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**What Does Great IT Support Look Like?**



Technology is a major pain point for just about all businesses, whether you're a small mom-and-pop store or a medium-sized (and quickly growing) name in your community. You'll always have the technology to upkeep, from computers and servers to software solutions or point-of-sale registers. This month, we want to discuss how managed IT solutions can help you maximize your resources by offering a...



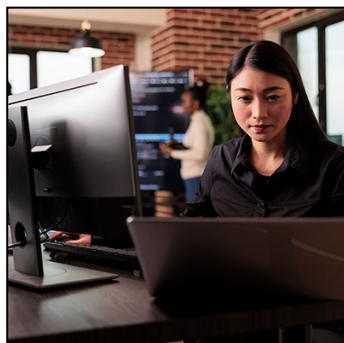
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**About Directive**

We are a technology consulting firm specializing in technology implementation and management for businesses. We're known for providing big-business, Enterprise-Level IT services to small and medium-sized businesses.

Visit us **online** at:  
[newsletter.directive.com](https://newsletter.directive.com)

**10 Things to Ask Your IT Consultant About In 2024**



As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, businesses need to stay ahead of the curve. That's where an IT consultant comes in. Whoever is currently managing your IT and providing technical support should have a pretty good idea of how your business works, and they should be able to help you plan and implement new technologies that will help you remain competitive in this always-changing landscape.

But with so many changes happening in the tech world, it's crucial to have an IT provider who actually stays up-to-date with the latest in tech, security, and business innovation. In this article, we'll discuss ten things you should ask your IT consultant about in 2024 to ensure they are providing the best possible services for your business.

**1. IT Assessments and Quarterly Business Reviews**

If you are under a contract with an IT services provider, you should get regular reviews yearly to go over your business goals and IT infrastructure, address concerns, and answer your questions.

*(Continued on page 2)*

**How You Can Protect Yourself from the Aftershocks of Microsoft's Security Issues**



Microsoft's cybersecurity vulnerabilities have been making headlines recently. These lapses in security are causing concern for customers worldwide. The impact of these vulnerabilities is far-reaching. It affects network security and increases the risk of data breaches, causing somewhat of a ripple effect.

In this article, we'll delve into these security lapses. We'll explore their implications and how Microsoft is responding. Stay tuned for insights on how to protect yourself from these vulnerabilities.

**Understanding Microsoft's Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities**

Microsoft's cybersecurity vulnerabilities are not a new phenomenon. They've been an ongoing part of the tech landscape for years. These vulnerabilities are flaws or weaknesses in Microsoft's software that can be exploited by cybercriminals to gain unauthorized access or control.

It's not necessarily a fact that Microsoft is producing insecure software, but since the vast majority of users and businesses worldwide use Microsoft's software, from Windows to Azure to Office, vulnerabilities have a major global impact.

What seem to be common vulnerabilities can lead to serious security breaches if not addressed promptly. Microsoft regularly releases security updates and patches to fix

*(Continued on page 3)*



## VoIP Integrated with Microsoft Teams for Dynamic Collaboration

Microsoft Teams has become one of the most popular apps that businesses use to promote collaboration. As a part of a Microsoft 365 plan, Teams gives businesses the tools they need to successfully organize and manage tasks to improve outcomes for all manner of organizational processes. Today, we can integrate our VoIP solution with your Microsoft Teams platform's Voice feature to give your team the best chance of success.

Microsoft Teams offers some stark benefits. They include:

- **Improved Collaboration** - Facilitating seamless collaboration, Microsoft Teams enables scheduling online meetings, facilitating real-time chats among colleagues, and advancing smooth communication between staff and customers. Whether it's initiating private or group chats, sharing files, or co-authoring content, the platform offers versatile options for...



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## You Don't Have a Business Continuity Plan without Backup



Every organization faces operational challenges at some point. Numerous factors can lead to downtime, making a comprehensive data backup plan essential. This month's newsletter dives into the concept of business continuity and underscores the pivotal role of data backup within it.

### Understanding Business Continuity

Business continuity involves proactive measures organizations take to ensure the uninterrupted functioning of their operations during and after disasters or unforeseen events. These events encompass natural disasters, cyberattacks, hardware failures, and human errors.

Business continuity planning primarily aims to minimize downtime, sustain operations, and mitigate disruptions' impact on business performance, reputation, and customer satisfaction. This entails identifying risks, devising

strategies to address them, and implementing measures for resilience and swift recovery.

### The Critical Role of Data Backup

Data backup constitutes a cornerstone of business continuity planning, entailing the creation of duplicate data copies stored securely. Here's why it's indispensable:

- **Safeguarding against data loss** - Various factors like hardware failure, software corruption, cyberattacks, or accidental deletion can trigger data loss. Without proper backup measures, businesses risk losing vital information crucial for smooth operations. Data backup is a safety net, enabling organizations to restore lost or corrupted data and swiftly minimize disruptions.
- **Ensuring continuity** - Prompt operation restoration during disasters or system failures is vital for minimizing financial losses and maintaining...



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## 10 Things to Ask Your IT Consultant About In 2024

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If you aren't under a contract, or in some cases, you are just getting the bare minimal level of services from an IT provider, then you should be reaching out to have regular IT assessments performed. This assessment comprehensively evaluates your current IT infrastructure, processes, and systems. An IT assessment can help identify any weaknesses or areas for improvement in your technology, and your consultant can provide recommendations for addressing them.

An IT assessment should be conducted regularly, at least once a year, to ensure

your technology meets your business needs and industry standards.

