



Executive IT Insider

The *Exclusive Edge* to Today's Technology

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All small and mid-sized businesses **need** to have firewalls. Firewalls, like SonicWalls, **prevent**

hackers, viruses, worms, trojans, and brute-force attacks from compromising your business.

To *fully* protect your computers, network, and data it is **crucial** to not only have but **upgrade** your security software and firewalls often.

Are you interested in **increasing** your business' cyber security and protection from online threats? Contact your account manager for more information!



Could You Afford This \$2.6 Million Mistake?

Two thousand and eighteen is the year of ransomware. According to the 2018 Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report, while malware and hacking breaches have been on a slight decline for the last year, the use of ransomware has skyrocketed. Criminals attracted to ease of use, minimal risk, and high hit rate associated with ransomware have flocked to the strategy in droves, costing small businesses across America millions of dollars in the process. About \$301 million to be exact, as stated in Datto's 2017 State of the Channel Ransomware Report.

But, of course, businesses aren't the only organizations that have been hit by the ransomware epidemic. Just ask the city of Atlanta, whose systems were frozen by ransomware in late March of this year, locked behind a

\$50,000 Bitcoin deposit. One interesting component of the case is that, regardless of whether or not the city was actually prepared to pay the ransom, it seems they didn't even have the opportunity. Hackers took down the payment portal not long after the breach, leaving Atlanta officials swinging in the wind. As officials scrambled to restore basic functions of city programs, it only took two weeks to amass a staggering \$2.6 million bill – a figure that officials expect to climb another \$9.5 million over the coming year.

Even if you're not one of the 10 biggest cities in the United States, cybercriminals cast a wide net – most of the time, it's more profitable to target dozens of virtually unprotected, smaller organizations than to draw the ire of big fish like the

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US government. If you were a small-time criminal, would you rather break into 10 high-end, unlocked homes abandoned by vacationing tenants, or pull a single, endlessly complicated Ocean's Eleven-style heist? Attackers generally follow the path of least resistance. Your business is just that.

So, what do you do in response? Toughen up your barriers, tighten up your processes and enlist your entire staff in the battle against ransomware.

Ransomware attackers don't steal your data, they just lock you out of it. So the best way to make your organization totally ransomware-proof is to make sure a ransomware breach won't actually affect your day-to-day operations. That means regular backups, and lots of them, scattered throughout your primary network in places that won't be compromised by the spreading malware. When ransomware hits, all you need to do is hunt down the source, delete it, and roll the entire system back.



The vast majority of ransomware attacks happen through phishing e-mails, which means employees are usually the ones to open the gates that let the malware in. Luckily, it's easy to train your team to stay vigilant for the signs of digital scams and put procedures in place that will prevent them from ever clicking that shady link.

Of course, the best way to keep ransomware at bay is by putting a skilled team on the case. Unlike an isolated IT employee, a managed services provider has the combined know-how, time, and resources to proactively manage your network security, implementing systems that will make it all but impossible for ransomware to penetrate your data. Firewalls, backups, and knowledge are your best weapons against attacks.

To truly seal up all the holes in your digital security, it takes a complex, comprehensive strategy. Bring in the experts and ensure your business doesn't become another statistic in the age of digital crime.



What is Ransomware?

Ransomware is a type of malware that **prevents** you from accessing your computer or its contents. It is designed to hold your computer **hostage** until you pay a ransom.

After paying the ransom, your systems and files *should* be unlocked. In some cases, even after the ransom was paid, the data was still **erased** or **corrupted**.

Ransomware can **destroy your business**. If you don't have the proper backups in place, your data may be *impossible* to recover.

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**.



Think of it as 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.

Simply call us (401-684-3036), e-mail us (support@itsupportri.com) or visit www.ITsupportRI.com/referral and send us their contact information today!

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Technology Spotlight: Amazon Echo Look

Amazon's Alexa is slowly making her way into every room of the house. The popular home assistant helps you with hundreds of daily tasks, but now she can help you dress to impress! With the Amazon Echo Look, Alexa has made her way into your closet.



Equipped with a camera, four LED lights, and a microphone, the Echo Look is ready to take full length pictures and videos of your outfits. Using the Echo Look app on your phone, you can take photos, create 6-second long videos, or see a live 360-degree view of your outfit. To start taking pictures, use your phone and the app as a remote or use Alexa voice commands.

The Echo Look allows you to blur the background of photos, allowing you to focus on your outfits and style and not any messy backgrounds. Using the app, you can view your outfits, edit your pictures, and get your photos ready to share.

The Echo Look also has a "Style Check" feature which gives personalized style suggestions and second opinions on your outfits. If you submit two outfits, Style Check will tell you which looks better on you. Not only will it pick the better outfit, it will also explain why it's better based on fit, color, styling, and current fashion trends.

The Echo Look's fashion advice combines computer algorithms with advice from Amazon's team of experienced fashion specialists. Over time, the fashion advice will continue to improve. As you interact with the app, its recommendations and suggestions will become more tailored to your style.

If you're fashion-conscious (or fashion-impaired) and in the market for a home assistant device, you can purchase the Echo Look on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) for \$199.99.

4 Lessons From The Coach's Playbook

For the business leaders we coach in my organization, it is often easier for them to see where others need to improve and course-correct than it is for them to see which changes they need to make themselves. But it's important that we, as coaches, leaders and entrepreneurs, put as much pressure on ourselves to move forward in our own lives and businesses as we do on others. Here are four ways I've learned to cut through the egos and expectations and help business leaders and their teams achieve their personal bests.

