



# Innovations

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



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## Finally Shed The Old This Year It's Costing You Much More Than You Think

*New year, new technology!* If your business is still relying on older and aging technology, it's time to think about updating that technology. As it ages, the effort to keep it running comes with many hidden costs. While it may seem financially savvy to keep older hardware and software running, you may be setting yourself up for **major** costs down the road.

It's understandable why many small businesses shy away from investing in new equipment and software. They do the math and see a number that keeps rising. While the upfront costs of new technology — hardware or software — *can* be high (or higher than you would like), you have to consider what you would be paying for versus the cost of keeping aging technology running.

Let's start by looking at some of the "hidden" costs that come with using older or outdated technology. First, consider **the cost of productivity**.

The older technology gets, the less efficiently it runs. This applies to hardware and software. Hardware has a tendency to lag, even if it's well-maintained. Devices simply wear out with use. This cannot be avoided. But the productivity issues that come with aging hardware only get worse when you bring aging software into the mix. Over time, you will start to lose support from developers, and this comes with all sorts of problems. Here are three examples.

**Loss Of Integration** Older apps lose stable integration with companion apps. At one point, your CRM software may have worked perfectly with your billing software. As developers focus on newer versions of their apps, they stop updating past versions. The end result is more hiccups or errors. You risk losing data.

**Loss Of Compatibility** Older apps aren't always compatible with newer apps. What should you do when still using an old software and your vendors or customers use the up-to-date version? It can result in a lot of aggravation on everyone's part, and you can end up losing customers. One Microsoft survey showed a vast majority of consumers – 91% – would walk away from a business if that business were using older technology.

**Loss Of Time And Money** Factoring in slow equipment and a loss of integration and compatibility, aging tech makes it harder for your team to do their jobs. A recent study by Currys PC World found that employees lose an average of 46 minutes **every**

**day** due to aging technology. That adds up to about 24 days per year and an average loss of about \$3,500 per employee – though that number can vary wildly from industry to industry. You can be sure the cost in time and money has a ripple effect throughout the entire business.

While productivity takes a hit, there's another major issue that comes up when your business relies on aging technology: **security**.

As your tech ages, and as developers end support, this means you'll see fewer security patches. Eventually, there will be *zero* security patches, leaving you vulnerable. Developers may stop supporting older products, but hackers and cybercriminals will keep on trying to break into those products. They know small businesses tend to update their systems at a slower pace, and this gives criminals an advantage.

If you get caught using outdated software and a hacker is able to break into your network, the costs associated with this kind of a data breach can put a business under. It's devastating. The problem is made worse if you had limited IT security in place (or none at all) and weren't backing up your data. It's like handing your business over to the criminals! The importance of IT security cannot be overstated, and if you are working on older computers with outdated software, risks are greater.

**So, What Can You Do?** As we said before, many small businesses assume that keeping their technology up-to-date is cost prohibitive. They don't want to deal with the upfront cost that comes with investing in new hardware and software. While it can be costly, depending on your needs, there are ways to mitigate those costs.

One great example is through a Hardware-as-a-Service (HaaS) and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) company or program. These allow small businesses to stay current without having to drop a tidy sum in order to make it all happen. These services are often offered through managed service providers (MSPs) that are dedicated to helping small businesses with all of their IT needs, including keeping their technology updated and their network secure from outside intruders.

When you factor in the loss of productivity (and the frustration that comes with that) along with the costs that come with data breaches, malware infections or cyber-attacks, it can easily be worth it to kick your old tech to the curb and embrace the new!

## Technology Tidbits

### 3 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR DATA DURING COVID-19

1. Manage Your Passwords. You've heard it before, and you'll hear it again – one of the best ways to keep intruders out of your data is to lock it behind strong passwords that are updated every 60 to 90 days. Use passwords that are a mix of letters, numbers and special characters. Make passwords long and confusing.
2. Secure All Data. Who are you sharing your data with? Do former employees still have access? What about former clients? Take time to see who has permission to access your network and data. While you're at it, clean up old or useless data that may be just taking up space. When you know what data you're saving – and who has permission to access that data – you can better protect it.
3. Adopt Best Practices. When was the last time your team received IT security training? Never? Five years ago? It's time to get back on it. Train your team on the latest cyber security threats and how to handle them. Then, adopt best practices so your team knows what to do when they receive a phishing e-mail or there's a threat to your network.

~ Inc., Nov. 20, 2020

### CONFIDENCE IS KEY: HOW TO SELF-PROMOTE FOR GREATER SUCCESS

We often don't like to talk about ourselves. But there are many times when it is important to talk about yourself and to convey your accomplishments. Maybe you're applying for a new position within your organization, you're trying to establish a partnership with another company or you want to expand your

professional network. Either way, here are a few ways to self-promote without sounding like a brag.

Lean Into Your Expertise. Call on your experience. If someone is dealing with an issue you're familiar with, walk them through it. Or, take on the role of mentor with others in your organization or community.

Be Receptive To Feedback. This is how we grow. Listen to what people have to say and respond by taking action. Make adjustments as they make sense. When you receive positive feedback, accept it graciously.

Emphasize "Together." Don't make things just about you. Share credit when it deserves to be shared. Be a supportive and motivational voice. Uplift others.

~ Forbes, Nov. 23, 2020

### 4 WAYS TO MAKE SURE YOUR BUSINESS IS READY FOR WHAT THE REST OF 2021 MAY BRING

As you prep for the coming year, here are four things you need to give your business a serious edge.

