



Executive IT Insider

...The Exclusive Edge to Today's Technology

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"Season's Greetings!"

With the end of the year upon us, now is the time to wrap up those loose ends and **year-end projects**. If you are looking to take advantage of the **Section 179 Deductions**, get in touch with us! Remember, **any equipment purchased in 2017 qualifies** for the deduction. Finish this year strong and **get ready to hit the ground running in 2018!**"



Top Tricks Cybercriminals Use To Hack Your Computer Network

There's no denying that cybercrime is on the rise. All it takes is a glance at a few big news stories from the past couple years. Equifax gave up the information of over 100 million people, many of them not even users, to a surgical hacker attack. Last May, over 57,000 infections spread from a single ransomware source across 99 separate countries, with damage reaching everything from hospitals and businesses to vital public utilities like the German railway network. And how many high-profile celebrities have had their phone's picture feeds hacked and then had to deal with the scandal of some maliciously leaked photographs, some of which they'd deleted years before?

But it's not just massive corporations like Equifax or JPMorgan or actresses like Jennifer Lawrence that are being targeted day in and day out. It's small businesses, many equipped with far less robust security measures. In fact, if you're an entrepreneur, it's almost a

statistical guarantee that hackers will target your business at some point down the road.

In your company's battle against cybercrime, it's essential to stay abreast of the rapidly shifting digital landscape. Only the most up-to-date security technology can even hope to protect you from the ever more sophisticated thieves pounding at your digital door.

However, it's also important to stay informed. Here are a few of the sneakiest and most common tricks thieves use to snatch your vital data:

Social Engineering Hacking, though it can cost thousands and thousands of dollars and do just as much damage as its digital counterparts, doesn't require a single line of code. Instead, it exploits weaknesses in the "human network" of a business. For example, skilled scammers can call your business's cellphone provider, posing as the CEO's spouse, and convince the

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customer service rep to hand over passwords, Social Security numbers and sensitive personal information. Many IT departments are susceptible to this same scam.

Often, social engineering is used to gather information that will later be used for a different strategy. Such as ...

E-mail Phishing, which hijacks (or fabricates) an e-mail account with trusted authority and sends users an e-mail requesting they click a particular link. Maybe the e-mail looks like it's from the service department of your company's time-tracking software, seeking to remedy an error. But when the link is clicked, ransomware or other malware spreads like wildfire through the system, and the user is at the mercy of the hackers. Usually, this is used to extort exorbitant sums of money from small businesses or individuals. Symantec reports that just last year, over 7,000 businesses of all sizes fell prey to some form of phishing scam, costing them more than \$740 million in total.

“...if you're an entrepreneur, it's almost a statistical guarantee that hackers will target your business at some point down the road.”

Brute-Force Password Attacks Or Password Guessing are just what they sound like. Either a hacker uses a software that, after putting in some data about the target (for example, the name of their dog or their anniversary), runs through potential keys ad infinitum. With sufficient information about the target, it's only a matter of time before the software breaks through.

Or, more often than you might think, hackers can simply guess the password. Infiltrators have common passwords that use real words or common structures memorized and can run through hundreds before giving up.

Fault Injection is a different story, usually only used by the most dedicated, sophisticated hackers around the world. Cyber thieves will use a complicated software to scan the source code of their internal software or network, noting every potential weak point in the system. Then, by splicing in strings of code, they can penetrate the system and steal data, inject a virus or cause other digital mischief.

How To Protect Yourself Against These Threats

As they say, forewarned is forearmed, but it's not enough to keep your eye out for common hacker strategies. As the progress of technology marches on, so do the techniques and software used by hackers, resulting in an infinite number of permutations of ways they can penetrate your system.

The only way to be truly secure is by utilizing bleeding-edge security solutions to ensure you stay ahead of the breakneck developments in hacker technology. With constantly updating software dedicated to security, along with some know-how, you can rest a lot easier knowing your data is safe.

Refer-a-Friend and Get Free Gifts!



We love having customers like you and honestly, we wish we had more just like you! So, we are doing an ongoing “Refer-a-Friend” event.



Refer any company with 5 or more computers to our office to receive a FREE Computer Network Assessment (a \$300 value). Once we've completed our initial appointment with your referral, we'll send you a **\$50 Amazon gift card**. For every referral that you send, you get a \$50 gift card as your referrals complete the Network Assessment. Just a small “Thank You” for thinking of us. As an added bonus, if they join and become a client of ours, we will send you a **\$500 Amazon Gift Card** for introducing your friend to us.

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Technology Spotlight: Garmin Speak

Garmin and Amazon have teamed up to create the Garmin Speak. This means that Amazon's Alexa can go on road trips with you!



The Garmin Speak is a device that mounts to your car's dashboard. It is fully integrated with Alexa, meaning that all of her services are available while you drive. Alexa allows you to access your music and playlists, listen to the news, get traffic updates, and much more.

With the Garmin Speak, you can ask Alexa to remotely manage your smartphone devices at home.

She can also give you driving directions. By saying "Alexa, ask Garmin...", you can access Garmin's GPS. Not only will the Garmin Speak give you spoken directions, it will also display arrows for turns, lane guidance, and driver alerts.

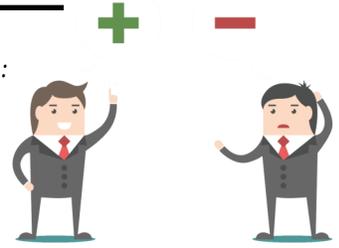
The Garmin Speak streams Alexa's responses directly through your car's speakers, by using your Bluetooth, or through the AUX port. All you need to do is install the free Garmin Speak app and you're ready to roll!

