TECHNOLOGY TIMES

"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably"

WHAT'S NEW

I recently bought a new car. I'm impressed by the improvements in entertainment, technology and safety features that have been developed in the four years since I bought my last car.

For example, smartphone integration has been enhanced with Apple Carplay and Android Auto. If I'm texted, the text is converted to voice and read to me; I can respond in kind hands-free with my eyes on the road. I feel safer because I'm warned if I drift out of my lane or if the car in front of me brakes hard.

Unfortunately, my car may already be technologically obsolete.

Ford is introducing an intelligent speed limiter that can help drivers reduce speeding tickets:

(http://www.pcmag.com/news/353379/ford-makes-more-of-its-cars-immune-to-speeding-tickets)

BMW showed off a car without mirrors, using cameras for a 360 degree view:

(http://www.businessinsider.com/heres-what-a-mirrorless-car-looks-like-2017-4)

Then there's autonomous cars and trucks .... but that's a topic for another column!

Stephill Associates, LLC

David Streit, Principal

4 E-mails You Should NEVER Open

No matter how "bomb-proof" we make your network, you and your employees can still invite a hacker in if you click on a link or open an attachment in an e-mail sent by a cybercriminal. Some spam is obvious (can you say, "Viagra at a discount"?) but others are VERY cleverly designed to sneak past all the filters and trick the recipient into opening the door. Known as a "phishing" e-mail, this still is the #1 way hackers circumvent firewalls, filters and antivirus, so it's critical that you and your employees know how to spot a threatening e-mail. Here are four types of e-mail ploys you should be on high alert for.

The Authority E-mail. The most common phishing e-mails are ones impersonating your bank, the IRS or some authority figure. The rule of thumb is this: ANY e-mail that comes in where 1) you don't PERSONALLY know the sender, including e-mails from the IRS, Microsoft or your "bank," and 2) asks you to "verify" your account should be deleted. Remember, ANY important notification will be sent via old-fashioned snail mail. If it's important, they can call you.

The "Account Verification" E-mail. Any e-mail that asks you to verify your password, bank information or login credentials, OR to update your account information, should be ignored. No legitimate vendor sends e-mails asking for this; they will simply ask you upon logging in to update or verify your information if that's necessary.

The Typo E-mail. Another big warning sign is typos. E-mails coming from overseas (which is where most of these attacks come from) are written by people who do not speak or write English well. Therefore, if there are obvious typos or grammar mistakes, delete it.

The Zip File, PDF Or Invoice Attachment. Unless you specifically KNOW the sender of an e-mail, never, ever open an attachment. That includes PDFs, zip files, music and video files and anything referencing an unpaid invoice or accounting file (many hackers use this to get people in accounting departments to open e-mails). Of course, ANY file can carry a virus, so better to delete it than be sorry.

Call Us To Cut Down On 99% Of The Spam E-mails You're Getting

Call us this month and we'll come onsite to perform a free spam-protection analysis. Simply contact us today at 732-792-2021 or dstreit@stephillassociates.com to reserve yours. Do it now…before a ransom demand – or worse – shows up in your inbox.

Helping Clients Step Over the Hills of Technology
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10 Million Passwords Became Public; The Findings Were Astonishing

Keeper Security, a company specializing in secure password management, conducted a review of the 10 MILLION passwords that became public in 2016 from various hacker attacks. What they found was shocking. One of the most common passwords used was "123456" with the second being QWERTY, which are the top keys on a keyboard – and these were used by webmasters to "protect" the digital keys to your website's kingdom!

Another very common mistake was that many passwords were six characters or shorter, which any brute-force password-cracking software can descramble in SECONDS. So while remembering all those passwords and changing them is a major pain in the butt, getting your website hacked or your bank account wiped out is even worse. Our advice is to create a password that is at LEAST 12 characters, with uppercase and lowercase letters, and numbers and characters such as ! or #. Of course, if you need help in remembering and organizing your passwords, there are several very good password management software tools such as LastPass and RoboForm that can keep all the passwords secure AND make it easy to cut off an employee's access to various passwords and sites easily if they are let go or they quit.

