TECHNOLOGY TODAY

Human Nature

Human nature cannot be ignored, especially in Cybersecurity. Machines don't get a 'feeling' that what should be flagged as a suspicious email is okay to open, but humans all too often do.

AI is cold and logical, whereas human intelligence is based in part on knowledge learned from experience, and when that experience tells us that if an email looks like a typical FedEx communication, has the logo and format we know, we are all too likely to click the 'View Invoice' or order tracking link it provides.

That's when your entire network locks up, because it was an excellent spoof, and it just let Ransomware loose in your system.

We always say 'train your users' but we highly recommend testing them as well.

Call us at 818-797-5300 or visit us at www.itsupportla.com/cyber-security-services/, and at no charge, we'll take them phishing and see what they catch.

Then we can talk about training.

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

IT Support LA creates the possibility of focusing on business goals and priorities by providing a trusted technology partnership to small businesses

Top 3 Strategies I Learned From Peyton Manning To Improve Leadership And Grow My Business

Peyton Manning knows a thing or two about success. As one of the most legendary quarterbacks in the history of football, he's reached heights few of us can ever hope to match, regardless of our field. When looking at a career as storied as Manning's, it's tempting to attribute his dominance to sheer innate talent and maybe some kind of preternatural work ethic. Certainly, if you ask him, he'll tell you that these two are essential ingredients to any kind of outsized success. But there's a third factor that we tend to overlook from the sidelines, one that has tremendous implications for our roles as business leaders: the influence of those who coach us along the way.

Speaking at a recent conference I attended, Manning said something that really stuck with me. "I think you *always* need to be coached," he said. "Whatever level of success anyone in this room has reached, someone's gonna hit a plateau. We need a coach to unlock our full potential."

No matter where we're at in our work and lives, it's vital that we seek out folks to keep us accountable and moving forward. Luckily, I found Manning himself to be an invaluable resource in that regard. While he's not about to sit down with me one-on-one, he definitely left us with a few key lessons we could all benefit from.

1. RECOGNIZE THAT YOU DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING.

It's easy to balk when you hear a quarterback with two Super Bowl wins and five MVP awards under his belt tell you to remain humble in your self-perception, but it's also telling. "I believe in mentoring and paying it forward," he said, "but I also believe that we shouldn't think we have it all figured out and that we don't need to be mentored."

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Years back, Peyton and his brother, Eli, had a shared coach: David Cutcliffe, now the head coach at Duke University. Even after they'd entered the NFL, both he and his brother would return to Coach Cutcliffe and seek his insight and guidance to refresh and strengthen their fundamentals. It was "like we were 18-year-old college freshmen in college again, working on how to take a snap," Manning says. Even as a 14-year all-pro quarterback, he continued to seek the counsel of his mentors on the most basic aspects of the game. "The point is that the little things do matter," he said. "Keep being coached, and keep being evaluated."

2.BE ADAPTIVE.
As CEOs and managers, we're the "coaches" of our business teams. And the best coaches, according to Manning, are the ones who know the members of their team and consistently play to their strengths. For example, the best offensive coordinators that Manning played for "were adaptive in designing the offensive system … around the players that he had on the team that year." Since Manning is not particularly fast, coaches wouldn't structure their offense on a lot of running plays, for instance. Rather than trying to magically turn him into a faster runner overnight, successful leaders tapped into the things he *was* good at.

"Design plays that your team can do," he said. "Don't put them in situations where they're not going to be really comfortable and

> # "Rather than complaining about your employees' faults, hone in on their talents."

not going to be successful … Being flexible based on who's in the room is a good way to coach."

Rather than complaining about your employees' faults, hone in on their talents. This will not only motivate and inspire those you work for, but it'll also optimize outcomes in your business for the long haul.

3.PRACTICE SERIOUSLY.
When asked how he was able to consistently thrive under such incredible pressure, Manning cited a piece of advice he received early on in his football career: "Treat practice like a game."

"Create those intense situations during practice, during the course of the week," he said, "so that when Sunday afternoon or whenever that big moment comes around, you're not overwhelmed by the moment." At Manning's practices, the team would always strive to maintain the same level of intensity they'd bring to a big game, from their own attitudes to the piping crowd noise.

"The biggest mistake people make in that mecca moment," he said, speaking about the Super Bowl, "is to try to do something *different* from what they've been doing all season to get them to that point." Find what works and cultivate it relentlessly, to the point that you and your team can do it in your sleep. "The competition's going to be tough. It won't be easy," Manning said. "But there's a reason you're there in that moment … because you've had great success." Keep doing those things while keeping a mind on your team, and further success will surely follow.

DON'T PAY!

Ransomware has been with us for a long time, but in spite of the tried-and-true remedies available for an attack, a recent study by AppRiver shows that the majority of Small & Midsize Businesses (SMBs) still pay the ransom when they get hit. To be polite, let's just say, "What The____?". As an MSP, we are not alone in pointing out that the most simplistic, basic remedy when the Ransomware screen appears and your data is encrypted, is to shut everything down, wipe the entire system and restore the data from reliable off-site backups.

So what's the problem?

There are a few. SMBs often scrimp on the IT, and have virtually no backups, or their data is backed up locally to their own on-site server, if they have one. Good luck with that: once the malware is in the system, it encrypts any server backups as well.

Then there is still that pervasive idea that business owners have that, "We're too small. Nobody's going to target a small fish like us." That 'conventional wisdom' is so full of holes you could use it to drain spaghetti.

WRONG. Dead wrong. The echelon of cyber crooks runs from the small-timers who hit up phones and home computers to a few hundred bucks to the thieves who go after the largest corporations in the world. The fattest segment of potential victims lies within the SMBs, and they are easy pickings. 71% of all Ransomware attacks in 2018 targeted small businesses.

