This Issue:

Three Ransomware Tips for Area Businesses for 2021

For 2020, the word in technology was ransomware, and while many businesses were caught off-guard, there are no longer any excuses to not take cybersecurity seriously. Here are three ransomware and cybersecurity lessons businesses should learn before it's too late.

Segregate Your Data with Access Permissions

When it comes to protecting your data, the fewer people with...

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YEARS IN BUSINESS
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Over Half of Workers Will Work Remotely by the End of 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic forced much of the workforce to work remotely, but now that the pandemic is marginally receding in several parts of the world, the question of if this workforce will continue to work remotely is up for debate. A report from Gartner suggests that things will move in the opposite direction from what you might expect. Let's dive into what this report suggests and what it might mean for your business moving forward.

TechRepublic reports that, according to Gartner, 51% of knowledge workers are expected to work remotely by the end of 2021. This number is up from 27% in 2019, a considerable increase no matter how you look at it. Another notable figure includes the number of workers worldwide expected to be remote by the end of 2021—32%—up from 17% in 2019. It should be mentioned that these numbers are specific to knowledge workers, which are defined as those who hold knowledge-intensive occupations. TechRepublic cites some examples, which include writers, accountants, and engineers.

These trends have forced many employers to consider how they will accommodate remote work in the future, and it's easy to see how it can benefit them, to an extent. They likely got a taste of what having a remote workforce would feel like during the social distancing phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now that workers are confident they can perform their jobs remotely, employers now must ask if it is beneficial for workers to return to the office, or continue to have them work remotely. In fact, this is evident in Gartner's 2021

Easy to Follow Tips to Extend the Life of Your Mobile Device's Battery

When was the last time you wished your device had just a little bit of gas left in the tank? Smartphone batteries tend to degrade over time, regardless of how preventative and proactive we are with our day-to-day use. To help you be as productive as possible with your smartphone while the battery is still functional, we have put together a list of tips that you can use to help keep your battery as full as possible throughout the workday.

Before we get started, you should know that a lot of problems associated with poor battery life have to do with the age of the battery itself. Older smartphones might give you the ability to swap out batteries, but more recent models do not have the removable battery, forcing you to replace the device rather than simply replace the battery. If you do have to upgrade to a new device, let Directive help you with this process, but before you do so, let's make sure that you actually need to do this.

Turn Down Your Screen's Brightness
Modern smartphones have some slick looking screens, and while it might be nice to look at, it also means that the battery is draining much faster while it is on. You can reduce the impact of this by lowering your screen's brightness in the settings of your device. This

"I'm a greater believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it." - Thomas Jefferson

4 Ways to Use Data for Growing Your Business

All businesses collect data of some sort, whether it's for the purposes of storing customer information or product specifications. However, not all businesses understand the importance of this data; in fact, you could be sitting on countless opportunities for growth without even realizing it. Here are some ways that you can take commonly procured data and transform it into actionable steps for growth.

Customer Data & Feedback Surveys

You can use information collected from your customers and the feedback they provide to make changes to the way you do things that could benefit your business long-term. For example, these feedback surveys can be used to find shortcomings in your dealings with customers. Are they satisfied with the way they receive services from you? What do they think about the way your company handles customer service? If you listen to your customers and hear what they have to say, not only will they feel valued, but you might get some great ideas for how you can improve your services further.

Employee Feedback Surveys
Similar to the customer data, you can also glean valuable insights from data provided by your employees. Specifically, you want to look at whether they find their jobs easy or difficult to do, why that is the case, and what they think can be done to improve their jobs or your workplace. When people feel heard, they feel good, and when they feel good, they are more likely to perform well in their workplace roles. You also might find valuable opportunities to improve operations and streamline processes that might not have otherwise been brought to the surface.

Product or Service Data

If you are a small business, chances are you rely on selling products or services of some sort to other organizations or individuals. You likely collect data on how well these products or services sell, but whether or not you act on this data is what will make or break opportunities for growth. What sells well, and why? How can you use this data to replicate future successes? Making informed decisions moving forward based on how well your products or services are doing can give you an edge in making these important decisions.

Network Performance Assessments

Perhaps one of the most overlooked sets of data analytics is for your in-house or cloud-hosted network infrastructure. Oftentimes businesses will notice that things are running smoothly and won't think to check for inconsistencies, concerns, or anything of the sort. It's just like if you have a car that is working well; you don't think to...

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Over Half of Workers Will Work Remotely by the End of 2021

Digital Worker Experience Survey, which cites that 70% of employees work at least part of their workweek out of the office.

Remote work does come with its fair share of challenges, chief among them being the procurement of tools and technologies that accommodate it. If you are going to have staff work remotely at least part of the time, if not all the time, then you need to make sure that you do your part to help them be successful while working remotely. This includes making sure that they have access to important files and documents, solutions that connect them to the workplace and your in-house

workforce, and ensuring that they can access everything they need in a secure fashion.

Of course, having access to all of this also depends on having devices that are capable of working remotely. You will need to equip your employees with devices like laptops and smartphones that can accommodate remote work—and with the global chip shortage still in full swing, it's no surprise that finding the right equipment might be a bit challenging at the moment. Still, we recommend that you consider all of these aspects of remote work for any of your employees who might be considering it at least part of the time.

As for how you can prepare your business for remote work, Directive has you covered. We can equip your business with the tools necessary to get work done outside of the workplace. Technology is a major challenge for small businesses, so you need every advantage you can get. Don't wait any longer! Get a hold of us at 607.433.2200 and ask today about how you can better prepare your office for remote work.