> *One of the most common passwords used was "123456" with the second being QWERTY, which are the top keys on a keyboard – and these were used by webmasters to "protect" the digital keys to your website's kingdom!*

Free Report Download: If You Are Considering Cloud Computing For Your Company, DON'T, Until You Read This…

If you are considering cloud computing or Office 365 to save money and simplify IT, it is extremely important that you get and read this special report, "Critical Facts Every Business Owner Must Know Before Moving Their Network To The Cloud."

This report discusses in simple, non-technical terms the pros and cons of cloud computing, data security, how to choose a cloud provider, as well as three little-known facts that most IT consultants don't know or won't tell you about cloud computing that could end up causing you MORE problems and costing you more money than you anticipated.

Even if you aren't ready to move to the cloud yet, this report will give you the right information and questions to ask when the time comes.

Get Your Free Copy Today: http://www.stephillassociates.com/cloudreport

Client Spotlight: BC Compliance Group, contract compliance examiners.

BCCG Partners Ed Botti and Rob Connolly have been friends and clients of Stephill for many years.

BCCG specializes in providing independent third-party Compliance Analyses for their clients. Rob and Ed and their staff review and analyze contractual obligations to identify and correct accounting discrepancies that lead to over spend.

BCCG's clients include many fortune 100 US corporations, non for profit corporations, as well as many mid-sized companies.

BCCG engagements have resulted in millions of dollars of savings for their clients, savings that would have otherwise gone undetected.

In one case, BCCG recovered $565,000 on a current obligation and reduced future obligations by $250,000 per year for the next 12 years.

Another recent project focused on an analysis of the costs of a large Construction project, finding the General Contractor did not accurately comply with the intricate and specific terms of the contract in place, leading to $250,000 of savings on the construction project for their client.
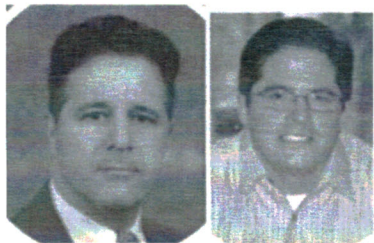
How To Get Your Employees To Commit To Achieving BIG Goals

How do great leaders inspire others to commit themselves to their goals? It's not just that they have charismatic personalities, or that they give a lot of high-energy motivational talks. What they do is communicate their vision so effectively that other people adopt it as their own.

Inspiring people is what great leaders like John F. Kennedy did best. In the early '60s, President Kennedy set his sights on putting a man on the moon and told the American people, "We can do it!" He said it with such conviction that people believed it and committed themselves to making it happen. And, sure enough, we made it to the moon. That's the formula for any leader to inspire commitment: clear goals, a solid plan of action and a strong conviction.

Of course, leadership takes more than inspiration. One of the most insightful tips I learned about leading others is that **people do things for their reasons**, not for your reasons or for mine. So how can you move past the empty rhetoric and translate your vision into concrete actions your people can identify with and get excited about? Let me suggest seven proven techniques for building a solid team:

Recognize outstanding performance.

Everyone likes to look good in the presence of their peers. When you find someone doing something right, make sure you give them public recognition. If they do really well, throw in a tangible benefit, bonus or gift. It will boost the whole team's mood and productivity.

Constantly ask for input and ideas.

People are usually much more enthusiastic about supporting decisions and plans they helped create. So get ideas and input from any person whose job will be affected by any upcoming decision. When your team quits talking about the company, and starts talking about our company, you know you've got a team.

Give them proper coaching and training.

If you're lucky, you'll have one or two people who can plow into almost anything with little to no instruction from you. But most people need a lot of training, mentoring, coaching and guidance in the beginning. Without that, people can become frustrated quickly and lose interest in hitting a big goal.

Just be a nice person.

