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Are You Using Your Website To Communicate Effectively?

The pandemic changed how businesses interact with their customers, particularly regarding communication. As customers have grown used to and have come to expect to find solutions to their problems online, the question is, does your website help or hinder your customers? Here are some steps you can take to ensure your customers have a great user experience.

Customers are More Self-Directed than Ever

The pandemic has shown...



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**Mobility Is a Huge Benefit for Some Businesses**

You always read that “business has changed”. This is true because people have changed. More people use their mobile devices for a majority of their communication, their browsing, and a lot more, and it is changing the way business is conducted; it’s just not always easy to separate work use from personal usage. Let’s take a look at some of the ways the smartphone has changed the way people approach work, and how that shift in perspective has changed business.

The Rise of Mobile

The rise of business mobility didn’t just happen overnight, but it was a fairly rapid ascension. It’s been years since mobile has overtaken desktop computing for most things. In fact nearly 70 percent of all computing is now done using mobile devices; and the number grows every year. As mobile devices get bigger, get extra screens, and gain substantial (and downright impressive) computing capabilities, it stands to reason that people would be using them more to do work-related tasks.

Here are some of the ways people are utilizing their mobile devices to enhance their professional lives:

Triggers

The smartphone has become a professional’s most useful tool when it comes to jotting down notes or researching things off the cuff. For example, say you see something in a shop window or on a flier, you can immediately get more information in seconds with your smartphone. Businesses have been leveraging this notion for some time. Say an idea comes to a project manager off the clock and doesn’t want to wait to inform his/her team about it, they can simply update the collaboration software or send direct messages to the team members that would be able to act on this information.

Urgency

Many businesses are doing more with less and that means that many times the people responsible for the generation of a product or service are also responsible for the support

(Continued on page 2)



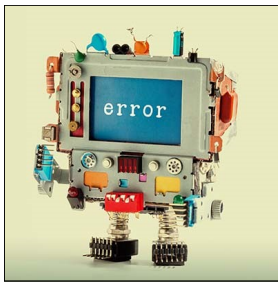
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Failing Technology Can Negatively Affect Your Business



When a computer is on the fritz it can really destabilize a person's ability to produce consistent work. Most

users today will try basic troubleshooting techniques, for better or for worse, to get the machine to run properly. Let's look at the results of failing technology and how it can cost businesses in different ways.

Inefficiency

As we've already established, one of the biggest problems a business has is when their technology isn't running smoothly and it causes workers to spend more time tinkering around with the machine than focusing on work. A study by the University of California at

Irvine found that it takes the average person just over 23 minutes to get back to a task after being disrupted. A worker with technology troubles will be inefficient and have a difficult time retaining any level of focus, meaning even if they do get their work done, it will likely be substandard to their normal work with technology that is working properly.

Downtime

When the technology problems get even worse and the technology actually fails or needs to have a professional technician look at it, the result is downtime. This is basically a state where your business is spending money for zero (or very little) productivity. Sure, broken technology causes you to figure out how to get it back working again, whether that is a situation is resolved through a remote help desk, an onsite technician, an outsourced technician, or

the influx of new technology, until you can get the technology back and running again, you are going to be paying for nothing.

Data Loss

If your business' data isn't backed up and protected from loss, you could be in a world of hurt if the technology that is storing it fails. One major problem with businesses that don't keep up-to-date backups is that computers can fail in the blink of an eye, not to mention the million ways it can fail. Not only do you deal with inefficiency or downtime if you don't have redundancy of your data, you deal with redundancy in your tasks list, which isn't the type of redundancy that will help your bottom line...



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Mobility Is a Huge Benefit for Some Businesses

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of it. If a client has a problem outside of work hours, employees might be asked to handle support calls with clients when off the clock. Technology has come far enough where this can happen at any time in nearly any place.

Project Management and Scheduling

One of the most important parts of any business is the management of the worker and dissemination of tasks. Project management software has come a long way to where now there are mobile apps that can keep teams in the know and up-to-date while also providing communication, file sharing, and much more.

Networking and Showrooming

Since your employees are constantly using their phones to check social media, browse the web, and communicate with the people in their lives, it stands to reason that you can make it work for you. Encouraging your employees to network and find products and services that are in competition with yours can really help them understand your

business better and it can result in better ideas flowing through your collaboration apps.

Issues with the Mobile Workforce

While more and more workers seek additional flexibility and embrace the intrusions that sometimes come with it, some workers are concerned that they are being taken advantage of. For example, some workers don't want to be bothered with work-related issues when they are off the clock. They don't want their superiors and contemporaries blowing up their phone to send memes or give suggestions on how they can do their job better when they are out to dinner on a Friday night.

For a long time, business owners tried to find a solution for the loss of productivity they would see when their employees would check their phones five times a minute throughout the workday. With the advent of mobile device management software, Bring Your Own Device policies, and cloud-based management and productivity applications that make it easier to use the

mobile device than it is to return to a workstation to do a litany of business-centric tasks, businesses have tools that can help them provide the flexibility their employees demand, while also facilitate getting work done.

It will be interesting to see how this issue continues to form as the COVID-19 pandemic has created situations where people are flatly refusing to go back to the office, saying that they can do their jobs remotely and will find other companies willing to allow them that opportunity. The more mobility that is being embraced, the more some workers are willing to do.

