"As a business owner, I know 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!"
- Karen Bowling, Integration

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What's Inside:

Could You Afford This $2.6 Million Mistake?

Two thousand and eighteen is the year of ransomware. According to the 2018 Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report, while malware and hacking breaches have been on a slight decline for the last year, the use of ransomware has skyrocketed. Criminals attracted to ease of use, minimal risk, and high hit rate associated with ransomware have flocked to the strategy in droves, costing small businesses across America millions of dollars in the process. About $301 million to be exact, as stated in Datto's 2017 State of the Channel Ransomware Report. But, of course, businesses aren't the only organizations that have been hit by the ransomware epidemic. Just ask the city of Atlanta, whose systems were frozen by ransomware in late March of this year, locked behind a $50,000 Bitcoin deposit. One interesting component of the case is that, regardless of whether or not the city was actually prepared to pay the ransom, it seems they didn't even have the opportunity. Hackers took down the payment portal not long after the breach, leaving Atlanta officials swinging in the wind. As officials scrambled to restore basic functions of city programs, it only took two weeks to amass a staggering $2.6 million bill — a figure that officials expect to climb another $9.5 million over the coming year.

Even if you're not one of the 10 biggest cities in the United States, cybercriminals cast a wide net — most of the time, it's more profitable to target dozens of virtually unprotected, smaller organizations than to draw the ire of big fish like the US government. If you were a small-time criminal, would you rather break into 10 high-end, unlocked homes abandoned by vacationing tenants, or pull a single, endlessly complicated Ocean's Eleven-style heist? Attackers generally follow the path of least resistance. Your business is just that. So, what do you do in response? Toughen up your barriers, tighten up your processes and enlist your entire staff in the battle against ransomware. Ransomware attackers don't steal your data, they just lock you out of it.

So the best way to make your organization totally ransomware-proof is to make sure a ransomware breach won't actually affect your day-to-day operations. That means regular backups, and lots of them, scattered throughout your primary network in places that won't be compromised by the spreading malware. When ransomware hits, all you need to do is hunt down the source, delete it, and roll the entire system back.

The vast majority of ransomware attacks happen through phishing e-mails, which means employees are usually the ones to open the gates that let the malware in. Luckily, it's easy to train your team to stay vigilant for the signs of digital scams and put procedures in place that will prevent them from ever clicking that shady link.

Of course, the best way to keep ransomware at bay is by putting a skilled team on the case. Unlike an isolated IT employee, a managed services provider has the combined know-how, time, and resources to proactively manage your network security, implementing systems that will make it all but impossible for ransomware to penetrate your data. To truly seal up all the holes in your digital security, it takes a complex, comprehensive strategy. Bring in the experts and ensure your business doesn't become another statistic in the age of digital crime.

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4 Lessons From The Coach's Playbook

1 LISTEN. THAT'S ALL.

It sounds so simple, but it can be very difficult for people who are used to running the show to begin by listening. In any group of strong personalities, you're going to get a lot of brutal honesty disguised as constructive criticism. But that's okay. As a leader, the best thing you can do is listen and not respond until the other person is finished. Avoid "getting in there" and problem-solving right away. Instead, hear what the other person has to say and consider it carefully before you respond.

2 REALIZE — AND ADMIT! — THAT YOU'RE NOT PERFECT.

You've been running a business for years. You know where you're going and how to get there. But no matter who you are, you've still got a lot to learn. We all do. The minute you think you know it all is the moment it's time to get back to basics. Invite other voices and opinions to weigh in. Troubleshoot areas where you might need help. Get vulnerable.

3 TEAR IT DOWN AND BUILD IT BACK UP.

Step back, look at what you've done in the past and ask, "Is this really the best way?" Find all the things that are not working or could go wrong, and shine a light on them. Then, fix what's broken. Once you get a new plan to a place that feels right, solidify it and put in the work to make it happen.

4 BE A LIFELONG LEARNER.

A superior track coach will always be looking for the best shoes for their team to wear and the most efficient ways to train. Any football coach worth their salt will spend hours watching game videos and developing new plays to help their team win. As a business leader, it's your duty to do the same for your team members. Adopt a student mindset. Read voraciously. And keep your mind open to whatever may come.

Why VOIP Is Built For Business

VoIP provides many ways for businesses to increase efficiency and ensure employees are always in touch. Features such as auto attendant and hunt groups ensure incoming calls are distributed to the right party so someone always answers. Have a call center? VoIP functionality optimally directs both incoming and outgoing call traffic. Voicemail to text functionality transcribes the message in a readable format for the user to quickly gain context on a mobile device.

Business Continuity

All businesses must discuss and develop a plan for business continuity in the case of a disruption. These disruptions come in many forms, including natural disasters (hurricanes, floods, etc.), ransomware and user error, among others. Studies show that businesses that do not quickly recover from such outages many times cease operations. VoIP technology is a key part of a business continuity plan. Users can take their VoIP phones to another location with broadband access (other office, home office, etc.) and establish phone calls to resume business. If not able to move the phones for any reason, users can access a softphone app to remain connected to the phone system.

Mobile Workforce

Staying in touch is critical for business success. Missed calls are missed opportunities. VoIP's find me / follow me feature allows individuals to add mobile or other numbers to the user portal to make sure they are reached at a secondary number if they are not at their desk. Then, users can integrate their service with a softphone mobile app. Softphones enable VoIP calls to be made from the mobile device, but using the business caller ID. This is an important features to allow separation between the business and personal persona of the caller. With Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) becoming more popular, this allows employees and businesses a way to conduct business on a single device.

Contact Us Today…
VOIP for your office needs...

Computer Service

⇒ Pro-Active Customer Care
⇒ Onsite Computer Service/Support
⇒ Network Management/Support
⇒ Network & Server Installations
⇒ Network Security & Firewalls
⇒ Cloud Solutions & Hosted Email
⇒ Secure Remote Access / VPNs

Healthcare Services Provided

⇒ Medical, Dental, Radiology
⇒ Software & Hardware Integration
⇒ Security Solutions

Ask us about—Managed Services

How would you like to pay a flat rate and have us take 100% responsibility?

How would you like new equipment, service and support for a flat rate and refresh every 3 years?

Backup & Disaster Recovery

⇒ Business Continuity
⇒ Secure & Compliant Offsite Backup
⇒ HiTech BDR

Email, Web & Archiving

⇒ Spam Filtering
⇒ Email Hosting
⇒ Email Encryption & Archiving
⇒ Website Hosting
⇒ Customer Hosting Server

VOIP (Hosted)

How would you like the security of knowing that your data is safe and protected?

How would you like a VOIP phone system that is cost effective, saves you money, and you can take it home or vacation and work as in the office?

INTEGRATION
**Po Box 5526
Decatur, AL 35601
Phone: 256.536.5805**