This Issue:

Leaning on AI Isn't Always the Answer

Artificial Intelligence is one of the most disruptive and innovative technologies that has come down the line in a decade. It can do things in minutes that would take people hours or days. It will only get more sophisticated from here. Unfortunately for business owners, the use of AI can mean that sometimes you lose sight of just how valuable your human employees are. This month, we take a look at why human employees

Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/leanonai

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

Why Otsego County Businesses Should Replace their Phone System with VoIP

Considering how essential telephone services are for just about any organization, it's surprising how limited—and expensive— telephone service providers here in Otsego County are. Between the lack of support and, again, the costs that are involved, they've dropped the ball...and yet, they still expect businesses to play.
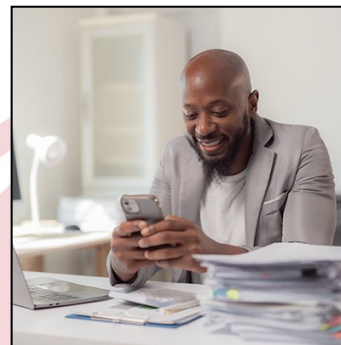
Not only do businesses here in Otsego County deserve better, better options are available.

Here's the thing; if you've been relying on local phone providers, and you are dealing with dropped calls, expensive bills, and outdated technologies, you aren't alone. Most of the local phone companies just aren't offering business solutions that are from the last decade. A lot has changed with phone systems, and it doesn't mean it's more complicated or expensive either.

What Otsego County Businesses Should Expect from Their Phone Systems

Let's take a few moments to consider how your business' phone system should work:

Building a Plan for Business Mobility

It's undeniable that the smartphone has transformed computing. In fact, not only is more computing done on mobile devices, they are by far the most purchased computers in the world. Well over 90 percent of people own some type of smartphone. So how do you use these devices for productivity? This month, we will discuss some ways to make this happen.

Let's face it, when you see most workers on their phone, they are just distracting themselves away from their actual work. Even people who do use it for productivity will often stray away from it to check social media, browse the web, or play games. The availability of these distractions make them somewhat controversial.

Years ago, you would see business owners ban their employees from using their phones at work. Nowadays, with even more distractions, most organizations wouldn't dare try it as it could easily alienate their employees. Now, it's best for everyone if a company has a plan to incorporate the inevitable smartphone use to help their business.

Start with BYOD

A few years ago the term "Bring Your Own Device" was all over the place. Some experts were telling business owners that the only way to get the kind of control they need was to purchase phones for their staff and pay the exorbitant costs of data plans. This would allow them to completely control mobile device use for business,

Services Designed to Optimize Your Business' Performance

Any business' technology can get pretty complicated fast. At Directive, we offer comprehensive and customized network infrastructure services to help build reliability into your business' IT infrastructure. Our team of certified experts covers every end of your network to get you the hardware, software, and support your business needs to run efficiently.

Network Services that Support Your Business

Several Valuable Services Combine to Create Optimized Functionality

Our Network Infrastructure services start by assessing your current IT infrastructure to gauge how your information systems impact your business. Once our initial assessment is complete, we will go into action creating and supporting a business network to maximize your staff's ability to be productive.

Our services include:
Network Design and...

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https://dti.io/networksrvc

You Need to Be Able to Spot Scams Before They Sink You

The Internet is a fantastic place to shop, connect, and learn, but people also have to deal with the minefield of scams—especially in 2025, where opportunists are getting even craftier with AI and other high-tech tricks. This month, we take a look at four simple ways you can spot an Internet scam before it drains your wallet or your personal data.

Check the URL and Look for Secure Connections
One of the first things to do is always check the website's URL. Scam sites often use URLs that look almost identical to the real deal but might have subtle misspellings or weird characters. Look for that little padlock icon and make sure the site starts with "https://" instead of "http://." This tells you that your connection is encrypted and generally more secure. If something feels off with the URL, it's a good idea to exit the page immediately.

Be Wary of Urgent or Pushy Language
Ever received an email or text message that screams "Act Fast!" or "Urgent!"? Scammers love to pressure you into making snap decisions without a second thought. They use these tactics to prevent you from taking a step back and really checking if the offer is legit. If you're being rushed to click a link or send money, that's a huge red flag. Take a deep breath and give yourself a minute to verify the details before you do anything.

Verify the Source of Correspondence
If you get a message from a bank, government agency, or even a friend that seems a bit out of the ordinary, don't just reply directly to that email or message. Instead, open a new browser window and navigate to the official website or call the official phone number you already have on file. This extra step helps ensure you're really communicating with the legit organization and not a scammer posing as one...

Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/spotascam

Why Otsego County Businesses Should Replace their Phone System with VoIP

Your Business' Phone System Should Be Fully-Hosted
Now, what does this mean?

Traditionally, phone systems and the assorted features that many businesses relied on would require bulky and expensive hardware at the business' location. You'd likely require a dedicated server to host the system, along with the hardware required to fax documents and the like. Not only would you need to invest in the hardware itself, you'd then need to keep it maintained. This added substantial expenses and costs to the business' investment in what is fairly described as an operational necessity.

