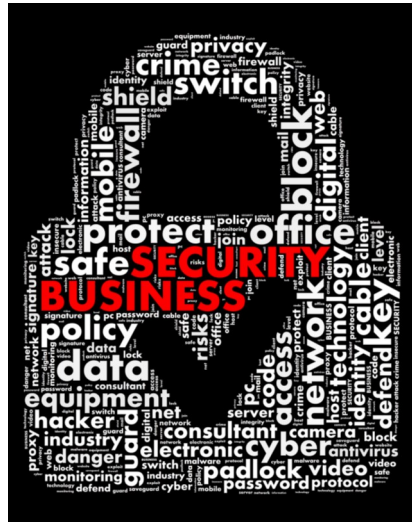


What's New

Business Information Solutions hires creative marketing assistant, Emily Garrett, and experienced help desk technician, Bart Reed. We're excited to have them on our team!



\$1.5M Cyber-Heist Typifies Growing Threat

Efficient Escrow of California was forced to close its doors and lay off its entire staff when cybercriminals nabbed \$1.5 million from its bank account. The thieves gained access to the escrow company's bank data using a form of "Trojan horse" malware.

Net result? The two brothers who owned the firm lost their nine-person staff and faced mounting attorneys' fees nearing the total amount of the funds recovered, with no immediate way to return their customers' money.

Avoid Getting Blindsided

While hacks against the big boys like Target, Home Depot and Sony get more than their share of public attention, cyber-attacks on small and medium-sized companies often go unreported, and rarely make national headlines.

Don't let this lull you into a false sense of security. The number of crippling attacks against everyday businesses is growing. Cybersecurity company Symantec reports, for example, that 52.4% of "phishing" attacks last December were against SMEs - with a massive spike in November. Here are just a few examples out of thousands that you'll probably never hear about:

December 2016



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Phillip Long, CEO of BIS Technology Group.

Our Mission: To deliver solutions to our clients to help them overcome challenges that threaten the health of their business.

Once the hackers broke in, they wired \$432,215 from the firm's bank to an account in Moscow. That was followed by two more transfers totaling \$1.1 million, this time to banks in Heilongjiang Province in China, near the Russian border.

The company recovered the first transfer, but not the next two. They were shocked to discover that, unlike with consumer accounts, banks are under no obligation to recoup losses in a cyberheft against a commercial account. That meant a loss of \$1.1 million, in a year when they expected to clear less than half that. Unable to replace the funds, they were shut down by state regulators just three days after reporting the loss.

continued on pg2

Is Your Keyboard Making You Sick?

By: Taylor D'Amico, Digital Marketing Specialist

Now that we've reached the time of year when those notorious cold and virus bugs infiltrate our office, it's probably a good idea to do a little sanitizing. We hear it on the radio and drive past pharmacy storefronts all the time that say "Protect yourself from the flu now!"

But did you know that your work space and specifically your keyboard can be a huge factor in what makes you sick?

What Can You Do To Keep Your Computer Clean?

Here are a few recommendations to help avoid getting infected:

Clean out your keyboard.

Turn your keyboard upside down, and lightly shake it to dislodge debris. Use alcohol based, lightly damp wipes for cleaning once your computer is powered down. Follow up with a light dose of compressed air to shake out excess dust, dirt and crumbs. While you're at it, gently spray the compressed air into the fan and grill of the main computer tower as this will improve performance in the long run.

Protect your face.

It's been said that office workers

touch their face on average 18 times an hour, bringing all those pesky germs from the keyboard and phone right up to your respiratory and digestive systems every three and a half minutes.

Wipe down surfaces.

Use alcohol based, non-toxic wipes on your desk to periodically wipe down your equipment of the germs, bacteria, and dust that accumulate over time.

Don't eat at your desk.

Crumbs provide a huge breeding ground for bacteria. When you eat and then type, you are probably transmitting bacteria from your mouth to the keyboard.

For an added benefit, add some plants to your desk to not only uplift your mood, which is a health boost, but it also improves air quality, increases productivity, and reduces stress.

Office plants have been reported to reduce absenteeism by up to 50% and reduce minor illness by 30%.

Remember, simple hand washing is always the best way to stop the spread of bacteria!

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Your Desk Is Killing You: Do This Instead

The evidence is piling up that sitting all day is bad for your health. Though not perfect, Varidesk offers a compelling solution.