Make people feel valued and important by treating them with dignity and respect. If you have to correct someone's mistake, do it privately, and counter it with a sincere compliment. Attacking someone and belittling them is never a useful way to get the most out of a team member.

Get rid of underperformers fast.

You've heard the phrase "Hire slow and fire fast." This is a piece of advice we all need to keep in mind. Make sure you weed out the bad apples before they spoil your culture. That's because keeping someone on the team who is not performing, is not trying and is clearly not doing their job sends a message that it's okay – which is incredibly demotivating to high performers who are striving to hit big goals.

It takes a lot of patience and effort to build a solid team of people who will share and help you fulfill your vision, but the results will be well worth all you put into it.

Dr. Nido Qubein is president of High Point University, an undergraduate and graduate institution with 4,300 students from 40 countries. He has authored two dozen books and audio programs distributed worldwide. As a business leader, he is chairman of the Great Harvest Bread Company, with 220 stores in 43 states. He serves on the boards of several national organizations, including BB&T (a Fortune 500 company with $185 billion in assets), the La-Z-Boy Corporation (one of the largest and most recognized furniture brands worldwide) and Dots Stores (a chain of fashion boutiques with more than 400 locations across the country). As a professional speaker, Dr. Qubein has received many distinctions, including the Golden Gavel Medal, induction into the International Speaker Hall of Fame and as the founder of the NSA Foundation in Arizona. To learn more about Dr. Qubein, go to: http://www.nidoqubein.com/

■ **Want More Customers? Use This FREE Google Marketing Trick.** If you want your business to show up first when potential customers are searching for you or for the services and product you provide, you MUST claim your business on Google. This free service allows you to enter data about your company, products, services and location that will greatly improve your search-engine ranking. Make sure you enter COMPLETE data and information, including hours of business, your phone and photos of your location. You can even post internal photos of your store or office, but you must hire a Google certified photographer (a simple search with Google will allow you to find one in your area). Remember, Google displays search results based on relevance, so the more specific information you can provide on what you do, the better your chances are of coming up in search-engine rankings. *For more information, just search "Google My Business" to get started.*

■ **The Latest Way Hackers Are Stealing Your Identity That You Won't Believe.** Researchers at Japan's National Institute of Informatics report that fingerprints can be easily reproduced from photos without using any advanced technology. If the image is clear and well-lit, fraudsters can mimic your fingerprints. Swiping biometric data is nothing new. In 2015 a famous hacker recreated German chancellor Angela Merkel's iris from a photo to unlock a test. The problem is, once biometric data is resold on the dark web, the risk it will be used against you persists for life. New technologies, such as a scanner that also analyzes underlying tissue and pulse, promise to "go deeper," making this type of theft more difficult. Until then, however, think twice before flashing that peace sign on your next selfie. *Telegraph.co.uk, 01.17.17*

■ **How Businesses Hurt Sales And Their Reputation On Social Media.** If you have any type of social media presence – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube or others – one of the things you must be on CONSTANT alert for is customer complaints. According to a study conducted by Edison Research, consumers post their complaints on social media in order to solicit a FASTER response than going through the normal channels. That's because smart companies don't want an unhappy client's comments hanging out there for the world to see, unanswered and unaddressed. So IF you are going to have a presence on social media, make sure you or someone on your team is constantly monitoring it for client complaints.

■ **New 360 video cameras let you deliver a whole new customer experience.** 360 video lets your customers visit a location without actually being there. How you use it depends on your business, but the sky's the limit – literally. Realtors and property managers, for instance, can give prospective buyers or renters a view from the kitchen where they can look in all directions and get a feel for the place that they just can't get from 2-D shots. 360 video cams consist of two back-to-back fish-eye lenses and software that "stitches the seam" between them. Just be sure to position the camera where viewers can see everything all around them. With the right camera and headset, you can now put your customers "on location" – virtually. *Wired, 02.24.17*

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"Things have gotten a lot easier since I moved everything from my to-do list to my it-is-what-it-is list."