60% of SMBs fail within 6 months of a cyber attack, according to The National Cyber Security Alliance. If you do not want to be one of these statistics, the first step is:

Determine your Cybersecurity status.

This will decide what further steps need to be taken, if any. In 3rd party security audits we have performed, it has been extremely rare that we find a virtually bulletproof system.

We routinely extend the offer of a free Network and Security Audit to our readers: To avail yourself of this invaluable tool, please call us at 818-797-5300 or visit us at www.itsupportla.com/free-stuff/free-network-security-assessment/

Volunteering Teaches Entrepreneurship

If I offered you a chance at an internship that would rock your business – and your business potential – more than any class you could take at any university, would you sign up? Yes?

Okay, then. Get out there and volunteer somewhere.

We all know that volunteering is valuable. It helps our neighbors, our communities and our country, and it certainly helps us. Millions get involved. We deliver meals to shut-ins, swing hammers and paint houses with Habitat for Humanity, fill boxes at the local food bank or serve dinners at local homeless shelters. In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, around 63.4 million people in the US volunteered last year. That's 26% of the population.

People volunteer because they get more out of the experience than what they put into it. The giddy feeling of doing good is one thing, but you also get to express yourself, meet new people, make new friends, learn new skills, network and rub elbows with community leaders you might not ever meet otherwise. But there's one more reason to volunteer: You can learn to be a kick-ass entrepreneur along the way, especially if you got into it seeing it as both a chance to give back and an opportunity to learn and hone your people and job skills.

I experienced all this firsthand, by spending a few days planning, and then working at, the food bank in my community. Man, oh man, did I experience some hardcore business lessons. And you will too!
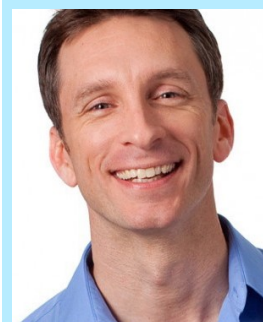
Going into volunteering, you may think you are the ultimate nice guy, the generous guy, donating your time and skills. You're just going to walk in, do some work, help a few folks and earn some brownie points. But if you really want to see what being an entrepreneur is all about, volunteering in a

leadership position will give you important insights into what it is like to run a business and to rely upon others to have your mission carried out. Consider it a trade in a lot of ways: your time for life lessons. Getting others to do the things you want or need them to do is hard enough when you're paying them. When they are simply volunteering their time, it becomes a whole new ballgame, one that requires inspiration and clarity in the common vision in order to effectively lead them and meet all the objectives.

Certainly, you learn a lot about focus, keeping people on track and listening to the abundant new ideas of your team, but the biggest lesson I came away with from my own volunteering experience was humility. The lesson here is that you, as an entrepreneur, need to set the course, get people fired up and then, for God's sake, get out of the way and let them do amazing things.

Volunteering to organize something for your community may not put money in your pocket. But by homing in on the important lessons that you learn as a volunteer, you can use what you learned to work with your own employees. And those lessons may just take your business to the next level, and that's priceless.

■ This Is The Biggest Threat To Your Business Today

In 2019, there is no greater threat to the safety of your business than ransomware. According to a 2018 survey conducted by Datto for 2,400 managed services providers specializing in data security for small to midsize businesses, over 55% of clients had been targeted by a ransomware attack within the first six months of last year. The biggest issues cited were poor end-user cyber security training, risky user practices and weak passwords.

But the biggest issue of all may simply have been ignorance. "The #1 threat for SMB CEOs is thinking they are immune for some reason," said Michael Drake, CEO of masterIT. "They think they don't have anything the hackers want, so it's not worth the price to protect themselves." But the numbers don't lie: Hackers are zeroing in on the low-hanging fruit of small businesses in droves – it's time to wake up and invest in the protection your business needs to survive. *SmallBusinessComputing. com, 1/19/2019*

■ 6 Daily Rituals To Boost Your Productivity

1. Cut down on your distractions. From the apps and websites that keep us from flowing to poor lighting and aesthetics in your office, every little thing adds up.

2. Maintain boundaries. "The difference between successful people and really successful people," Warren Buffett once said, "is that really successful people say no to almost everything."

3. Simplify. Boil your work down to the tasks that matter most. Keep your schedule straightforward, and direct all your efforts toward your personal values and purpose.

4. Try the Pomodoro Technique.

Make your to-do list, then set a timer for 25 minutes. When the timer rings, take a five-minute break, get a snack, take a walk and refresh, then come back, reset that timer to 25 and get to work. Repeat this cycle four times, take a longer, 10- to 30-minute break, then start over. It's amazing what these little bursts of productivity can do, knowing that you have a break coming up soon.

5. Take more breaks. According to an article in the New York Times, research shows that "daytime workouts, short afternoon naps, longer sleeping hours, more time away from the office and longer, more frequent vacations" boost productivity and performance.

6. Schedule what's on your to-do list. By creating a minute-to-minute schedule, you're forced to be realistic about demands made on your time. *Inc.com, 3/19/2019*

■ This Communication Tool Can Improve Your Business

According to a study by Zipwhip, 39% of businesses use a texting app to stay in touch with their clients. Relying solely on e-mail communication in 2019 is a mistake. Create an opt-in list to form a texting list, then create a number to which the customer can directly reply. Avoid chatbots, and craft the tone to be as human and conversational as possible. If you're able to provide value without being annoying, you'll be amazed by the benefits you can reap with text communication. *SmallBizTrends.com, 2/19/2019*

"I miss the days when tech support was a new bulb for the overhead."