

Technology Today

"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably"
Since 1984

Beware of Scam Websites and Phishing Emails

Hackers are taking advantage of the holidays being a very busy time of year. Big name companies are commonly the victim of brand impersonation, with DHL being the third-most impersonated brand in phishing emails. Retailers like FedEx and UPS have warned of similar scams that occur more frequently during the holiday season.

The more common format for these types of scams begins with the attack claiming that there is a problem for the target to rectify in delivering a package. They are then directed to a malicious link where their personal information is requested and then stolen. Phishing emails target personal and work devices because employees often use both devices to check both types of email.

These incidences occur more often during the holidays because people are too busy and stressed to take the extra second to confirm information. Make sure to stay aware this holiday season!



IT News, Trends And Information You May Have Missed In 2022

The year 2022 will soon be on its way out the door. It became a year full of ups and downs for many small businesses, but it still felt more promising than the past few years in the midst of the pandemic. Many small-business owners used this past year to reevaluate their IT services. Some needed to strengthen their cyber security defenses while others utilized new advancements to further assist their customer base.

If you're a small-business owner, it's essential that you're aware of the IT news, trends and events that took place in the recent past. In fact, knowing what happened in the previous year can allow you to develop plans for the future so 2023 will be successful for you and your business. You shouldn't continue following old trends because the competition will quickly leave you behind, and that could open you up to cyber-attacks you didn't know

existed. Don't worry, though; we're here to help. Here are our picks for the most important IT events and trends of 2022.

Refined Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) has come a long way over the past few years. Many people associate AI with video games or using GPS for travel, but many companies have started to implement AI in new ways to boost their businesses. It's even being used to automate certain tasks, provide insight through data analysis and assist customers with their needs.

AI has proved incredibly beneficial when used to help customers, and this can be seen when looking at various small-business websites. They use AI to answer common questions their customer base has, which provides quick, efficient results for their customers, who leave satisfied with their interaction.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Ryan Haislar, President of Computerease.

"As a business owner, 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!"

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Around 37% of businesses now utilize AI in the workplace, according to a survey conducted by Gartner. Another study by NewVantage Partners found that nine out of 10 leading businesses have investments in AI technologies. So, if you want to get ahead of your competitors, implement AI into your business.

Managed IT Services Providers Continuing To Grow In Popularity

Gone are the days of having an in-office IT person or team. A more cost-effective solution has been gaining traction over the past few years and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Managed IT services providers (MSPs) install, support and maintain all the users, devices and PCs connected to your network on a routine basis. MSPs can even prevent common problems such as lost devices, hardware failures, fires, natural disasters and a host of other issues that can interrupt or outright destroy your IT infrastructure and the data it holds. The managed IT services industry is growing immensely. At the end of 2021, the industry was valued at \$239.71 billion, and it's estimated to grow by over 13% annually until 2030. Businesses of all sizes have realized the value of MSPs and are using them to their advantage.

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Major Cyber-Attacks Of 2022

Cyber-attacks happen all the time. As new cyberthreats emerge, we'll see more frequent and severe cyber-attacks over the next few years. Uber saw another cyber-attack this past September that caused the company to shut down its internal messaging service and engineering systems in order to get to the bottom of the incident. Cryptocurrency storage and blockchain were also high-value targets for cybercriminals. Ronin and Crypto.com suffered severe cyber-attacks that required both companies to reimburse their users for the cryptocurrency stolen in the attack. Ronin was hacked for \$540 million, and Crypto.com was hacked for \$33 million worth of cryptocurrencies.

Small businesses weren't safe from cyber-attacks, either. While cyber-attacks on big businesses make national news, small businesses are targeted more often since their cyber security defenses aren't as strong. That being said, it's imperative you ensure your business has efficient cyber security practices in place, so you won't have to worry as much about cyber-attacks.

The IT industry is consistently changing to keep up with new developments and advancements. If you're a small-business owner, it's vital to keep up with the latest news and information so you can best protect your business and its data. When you stay ahead of the trends, it's much easier to prevent potential cyber-attacks and threats.

