Vermont's Technology Times

"INSIDER TIPS TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS RUN MORE PROFITABLY, FASTER AND SECURE"

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Phenomenal IT Support For Business
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Spending on Cyber Security Products are up!

And they will keep going up. Why? Because the Hackers are getting smarter, carry out more attacks and the rewards are getting bigger. The typical response has been to spend more on technology, but that has proved not to be the answer. Otherwise the problem would be reducing and not getting worse.

People following a regular process to look for vulnerabilities, changes,

What have Ships and IT got in common?

After I left the Royal navy and graduated from Uni, I joined Vosper Thornycroft in Southampton as a Shipbuilder. One of my last jobs there (before I moved to IBM) was to project manage the installation of mechanical systems on 4 ferries that now work on the Thames.

The previous manager had been using brute force to get the first one built. It was behind on delivery and over budget. So jumping into action I had to figure out where we were, work out a plan for the next Ferry and start implementing it.

Key to staying on track and budget was checking regularly for progress. Therefore, I could adjust the plan to make improvements for the third and fourth ferries. In the end the final 2 were delivered on time and just under budget.

Keeping the Fleet afloat
And when I was in the Royal Navy my job was to carry out maintenance on

weapon systems , whilst at sea.

Most of the sailors on a ship are in one of the three engineering departments—Marine, Weapons and Flight. They are responsible for making sure the ship can deliver its roles when required.

And as such, they have to check lots of systems to make sure nothing breaks when it is needed, like the engines, or guns. The check to make sure nothing is running too hot, air filters are cleaned and that the guns are greased. If something is broken or doesn't meet the Standard then it is either fixed or replaced until it does. If they don't do these checks then when you need it most it might not work.

Same principles, different systems
The same principles apply to managing IT in your business. You outsource your IT (mostly) to a third party and expect that you will be secure and won't have any problems. But the expectation is often quite far away from the reality.

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Now, you might not have had a security breach (ransomware, phishing email) recently (or ever), but that doesn't mean to say you aren't wide open to attack. Or that you don't get a lot of problems with how things work. But who's to say that you colleagues are just putting up with stuff, or that switch you have under the stairs is 7 years old and is about to break?

Wouldn't you want to know where your weaknesses are, or how many issues you are having a week, or where you need to spend money next?

The bottom line is that most organisations don't have KPi's on their IT and leave their IT management to chance.

IT is treated different to other departments

You wouldn't manage any other part of your business that way? Imagine if you said to the board that you are going to double revenue in the next 3 years, and they asked you how, and what your achievements are to date? You wouldn't shrug your shoulders and say 'luck'. No, you would show them your stat's from the last 3 years and your business plan.

How do you build your Stats and your plan for IT?

We have a secret recipe and I'm going to share it with you. I've put it into an acronym that makes it easy for you to remember:

START:
St– Standards
A—Alignment
R– Roadmap/budget/Strategy
T—save time

Standards—take Industry and Vendor Best Practices for each of the 13 sections of an IT system, put them in easy to access software and update them regularly as things change or new information comes up.

Alignment—take a sub-set of the Standards and regularly check your system against them. When they don't align record it and then work out what needs to be done to about it.

Roadmap/Budget/Strategy— When you have identified the misalignments work out how much it's going to cost to put it right. For instance, a switch is 5 years old and needs replacing, which will cost £700 to do. Put that in the budget. Once you have completed the months review, and you have a list of stuff, work out a priority list of what needs to be addressed first. Also, take input from the business about what changes are planned, and incorporate that into your plan.

Time—doing the above will ultimately prevent issues from appearing.

Once you have this information you can start building out your KPi's. Some of our favourite ones are:
- How many tickets this month?
- How much time did we put into fixing them?
- How many Standards did we check?

Then by having a **regular meeting** (weekly for us) to review stat's, you can see where you are and then, what progress you are making. You will have a budget and a roadmap that shows how you can improve your IT. Simples!

(But if that all sounds like hard work, then give me a call and we can have a chat whether our approach is right for you).