### 2. IT Advisory/Virtual CIO Services

In addition to an IT assessment, you should also ask your IT consultant about their CIO services. These services involve ongoing support and guidance from your consultant to help you make strategic decisions about your technology. This basically allows you to outsource the traditional CIO role to a third party. There is a lot of value in this, as hiring an in-house CIO is...



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## How You Can Protect Yourself from the Aftershocks of Microsoft's Security Issues

(Continued from page 1)

these vulnerabilities. However, the effectiveness of these measures depends on users' prompt application of these updates.

The balance between usability and security in Microsoft products is a constant challenge. It's a tightrope that Microsoft walks, often under scrutiny.

### The Real-World Impact of Security Lapses

Security lapses can have severe consequences. They can lead to

### What Do Firewalls Really Do?



Firewalls are a mainstay of network security. At its core, the firewall acts as a barrier between a trust-

ed internal network and untrusted external networks, such as the Internet. Its primary function is to monitor and control incoming and outgoing network traffic based on predetermined security rules. Think of the firewall as a gatekeeper scrutinizing every packet of data that attempts to pass through. Let's take a look at the different types of firewalls and some of their key functions.

#### Types of Firewalls

Firewalls come in various forms, catering to different security needs and network configurations. Here are some common types:

- **Packet Filtering Firewalls** - These are the most basic types of firewalls that inspect individual packets of data based on

unauthorized access to sensitive data. For businesses, this can mean exposure of customer data. It can also lead to financial losses and damage to reputation. For individual users, personal information can be compromised. This can lead to identity theft and other forms of cybercrime.

The cost implications of data breaches are significant. For businesses, these breaches can run into millions...



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predetermined criteria, such as IP addresses, port numbers, and protocols.

- **Stateful Inspection Firewalls** - Unlike packet filtering firewalls, stateful inspection firewalls keep track of the state of active connections. They analyze the context of packets within the context of ongoing connections, enhancing security by understanding the relationship between packets.
- **Proxy Firewall** - Proxy firewalls act as intermediaries between internal and external systems. They receive requests from clients, forward them to the destination, and then relay the response back to the clients. This setup adds an additional layer of security by hiding the internal network's details.
- **Next-Generation Firewalls (NGFW)** - NGFWs combine traditional firewall capabilities with advanced features such as intrusion detection and prevention...



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## CYBERSECURITY TIPS

### Recognizing and Reporting Phishing

For this Micro Training, we're doing a bait-and-switch on the cybercriminals: teaching you how to catch your own phish with tips on what to look out for, and advice on how to report suspicious activity.

View this tip and others at:

<https://dti.io/rroffishing>

### Get our Cybersecurity Tips directly to your inbox!

Sign up to receive our **FREE** cybersecurity tips to help you to avoid a data breach or other compromise. These tips can be used to educate yourself and your employees on security best practices.

Sign up today!  
<https://dti.io/gettips>

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We would *love* to hear your feedback, and would be incredibly grateful if you could take a couple of minutes to write a quick Google review for us. This will allow us to improve our service and let others recognize the value we provide.

*Thanks in advance!*

<https://directive.com/review>



## Marketing Ideas & Tips for Your SMB

### 10 Ways to Supercharge Your Email Marketing Efforts



Email marketing remains one of the most popular

ways businesses can nurture leads, build the necessary impressions to convert prospects, and maintain relationships with current clientele. With this popularity, however, comes plenty of competition for attention in recipients' inboxes. This means you must do everything you can to make your email marketing as effective as possible.

Let's review ten things we recommend you prioritize as you work toward this goal.

#### What Can You Do to Make Your Marketing Emails Optimally Effective?

##### 1. Educate Before Selling

As we'll discuss later, the email format requires consent before you can use it. By law, you must give your audience an easy out should they ever decide they no longer want to receive your messages. This means that your email content needs to provide value. If all of the emails you send are hard sells—or

even soft sales pitches—your audience will get sick of getting them.

By treating your emails as an opportunity to educate, you can infuse them with the value that will motivate your audience to receive them and read them. If you consistently do this over time, you'll cement the idea of your company as a resource for certain needs in their mind, making you the first one they think of when they encounter those...



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HAVING AN IT ISSUE?

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[support@directive.com](mailto:support@directive.com)

#### CHAT WITH US

[chat.directive.com](https://chat.directive.com)  
607-433-2200.

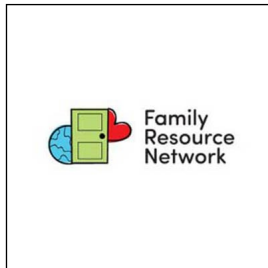
#### TICKET PORTAL

[support.directive.com](https://support.directive.com)

#### MANAGED RESOURCES

Use the icon in your desktop system tray for support options, quick links!

### Community Spotlight: Family Resource Network



While we're proud of what we offer the community, we must acknowledge that other organizations do an awful lot, too. For instance, we wanted to highlight the good people we enjoy working with at the Family Resource Network and all the good they do.

Since its incorporation in 1994, the Family Resource Network has provided services and support to individuals with special needs and their families. Their goal is simple: helping those they serve to live independently and productively as their circumstances allow. This takes many forms, from advocacy to family support and education services to community outreach programs... all designed to help everyone achieve their fullest potential in a more inclusive and accepting environment.

We're happy to support this mission, and we urge you to do the same. Find out more about the Family Resource Network and what they do by visiting [familyrn.org](http://familyrn.org).



Charlotte & Chris Chase

#### Tech Trivia

Google+ was the search engine's fourth attempt at launching a social media platform. The others: 3Orkut, Buzz, and Friend Connect.

### Directive

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YOU FAILED THE PHISHING TEST SO MANY TIMES THAT WE'RE REPLACING YOUR LAPTOP WITH AN ETCH-A-SKETCH.

