Real World Tech Tips

making your business IT reliable & more secure than ever

Did You Know?

So you have a big file you need to get over to your printer YESTERDAY and you can't get it to "send" via e-mail because the file is too big. What should you do? The right thing to do is contact your IT department (us!) so we can assist by installing a secure, commercial-grade file-sharing application. What you shouldn't do is download a free copy of Dropbox or some other file-sharing software without telling us. Dropbox and other free apps come with a price: SECURITY. These applications are known for security vulnerabilities and hacks. Plus, if we don't know about it, we can't manage it or secure it; so the golden rule is this: NEVER download any software or application without checking with your IT department first!

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Shan Dholaria, CTO of PcPlus Networks

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

Don't Settle For Less
5 Questions Every IT Professional Should Say Yes To

Business owners have a wide variety of responsibilities. In many cases, they oversee the hiring process, ensure operations run smoothly and find the best third-party vendors to help benefit their business for years to come. One problem many business owners face when hiring a third party is knowing whether they're the right fit for their business. Making the wrong choice can be detrimental to your business, so how can you ensure you make the right decision? You ask essential questions.

Knowing which questions to ask is easier said than done though. Most business owners are convinced to use a third party, thanks to the persuasive skills of an excellent salesperson or representative. Still, many of these salespeople hold their cards close to their chest. They only tell you what you want to hear, leaving out anything that might make you doubt their expertise or

abilities. We've seen this with many IT "experts," so we wanted to help you by providing you with some questions you should ask before they get anywhere near your network.

Here is what you should ask any IT professional before hiring them to oversee your network, IT and cyber security practices. These are simple yes-or-no questions; if you get a no from the *expert* for any of them, you're probably better off finding a different option.

Are They Monitoring Your Network At All Times To Ensure Security Settings And Security Patches Are Current?
For many businesses, the whole purpose of hiring an IT team or individual is to keep their cyber security protected. They might work with sensitive data that, if compromised, could harm their clients and the business's reputation.

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You need to make sure any IT expert you hire is going to stay up-to-date with the current security patches so they can ensure all holes are covered to keep your business protected. There should not be gaps when they aren't monitoring your network.

Do They Provide Detailed Invoices That Clearly Explain Everything You're Paying For?

Some IT "experts" believe the business owners they work with are clueless about the IT and cyber security industry. They'll try to overcharge for simple tasks without fully explaining what they did, and their invoices are as basic as it gets. This shouldn't fly with you. Every third party you work with should provide detailed invoices so you can see exactly what you're paying for. It's a huge red flag if they refuse to do this.

Will They Be Proactive And Provide You With Regular Updates?

If you're hiring someone to oversee your IT needs, you don't want them to be another responsibility you must manage. You want to trust them and know they're doing everything possible to assist your business. If you have to continually go to them to see

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how they're doing on certain projects, you're better off with someone else.

Do They Offer Any Guarantees On Their Service?

This is a big one many people don't think about, but it could make all the difference in your decision. A business or individual who does excellent work will stand behind their service no matter what, which means offering guarantees that they'll do what they say they'll do. Find out how they respond if your company's data is compromised or something goes wrong with a particular piece of software. Their response should tell you whether they're trustworthy or not.

Do They Have Set Rates For Each Project?

Before hiring them to assist with your IT needs, you should know how much everything costs. You should be cautious if they say they won't know how much something will cost until they start working. There's no telling how much they'll try to charge you, and it could be difficult to know if you're getting bamboozled or not.

It's important to have IT assistance for your business, as it helps keep your company, employees and customers protected. These are just a few questions you should ask before hiring an IT expert. If they answer no to any of the above questions, then continue your search and find someone who is a better fit and has your best interests in mind.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Timekettle's WT2 Edge AI Translator Earbuds

One of the most common things people wish to learn is how to speak a new language. When you can speak other languages, new doors open and additional opportunities become available. But not everyone has the ability or time to learn a new language. That's where Timekettle's WT2 Edge AI Translator Earbuds help. You and the person you're speaking with will each put on one earbud and begin communicating. The earbud will automatically translate your and their words into the other's native tongue, allowing for seamless communication. You can even connect your earbud to your phone if you need to speak to a group of people at once. With Timekettle's Translator Earbuds, you can easily travel the world and converse with locals.