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Easy to Follow Tips to Extend the Life of Your Mobile Device's Battery

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should contribute to a greater battery life.

Try to Avoid Using Media
If you use applications and media too much—especially games and high-quality video streaming apps—you can expect your battery life to dramatically decrease. To minimize the impact this has on your battery life, try to limit how often you use these applications.

Turn Off Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, NFC, and Location Services
Services like Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, NFC, and Location Services should only be enabled when you are using them. When you are not actively using them, they can drain your battery. It is also a security best practice to turn off any connectivity functionality unless it is

needed, as you could potentially connect to an unsecured network on accident. It's better to just disable connectivity until it's needed.

Turn Off Mobile Data
Just like with the previous point, your phone is just about always looking for a connection, and when it cannot find one, your battery drains as a result. If you turn off your mobile data, you can save battery life. Turning off your mobile data also has the added bonus of reducing the amount of time you spend in applications and streaming services, meaning that your battery will last even longer.

Just Put Your Phone Down
As a business owner, it might seem like you can't keep yourself from looking at your phone. After all, you are constantly

receiving texts, emails, phone calls, and other messages. What if something important happens and you don't see it? Well, if you want your phone's battery to last a bit longer, we urge you to put your phone down and maybe set it aside for a little while—especially if you tend to use it a lot at home. The less you use your phone, the longer your battery life will be in both the short and long-term.

We hope you found this blog helpful. We urge you to share this blog with anyone who might get some value from it!

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3 Mantras to Live By for Everyday IT Success

With so many technical terms to know and processes to understand, one might think that the only possible way to take care of your IT infrastructure is to hire professionals to monitor and maintain every aspect of it. While there is certainly a lot of truth to this statement, and working with professionals presents a ton of value, it doesn't take a genius to implement small, common-sense practices that can compound over time.

Here are three mantras that you can adopt to help you be successful with your IT long-term.

If It's Not Broken, Don't Fix It
Whenever you get the chance to add a new technology to your infrastructure, you might leap at the opportunity to try something new and awesome out. This is the "shiny new toy" syndrome where you purchase something impulsively,

thinking that it's the next big thing, without looking at your infrastructure and seeing if you actually need it. While it can sometimes be beneficial to implement new technology to solve a problem, it might be worth looking into your current infrastructure to see if you already have technology that can address the problem.

Bigger Is Not Always Better
On a similar note, adding new technology to your infrastructure on a whim to just implement something new can make your network more complicated. When your network becomes more complicated, you are adding more opportunities for things to go wrong. Perhaps your many different solutions won't play nice together, or the increasingly larger number of endpoints added to your infrastructure creates more openings for hackers to infiltrate your system. Regardless, adding too much too fast can create more work than necessary and pose a marked security...

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Cybersecurity Tips

Cybersecurity Myths

Cybersecurity can be a complex subject, so understandably, many popular myths are mistaken for facts. To help educate the community, we've put together a list of cybersecurity myths that need to be debunked.

Learn more about cybersecurity:
https://dti.io/cybersecmyths

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Marketing Ideas & Tips for Your SMB

How To Find Qualified Leads

The top question many businesses ask is how to find qualified leads. In today's marketplace, having a website, and expecting the dollars to roll in is a fool's errand. There is more competition than ever before, and business owners are less likely to seek out new ways to spend money. You need to put yourself in front of them.

What is a Qualified Lead for Your Business?

A qualified lead is a potential customer who has actively sought out your business and freely provided contact information to you, allowing you to follow up with them. While using purchased email lists and cold calling can generate leads, they are not qualified leads. They could be vetted, in fact, they should be vetted first, but that's the distinction. A lead can only qualify themselves, and qualification occurs when they decide to contact you directly and of their own accord.

When considering a marketing strategy to develop leads, inbound marketing should be at the top of the list. Inbound marketing is designed to generate qualified leads and is key to drawing in your desired audience.

What Makes a Lead Qualified?

For a lead to be qualified, they should fit within the following criteria:

- **Opted-In:** A qualified lead will request to receive communications from you. In other words, they will convert.
- **Decision Maker:** Your message attracts the attention of people who are or are able to influence the decision-makers or, better yet, actually sign the checks.
- **Proven Interest:** They read and subscribe to your blog…

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Employee Highlight: Aysha Brockington

Here at Directive, we have an excellent team of eclectic people working for us, each doing their best to serve our clientele in any of the services we offer. As we like to do every so often, we wanted to introduce you to one of these team members so you could learn a little more about them. So, without further ado, meet Aysha Brockington, an Outbound Marketing Assistant with our marketing team.

Originally from Virginia, Aysha joined us immediately after graduating from nearby Hartwick with a bachelors in business. After observing the office culture during her interview, she decided (luckily for us) that Directive was the perfect place to get started.

When she isn't hard at work, Aysha can be found enjoying a variety of activities. She's a fan of traveling, either in person or through the pages of a book, learning wherever she goes. She's been known to paint, and she commonly finds herself having to deal with Jasper, her deaf cat, and the messes he gets into. In the future, Aysha wants to continue her travels, taking in as much of the world as she can.

Well, Aysha, regardless of where your travels take you, just remember that you are always welcome as a valuable part of the Directive team! Thank you for everything you do for us each day!

We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is our success, and as you grow, we grow.

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