



Innovations

Review Twice, Implement Once. Doing IT Right the First Time.



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On the Lighter Side

The class teacher asks students to name an animal that begins with an "E". One boy says, "Elephant."

Then the teacher asks for an animal that begins with a "T". The same boy says, "Two elephants."

The teacher sends the boy out of the class for bad behavior. After that she asks for an animal beginning with "M".

The boy shouts from the other side of the wall: "Maybe an elephant!"

I actually heard a speaker say before he started his presentation, "If you can't hear me, please raise your hand." And then he repeated himself...

A man walks into a rooftop bar and takes a seat next to another guy. "What are you drinking?" he asks the guy.

"Magic beer," he says.

"Oh, yeah? What's so magical about it?"

Then he shows him: He swigs some beer, dives off the roof, flies around the building, then finally returns to his seat with a triumphant smile.

"Amazing!" the man says. "Lemme try some of that!" The man grabs the beer. He downs it, leaps off the roof —and plummets 15 stories to the ground.

The bartender shakes his head. "You know, you're a real jerk when you're drunk, Superman."

"'I'm sorry' and 'I apologize' mean the same thing. Except at a funeral." ~ Demetri Martin

Are YOU Prepared For The End Of Windows 7?



On January 14, 2020, the world will bid a fond farewell to the beloved Windows 7 operating system. Well, sort of. Microsoft has declared that, after that date, it will no longer update or support the system. It's the final nail in the coffin for a trustworthy, oft-touted software package that's been running on fumes since newer versions hit the scene. And, as with any funeral, there are some arrangements to be made for the millions of businesses that have stuck it out to the end. Here's everything you need to know about the coming changes – and what you should do now to prepare.

THE END OF AN ERA

The news of Microsoft closing down Windows 7 support may come as a surprise to some of us, but the operating system has been on its last legs for a while. In fact, Microsoft stopped adding new features and honoring warranties for the platform back in 2015. When 2020 comes, it will cease releasing patches and updates for good.

This doesn't mean that Windows 7 PCs will suddenly stop working in January; you'll still be able to boot up in the operating system if you keep it installed. But if you value your privacy, your data and your sanity, it's time to upgrade.

Those Microsoft updates that pop up from time to time don't exist just to annoy you; they patch security vulnerabilities and protect you against

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new viruses and malware. Without that ongoing support, Windows 7 users will become fish in a barrel to sophisticated cybercriminals looking for a quick buck.

That's why it's essential that you call in the professionals to prepare your business for the switch to Windows 10 – or an alternative operating system – now, not later.

IT'S A REQUIREMENT, NOT A CHOICE

Upgrading your operating system well in advance of the Windows 7 end-of-life date may seem like a decision you should make for your peace of mind, but it's even more critical than that. Of course, as time leaves Windows 7 behind, it's certain that pieces of software will steadily become incompatible with the OS. Programs your company uses day-to-day suddenly becoming unusable will present serious headaches, but the real problem lies in the security of your network.

Windows developers are in a constant arms race with cybercriminals looking to exploit vulnerabilities in their platform. Each patch brings a host of bug fixes and security

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upgrades, but cybercriminals almost always find a new way in. Thus, the developers hastily put together a new patch, and the cycle continues.

When an operating system loses support from these developers, its users are left completely vulnerable to hackers. Like maggots drawn to rotting meat, they flock to the abandoned platform and dig into the networks of those stubbornly clinging to the outdated OS. This process is expected to be especially nasty after Windows 7's end of life, since so many businesses still use the OS and likely will forget (or refuse) to upgrade.

If you value your business at all, it's not a choice. You need to upgrade before time runs out.

AVOID THE CRUNCH

Not only should you enlist your IT experts to facilitate the upgrade, but you should do it ASAP. As the clock ticks down on Windows 7, tech companies are expecting a flood of upgrade requests as businesses scramble to leave the OS behind before it's too late. Many of these IT providers will have a lot on their plate later in the year as they hurry to upgrade hundreds, if not thousands, of individual PCs. If you wait it out, you're likely to find yourself at the back of a long, long line, potentially to the point that you breeze past January 14 without a solution. If you do, you're almost certain to regret it.

Every day, the need for an upgrade becomes more urgent. Give the task the ample time required, and avoid needless stress. Reach out to your IT provider and ask them to start the upgrade process today.

Technology Tidbits

Top Tactics To Improve Company Culture

A healthy company culture does more than make work life bearable – it draws in talent and increases productivity. But contrary to what some CEOs may believe, culture begins with leadership. To bolster a positive, winning environment in your business, make sure that above all, your team embodies the core values of your organization. Hire and fire by the standards you've set, and build an organization that seeks to bring meaning to the business you do.