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Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



The Ekster Parliament Wallet

We carry sensitive information in our wallets. They hold our driver's licenses, credit cards, family photos and more. It makes sense that we would want to do everything we can to keep our wallets safe. Now, there's a wallet available to help us. The Ekster Parliament Wallet is a premium-leather, RFID-blocking smart wallet. With the press of a button, the built-in aluminum card holder fans out your cards for easier access. It protects your cards from skimming and is available in 10 brilliant colors. For an additional price, you can add a tracker card to your wallet so you can find it if you leave it somewhere. There's never been a smarter wallet than the Ekster Parliament Wallet.

3 Mistakes Leaders Make With Job Descriptions



Leaders often make common mistakes with job descriptions when hiring and reviewing performances, leading to more errors that can become irritating and reduce productivity. These mistakes are entirely preventable and easily overcome, which leads to better hiring processes.

Here are three common mistakes you're probably making right now:

Describing A Job In Vague Terms

Watch out for "-ing" verb tenses - they are often too basic. "Supporting the marketing team in promoting our products" is undefined. What does "supporting" or "promoting" mean? What level of performance is considered poor, good or great?

Instead, consider a more specific description, such as "To help our customers modernize their inventory management systems by increasing sales of existing customers by 20% per year through new product introduction." This is a high-level but specific explanation of why the job exists.

Focusing Only On Actions, Not On Results

Some leaders make the mistake of wording their expectations in terms of only actions, not results. "Contact at least 20 existing customers per week and conduct an account review with at least five per week." That is a perfectly good expectation of an "action,"

but it is insufficient if all of the expectations do not outline any results. The risk is that people perform required actions without feeling the urge to deliver a specific outcome.

Focusing Only On Results, Not On Actions

Other leaders make the mistake of wording their expectations in terms of big-picture results without specifying the actions an employee should take. "Grow revenue at least 15% per year" is a very specific goal. But to make that goal more achievable, it is helpful to also list several of the necessary actions needed to reach that result.

To avoid making these mistakes, we encourage colleagues and clients to practice writing a "scorecard." A scorecard has a clear mission for the role. It identifies five to seven outcomes you expect a person to achieve by a certain date. The outcomes are a mixture of actions you want the person to take and the results you expect them to achieve. And you can easily "score" whether someone achieved the outcomes.

Using a scorecard will improve your ability as a leader to hire and coach people to exemplify the organization's purpose and values and take actions that achieve results.



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■ Attracting Customers In A Crowded Market

Every industry is full of businesses trying to persuade and attract the same group of customers to shop with them, so you can't just do the same thing as your competitors and expect your business to survive. If you're looking to start a new business or if your current business needs a refresh, there are things you can do to give your business a leg up on the competition.

Stand Out From The Crowd.

You don't necessarily need to revolutionize your industry to see success. You just need to stand out more than your competitors. So think for a moment, what do your customers actually want and need in your industry? How can you provide more or

something different than your competitors? When you find the answers to these questions, you'll be well on your way to creating a profitable business.

Personalize The Experience.

When you own or operate a business, you want your customers to shop with you for life. That means you need to come up with some ideas to encourage loyalty. Sure, you could start a loyalty program, but how can you be sure your rewards are better than your competitors? Instead, make each customer interaction about the customer. Personalize their experience so they feel valued at your business.

Put The Focus Back On Your Work.

We live in a world full of distractions. Every one of us

has a smart phone capable of keeping in contact with anyone at any time, searching the Internet for endless information and scrolling through social media for hours on end. These distractions can quickly take away from our productivity, but it's not always easy to put our phones down. Here are two ways to reclaim your focus so you can get back to work.

Turn Off Your Distractions.

Find out what's most commonly distracting you and find a way to block it out. If you're distracted by your phone, turn on Do Not Disturb mode or turn your phone off. If you struggle with talking to co-workers, close your office door. Log out of your social media accounts so they're not as easy to access.

Break Up Your Schedule.

It's essential to take breaks during your work to stay focused and refreshed. This is when you should be looking at the things distracting you. Make sure you have breaks throughout the day and set a reminder so you take them. If you actually take breaks, you'll be less likely to reach for your distractions while working.



"Wheeeeeeee!"