TECHNOLOGY TODAY

An Ounce or A Pound?

Cybercriminals don't stop, because there is too much easy money to be had. The #1 weakest link in your network defenses is your staff. Maybe you are one of the relatively few businesses that have invested the small amount to have their employees trained in data breach awareness and prevention. Maybe you had them do a seminar. Once. Done? No.

Counter-intuitive as it may seem, the more times an employee has clicked on a Phishing scam in the past, the more likely they will do it again, according to a 2018 Verizon Report. We had it happen twice with the same employee at one of our clients. With our defenses, it never escaped from his computer into the network, and with our reliable backups in place, he was up and running within a couple of hours.

Let us show you how inexpensive an ounce of prevention can be. 818-797-5302. The pound of cure is expensive.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Yuri Aberfeld, CEO of IT Support LA

Our Mission: To build a community of successful-minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.

Security Alert!

Hackers And Cybercriminals Are Now Concentrating Their Attacks On Your Business Is Your Cyberprotection Up-To-Date?

Technology exists in a state of constant flux. The most popular gadgets turn obsolete within a year or two, the sophistication of the hardware and software we use increases exponentially with each passing month and the digital foundations of modern society are almost continuously supplanted. Every day, there's a new device to contend with, a fresh update and an addendum to the already dizzying array of features at our fingertips.

It's a thrilling world full of possibility and potential, but our dependence on these ever-changing technologies comes at a price. The overlay of the Internet on all aspects of our lives is fraught with vulnerabilities that criminals are eager to exploit. Though new protective measures are developed at the same breakneck speed as the software they guard, so are new ways to penetrate and circumvent these defenses. It's estimated that 978,000 new malware threats are released with each passing day. It's clear that "up-to-date" can no longer be an accurate descriptor; it always describes a system one step behind the newest development.

Today, cybercriminals are casting a wider net and catching more hapless victims than ever before. We read about the most costly of these breaches in the news each morning, including Equifax, J.P. Morgan, Home Depot, Yahoo!, Verizon, Uber and dozens more.

But these high-profile incidents don't even comprise the majority of attacks. According to Verizon's 2017 Data Breach Investigations Report, 61% of

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breaches occurred at small businesses, with half of the 28 million small businesses across the United States succumbing to a digital strike. Even scarier is the fact that UPS Capital reports that 60% of these businesses shut down within six months of a breach.

It's a bleak reality to come to terms with if you're a business owner. The truth is that it's almost a statistical certainty that hackers will come for your data, and when they do, they'll likely be using techniques nearly unrecognizable from today's malicious flavor of the month. How can you possibly prepare for something that is constantly changing?

The answer is sustained attention, vigilance and resources directed toward protecting all that you've worked so hard to build. While it may be impossible to foresee exactly how hackers will try to penetrate your business, it's well within the means of most businesses to implement comprehensive security solutions to give your organization a fighting chance.

It's vital to realize that, unfortunately, security protocols aren't a set-it-and-forget-it proposition. To respond to the evasive and increasingly sophisticated tools being shared throughout the enormous hacker

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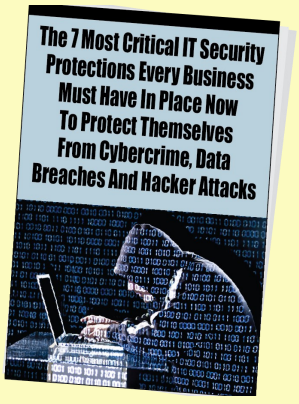
community, you need an equally sophisticated and regularly updating security system. For nearly every one of the 978,000 fresh new malwares developed daily, there are patches and updates designed to address them – strategies and techniques to outsmart even the most devious of criminals.

Just because you don't have the resources of a massive corporation doesn't mean you need to be low-hanging fruit for well-funded and highly organized cybercrime rings. Hackers assume that a business like yours is too tiny and ill-informed to prepare for even a simple phishing scam, and they're usually right. But if every business owner put just a little more effort into securing their data, you can bet attacks would be curbed. And if every small business pledged to implement a professionally managed security protocol, we would see the frequency of these hacks diminish drastically.

There's a lot for business owners to think about during a year as chaotic as 2018, but your top priority should be the basic security of your company. Invest your time and resources into building a foundational blockade for potential threats, and you can rest assured that your livelihood is safe from digital collapse.

FREE Report: The 7 Most Critical IT Security Protections Every Business Must Have In Place Now To Protect Themselves From Cybercrime, Data Breaches And Hacker Attacks



978,000 NEW malware threats are being released every day, and businesses (and their bank accounts) are the No. 1 target. To make matters worse, a data breach exposing client or patient information can quickly escalate into serious reputational damage, fines, civil lawsuits and costly litigation. If you want to have any hope of avoiding a cyber-attack, you MUST read this report and act on the information we're providing.

Claim Your FREE Copy Today at www.itsupportla.com/sittingduck/

What's It Cost?

Kits for launching Ransomware attacks are available on the Dark Web for as low as $39 That's if you plan to be a criminal. Nobody plans to be a victim, but too many end up one. Now, what is it going to cost you? If you choose to be a sitting duck and pay up (quack!), the average ransom for a US business is $57,088 according to SentinelOne's Global Ransomware Report 2018.

That only represents the ransom itself. Add in the cost of the downtime, extra IT costs and potential loss of business and it becomes substantially more devastating. The IBM affiliated Ponemon Institute's Cost of Data Breach Study 2017 gives the average true cost per lost or stolen record containing confidential information at $225 per record. The same study gives the average number of records stolen at 28,512, or $6.4 million.