Also, be sure to maintain transparency at every turn. Nothing erodes trust and good vibes like secrets or the rumors they spawn, yet many leaders struggle to understand that, when faced with a difficult situation, a thorough explanation will win the loyalty and consideration of those you work with.

Finally, keep your vision locked on your organization's long-term goals. With a clear focus in mind for your employees, it's that much easier for everyone to stay on the same team and continue

to push forward in earnest. Short-term wins are important, sure, but it's the visionary in you that will become someone to rally around for the long haul.

Easy Ways To Prevent Great Hires From Getting Away

Today's labor market is tighter than it's been in years. With this in mind, it's essential that you do all you can to attract top talent. One of the best and simplest ways to do that is to improve your hiring process.

First, make sure the job description sounds like a true sales pitch. You should feature the benefits of working in that job above the preferred credentials. Once the applications start coming in, ensure you're keeping in regular contact with your prospects. When it comes time for interviews, make the process as straightforward and comfortable as possible and cater to their scheduling needs. Finally, ask for feedback about your hiring process – checking into reviews on sites like Glassdoor can provide valuable insight.

~ Inc.com, 2/1/2019

READ THIS TIP TO AVOID GETTING HACKED!

Everyone knows how damaging data breaches can be to a business, but few actually realize that 81% of these hacks are not the result of elaborate scams carried out by sophisticated hackers. They happen because of poor passwords.

Do what you can to prevent your business from being targeted. Demand that your employees create strong passwords: between 8 and 10 characters in length, with letters, numbers and symbols scattered throughout. Instruct them to avoid real dictionary words and to steer clear of the bone headedly obvious ones like "12345" or "password." You can test the strength of your password online at Microsoft's Security and Safety Center. NEVER use the same password at other sites (i.e. don't use the same password on Facebook as you do at your bank). If you can, enabling two-factor authentication can go a long way toward your overall security.

Even if you use a secure password yourself, you'd likely be amazed (and terrified) to discover how many members of your team do not. In 2019, a strong password is essential. Make sure every one of your employees takes care to create one.



EXPECT, INSPECT, CORRECT

It's no coincidence that we have so many ways to say we made a mistake: botched, flubbed, mishandled, misjudged, mucked, messed, screwed or goofed up – just to name a few.

As a leader, you'll hear each of these (some more than others, and likely some more explicit than the ones I've named here) pretty often. When you do, it's important to first try to remember that whoever made the mistake probably didn't mean to.

Put yourself in their shoes. Ask yourself if you have ever made a mistake. A bad decision? Have you ever said something you regret? Ever disappointed your boss? Jumped to the wrong conclusion? Done something foolish or outright stupid? Everyone has. Sometimes a simple reminder of our past failings enables us to be a little more tolerant of others' missteps.

Mistakes don't have to be the end of the world. Mistakes are inevitable and are often essential to learning and progress. They should guide you, not define you, on you and your employees' journey to success. Mistakes show

effort, and if you learn from them, they can be some of the best tools for growth.

I've heard it said before that the only people who don't make mistakes are those who do nothing at all. To me, the most interesting part about errors is the gradual evolution in how they're classified. First, they start as mistakes. Then they turn into lessons, followed by experiences and finally as gifts that help us succeed.

Therefore, the only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing. Keep that in mind as you're dealing with your employees or considering your own shortcomings. It's one thing to recognize that mistakes are learning opportunities – it's another to actually implement that concept in your organization.



*Robert Stevenson is one of the most widely recognized professional speakers in the world. Author of the books *How To Soar Like An Eagle*, *In A World Full Of Turkeys* and *52 Essential Habits For Success*, he's shared the podium with esteemed figures from across the country, including former President George H.W. Bush, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, Anthony Robbins, Tom Peters and Steven Covey. Today, he travels the world, sharing powerful ideas for achieving excellence, both personally and professionally.*

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***"We make all of your
computer problems go away
without the cost of a
full-time I.T. staff"***

Shiny New Gadget of the Month

VIZR Hopes To Revolutionize Your Dashboard



When it comes to driving, the forces that aim to keep us safe seem to be in constant battle with the pull of convenience. We're supposed to keep our eyes glued to the road while trying to navigate through Google Maps without missing a single turn. It's an inherently dangerous combination.

With their new VIZR tool, FIXD automotive hopes to fix that. After selecting the feature you want, you connect the device to your phone and place it on your dashboard, where it creates a transparent display. This way, FIXD says, you can seamlessly navigate without ever glancing at your phone and putting your life in jeopardy.

Though VIZR is a great idea, the reviews indicate it might not be all it's cracked up to be. You might want to wait until all the bugs are sorted out. For now, just keep your eyes on the road the old-fashioned way.



"OK, went to maps, clicked 'home,' and specified walking directions. We're good to go."

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