Is Work Consuming Your Life?
GET YOUR LIFE BACK

Early in my career, I met with an executive and noticed something strange on her desk. In a small picture frame, she had a little note that said, "Eat lunch." I asked her why she needed that note, and she replied she never eats lunch. Her job was all-consuming.

That horrified me. I felt sad that a competent business leader seemed so powerless in the fight to reclaim her life from her job. Work is not supposed to be like that. It is not supposed to suck the life out of you. Throughout my career, I developed three ways to reclaim my life from my work. To fully get your life back, you have to do all three.

Set Personal Goals.

Think of simple things, like how many nights per week you want to eat dinner with your family. Several colleagues set and track their "family dinner" metric goals. It works. An extremely busy tech entrepreneur set a goal of having a proper "cellphones off" two-week vacation every summer. I've heard all kinds of goals entrepreneurs set and the work they are willing to put in to meet them.

Schedule Personal Time.

An hour ago, I called one of my colleagues. Rather than hearing "hello" when he answered, I heard, "I put the diaper bag on the stroller!" I jokingly told him that I didn't have the diaper bag. "Oh, sorry, how's it going?" he said, turning his attention to me. My colleague was at the zoo, midday on a Thursday, with his wife and two kids. Was I mad that he was not working? No way! I was proud of him. My colleague is one of the hardest-working people I've ever met. And yet, he schedules personal time. If somebody is trying to schedule over one of your personal

commitments, tell them you are unavailable. It's none of their business why.

Delete, Delegate, Delay And Do.

When a task is begging you to complete it on your off time, your first instinct should be to delete it. If the task is a high enough priority that it has to get done, your second instinct should be to delegate it to a capable person. If the task is important enough that it has to get done, and there's nobody to delegate it to, consider delaying doing it yourself until a time that works for your calendar. If that isn't practical, then your last resort is to do that task.

If you set personal goals, schedule personal time and practice the Delete-Delegate-Delay-Do framework, you can achieve career success and get your life back.

IT Security Tip #2: Working from home? DON'T! Until you read this…
If you plan on catching up on some work from home AND you're using a personal device such as a smartphone or personal laptop – DON'T! Unless your personal device is covered under our <<name of managed services>> plan, you could accidentally introduce a virus to the company's network.
ONLY devices that are under our vigilant watch of patching, updating and monitoring should be used to work remote. Side Note: We can set up a way for you to work from home securely; call our office if you would like us to set that up: (678) 523-5599

**pcplus
networks**
better people, better solutions

1010 Lakes Pkwy
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

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Create An Experience Your Customers Won't Forget

Businesses that create an exceptional customer experience will always hold a position within their industry. This is especially noticeable with companies like Apple or Disney. Around 58 million people travel to Orlando annually to visit Walt Disney World, and many who visit annually cite the customer experience as their primary reason for returning. Apple consistently goes above and beyond to help its customers with whatever they need, and because of this, it's rare to walk by an Apple Store that isn't full of customers.

So, how can you create a similar following for your business? It starts with creating a phenomenal customer experience for everyone walking through your doors. Here's how to do so.

- Ensure you and your team are knowledgeable about the products and services offered. You should never have to say, "Give me one second while I find out."
- Give your customer-facing employees the power and tools to rectify customer problems.
- Find ways to amaze your customers. Even something as simple as providing a discount on your customers' birthdays can make them loyal for life.

THE SECRET TO HIRING THE RIGHT EMPLOYEES FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Hiring can be one of the most stressful situations a business leader can experience. Who you hire plays a role in every aspect of your business's success, from customer satisfaction to profitability. This leaves many wondering how to ensure they hire the right people.

Begin by carefully analyzing the potential hire's résumé and cover letter. Ensure their skills and experience are a good fit for the position while checking for grammar and spelling errors. When you bring them in for the interview, ask questions about how they handled difficult situations in the past and don't be afraid to role-play. From there, you should have them take a skills test or participate in an exercise, if applicable, to ensure they can do the job well. If everything goes well, and you think they're a good fit for the position, call their references and run a background check. Performing these steps will help ensure you hire the right person for your open position.