ingenious idea with George Anthell in the early 1940s, it was not until 1990 that she received an award for her contribution.

## CYBERSIDE CHAT

### Fluffy Robot For Your Bag: Cute Or Creepy?

One of CES 2025's quirkiest (creepiest?) reveals was the Mirumi robot – a part-owl, part-sloth companion that clips to your bag and swivels its head to watch others as they stroll by. Created by Yukai Engineering, it's equal parts adorable and unsettling – perfect for sparking conversations or just freaking out strangers on your commute.

### Smart Sharing: Location Updates Without Oversharing.

Instead of sharing your location 24/7, choose "Share trip progress" in Google Maps or "Share ETA" in Apple Maps to send updates only when you're on the move. It's a simple, practical way to keep friends or family in the loop and stay safe during late-night rides or busy travel days.

### Are You Using AI To Create Charts Yet?

You don't need to be a design expert; you just need to know how to ask the right questions. Try prompting, "What type of chart or visual would work here?" to let AI help you turn data into clear, impactful visuals in seconds.



### Fitness Apps Are Tracking More Than Your Heart Rate:.

Apps like Fitbit, Strava and Nike Training Club don't just track your workouts – they also sell your data to advertisers. Since around 80% of top apps share your info, it's a good idea to review and limit your sharing permissions to protect your privacy.

## INNOVATIVE TECH TRENDS TO EXPLORE IN 2025

Forget smart vacuums — 2025 brings AI-powered communication coaches, advanced collaboration tools and next-level wearable tech to transform business operations.

### 1. AI Communication Coaches:

These tools provide real-time feedback on tone, body language, and phrasing during video calls, helping professionals improve communication and engagement. Why it matters: They democratize professional development, leveling the playing field for smaller businesses.

### 2. Advanced Collaboration Tools:

AI-driven meeting summaries, instant

translation and integrated team chats streamline remote work. Why it matters: They break language barriers and improve team efficiency.

### 3. Wearable Tech:

Smart glasses, watches and sensor-embedded clothing enhance productivity and safety in industries like logistics and healthcare. Why it matters: Wearables provide instant data, reducing errors and improving response times.

**Embrace these innovations to future-proof your business and simplify your life in 2025!**

