The Tech chronicle

What's New

February 2021

This monthly publication provided courtesy of Craig Covington co-owner Canon Capital Technologies

Our Mission

To enhance our customers quality of life and the health of their business.

How To Enable Remote Work Without Exposing Your Business To Cybercriminals

A record number of businesses said goodbye to the traditional in-office work model in 2020. They embraced the remote work model as they adapted to the new COVID-19 reality. It was a huge shift that came with many challenges, and some of those challenges are still felt today.

One of those challenges is cyber security. Businesses want to get their remote workforce up and running, but there are a lot of questions about how they can keep their remote employees secure.

So, how can you enable remote work while keeping your business and your employees secure? How do you keep cybercriminals out? The answer is multifaceted—there is no one-size-fits-all approach to cyber security. Here are three things you can do to increase security without detracting from productivity:

1. Skip public WiFi. This is Cyber Security 101. Never use unsecured WiFi, especially when working. For remote employees who have the option to work from anywhere, using public WiFi is tempting. It's easy to access, but it comes with huge risks, like the potential to expose your device to intruders.

Thankfully, there are plenty of options to help keep employees connected without having to worry about snoops. The most popular is the VPN, or virtual private network. VPNs allow remote workers to securely access the Internet, even through public WiFi which is ideal for remote workers who need to routinely access your network.

Another option is the personal hotspot. This portable WiFi access point, paired with data service through a telecom like Verizon or AT&T. It gives remote workers flexibility to work anywhere they can get high-speed data service. Because the remote worker is the only person on the hotspot, there is less worry about others snooping for your data.

2. Have a strong device policy. When it comes to cost-cutting, it can be appealing to let employees use their own devices

Continued from pg.1

while working remotely. Avoid this, if possible! The bring-your-own-device (BYOD) approach may help keep costs down, but the security costs could be massive, especially if an employee gets hacked or misplaces crucial data.

Many businesses work with an IT managed services provider to create a list of approved devices (PCs, laptops, smartphones, etc.) that employees can use. Then those devices are loaded up with malware protection, a VPN, and other security solutions. So, while employees may be using a variety of devices, they all have the same security and other necessary software in order to perform their duties.

However, the best device policy is to provide employees with work devices. This ensures that everyone is using the same hardware and software, and this makes it much easier to keep everyone up-to-date and secure. It takes a little more effort logistically, and it has a higher up-front cost, but when it comes to keeping your business secure, it's worth it.

3. Physical security. When evaluating digital security, don't forgot to put a similar focus on physical security! You may have a team of people working remotely across different neighborhoods, states or countries. This mobility comes with the risk of device theft or loss.

If employees will be carrying their work devices with them for any reason, those devices should be kept nearby at all times. That means *never* leaving work devices in vehicles or unattended at a café or airport. Never leave a device where it has the potential to be taken!

Remind employees to not only keep their doors locked but also keep work devices out of sight. You wouldn't want to set up a home office in a room facing the street outside while leaving the windows open and the door unlocked.

The way we work is changing, so we must be prepared for whatever happens next. Implementing these three steps will give you a starting point, but they aren't the end point. Work with an experienced MSP to get the most out of your remote work approach. Many businesses will not be returning to the traditional in-office model, so the more steps we take to secure our businesses and our remote teams, the better off we'll all be.

Driving Business Success In the Age of COVID-19

Countless businesses had to figure out how to navigate the last year. Some didn't make it, but at the same time, many thrived. Nearly a year after the pandemic began, many businesses are still trying to navigate COVID-19 repercussions. How do you drive success in 2021?

Budget Wisely. Countless businesses had a knee-jerk reaction to the pandemic. They rapidly cut costs in an effort to survive. Cutting certain areas can work. But cut the wrong area of a business, and it may be hard to recover.

Some companies that put off upgrading technology during the pandemic are now paying for this costly mistake with out-of-date hardware and software that created holes in their network that are open to cybercriminals. However, if your customers didn't stick around, cutting the marketing budget is disastrous.

Embrace New Ideas. COVID-19 isn't going anywhere soon. Businesses that decided not to adapt because they thought it would blow over or it wasn't serious were put into a tough spot.

Meanwhile, businesses that planned and focused on innovation were in a much better spot. When your customers' habits change, your habits need to change as well.

Forbes, Nov. 23, 2020

Communication In Times Of Fatigue

In light of all the Zoom and videoconferencing meetings, communication is changing both internally and externally.

Some companies think working remotely is the best thing they've ever done, while others say it's awful because they thrive on personal, face-to-face relationships.

Oftentimes, dominant personalities can overrun the room in person, but on a video call, the indirectness of virtual communication can help more soft-spoken team members feel comfortable speaking up.

When companies are together in person, they grab a coffee and a meeting breaks out, but when you have that on video it's awkward. There has to be more structure to the meetings because people don't want to spend an excessive amount of time like they would in person. They want to make it as short and efficient as possible.

Where people could get better is in their external messages on video chats. When you speak to your team, use a different tone. Simple things like charisma, lighting and talking *to* your audience – the things people master for TV and film – take a lot more effort than chatting with your team in person. Not having this skill is hurting some on the marketing side.

In planning for 2021, companies are running into big issues and plans may need to change.

It's time for the annual reset and the One-Page Strategic Plan (OPSP) – the gift that gives back for the next four quarters. We set our annual key initiatives – six to eight things over the next 12 months to move the

business forward – but what often gets left behind is time to reset ourselves.

We need to be mindful of what we're doing with our people to keep them on track on a personal-growth level. We're all a little out of our rhythm right now, but so goes the person, so goes the business. We need to develop the *whole* person to get the best results in the new year.

Answer the question: what do you want? Don't let your logic stifle what your true goals are. Once you define it, then you can set out and figure out how to achieve it.

With upcoming changes, necessary planning and so much more, how can organizations combat the fatigue?

We must make time to take a break and step away for a moment. Set some boundaries.

It's easy for us right now to just keep working – especially working from home. You have to make yourself "go home." Do simple things, like changing your clothes after work, to turn the "work" switch off. Make yourself "commute" home. At 5 p.m., go to the store and drive back home. Give your body and mind the shift change. Honor a schedule because it is easy not to.

Chip Gallent's career has taken him through a number of C-level roles with a nonprofit, a technology development company, a publicly traded dot-com firm where he served as president and more! With an extensive background in marketing, and as a fervent entrepreneur, he's led many businesses to success. Now, as a Petra Coach, he's helping others do the same.