## *What's New*

This monthly newsletter is provided courtesy of Kevin Bowling, CEO of Integration.

"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!"



*If you haven't invested in IT security, then your business is at risk.*

# Why NOT Investing In IT Can Cost You BIG

These days, it's easy to take technology for granted. It just seems like everything works so well. If things are working well, why spend more on things like data monitoring or secure cloud storage?

Here's a startling fact: a lot of business owners take this approach to network security. They might think, "This will never happen to me," when it comes to data breaches, malware and hacker attacks. While they might be great at running their businesses, they may end up skimping on their IT security.

They see it as something they simply don't need to invest in. But a lot of business owners end up paying big because they aren't serious enough about IT security. A simple virus scan app or firewall just isn't enough. Hackers and cybercriminals are relentless.

Here's another startling fact: threats like data breaches, malware and hacker attacks are a lot closer than you think. When you go cheap with your network security or don't work with an experienced IT services company, it can end up costing you big in the long run.

A lot of business owners skip out on things like network security, cloud backup, data protection and data monitoring because they don't like the up-front cost or another monthly bill. In reality, while you can expect an ongoing cost, working with a managed IT services firm can be remarkably cost-effective (and smart!).

When your network security solutions are running smoothly, you won't know it. It all happens in the background. But because it's not something you "see" on a daily basis, you might wonder if you're really getting your money's worth. This can be a challenge for business owners who may want to see tangible results for something they pay for. The good news is that you can get tangible results!

Many IT services firms let businesses customize their reporting. You can actually get daily, weekly or monthly reports from your IT security company! You can see exactly what they're doing for your business and the exact threats they're protecting you from.

More than that, a good IT services company is going to work closely with you. They'll provide you with the information, resources and tools you need in order to focus on your customers and the successes of your business. They'll educate you and your team and help you identify the best technology for your needs. That's the definition of peace of mind!

Here's why it can be so costly to NOT invest in IT security:

**Scenario 1**: Imagine you're hit with a malware attack, and it takes your network out of commission. Customer data is at risk, and your business comes to a screeching halt. You have to call in IT experts to fix the problem ASAP. This is a break-fix approach to IT services.

In this event, you're going to be charged BIG to get your business up and running again. The IT specialists will have to scrub your network and make sure everything can be recovered. Not only do you have to pay to get your network cleaned, but your cash flow also takes a hit while you wait around to get everything fixed.

**Scenario 2**: You're hit by a data breach. Hackers are looking for information they can exploit, such as credit card numbers, passwords and other identifying information. They often sell this information to other cybercriminals. In almost every case, this information CANNOT be recovered. Once it's gone, it's gone.

This means you have to take action FAST to make sure stolen information cannot be used. This includes changing credit card information and updating passwords. In the event of a data breach, the sooner you inform your customers, the better. But this is a double-edged sword. Your customers need to know so they can protect themselves. At the same time, your customers may lose faith in you because you put their data at risk.

These are just two examples out of many. When you don't take IT security seriously or you're cheap with your technology, it can end up costing you BIG in the end. Work with an IT security company that will work with you to protect your business the right way – and help you avoid scenarios just like these.

> **"When your network security solutions are running smoothly, you won't know**

# 3 Places You Should NEVER Cut Corners With IT

We all know how easy it is to cut corners in business; we've all done it somewhere. But we also know we shouldn't. You'll eventually have to face the consequences, whether they're small or large. The same applies to IT. When you cut corners, the consequences to your business can be major. Here are three places where you never want to cut costs.

**EQUIPMENT**

You want to set up a wireless network at the office, but you don't want to spend more than $50. So, you spend that $50 and call it good. While this new router may deliver a wireless signal that reaches every employee, you could be making a huge mistake that may cost you dearly.

Routers are a good example of technology you want to put extra thought and money into. You want equipment that not only makes sense for your business's network needs but will also perform reliably _and_ securely. Cheap routers aren't known for their security features. You want something that will complement the firewalls or security software you have in place (and you _should_ have them).

This same idea applies to all other equipment, as well as software. When you cut corners, there's a good chance you'll be opening your wallet again to fix the problem in the near future. On top of that, it puts your data at risk if you're buying cheap, potentially faulty equipment. Do research, ask questions and work with an experienced IT company to make sure your equipment is up to snuff.

## GROWTH OF YOUR BUSINESS

Whether you're just getting started or you've been in the business for a while now, you always want to invest in hardware and software that will scale *with* your business. It's safe to say that most businesses want to grow, which means adding more customers and more employees. When that's the plan, scalability becomes a big deal.

Part of it comes back to the first point: cheap equipment isn't typically designed with scalability in mind. It's a quick-fix investment. It's not made for the long haul. Where do you plan on being in five years? What are your growth goals? You have to ask these kinds of questions to determine what kind of investment you need to make, whether it's in billing software, customer service software, workstations or your network infrastructure.

If you don't think about scalability, as soon as you start really growing, you'll be hit by growing pains. You'll have to reinvest in technology, and you'll be spending far more than you needed to, once for the first investment (on non-scalable tech) and once for the second investment (to catch up with your growth). But because your business has grown since that initial investment, you'll be left with a hefty bill – for much more than you paid the first time. Don't make this mistake!

## DATA SECURITY

Just because your data is locked away in the back room doesn't mean it's safe. For one, small businesses are the biggest targets for cybercriminals because most small businesses skimp on data security, making it easy for cybercriminals to steal data and cause a lot of problems.

To make matters worse, if you get hit with a cyber-attack or data breach, it can be incredibly difficult to recover, and many small businesses *don't* ever recover. They struggle for a few months before finally closing their doors.

You need to invest in firewalls, malware protection, data encryption, data backups, password managers and, as mentioned above, good equipment that is designed with reliability and security in mind. And no, you don't have to figure it out by yourself. It can be a lot, and as you dive into the topic of data security, you'll have questions.

This is exactly why you want to pair up with an experienced IT company that specializes in security. It is very hard to run a business and try to be a data security expert at the same time. Thankfully, you don't have to do that. You can get the most out of your equipment, you can be prepared for future growth and you can be ready for the threats to your data! You just have to make that first investment.

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Cybercrime is already on the rise and is expected to cause $6 trillion in damages by 2021!

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