

What's New

2 Things Every Customercentric Brand Needs

When you're building a new brand from the ground up or rebranding, there's a good chance you're thinking about the customer. *How can my brand connect with customers?* Not every business puts thought into their customer experience, nor do they strive to connect with the customer outside of the sale, but for a brand to be successful, that connection is a must. Here are two things every business must do in order to build a customercentric brand.

Be Empathetic. Understand where your customers are coming from. What are their needs, wants and desires? What's causing them stress? Be there for customers and their problems. You might not be able to solve every problem, but by listening to their needs and helping them (even if that means referring them to someone who can help), you make a positive difference in how they perceive your brand.

Know Your Customer. You need to have a "full view" of your customers. Not only do you need to understand the demographic you serve, but you also need to get personal and understand what they like and dislike. It goes hand in hand with knowing what they need and want. The more you know about your customer, the better you can serve them. Send out surveys. Ask them about themselves when you engage with them in person or online. Build this approach right into your business.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Frank M. DeBenedetto, President of TRTG.

"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"



These Technologies Hold The Key To Growing Your Business

After a roller coaster of a ride in 2020 and into 2021, businesses just like yours are looking to the future. Their eyes aren't just on recovery. Many businesses are eager to make up for lost time, and they want to bring new customers into the fold.

There are countless growth strategies out there, but one area offers a lot of options you can dial into your specific business needs: technology. Under the umbrella of tech, you have plenty to choose from. It really comes down to finding the right solutions that fit the current or future needs of your business.

This month, we'll dive into two ways you can utilize various technologies to grow your business in the second half of 2021 and in the years to come. Let's get started.

Using Automation

Many businesses have yet to crack the code on automation. They aren't sure how to implement it and make the most of it. And that's okay. Automation comes with a few

hurdles, like just getting started for one. It's an investment of time and money. However, once you get started, it does the rest.

A majority of daily business activities can be automated. One increasingly popular form of automation is artificial intelligence (AI), often used by chatbots. In the past, chatbots were useless. From the user standpoint, they never worked as expected. But those days are over; thanks to major strides in AI technology, chatbots are automation kings.

Chatbots are highly customizable. You can use them as the first "person" a customer or potential customer sees when they visit your website. From there, a chatbot can ask questions and mimic a real person. But here's where the automation really comes into play: if a potential customer has a specific request or question, the chatbot can instantly direct them to the person within your company who can help. It saves a lot of time.

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Automation is also useful when it comes to collecting data. Now, you can rely on numerous apps to collect different types of data and have it all sent to one place. For instance, you should have forms on your website where people can input data, such as their name and e-mail (and other similar data you may be interested in). You lock free content (such as special reports, books, videos, demos, offers, etc.) behind a “data wall.” Once a potential customer gives you what you want, they get access and you have a lead.

Investing In IT Security

Many businesses went through huge changes last year. One common change was the shift to remote or hybrid work models. In the process, these businesses had to figure out a lot of things on the fly, from how to get their employees up and running to making sure their data was secure.

Unfortunately, many businesses, particularly small and medium-size businesses, struggled to balance getting their employees up and running and staying secure, due to a lack of resources, support or know-how. They ended up having to focus on one or the other – data security often got left in the dust. And in the mix of it all, growth completely fell off their radar.

We’re going into Q3 2021, but many businesses still lag behind when it comes to their IT needs. Not investing in network security, and an overall IT security strategy, has the potential to hold your business back and prevent the growth you’re looking for. Not only is your data at risk

from both internal (hardware failure, data loss, etc.) and external (data breaches, cybercriminals, etc.), but there are also other issues to be aware of.

Here are a few questions to consider:

- Do your employees have strong endpoint security? (Are their devices and network connections secure?)
- Are they trained in IT security protocols? (Do you have protocols in place?)
- Are your network and IT needs scalable? (Do they allow for growth or are they static?)

These questions are a starting point. If you aren’t happy with the answers, it’s time to fill the gaps and give your business the advantage it needs for the future.

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Getting Started

If technology still eludes you, you want to jump into the cloud or automate parts of your business, or you need to boost your data security, your best next step is to partner with a managed services provider (MSP) or a firm that specializes in IT solutions. You never have to do any of these things on your own – especially if you have questions or aren’t sure how to get started. This is the kind of partnership that can put your business on the path to hitting your growth goals and set you up for tech success!