1. Head To The Cloud. Back up your data to secure cloud storage. This makes it a breeze for you and your team to access. Should anything be disrupted on-site, you have a backup you can turn to.
2. Update, Update, Update! Patch all of your security solutions, apps, programs – you name it. You don't want to accidentally leave yourself open to security exploits because you're four months behind on the latest security patch.
3. Dive Into Software-As-A-Service (SaaS). One great way to stay ahead of the curve on software is to pair with a SaaS for your various needs, such as marketing, project management or billing. It's easier to keep updated and integrated

with the latest and most reliable software on the market.

4. Call Your MSP. Talk to your managed service provider to make sure all of your current needs are being met. Do you need additional protection? Do you need to back up data more frequently? Do your employees need more IT security training? Look for gaps and work together to fill them.

### THE "HUMAN FIREWALL" – WHAT IS IT AND WHY YOU SHOULD BE FREAKED OUT BY IT

Social engineering is a scary thing, and we're **all** vulnerable. It starts when scammers try to build trust with their victims. They trick their victims into handing over e-mail addresses, physical addresses, phone numbers and passwords.

Scammers often use phishing e-mails (and sometimes phone calls) posing as legitimate sources to get this information. They might tell you they're a representative at your bank or your favorite online store. They may even pose as one of your colleagues. They prey on your desire to help or fix a problem.

Social engineering works because scammers know how to break through the "human firewall," or the people in your organization. You can have all the malware protection in the world, but hackers can still break in by **exploiting your employees.**

How can you protect yourself and ensure your human firewall isn't breached? While no method can stop social engineering completely, ongoing cyber security training can go a long way in patching that firewall. When your team knows what to look for and how to deal with it, they can stop the scammers in their tracks.

## 6 Time Management Tips For The Busy Entrepreneur

Face it, there will never be enough hours in the day to accomplish everything you need to do. But, if you methodically review how you spend your days and instill focus and discipline while completing daily priorities, you will soon find more time to work on the long-term success of your business. Here are six ways to do it.

### 1. Conduct A Time Audit.

Sit down and review three months of activity. The data from the analysis will show where you spent your time (which projects, tasks and priorities demanded your attention) and with whom you collaborated to get the work done. The audit will also shed light on areas where you were distracted, where you were the most productive and which tasks/projects took more (or less) time than anticipated.

### 2. Eliminate Time Drains.

These are the kinds of things that sneak up on you and steal time that can be put to better use growing your business. Look for these time drains: not delegating tasks, not managing meetings efficiently (tip: always have an agenda!) and spending too much time writing/responding to e-mails. If you've done your job as a leader, members of your team can handle a majority of meetings and e-mails. You hired great people. Now let them do their jobs.

### 3. Take Control Of Your Calendar.

Remember, you drive your schedule; don't let others drive it. Block time throughout your day and guard against changing

your schedule to work on tasks that are not important or urgent. The way you allocate your time has a direct correlation to your effectiveness as a leader and, ultimately, the performance of your business. Prudent calendar management will also send a strong signal to your team that you should take this seriously.

### 4. Plan Your Day.

When you know your priorities for the day, you will be better prepared to reset your work schedule if the unexpected comes

your way. Once your schedule is set, block off chunks of time to work on your priorities. I recommend 90-minute blocks so you can concentrate on big-picture items or work on a group of related tasks. Stay disciplined and don't allow yourself to go over that allotted time.

### 5. Limit Interruptions.

Now comes the hard part. Once you start working on each priority, you need to remain focused. Close the door and don't answer the phone unless it's a critical issue. Avoid checking your e-mail. Don't let distractions slow you down.

### 6. Hold Yourself Accountable.

Share your tasks, priorities and deadlines with a colleague. Meet with that person at least monthly to review how well you managed your time. The probability of success increases when you have someone watching your progress and coaching you until you cross the finish line.



*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.*

#### On the Lighter Side

Q. Did Adam and Eve ever have a date?  
A. No, they had an apple!

Q. What did the flame say to his buddies after he fell in love?  
A. "I found the perfect match!"

Did you hear about the bed bugs who fell in love? They're getting married in the spring!

Q. Why do skunks love Valentine's Day?  
A. Because they're scent-imental creatures!

Q. Why shouldn't you fall in love with a pastry chef?  
A. He'll dessert you.

Q. How did the phone propose to his girlfriend on Valentine's Day?  
A. He gave her a ring.

Q. What Valentine's Day candy is best to give a girl?  
A. Her-She Kisses.

Me: "I love you." You: "Is that you or the wine talking?" Me: "It's me talking to the wine."

If you were a triangle you'd be acute one.

I just saved a bunch of money on Valentine's Day by switching to single.

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## Shiny New Gadget of the Month

## NexOptic DoubleTake Binoculars



You might not realize, but binocular technology has come a long way in the past 10 years. It's all thanks to advances in other areas of technology, including high-resolution cameras and high-resolution displays. Bring these technologies together along with some serious image processing, and you are left with NexOptic's DoubleTake Binoculars!

This pair of binocs is slightly smaller than a good pair of traditional lenses, but it comes with so much more, including a 12-megapixel sensor capable of shooting 4K video. It's GPS and WiFi enabled and has a Micro SD card port so you can easily save your photos and video. It's like a supercharged camera, but it has something your average phone camera does not: 10X digital zoom. It's great for travel or hobbies like birdwatching. Learn more at [NexOptic.com/doubletake](http://NexOptic.com/doubletake)



"Sorry we had to kill you, but it was the only way we could get some computer tech support up here."

CartoonStock.com

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