

"Insider Tips to Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier and More Profitably"

What's New

"How did it get so late so soon? It's night before it's afternoon. December is here before it's June. My goodness how the time has flown. How did it get so late so soon?" ~ Dr Seuss

The month of December for most is a very busy time; hustling, shopping, planning, decorating, eating, parties and so forth. Certainly, a joyous occasion but this time can be exhausting and frustrating as well. Please remember to take some time for yourself during this busy period, but let's not lose sight of the true spirit of the holiday season. A season for giving, hope, good cheer, love, understanding, helping and goodwill to all.

"What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!" ~ Dr Seuss

From all of us here at Stronghold. Wishing you and your family a wonderful holiday season!

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Our Mission:

To create and build professional, valuable and exceptional relationships with our clients; to develop and implement the most appropriate and effective technology solutions and processes.



Hackers Are Stepping Up Their Game This Holiday Season

The holiday season has almost arrived, and more of us are expected to turn to online shopping this year than ever before. The ongoing pandemic, combined with convenience, makes online shopping an obvious choice for most consumers.

Unfortunately, online shopping has been muddied with hackers and cyberthieves since its debut. There are still safe places on the Internet where we should feel comfortable to shop, though. If you are careful about where you spend your money or share your personal information, online shopping can feel just as safe as entering a store.

Here are our five best tips to ensure that your online holiday shopping is safe and secure.

Stick To Secure Websites

When shopping online, you want to

ensure that every site you visit is secure. Look at the browser bar when entering a new site. If there is a small padlock icon to the left of the web address, the site is secure and you should feel safe to continue. Google Chrome goes an extra step and will label unsecure sites as "not secure" so you know to stay away. Another quick way to tell if a site is secure is by looking at the web address. If it begins in "https," you're good to go. If the "s" is missing at the end and it starts with "http," the site is not secure, and you should find somewhere else to shop.

Don't Be Afraid To Use Your Phone

You can shop on your phone just as easily as you do on your computer, and the portable aspect should not worry you. Major corporations like Amazon and Walmart have secure apps with seemingly unlimited

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items to purchase. Making purchases directly on apps avoids the hassle of going to the company's website, where your connection might not be as secure. It also helps to set up an Apple or Google Pay account, as businesses will not be able to get your bank account information from these sources.

If you do decide to shop on your mobile device, make sure that you are not on public WiFi. Public WiFi is rarely secure, and using it could make you an easy target for hackers. They could get any personal information you enter while on the WiFi. It's better to bookmark the products and purchase them when you are on a private connection.

Use A Password Manager

To keep your information secure, it's imperative to utilize strong and complex passwords that are difficult to crack. Avoid using personal information and using the same password across accounts. To make things easier for yourself, utilize a password manager to keep track of all of your different passwords. This way, you can create complex passwords that even the best of

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hackers can't figure out. Make sure to use a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and special punctuation to make the most secure password possible.

Take A Pass On Amazing Deals

If you come across a price that just seems too good to be true, chances are it probably is. If you search for an item on a search engine, you may see prices way lower than those of major retailers. These options could be on unsecured sites as a front to try to steal your information or it could be someone who doesn't actually have the item trying to make a quick dollar. While the deal might seem like something you can't pass up, it may cost you more in the long run, and you might not even get the product.

Pay Attention To Bank Statements

You won't always know when someone gets access to your personal information or bank accounts. By paying attention to your bank statements, you can catch overcharges or purchases that you did not make. Always use a credit card when shopping online because hackers will not be able to access any of your actual money. Most credit cards come with fraud protection that prevents you from being liable for charges you never actually made.

As long as you take the necessary precautions, shopping online is a safe and financially responsible practice. If you follow these tips, your holiday shopping will go as smoothly as possible.

Fact: Many Businesses Don't Have A Disaster Recovery Plan



- The importance of disaster recovery
- The lack of disaster recovery plans among small businesses
- The leading causes of data loss
- The costs of downtime

No business is truly immune to disasters, but preparing against them will go a long way in making your company resilient. Our comprehensive guide will show you how to do just that. Download our FREE eBook today, and drop us a line if you have any questions.

Get your FREE copy today at

<https://www.stronghold.ca/recipe-for-disaster-recovery/>

Don't Let Hackers Ruin Your Holidays

Use Well-Known And Secure Sites

When looking to purchase a product or service online, you have thousands of options to choose from. To avoid having your personal information stolen, it's best to use familiar sites such as Amazon, Walmart or any of the other major retailers. If you search for a product on a search engine, you may be presented with prices that are extremely low. There's a good chance these are not trustworthy sites. When it comes to online shopping, if it seems too good to be true, something is wrong.

Pay attention to the security of the site where you're trying to make a purchase. Look for a lock icon in the browser bar. If the website has one, then you should be safe on their site. Another way to tell is by looking at the beginning of the web address. If it begins with "https" instead of "http," you are in good shape, and you can continue using the site. Shopping at unsecured sites can put your personal information at risk.