Free Cyber Security Audit Will Reveal Where Your Computer Network Is Exposed And How To Protect Your Company Now



At no cost or obligation, our highly skilled team of IT pros will come to your office and conduct a comprehensive cyber security audit to uncover loopholes in your company’s IT security.

After the audit is done, we’ll prepare a customized “Report Of Findings” that will reveal specific vulnerabilities and provide a Prioritized Action Plan for getting these security problems addressed fast. This report and action plan should be a real eye-opener for you, since almost all of the businesses we’ve done this for discover they are completely exposed to various threats in a number of areas.

**To get started and claim your free assessment now
Send your request to kmarquez@tworivertech.com**

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Your Car Companion: FIXD

When you're driving, there's one thing you hope to never see: the Check Engine light. This symbol often means that something is wrong, but it's rarely clear what that is. Well, here's a little help: FIXD!

FIXD is a small device that connects to your car's onboard diagnostic (OBD) port. Every car built after 1996 has this port – it's what mechanics use to diagnose vehicle issues when a dashboard light comes on. You can use it too, so you won't have to rely on a mechanic to tell you what's "wrong" with your car. FIXD wirelessly connects to your smartphone and tells you directly. Then, you can decide what to do!

Say goodbye to the mysterious Check Engine light and say hello to FIXD. Learn more at bit.ly/3alSXwy.

Mastering Authentic Leadership

When I think of the old definition of leadership, I think of corporate CEOs pretending they don't have weaknesses. Instead of using more productive leadership habits, they're focused on fixing, managing and controlling perceptions to get what they want (the same way a drug addict fixes, manages and controls perception to get the next hit).

Great leaders in the future will lead in a fundamentally different way. The only people who have been systematically trained in the new, authentic model of leadership are recovering drug addicts. This is probably not the first time you've heard about leadership, and you may be familiar with my story and stories like it. And we have all been impacted by addiction in one way or another. As a recovering addict, I've been there. But I've also been in leadership positions.

We have a saying in recovery: "A head full of recovery will screw up your using." Once you know something, you can't unknow it. It's all about "screwing up" your perception of leadership. But first you have to understand your addiction – that thing you do over and over again despite the negative consequences.

There are three behaviors addicts exhibit:

1. **Saying yes to something you should say no to (getting high)**
2. **Hiding your weakness ("I never talked about how much I was struggling")**
3. **Avoiding difficult conversations (such as interventions and getting clean, thus preventing solutions)**

As a professional, you waste 500 hours every year doing these three things. It's possible you are an addict and all you have to do is accept the possibility that you are an addict. When you



realize this, you can begin to say no instead of yes. When you do, things will start to change – that isn't to say it's easy.

You can tell a leader to just stop over-committing, stop being inauthentic or to stop working at 5:00 p.m., but these things are scary – and we aren't addressing the real problem: addiction. Leaders are addicted to their "mask" – that thing they hide behind as they exhibit those behaviors.

What can you do about this? I had a 12-step process to address my addiction, but it boiled down to three things:

1. **Practice rigorous authenticity.**
2. **Surrender the outcome.**
3. **Do uncomfortable work.**

You learn to lead in a fundamentally different way. Addicts have exclusive access to these kinds of principles. So, I'm sharing these same ideas with you, to help you know you can get clean and change the way you lead.

P.S. Be sure to check out the accompanying Petra Coach webinar at PetraCoach.com/mastering-authentic-leadership-with-michael-brody-waite.



Michael Brody-Waite is a recovered drug addict who has since become a three-time CEO and TEDx speaker (with over 2.2 million views). He's held a leadership role at a Fortune 50 company, he's the founder of an Inc. 500 company, he's led a nonprofit and he's the author of Great Leaders Lead Like Drug Addicts: Lead Like Your Life Depends On It.

Services We Offer

*Cloud Services ~ Managed Networking Services
Cybersecurity ~ Hosted Voice over IP*



TRTG Happenings



Keep your pet safe this summer

Not IT related but here at Two River Technology, we love our pets.

