



Bye 2020. Thanks for nothing...



What a year we've left behind. As we contemplate the negative aspects of this year that we had no control over, we can't overlook some of the positive changes, especially within our businesses.

We are thrilled to see how businesses like yours have become flexible and adapted. If you're looking to hire new people this year, this flexibility is huge.

2021 is looking to be a "buyer's market" for employers. A great opportunity to take on truly excellent new people. This also creates a responsibility to give everyone the tools and accessibility they need to excel in their roles from wherever they choose to work.

That means you, as the business owner or manager, need to be on top of issuing the right devices, keeping security tight, and network access open and secure.

After the 2020 lockdowns, hopefully you've already got the fundamentals in place. Moving forward, it's as important as ever to offer your team as much IT support in their homes, as they get in the office.

Let our experts help you with that! Give us a call now and let's make 2021 your most productive year ever!



Finally Shed The Old This Year It's Costing You Much More Than You Think

New year, new technology! If your business is still relying on older and aging technology, it's time to think about updating that technology. As it ages, the effort to keep it running comes with many hidden costs. While it may seem financially savvy to keep older hardware and software running, you may be setting yourself up for major costs down the road.

It's understandable why many small businesses shy away from investing in new equipment and software. They do the math and see a number that keeps rising. While the upfront costs of new technology — hardware or software — can be high (or higher than you would like), you have to consider what you would be paying for versus the cost of keeping aging technology running.

Let's start by looking at some of the "hidden" costs that come with using older or outdated technology. First, consider the cost of productivity.

The older technology gets, the less efficiently it runs. This applies to hardware and software. Hardware has a tendency to lag, even if it's well-maintained. Devices simply wear out with use. This cannot be avoided. But the productivity issues that come with aging hardware only get worse when you bring aging software into the mix. Over time, you will start to lose support from developers, and this comes with all sorts of problems. Here are three examples.

1. Loss Of Integration

Older apps lose stable integration with companion apps. At one point, your CRM software may have worked perfectly with your billing software. As developers focus on newer versions of their apps, they stop updating past versions. The end result is more hiccups or errors. You risk losing data.

2. Loss Of Compatibility

Older apps aren't always compatible with newer apps. What should you

do when still using an old software and your vendors or customers use the up-to-date version? It can result in a lot of aggravation on everyone's part, and you can end up losing customers. One Microsoft survey showed a vast majority of consumers – 91% – would walk away from a business if that business were using older technology.

3. Loss Of Time And Money

Factoring in slow equipment and a loss of integration and compatibility, aging tech makes it harder for your team to do their jobs. A recent study by Currys PC World found that employees lose an average of 46 minutes every day due to aging technology. That adds up to about 24 days per year and an average loss of about \$3,500 per employee – though that number can vary wildly from industry to industry. You can be sure the cost in time and money has a ripple effect throughout the entire business.



If you get caught using outdated software and a hacker is able to break into your network, the costs associated with this kind of a data breach can put a business under. It's devastating. The problem is made worse if you had limited IT security in place (or none at all) and weren't backing up your data. It's like handing your business over to the criminals! The importance of IT security cannot be overstated, and if you are working on older computers with outdated software, risks are greater.

So, What Can You Do?

As we said before, many small businesses assume that keeping their technology up-to-date is cost prohibitive. They don't want to deal with the upfront cost that comes with investing in new hardware and software. While it can be costly, depending on your needs, there are ways to mitigate those costs.

As a managed service providers (MSP), we are dedicated to helping small businesses with all of their IT needs, including keeping their team productive, their technology updated, and their network secure from outside intruders.

When you factor in the loss of productivity (and the frustration that comes with that) along with the costs that come with data breaches, malware infections or cyber-attacks, it can easily be worth it to kick your old tech to the curb and embrace the new!

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While productivity takes a hit, there's another major issue that comes up when your business relies on aging technology: security.

As your tech ages, and as developers end support, this means you'll see fewer security patches. Eventually, there will be zero security patches, leaving you vulnerable. Developers may stop supporting older products, but hackers and cybercriminals will keep on trying to break into those products. They know small businesses tend to update their systems at a slower pace, and this gives criminals an advantage.

Check out our recently published report, “6 Things To Consider Before Hiring Any IT Company”



Even if you aren't ready to make provider changes right now, this report will give you the information you need to make the most informed decision possible so you end up working with someone who helps you solve your problems and accomplish what you want, in the time frame, manner and budget that is right for you.

Download your copy here: <http://bit.ly/6-things-to-consider> and let us know if we might be the right IT company for you!



Does Your Team Need an At-Home VoIP Upgrade?



An unreliable phone system can cause downtime and lost reliability which can lead to

lost customers, lost revenue, and a host of other issues.

As WFH rolls into another year, it may be time to consider a more flexible phone solution.

Is your team using their cell phones to answer customer calls? With VoIP there are many options and features to choose from.