Keep Track Of Your Statements

You should always be watching your finances, but it becomes even more important when shopping online. It's a good habit to form and will help you catch overcharges or purchases that you did not make.

Protect Your Information

When entering a new website, you should be wary if they ask for any personal information upfront. No online retailer should ever ask for your Social Security number unless you are applying for a credit card on their site. Be cautious if they ask for your birthday as well. Hackers can use this information in conjunction with your credit card number to wreak havoc on your life.

Don't Shop On Public WiFi

While it might seem like a good way to keep yourself entertained while enjoying a coffee at a local café, shopping on public WiFi can leave you at risk of being hacked. Public WiFi is often not very secure, and entering your personal information while using it can give hackers easy access. It's much safer to bookmark the item and wait until you're home or no longer using WiFi to make the purchase.

A Winning Strategy To The Game Of Building A Business

Life isn't always easy. Sometimes we sit back and expect things to happen for us or we simply do as we're told and expect great things, but it's not always that easy. While defensive mindsets can be beneficial in some areas, if you want your business to grow, then you need to play aggressive offense.

I first got into real estate not long after Black Monday and the recession that hit in the early '90s. At the time, many other realtors relied on defensive tactics. They waited by the phone for prospective buyers to contact them or they waited at an open house for potential buyers to walk in. But that's not how you get business.

I had no prior training in real estate when I entered, but that didn't stop me from becoming a dominant force in the field. We didn't have millions of dollars to buy subscribers or begin a widespread advertising campaign. Instead, we went after highly targeted strategic partners and I keynoted at large conferences to build our subscriber base. We came out of the recession with more than 5 million subscribers because of our aggressive actions.

During various recessions, companies that have made a point of being aggressive in their campaigns have seen great growth. During the Great Depression in the 1920s, Post was the dominant leader in the breakfast market. They decided to cut their advertising while one of their competitors, Kellogg's, decided to double theirs. Kellogg's profits grew by 30% during the recession, and they became the top dog in the market, where they have remained ever since.

During the energy crisis of the 1970s, Volkswagen, the car import leader of the time, cut growth spending. Toyota decided to double its spending focused on marketing and growth and became the #1 car import company. Volkswagen was bumped down to fifth. Toyota is still the leader of car imports and is three times larger than Volkswagen.



Elon Musk is one of the greatest offensive businessmen of the last century. In 2016, South Australia's electrical grid was knocked out due to a devastating storm. Elon tweeted that he could provide 100 megawatts of storage in 100 days or less. This would have been the largest battery in the entire world at that point, and Elon won the bid. He produced the battery within 60 days.

The greatest way to grow your business into an empire is by taking an offensive approach. It's been proven time and time again by some of the greatest names in business.



While Darren Hardy was growing up, his father always told him to be the exception. He has taken this philosophy and applied it to his many pursuits in the world of business. Darren has remained at the forefront of success media for over 25 years and is not stopping anytime soon.

■ Tesla Took This Lesson From Ford's 112-Year-Old Playbook

Ford has been a dominant first in the auto industry since the very beginning. Henry Ford once said, "Any customer can have a car painted any colour that he wants, so long as it is black." It now looks like Tesla is following Ford's direction.

While other auto companies are focusing on providing more options to their customers, Tesla has scaled back. Tesla offers a third of the colour and model choices when compared to its competitors, but their stock value is much higher than most. Tesla has improved their stock value by doing what it does best instead of attempting to appease every customer.

This same thought process can be applied to business. Businesses that try to do everything to win

all customers instead of focusing on their true base usually lose out to the competition. The most successful companies limit their options and make the choice for the consumer easy.

■ You're Not Getting The Most Out Of Your CRM If You're Not Using This Tool

Businesses use CRMs to provide better service to their customers by organizing and automating certain aspects of the business.

There's a vital tool in many of the major CRMs that is unutilized in many businesses. The ticket/case function can be used to address and keep a record of issues reported by clients.

When this function is used in CRMs, it can ensure that the problem is sent to the right person who is capable of addressing the issue. It can catch these problems early and will

inform other users of this error so it can be fixed quickly. This helps meet the customers' needs while seeing if there are hidden faults lying beneath the surface of the product or service. A knowledge base can even be created to keep a record of all these problems so that customer service representatives can provide fast service to resolve any consumer issues. Regardless of the size of your business, the ticket/case tool is a valuable resource.

■ How To Attract Clients With A Connected Culture

When it comes to creating a successful business, hiring a dedicated and engaged team makes all the difference. If you have unhappy employees, chances are that you also have unhappy customers.

Building an engaged team starts with setting core values for the company. If all employees believe in the company's core values, they will have a better work experience. Once you have a team in place that believes in the values, work on creating positive connections. Positive connections help make the workplace enjoyable.

Consumers are more likely to buy based on emotion, and a happier employee will create a better encounter for the customer. Creating a culture that everyone buys into goes a long way toward growing your business.