On the plus side, The Varidesk sets up right out of the box – no assembly required. With its weight-balancing system, you don't need any hardware to fasten it to your desk. And it features an attractive, sturdy design. You can lean on it and your monitor won't go crashing to the floor. Springs and levers make it easy to raise or lower it to one of 11 preset levels.

The main flaw is that when you raise it, it also moves forward – a problem if you're in a tight space. All in all, though, it's worth looking at, especially if you have a wireless keyboard and mouse – and enough space in your office or cubicle to back up a bit.

Get Your FREE Network Evaluation!
Give us a call to schedule it... 251-410-7601!

6 Marketing Trends to Watch in 2017

By: Taylor D'Amico, Digital Marketing Specialist at BIS Designs

As you embrace the idea of a new marketing strategy for 2017, here are the top digital marketing trends to consider and hopefully capitalize on:

Cross-Device Marketing Optimization.

Most companies understand by now the value of having responsive website designs that are mobile friendly. The key term here is cross-device or multi-platform. The majority of web users are still using multiple devices for their web searches. When purchasing something online, often users will want to see the details on bigger screens such as their desktops or laptops. This means we need to adopt strategies that engage the "multichannel majority" and not just our [smart phones](#).

Longer Sales Funnels. Understanding the sales funnel is crucial to developing successful [marketing campaigns](#). A big trend that we're seeing is that companies are investing in marketing pursuits that provide a high level of value upfront, long before asking for an email address or moving into the Calls to Action that prompt users along the sales process. By providing valuable content will ultimately establish a strong level of trust, which is needed for someone to choose you over a

competitor. This may take longer than the traditional sales funnel, however, the rewards will come in easier sales when you do ask your visitors to purchase from you. They will already have developed a sense of trust because you've established yourself as an authority on certain subjects.

Live Video Streaming. Your fans and social media followers want an immersive experience that connects them with your particular brand. No longer can you rely on static blog posts or images alone to impact your audience. Whether Facebook Live, the Twitter-owned Periscope, or Google's YouTube, mobile live-streaming has a captivating power that can spread a company's message into the far reaches of social networks. Curious on how to get this started for your business? We'll guide you through it!

Big Data: Consumer Behavior Analytics. Website analytics is by no means new, but the full potential of this kind of reporting and analysis is continually emerging. As consumer decision behavior is growing in complexity, companies will soon start using web analytics for more than the 20% the majority of us access today. The

Affinity and In-Segment reports in Google Analytics is just one hidden gem that can demystify the types of customer personas that makeup your intended audience. The more we know about what makes our target audience tick, the more successful we'll be at marketing to them.

Artificial Intelligence (AI). Compiling user behavior facts from a global population—and in a timely manner—is an enormous feat beyond human ability. This is why the biggest research companies in the world use AI to establish patterns for this kind of pre-emptive marketing. The type of automation we see in establishing the ideal audience for Facebook ads, for example, is one way this is already being used. In the coming years, we believe this process will heavily increase, and we are bound to see major advances in customer behavior, user experiences (UX), and profitable outcomes for businesses.

BLE Beacons. Beacons are another hot new trend that is expected to increase heavily in 2017. BLE Beacons are used within brick-and-mortar stores to "hypertarget" customers through new levels of proximity awareness.

Is Your Marketing On Track?

Give us a call now to set up your FREE marketing roadmap assessment! Call 251-410-7601!

Website of the Month

Stuart Contracting



Stuart Contracting hails from Bay Minette but their work spans throughout the region. They needed a website that showcased their projects and services in a modern and professional way. Through the portfolio we created on their Projects page and the images chosen for their home page slider, the magnitude of their ability and quality is strongly enhanced.

To visit their website, go to www.stuartcontracting.com.

"People do not buy goods and services. They buy relations, stories and magic."

-Seth Godin

At the Office: Be the Adult in the Room



There's a reason people refer to the office as a "sandbox," because some folks refuse to act like adults. And, if the level of childish behavior rises to tantrum pitch and the culture becomes toxic, there's no chance for communication or growth. But the office is not a playground, and we're not children. So it's important that we enter into an "adult agreement" when we walk through the doors at work and begin our day.

When I work with companies looking to improve their business, one of the things we start with is our adult agreement. It informs the work we do for the entire day, and hopefully beyond.