There is a lot of technology out there that can help you enhance your business through mobility. If you would like to talk to one of our IT professionals about enhancing your business' mobile footprint, give us a call today at 607.433.2200.



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Access to Communications Has to Be a Priority



Businesses have a lot on their plates, especially lately, but one aspect of running a company that you absolutely should not ignore is communications. In fact, we might argue that communications is second only to security these days, considering the current state of many offices around the world. Let's take a look at some aspects of your business' communications infrastructure.

Anytime, Anywhere Access

Since many workers are still remote, it's important that all employees are able to access your communication

infrastructure at any time and from anywhere. To this end, the cloud is the ideal deployment method, as you are essentially storing your company's communication infrastructure in an online environment accessed through your web browser or a connected application. Furthermore, these communication solutions often allow employees to use their own preferred devices, giving even more freedom and flexibility in how they are utilized.

Unified Communications

As your business grows, chances are you will implement a lot of communication solutions. Sometimes these solutions don't talk to each other well, leading to issues with compatibility or miscommunications in general. Thankfully, a unified communications solution gives your team the ability to communicate

well through a series of integrated tools that are built to talk to each other, meaning there is little-to-no chance of issues cropping up. Furthermore, these solutions can all be accessed from the same place, making for a much more convenient and efficient workflow.

Voice-over-IP Solutions

Most businesses still need phone numbers in at least some capacity, but the way that these services are utilized has changed dramatically over the years. While businesses once relied on local telephone providers for phone services, businesses now have more options in the form of Voice over IP. Essentially, companies can use their Internet...



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Remote Work May Have Caused a Major Uptick in IoT Attacks



In today's day and age, there are countless connected devices, many of which are some that have historically not been connected to the Internet. These devices, which comprise a computing body called the Internet of Things, have made up a significant portion of cyberattacks in 2021. The primary perpetrator of these Internet of Things attacks might be what you least expect: the smart home.

This all makes perfect sense when you consider where most employees have been working lately: their home. The remote work circumstances surrounding the pandemic have led many employees to remain at home and away from the protections and safety nets found on their organization's in-house IT infrastructure.

This is why we always preach that the simpler you can make your IT infrastructure, the better. More entry points on

your network (i.e. more connected devices) means more avenues that hackers and cybercriminals can take to infiltrate your network. Smart devices are everywhere these days, particularly in the smart home, where devices like security cameras, appliances, thermostats, and so much more are all hooked up to the Internet for ease of access, convenience, and control. It's no wonder that with the surge of remote work, cyberattacks via IoT devices have taken off.

These increased reports of IoT attacks come from a report by Kaspersky. The cybersecurity researchers planted traps to gauge the impact of IoT devices on cyberattacks and found some incredible results. Throughout the first half of 2021, Kaspersky found 1.5 billion cyberattacks focused on IoT devices. Compared to the previous year, this is about double from 2020.

Researchers believe that this is due to many workers utilizing virtual private...



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Cybersecurity Tips

The Future of Fraud

The success of scammers is dependent on them staying one step ahead of their potential victims. By forecasting the future of fraud, we can keep pace with the scams that may target us in the future.

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Marketing Ideas & Tips for Your SMB

How To Use Business Trends to Market Your Business



Knowing which services your business should market can

seem like a guessing game, but it doesn't have to be. If you understand and take advantage of market trends, you can tailor your marketing strategy to target your audience, drive traffic to your site, and convert leads.

Why Business Trends Matter When Marketing Your Business

Business trends can be crucial to your marketing because they allow you to observe the areas where potential customers may be interested in learning more. The most obvious example of a business trend would be the mass adoption of remote work. As scores of businesses embrace a remote workforce (willingly or not), it shouldn't be difficult to determine what bottlenecks they will face as they make the transition. Understanding these trends is critical to developing a marketing plan for your business. Doing so will allow you to market your business post-COVID-19.

What services do you think a business new to remote work

would need to be successful? What tools would provide them with solutions to their challenges? When marketing your business, your marketing plan should explain how those tools will help solve their remote work problems.

Put Yourself in the Shoes of Your Clients

How to decide which service to offer? Become your client by adopting a buyer persona. While developing a fictional persona can seem a little out there, all you're doing is putting yourself in the shoes of your customers and behaving as if you were them. Doing so can provide invaluable insight as to what services your customers need.

If you imagine yourself as a business owner who is new to supporting a remote workforce and the limitation on in-person interactions with their customers, what challenges come to mind? Would you be worried about having an insufficient infrastructure to handle the influx of online requests, and are you set up to take credit cards? Does your remote team have the level of technology at home to allow them to be productive?

Your persona's goal is to better understand your customers to provide them with the services they need to solve their problems.

Soothing Pain Points

Once you recognize the issues that would prevent your customers from being successful, you are now in a position to help them resolve them. You know which of your services are right for the issues your customers would be having, now all that is left is for you to simply tell them. Your primary purpose as a business owner is to generate leads in order to grow your business. To do so, you must explain how and why the services you offer will help businesses do their jobs easier and better.

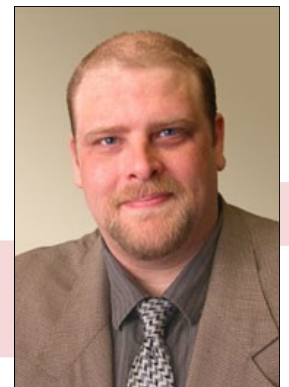


However, how can you reach them, let alone show them how you can help their...



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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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