1. LISTEN. THAT'S ALL.

It sounds so simple, but it can be very difficult for people who are used to running the show to begin by listening. In any group of strong personalities, you're going to get a lot of brutal honesty disguised as constructive criticism. But that's okay. As a leader, the best thing you can do is listen and not respond until the other person is finished. Avoid "getting in there" and problem-solving right away. Instead, hear what the other person has to say and consider it carefully before you respond.

2. REALIZE – AND ADMIT! – THAT YOU'RE NOT PERFECT.

You've been running a business for years. You know where you're going and how to get there. But no matter who you are, you've still got a lot to learn. We all do. The minute you think you know it all is the moment it's time to get back to basics. Invite other voices and opinions to weigh in. Troubleshoot areas where you might need help. Get vulnerable.

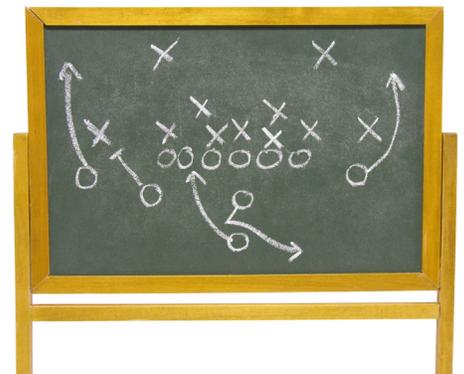
3. TEAR IT DOWN AND BUILD IT BACK UP.

Step back, look at what you've done in the past and ask, "Is this really the best way?"

Find all the things that are not working or could go wrong, and shine a light on them. Then, fix what's broken. Once you get a new plan to a place that feels right, solidify it and put in the work to make it happen.

4. BE A LIFELONG LEARNER.

A superior track coach will always be looking for the best shoes for their team to wear and the most efficient ways to train. Any football coach worth their salt will spend hours watching game videos and developing new plays to help their team win. As a business leader, it's your duty to do the same for your team members. Adopt a student mindset. Read voraciously. And keep your mind open to whatever may come.



Andy Bailey is the founder, CEO and lead business coach at Petra, an organization dedicated to helping business owners across the world achieve levels of success they never thought possible. With personal experience founding an Inc. 500 multimillion-dollar company that he then sold and exited, Bailey founded Petra to pass on the principles and practices he learned along the way. As his clients can attest, he can cut through organizational BS faster than a hot knife through butter.

Expert of the Month:

The Team at Connecting for Children & Families



In 1995, the Rhode Island Community Foundation wanted to start a Children's Initiative to help transform the lives of children. As a result, Connecting for Children & Families (CCF) was created. Today, CCF continues to be a leader on child and family issues. Because of their endless dedication and wide array of available programs and resources, the team at Connecting for Children and Families is our new *Expert of the Month!*

CCF is a community-based, non-profit organization located in Woonsocket, RI. Their mission is to transform the lives of children through high quality educational opportunities and family support. Overall, they strive to make a difference in the lives of children, families, and the city of Woonsocket. CCF primarily works with families in Woonsocket, but they do travel out into neighboring areas. Certain programs are open to people who live anywhere in the state.

As Executive Director Terese Curtin states, it is their **goal** to "remove any obstacles that might prevent a child from being successful in school and in life." At Connecting for Children & Families, they focus heavily on **education for all ages**. They offer programs for expecting mothers, an early learning center for toddlers and preschoolers, after school enrichment, and summer learning programs for kindergarten through high school students. To ensure each child can succeed, they also work with their families and offer several support programs including workforce training, free tax preparation, financial literacy workshops, food pantry, and weekly clothing distribution.

CCF is a *quality* resource for families. They have a close partnership with several schools in the area, which allows them to connect with families. At the end of the day, they want families to be aware that there are a lot of positive and supportive programs or resources available to help them whenever needed.

Both Terese Curtin and the Director of Development & Communications Lucy Davidson agree that our team of technicians is very responsive, professional, and willing to help whenever a problem arises. Terese Curtin believes that our "team is a tremendous help" especially because if something happens, we're just a phone call and a quick drive away. Overall, she's glad that we offer her "peace of mind the minute a computer isn't working."

If you'd like to learn more about CCF, all available programs and resources, or you'd like to volunteer or donate, visit their website www.ccfcenter.org or their [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ccfcenter) page. If you have any questions about CCF's programs and resources, contact Lucy Davidson at ldavidson@ccfcenter.org.

CCF also hosts several fundraising events throughout the year. One of their most notable events is their annual **Make Track for Kids 5K Race**. Because their 5K is such a great cause, the team at IT Support RI has participated several times.

CCF's next event is **Vision of Hope**, which takes place on **Tuesday, October 30**. If you're interested in attending Vision of Hope and celebrating the community's efforts to transform lives, you can purchase tickets at visionofhope.brownpapertickets.com. All proceeds will support CCF in their ongoing quest to give children the basic building blocks they need for a successful life.



4 Questions Every Leader Should Be Able To Answer - Can You?

Too many entrepreneurs rush into their leadership roles with nothing more than a vague idea of what they want to accomplish. Though they have the best of intentions, their lack of clarity inevitably spreads to the team, leading to confusion, crisis and a diminished bottom line. To address this common tendency, former Army officer Ed Ruggero helps CEOs and their teams create "leadership philosophies" that nail down their values and keep them on track. Though these documents are usually pretty small – around 750 words – they're an incredibly powerful tool for leaders of all types.

Start out by outlining your beliefs about leadership, drilling down to the principles that form the bedrock of your philosophy. Then, establish what you want your employees to expect of you – what will you do for them and the organization? After that, build out the expectations you have for your employees. Finally, lay out your pet peeves, the things that you believe hamper teams and damage company culture. *Inc.com, 4/12/2018*