Here are three agreements to make sure you're acting your age in the workplace:

Don't shoot each other down.

When a colleague brings an idea to the table – even if you disagree with it – don't shut them down just to be "right." If we want to be collaborative, we've got to consider that those around us have something valuable to offer. If you make it a habit to cut people off or discount what they're saying out of hand, you'll not only guarantee that they won't share their ideas with you again, but you'll likely miss out on insights that could help you and your company.

Own up to mistakes and bring them to the table.

Nobody is perfect – not you, not me, not Bill Gates or Mark Cuban or anyone you might admire in business. We all make mistakes, and the worst thing we can do is deny that they exist. Instead, own up to your mistakes and let everybody know what they are. We only grow and learn when we're vulnerable with each other. Admitting error is often

considered a risk, but it's really an opportunity. Our mistakes let others understand who we are, what risks we're willing to take and what lessons we've had to learn. Share freely to engender trust and understanding among your teammates.

Don't hide problems.

Maybe you want to stay focused on the positive and don't want to highlight "problems." Wrong. You're not a negative person just because you bring problems to light or point out conflicts where they might exist. More likely, you're finally saying what everyone else is thinking and is afraid to say. Or you're bringing something up that's important for everyone to understand in order to improve and move forward. Put problems up for discussion and brainstorm solutions. Hiding problems only makes them grow.

As you seek to master these three steps, remember one more thing: adults don't crush each other just for acting like adults. We've got to support each other in our efforts to be truthful and vulnerable. A team is only as strong as its weakest link, so it's critical that we lift each other up.

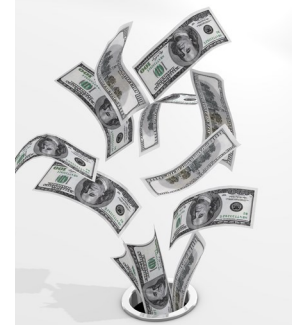
When we act like adults – especially in the sandbox – we all win.



Andy Bailey can cut through organizational BS faster than a hot knife through butter, showing organizations the logjams thwarting their success and coaching them past the excuses.

After all, as he tells his clients, 100% annual growth is only 2% growth every week. It's not easy. But possible. Andy learned how to build great organizations by building a great business, which he started in college then, grew into an Inc. 500 multi-million dollar national company that he successfully sold and exited. He founded Petra to pass on to other entrepreneurs, business owners and leaders the principles and practices he used to build his successful enterprise, which are rooted in the Rockefeller Habits methodology.

Stop Wasting Your Time & Costing Your Company Money



No company is 100% productive 100% of the time. But talk of last night's game, social media check-ins and long lunch breaks aren't the only time thieves.

Without realizing it, you may be asking your team to do things that frankly hurt the bottom line. For instance, do you hold meetings that take longer than necessary – or don't need to be held at all? Consider holding meetings only when critical. And when they are, use an agenda to keep everyone on track. Another big time killer is trying to fix a problem via multiple e-mails or chat. Often a simple phone call could resolve the issue with a lot less back and forth.

-Entrepreneur.com

Get Your FREE Consultation!

Give us a call to schedule it... 251-410-7601!

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*The BIS Division Only

*“A boss has the title.
A leader has the people.”*
-Simon Sinek



Who Wants To Win A \$5 Starbucks Gift Card?

Every week, we will have a Grand-Prize Winner for our Monthly Trivia Challenge Quiz! He or she has to be the first person to correctly answer my quiz question.

Now, here’s this month’s trivia question. The winner will receive a \$5 gift card to Starbucks!

Which was the last state in the US that declared Christmas a legal holiday?

- a) Texas
- b) Oklahoma
- c) Washington

*Email us right now with
your answer!*
cthompson@askbis.com

Want Better Collaboration at Work? Play These Tunes.



Research has already shown that teams who listen to music together at work feel more bonded and collaborate better. Yet that begs the question – what type of music do you listen to? It’s a topic likely to end up in wrangling and conflict. However, a recent study at Cornell University offers a scientific answer. And, while metal fans may not be thrilled with it, the results weren’t exactly shocking. The study found that people who listen to happy music were more likely to cooperate, regardless of age, gender or academic major, than those who listen to unhappy music. Interestingly, they found it was not the vibe, but the bouncing beat, that gets teams in sync.

-Inc.com