A VoIP, or Voice over Internet Protocol, option can deliver the same high-definition sound quality and dependability as a landline while delivering significant cost savings and many other features and benefits such as:

- The ability to make or transfer calls from home or anywhere.
- Team presence with status and location updates.
- Clear call quality.
- User-friendly interface.
- Employee training sessions.
- Individual / group chat.
- Screen sharing.
- View call / chat history.

Apart from helping your employees compartmentalize work calls and personal calls, the sound quality of calls on VoIP can be significantly better than on a phone.

In terms of the kit needed for this, that can be tailored to each person's personal preferences.

Some will want a traditional handset. That's easily done. Others will prefer a headset. Some may only want the VoIP software on their laptop, and not have a "proper" phone at all.

Give each member of your team the phone setup that suits them with VoIP.

Can we help you, to help your people get more done?



On page one, we talked about our adaptive CEOs and how it's prime time you snag up the very best people in your field this year.

Once you hire your rock-star team, here's a few questions to ask yourself:

1. What else can I do to help my Team achieve more?
2. How will I continue to adapt as my business grows?
3. Is my team getting frustrated with their existing technology tools?

Keeping your daily business operations running smoothly is hard enough. Adding "solving technology problems" to your to-do list on top of everything else can feel daunting. Plus, how in the world can you check email and make payroll if your printer won't print, or your computer keeps freezing!?!

We get it. It is a lot to think about. The truth is you shouldn't have to worry about it. You didn't go to technical school to become a computer engineer -- we did!

Technology can be frustrating and can keep your employees from focusing on their jobs and your clients. Having the right tools in place can help productivity flourish.

In order for your team to be the efficient group of people you have worked so hard to sift through and find, we'll want to make sure they are given the right tools to get the job done:

- Tools to help them make the most of their time.

- Tools that complemented what they do.
- Tools that simplified processes.

Fortunately, we live in an age where there is an app to help you do pretty much anything.

Why wouldn't you take advantage of that? The thing is, it's a little too easy to get stuck in our ways. Yes, even when it comes to business. We log into the same software each morning, have the same grumbles about how we wish it did things differently; then carry on with our day.

Like you, we care about efficiency and effectiveness in all our operations. This is where the opinion of a third party can lift the fog. Sometimes all we need is a new pair of eyes. Someone who can stand back and see the simple solutions that may have been overlooked.

Because when something is a habit, it can be difficult to imagine a different way of doing it. Even if that new way is easier and brings about more benefits - like a more productive team, and better customer satisfaction.

Could we be that new set of eyes for you? We'd like to offer your business a productivity audit where we'll assess your productivity levels and existing tools to see what's working and what needs improvement.

Schedule your assessment now by visiting: <https://calendly.com/meetingtreecomputer> or call us now: (845) 237-2117.

4 Ways To Make Sure Your Business Is Ready For What 2021 May Bring



As you prep for the coming year, here are four things you need to give your business a serious edge.

1 Head To The Cloud

Back up your data to secure cloud storage. This makes it a breeze for you and your team to access. Should anything be disrupted on-site, you have a backup you can turn to.

2 Update, Update, Update!

Patch all of your security solutions, apps, programs — you name it. You don't want to accidentally leave yourself open to security exploits because you're four months behind on the latest security patch.



Question:

How Do I Keep My Laptop Battery In Good Health?

Answer:

The batteries in most of our devices these days are Lithium Ion batteries, which are easy to take care of. Read your device's instructions for the most accurate advice. But in general, the battery will last longer if you don't let it go flat between charges, keep it cool, and don't leave it plugged in when it's on 100%.

3 Dive Into Software-As-A-Service (SaaS)

One great way to stay ahead of the curve on software is to pair with a SaaS for your various needs, such as marketing, project management or billing. It's easier to keep updated and integrated with the latest and most reliable software on the market.

4 Call Your MSP

Talk to your managed service provider to make sure all of your current needs are being met. Do you need additional protection? Do you need to back up data more frequently? Do your employees need more IT security training? Look for gaps and work together to fill them.

The “Human Firewall” — What is it and why you should be freaked out by it

Social engineering is a scary thing, and we're **all** vulnerable. It starts when scammers try to build trust with their victims. They trick their victims into handing over email addresses, physical addresses, phone numbers and passwords.

Scammers often use phishing emails (and phone calls) posing

as legitimate sources to get this information. They might tell you they're a representative at your bank or your favorite Online store. They may even pose as one of your colleagues. They prey on your desire to help or fix a problem.

Social engineering works because scammers know how to break through the “human firewall,” or the people in your organization. You can have all the malware protection in the world, but hackers can still break in by **exploiting your employees**.



How can you protect yourself and ensure your human firewall isn't breached? While no method can stop social engineering completely, **ongoing cyber security training can go a long way in patching that firewall**. When your team knows what to look for and how to deal with it, they can stop the scammers in their tracks.

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