Once paid, it's over, right?

Dead wrong. If you surrender your lunch money to the bully, do you really think that he's your friend now? No: He just knows where to get some easy cash, and he'll come back to your well. Once the decryption key has been given to you in return for your Bitcoin ransom, the original malware has burrowed into your system and hidden itself, waiting to be called into action. The sad fact is, according to SentinelOne's Global Ransomware Report 2018, 29% of US businesses that paid the ransom were never even given the decryption key code to recover their data.

Don't bear this cost. Network safeguards are not enough. A comprehensive recovery plan MUST be in place. For more on how you can protect yourself, call us at 818-797-5300 or visit us at www.itsupportla.com.

We've got your back.

4 Steps To Finding Your Company's Diamonds In The Rough

Executives are always looking to inject "fresh blood" into their teams. They're on the hunt for shiny new talent to be that secret ingredient their organizations are missing. But in my numerous coaching sessions with entrepreneurs and leaders across the country, I found that an external search should usually not be the first step. Instead, I suggest that businesses look internally for hidden, untapped assets within the company. Here are four steps to start uncovering your diamonds in the rough.

1. DON'T HIRE TO FIT A TITLE.

It may be the way business has been done for half a century, but that doesn't mean it's right. You need to look at the individual strengths of each candidate and determine if he or she is right for your company and culture.

Make sure that you have a process in place to make hiring efficient. And as a part of that process, take time to identify those creative and out-of-the-box individuals you already have on your team. Ask pointed questions of everyone you consider for a given role, because this allows you to get a sense of how they think.

2. MINE FOR THE GEMS.

As you refine your hiring methods, you'll likely discover that the talent you're looking for might be right under your nose. Dig into your roster of existing team members. Create a company-wide survey for those interested in taking on creative or challenging initiatives, and give them the opportunity to be considered. The true innovators know what they can bring to the table, even if they're currently not in a role that's a perfect fit. If you give them the opportunity to shine, they'll come forward.

3. REFINE AND POLISH.

Once you've identified your gems, spend some additional time with them. Find out what inspires and motivates them. You may decide to modify your team member's role or transfer some responsibilities to others in order to better utilize your talented individual's strengths and unleash their creative prowess. Just make sure to set clear expectations with each person, explain why you're making the change and empower them to do what they do best.

4. FORMALIZE YOUR PROCESS TO FIND MORE GEMS.

This isn't a one-and-done process. It's important to meet regularly with people to find these hidden assets. Consider handing out surveys and holding brainstorming sessions regularly as part of your company culture. That way, new team members will come on board knowing there's an opportunity to shine in new ways, even if it's not what they were originally hired to do.

Focus on embracing and developing internal individuals with relevant skill sets before hiring. I guarantee there is a huge number of underutilized assets within your organization. Give them the space to shine brightly.

As the founder of Petra Coach, Andy Bailey can cut through organizational BS faster than a hot knife through butter, showing organizations the logjams thwarting their success and coaching them past the excuses we all use to avoid doing what needs to be done. Andy learned how to build great organizations by building a great business, which he started in college. It then grew into an Inc. 500 multimillion-dollar national company that he successfully sold and exited.

Master These 3 Roles To Become SUPER Successful

Everybody is eager to offer business owners free advice, but as a leader, your success will come down to how well you fill three key roles: leader, manager, and executor. First you need to lead. Start by accepting that any success or failure within your company lies squarely on your shoulders and that everything depends on your vision, strategy and understanding of your target demographic.

Then you need to manage. Surround yourself with people who are dedicated to making your business grow. Everyone should know the organization's goals and how you plan to achieve them. Transparency is vital to building trust and cohesion within your team.

Finally, you have to execute. Run through the individual steps on the path to your goal. Your employees should focus on the day-to-day tasks so you can cultivate the big-picture direction of your company. *Inc.com 2/21/18*

Ways Technology Can Make Your Business Meetings More Productive

Every entrepreneur knows how difficult it can be to run an efficient meeting. But most of them aren't leveraging new technologies designed to do just that. Rather than treating meeting participants like audience members, use a tool like GoWall to empower your team to contribute without disrupting your meeting's flow, keeping them engaged and on topic. Meanwhile, solutions like ParticiPoll equip any meeting with a poll that can provide useful feedback to implement at your next gathering. This is especially valuable for organizations that frequently host remote events, providing a quick breakdown of your meetings' strengths and weaknesses.

Speaking of remote contacts, Google Hangouts has made it easier than ever to set up video conferences where participants can move from chat to file sharing to video chat with no fuss whatsoever. And if you're unable to stand in front of your team with a whiteboard, consider implementing a whiteboard app like Cisco Spark Board, which uses shared screens to create a cohesive brainstorming session between you and your team. *SmallBusinessTrends.com 2/21/18*

Two-Factor What?

Two-factor authentication (2FA for short) is a system in which you must verify your identity in two separate ways to access an account. Sound confusing? It's not. Here's an example:

After enabling 2FA on a Gmail account, you have to enter your password each time you log in. Then you are asked to enter a six-digit code that you pull from your phone, a jump-drive-sized key fob or a program on your computer.

Only then do you have access to your account. That way, if someone steals your password, they still can't get in.

If you aren't currently using two-factor authentication with your most sensitive data and systems, look into whether it might be an option. The extra 15 seconds it takes to pull up that second code is laughably short compared to the time you'd spend dealing with a hacked account.