You can purchase the Garmin Speak on Amazon, starting at \$149.99.

3 Strategies For Dealing With Problematic Team Members

You may have heard this common quote in business before:
"If you can't change the people, change the people."

As a business coach, I'm accustomed to helping leaders and executives work through all sorts of issues. And the ones dealing with specific team members are the most common. Often, I find that even though a person may be causing specific challenges, managers want to avoid looking at the responsible party directly. But it's important to understand that changing the people is a necessary act for any successful organization. After all, while training can improve performance, it's difficult to change attitudes.



Below are three tips to improve the talent management and procurement process to train fruitful, challenge-free team members who will grow into leaders.

1 Avoid Stray Dogs

If you've ever hired any team members who turned into poorly performing players (and who hasn't?), your first step should be to rethink your criteria.

"Stray dogs" are those hires who don't fit much of an organization's criteria but end up getting picked anyway. To set up your talent management processes the right way, develop a process of ensuring candidates meet your criteria and steer clear of those stray dogs.

2 Trust Your Gut

Leaders are often too focused on the details in a resume and let that override their gut feelings. It might seem like a

smart decision to rely on facts and figures that a candidate presents, but you can't fully know the circumstances surrounding those victories. Sometimes, it's best to rely on your sense of how a potential hire will perform. If there's any doubt, move on until one feels right.

3 Triple Your Time

Finding the right people becomes more difficult when there's a time crunch. To thoroughly vet potential hires, leaders need to start early by devoting a sufficient amount of time to the hiring process. Before getting started, identify efficiencies you can make during the hiring process. Vet candidates *before* you need them, not after.



As the founder of Petra Coach, Andy Bailey can cut through organizational B.S. 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.

Experts of the Month: Soucy Insurance Agency

Like many small businesses in Rhode Island, Soucy Insurance Agency is rich in history and family tradition. The company was established in 1914 by Adelard L. Soucy, who is current owner David Soucy's grandfather. Adelard Soucy represented Woonsocket in the Rhode Island House of Representatives, and was even elected as the mayor of Woonsocket. After years of being a respected leader, he decided that it was time to give back to his community. He started his business small, offering general services for insurance, real estate and also as a notary public. Now, years later and under the eye of third generation owner David Soucy, the company has transformed from a one-room home business into a thriving agency.



Staying true to Adelard's desire to give back, the agency still gets involved in the community. Soucy Insurance Agency works closely with the Museum of Work and Culture, Beacon Charter School, and various youth sports organizations. With their level of commitment and dedication to not only their clients, but also their community, the entire team at Soucy Insurance Agency are our Experts of the Month.

The Soucy Insurance Agency is a full-scale insurance agency that does it all! They cover everything from "Ma and Pa shops" to big businesses. There isn't anything that they can't or don't do. When asked what sets Soucy Insurance apart from other insurance companies, Senior Account Executive Michael Beaulieu believes it's their ethics. The team goes above and beyond to satisfy their clients' needs because they realize that "not all clients are the same." Michael added that they try to "find out what the client wants, and then deliver on that." They also firmly believe in being honest with their clients, making sure they get the right coverage for what they need.

With the team at Soucy, you're not just a number. The agents try to develop personal relationships, not strictly business ones. They're not working 9-5 days; they work on their off time and vacations to help a client in need. Michael jokes, "You can do business with any agency, but if you do business with us, you get me."

When asked about working with the team at SNECS, the praise was endless! "We love absolutely everything," General Manager Debbie Zinck laughs, "*absolutely everything!*" She continued, "We're busy with everything we try to do for our clients. It's nice to be able to put in a ticket and walk away from it!" But Debbie didn't stop there. "It has really changed our life, because there's so much we don't deal with now. Since we've been involved with SNECS, we've had absolutely no downtime." Debbie concluded, "We certainly appreciate *everything* that you've done for us."

If you would like to learn more about the Soucy Insurance Agency, you can email requests@soucyagency.com or visit them online at www.soucyagency.com. You can also call them directly at 401-762-2218.

4 Ways Technology Can Improve Your Business Many small-business owners struggle with staying up-to-date on technological trends. Statistically, your company is probably behind the times. Studies show that only about a third of small businesses even have a website, and those that do haven't optimized them for mobile devices – an absolute must in the contemporary marketplace. The same goes with a Facebook page. Every business, no matter how old-school, should have at least the minimum of a social media presence, and those that really want to succeed should amp up their online activity with YouTube videos and a Twitter feed. Marketing can't be limited to one-and-done flyers you send out once a month anymore. Instead, you need to fire on all cylinders, allowing people to easily search for and find your business online. This means adequate search engine optimization and syncing your offers up between digital advertising avenues. – *RDSDigitalMedia.ca*

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"Disrupting the marketplace sounds like a lot of work.
Couldn't we just make a big mess instead?"

Does Your Business Need Data Breach Insurance? In the past few years, data breaches into small businesses by malicious hackers have climbed to an all-time high. According to data compiled by the Identity Theft Resource Center, at least 1,093 data breaches occurred in 2016, 40% more than the previous year. And this trend shows no sign of slowing down. In response to rampant cyber-attacks across the country, many small businesses have turned to data breach insurance, designed to financially protect and support victims of malicious hacking. If your system becomes infected by ransomware, the insurance can cover the cost and guide you through the process so you can mitigate damage and stress. If your business creates and stores vast quantities of sensitive data – especially if that data is a vital asset to the company – you should at least consider protecting yourself with data breach insurance. When all else fails, it can mean the difference between shutting down for good and staying afloat in the midst of crisis. – *SmallBizTrends.com*

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