Here are some simple tips to keep your pet safe this summer:

1. Keep your pet safely away from fireworks

Pets are more sensitive to loud noises, flashing lights and strong smells. On the Fourth of July, and other days people are likely to set off fireworks, it's best to leave your pets safely indoors, preferably with a radio or TV turned on to soften jarring noises. Even pets who are usually kept outdoors should be brought inside.

If you are going to an Independence Day event and cannot leave your pet unattended at home, keep them leashed and under your direct control at all times.

2. If your pet is scared by fireworks, ask a veterinarian for help

There are medications and techniques that might help alleviate your pet's fear and anxiety. You can also try our suggestions for helping your dog cope with loud noises.

Keep your pets comfortable during all holidays. Read our Halloween safety tips for pets.

3. Protect your pet from heat stroke during summer festivities

Another reason to keep your pets away from the often noisy celebrations of summer is heat. High temperatures put your pet at risk of heat stroke, which can become deadly very quickly. Keep an eye on your pets and act immediately if you see any signs of heatstroke.

NEVER leave your pet in a parked car, even if the day doesn't seem that warm. The temperature outside may be a balmy 72 degrees, but the temperature inside a closed vehicle can rocket to a fatal 116 degrees in less than an hour.

4. Safeguard your pet with a collar and ID tag

All pets, even those kept indoors full-time, should always wear collars with ID tags. Indoor-only pets can become so frightened during fireworks displays that they may take desperate measures to escape the

noise, including breaking through windows or door screens. You should also ensure that your pet is microchipped and that the chip is properly registered with your current contact information.

Instead of spending money on loud, noisy fireworks, consider using that money to make a donation to your local shelter.

installing an anti-tracking browser extension.

Secure your computer

1. Keep up with system and software security updates

While software and security updates can often seem like an annoyance, it really is important to stay on top of them. Aside from adding extra features, they often cover security holes. This means the provider of the operating system (OS) or software has found vulnerabilities which give hackers the opportunity to compromise the program or even your entire computer.

2. Have your wits about you

It should go without saying, being suspicious is one of the best things you can do to keep your computer secure.

Admittedly, with hacker techniques becoming increasingly sophisticated, it can be difficult to tell when you're under attack. All it takes is one email open or link click, and your computer could be compromised.

Make sure you have your wits about you and think twice about opening or clicking on anything that doesn't look legit. Don't rely on spam filters to always catch sketchy emails. Criminals are constantly trying to outsmart these settings and now and again they'll get through.

3. Enable a firewall

A firewall acts as a barrier between your computer or network and the internet. It effectively closes the computer ports that prevent communication with your device. This protects your computer by stopping threats from entering the system and spreading between devices. It can also help prevent your data leaving your computer.

If your operating system comes with a firewall (e.g. Windows XP onward), you

can simply enable the built-in firewall. In Windows, this can be found by navigating to Control Panel>System and Security. You might choose to install an additional firewall as an extra layer of defense or if your OS doesn't already have one.

4. Adjust your browser settings

Most browsers have options that enable you to adjust the level of privacy and security while you browse. These can help lower the risk of malware infections reaching your computer and malicious hackers attacking your device. Some browsers even enable you to tell websites not to track your movements by blocking cookies.

However, many of the options are disabled by default, so you could unwittingly be exposing far more than you need to each time you browse. Thankfully, it should only take a few minutes to go into your browser settings and make the necessary adjustments. Chrome, Firefox, Safari, and Edge all provide detailed instructions to help. While using these browsers you can add an additional layer of protection by installing an anti-tracking browser extension.

5. Install antivirus and anti spyware software

Any machine connected to the internet is inherently vulnerable to viruses and other threats, including malware, ransomware, and Trojan attacks. An antivirus software isn't a completely foolproof option but it can definitely help.

6. Password protect your software and lock your device

Most web-connected software that you install on your system requires login credentials. The most important thing here is not to use the same password across all applications. This makes it far too easy for someone to hack into all of your accounts and possibly steal your identity.

While many security steps relate to intangible threats, there is always the possibility that someone could get their hands on your actual computer. A simple line of defense is to have a strong computer password to at least make it more difficult for them to enter.