A fully-hosted system is one that the provider takes on and maintains on your behalf. This way, you get all the benefits that come with the system (more on these in a moment) without any of the costs associated with maintenance and upkeep. It's kind of like the great parks and trails that we have here in Otsego County...

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https://dti.io/bizphones

directive

Building a Plan for Business Mobility

but it also added quite a few clams to the proverbial chowder.

Today, this strategy is widely ignored. Sure, large companies with big revenues and more people to support can afford to buy smartphones and data plans for their staff, but most businesses simply cannot justify the investment, especially when there are solutions that can provide them with the mobile coverage and management they need without huge capital outlays.

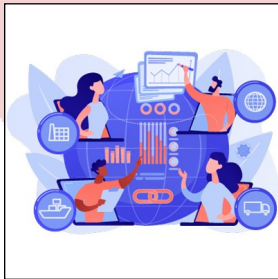Everyone knows (and usually protects) their mobile device; they likely paid a good price for it. With some people paying service and data plans of thousands of dollars a year (on top of the device) they are invested in it; and if they are like most other people they spend hours a day staring at it. Using this device to help push along your organizational mobile initiatives is brilliant; and something that almost every single person will agree to as long as you don't use this access to overstep the personal/work boundary.

BYOD as a strategy still requires mobile management, but it doesn't require the ridiculous price of buying and maintaining phones and phone...

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https://dti.io/mobilebiz

Technology that Can Help You Get a Handle on Your Supply Chain

Running a small business is no easy feat, especially when it comes to managing supply chains. You've got to keep track of suppliers, shipments, inventory, and customer demands—all without losing your mind. Luckily, technology is here to help. Let's break down some of the key tech tools that small businesses are using to make their supply chains smoother and more efficient.

Inventory Management Software
Gone are the days of spreadsheets and manual stock counts. Inventory management software helps small businesses track stock levels in real-time. These tools can send alerts when inventory is low, making it easier to reorder before you run out. Plus, they can sync with sales platforms, so everything stays up-to-date automatically.

Cloud-Based Solutions
Cloud technology isn't just a buzzword—it's a game-changer. Cloud-based platforms allow businesses to monitor operations, track shipments, and manage suppliers all in one place. No more digging through emails to find that one shipping update.

Transportation Management Systems
If your business relies on shipping products, a Transportation Management System (TMS) can be a huge benefit. These systems help optimize shipping and distribution processes as a whole. You can even track deliveries in real-time. This results in faster...

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https://dti.io/getsupplies

CYBERSECURITY TIPS

Fitness Scams
Often times, our fitness goals get lumped in with our New Year's resolutions, and in the spirit of our 2024 cybersecurity resolutions, we're joining forces in this training, too.

In this Micro Training, learn more about the world of fitness scams that may be encountered along your fitness journey.

View this tip and others at:
https://dti.io/fitscam

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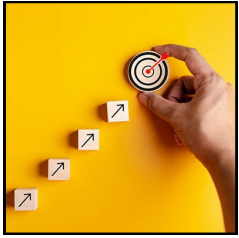## REVIEW US ON

Google

★★★★★

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

Don't Let the Small Stuff Prevent Your Business' Success

Success and failure aren't just about how motivated you are. Most of us who own and/or operate a business are very detail-oriented, and it's easy to get tangled up in the small details. Sometimes, getting stuck on the minutiae can really get in the way of launching and succeeding.

Let's discuss some common pitfalls businesses often get stuck in that prevent them from driving their operations forward.

It Happens to the Best of Us…
We get stuck on the day-to-day tasks and minutiae and forget about using our time and talent to do things that actually drive the business forward.

Every single business owner faces this challenge every so often. After all, we usually like the minutiae. We typically love the details. That's what makes us great business owners in the first place...

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https://dti.io/thrivingbiz

Employee Spotlight: Faith Williams

We have a lot of cool people making up our team, so naturally, we like to brag about them. This time, we wanted to show off one of our marketing associates, Faith Williams, so you can get to know her better.

Faith appreciates remote work's flexibility—particularly the fact that it keeps her off the slippery roads in the winter. What she enjoys even more, however, is the camaraderie between her coworkers and the admin team's support. As she puts it, it's like family, where everyone has *"got your back."*

When she isn't helping businesses succeed through thought-out and well-developed marketing strategies, Faith spends time at home with her menagerie of animals: two horses, Turtle and Secret, and her three dogs, Violet, Tallulah, and Gunther. She enjoys riding in the summer, both at events and out on the trails, and enjoys indoor activities like reading fantasy books and playing video games during the winter. Faith wishes she could have the opportunity to be Mr. Beast for a day, donating money to people in need. We hope she accomplishes her bucket list goal of winning the lottery so she can maybe enjoy that experience.

Thank you for everything you do, Faith… especially for being a valuable team member and part of the Directive family!

Charlotte & Chris Chase

Tech Trivia
The five parts of any information system: people, procedures, hardware, software, data.

Directive

330 Pony Farm Road
Suite #3
Oneonta, NY 13820
Toll-Free 888-546-4384
Voice: 607-433-2200

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