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

NeckRelax

Do you spend a lot of time hunched over your computer at work? Many people work on their computers for multiple hours a day and start to develop pain and stiffness in their necks because of it. While you can get a prescription to manage the pain or try to get a massage, these options aren't appealing to everyone. NeckRelax is the newest neck pain relief tool on the market and is working wonders for people who are using it. NeckRelax offers six distinct massage modes and infrared heat and also comes with a set of electrode pads to target specific muscles. NeckRelax sells for £9.99 on Amazon

Get out of pain and take back your life with NeckRelax.

Confidence

Confidence is an incredibly important trait in the world of business. You may think that all of the great CEOs and entrepreneurs of the last few decades never lose their confidence, but you'd be surprised. New CEOs usually have impostor syndrome and struggle with the idea that they're good enough for their role. Self-made billionaires often worry that their fortune will take an embarrassing hit. Even private equity investors look at the looming recession and grow concerned.

We often find that leaders are less confident when they obsess about things that are out of their control, rather than taking action in areas where they have some control. *The Wall Street Journal* recently reported that externally, most CEOs are most worried about a recession, global trade and politics. Internally, they're much more concerned about retaining top talent, dealing with disruptive technologies and developing the next generation of leaders. While it's good to be aware of the external issues, it's much more important to master the internal problems within your control.

In order to fully boost your own confidence, you must have a high level of confidence in your team. If you are already confident in your team, keep doing what you're doing to hire and develop top talent. If you aren't confident in them, then you should work on hiring the right people. If you've found yourself in this position and you're simply not confident enough in your team, there are a few things you can do to boost your confidence.

Your first option is to invest your own time into hiring, training and developing your team yourself. You'll need to set ample time aside so you can truly master the necessary skills to see the best results. Additionally, you can hire a company like ghSMART to do it for you. There are options for an immediate fix that will help adjust your confidence while also building your team's skills.

Confidence is not necessarily an inherent trait we get from our genes. We can build and grow our confidence skills by taking care of the things we can control. There will always be outside pressures that are out of our control, and there's simply nothing we can do about it. Instead, focus on hiring and maintaining top talent, developing your company's digital capabilities and training the next generation of leaders. You'll see positive results before you know it.

Dr. Geoff Smart is the chairman and founder of ghSMART, a leadership consulting firm that exists to help leaders amplify their positive impact on the world. Dr. Smart and his firm have published multiple New York Times *best sellers. He stays active in his community and has advised many government officials.*

Service Manager— Lawrence

Purser joined the Team in May 2015 as an apprentice.

He started work building/repairing, PC's and Laptops for our client's before moving on to the Help Desk, as a Level 1 support engineer. In the summer of 2020 he became the Team Lead for the Help Desk, and started to develop his management style.

Since then he has gone from strength to strength, and thus, very recently, we have moved into the Service Manager role (and assistant to Chris). Basically managing the whole support team, the small jobs team and our centralised services team.

Lawrence is a keen gamer—of all kinds, be it board or computers. And is also has an impression of Pokemon card! And he has a dog called Billy-Bob!

Developing Technology Professionals Into Leaders

The pandemic brought forward plenty of change in the worlds of technology and business.

Even as the pandemic slows down, the use of technology will not. This has brought new importance to the role of chief technology officer. In fact, data suggests that 30% of current CTOs expect their next role to be as a CEO.

Twenty years ago, we saw the rise of brilliant engineers who took on roles in the business field but lacked

necessary leadership skills. They're attempting to avoid this with the brilliant minds in the technology industry. Many industries have partnered CTOs with CIOs in an effort to improve the CTO's relationship skills. As things become even more digital, technology will be at the root of most businesses.

Developing your brightest technological minds will surely bring positive results to your business in the future.

Increase Your Productivity With A Voice Assistant

Even before the pandemic, people were using voice assistants like Siri or Alexa to help them keep track of their day-to-day schedules. Now that so many people are working from home, these virtual assistants are more valuable than ever before. They can help boost your productivity to new levels if you use them properly.
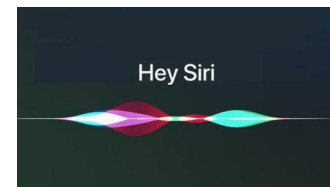
Utilizing a voice assistant for these four tasks will help you increase your productivity while you work from home.

- Meeting reminder
- News and weather
- to-do list
- Read your emails