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Why Cyber-Attacks Are Getting So Dangerous

Cyber-attacks on companies are becoming increasingly common. As many companies adapted to the work-from-home culture that came about during the pandemic, they left their systems vulnerable to hackers who could steal their valuable data or hold it for ransom.

Some companies have been able to recover most of their data through the use of backup copies, but all too often, companies see massive interruptions to their operations and make enormous ransom payments. In fact, in the first quarter of 2021, 41% of insurance claims in Europe were related to ransomware.

If it happened to them, it can happen to your organization too. Create a security-conscious work culture, create backups for your data, keep your systems up-to-date and hire security consultants to help you patch up any holes. Cyber-attacks *can* happen to you, but they don't *have* to.

HOW DO YOU BUILD CLIENT TRUST?

Building trust between yourself and your clients or customers is critical for making sales. If you have a client's trust, they'll work with you regardless of any other hurdles they have to clear to maintain their relationship with you. If you get the impression that potential clients and customers don't trust you, try these two methods for gaining their trust.

Share Client Case Studies With Them. If you can show customers how you benefited someone else's life with your business, they might be more inclined to see you as someone who can help them as well. Find a customer who you've successfully helped in the past. Then, with their permission, map out their struggles and how your services helped them overcome those struggles. New customers will see themselves reflected in those case studies and be more willing to trust you.

Share Video Testimonials With Them. While serving the same basic function as a case study, videos of client success stories help new clients "see it to believe it." These can capture tone and emotion like written words cannot, thus making them a potentially more effective tool for establishing trust in your business.

BUILDING A VIRTUAL TEAM THAT SPANS THE COUNTRY

As many businesses found out this past year and a half, miscommunications happen all the time when any team is working virtually. Most of how we communicate with one another is nonverbal, so it would make sense that things would get lost in translation when just chatting through Slack. Nevertheless, there are a few key ways that businesses can learn to communicate well and build a great virtual team.

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PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
BOISE, ID
PERMIT 411

TECHNOLOGY TIMES

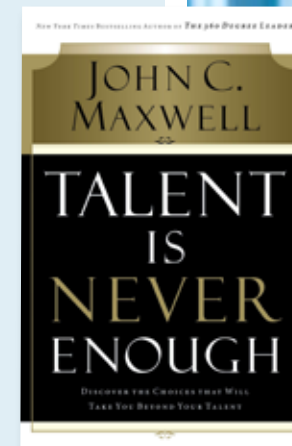
"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably"

Talent Is Never Enough

By John C. Maxwell

Talent is certainly an important part of being successful in any work role, but it's only part of the picture. In his best-selling book, *Talent Is Never Enough*, Dr. John C. Maxwell explores why this is the case and which qualities are needed to supplement talent in the workplace and help workers reach their full potential.

Maxwell does not waste any words in this book. He lists 13 attributes that should accompany talent in order for someone to be as successful as possible in their role, and readers would do well to take time to reflect on each one. Anyone who is looking to maximize their team's talents should have *Talent Is Never Enough* on their shelf.



A Flexible Partnership With IT Professionals

September 2021



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Jim Conley, President of Direct Connect Computer Systems and ClevelandComputers.com.

Our Mission:

To empower our customers with the best-fit technologies, tailored and managed to suit their business needs, and to enhance their growth and success.

It's hard to see how investing in your company's IT services would be as incentivizing as other investments that might deliver a more tangible ROI. However, ensuring that your IT department has a competent team that's up-to-date on the latest cyber security knowledge and has access to the latest software to allow them to do their jobs well is a sounder investment than you might think.

Investing in your IT services is a little like buckling your seat belt before you drive to work in the morning. You're certainly not planning on

getting in a crash that day, but you know that if you do, the seat belt will keep you safe, or at least mitigate the bodily damage the crash could cause.

We live in a world where it pays for companies to be on the forefront of cyber security. Even in just the past few years, ransomware and other cyber-attacks have become increasingly common, and they target antiquated IT systems that have yet to get with the times. If hackers can infiltrate

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your company’s servers and hold that data hostage, it could financially cripple your company to try to get it back – or shut it down entirely. It could also destroy your company’s reputation and hurt your clients and customers.

You need an IT team that you can depend on to keep your company safe, but that still leaves the problem of cost. We get it: keeping your IT up-to-date is expensive, whether because you can’t afford to hire the right number of IT professionals or because you can’t afford the software necessary for keeping your company from getting hacked. That’s why we believe co-

managed IT is the best option for companies looking to protect their employees and their customers’ sensitive data.

Co-managed IT is a means by which growing companies can have access to all the tools and knowledge necessary to protect their data without paying the full cost. It won’t replace your current IT team, and it’s more than just a one-off project-based relationship with an outside IT service – it’s a flexible partnership between your business and IT services that you can trust.

Say your existing IT team does a stellar job of putting out the little fires that inevitably happen throughout the workday, but they struggle to find time for building and updating company security systems and protocols that will keep your data safe in the event of a cyber-attack. Or your company is going through a period of rapid expansion, and you can’t hire enough people for your IT department quickly enough to secure your ever-growing databases. Or perhaps your IT team does a stellar job of finding balance between the daily tasks and preventive maintenance, but they lack the software tools to do so efficiently. In all these scenarios, co-managed IT can ensure that those gaps your IT team just can’t fill on their own get filled through a collaborative effort.

Co-managed IT can be a great solution for a burnt-out, potentially disgruntled IT team. If you don’t know whether your IT team is getting burnt out or not, you can look for a few different signs. If they’re constantly working late or on weekends, they’re not getting projects done on time or correctly, they aren’t creating any new security measures or they’re showing signs of aggression or frustration at their job, you might be burdened with a burnt-out IT team.

Ideally, a burnt-out IT team would welcome help with their responsibilities and see the benefits of the collaborative effort between them and another group of experienced IT professionals. Together, we can protect your company from hackers, if you’re willing to invest in your IT infrastructure. Even though you might think that keeping things the way they are won’t cost you a dime, with how common cyber-attacks are becoming, it could only be a matter of time before hackers hold your data for ransom and cost you everything.

With all this in mind, we strongly encourage you and your IT lead to come to a diagnostic consultation with us. We’ll help you understand how, moving forward, co-managed IT can save your company a boatload of money and trouble.

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Create Spaces For Personal Stories. Whether this looks like a group call where the team talks about non-work-related things or you have a virtual “coffee break” every morning, talking about your personal life will help you build trust with your fellow team members.

Make Communication Simple. Make sure the communication channels are clear, then use them correctly. If everyone knows where to find instructions for their workload, then miscommunications will be kept to a minimum.

Set Clear, Attainable Goals. When something needs to get done, don’t make general statements about how you’ll get there. When you communicate the task to others, mention dates, times and specific steps for getting the task done.

By following these three general guidelines, you can have a well-oiled virtual team to be proud of.

What Is The #1 Key To Success?

Dr. Geoff Smart: The Key To Success Is Building A Talented Team

To start off, I’ll tell you what the key to lasting success isn’t. It isn’t financially savvy, competitiveness, humility or even hard work. Lots of people embody those traits, so they won’t cause you to stand out from the crowd. No, what it really takes to be successful is hiring a talented team.



Marshall Goldsmith: The Key To Success Is Creating Lasting Positive Change In Yourself And Others

I would agree with Geoff that success isn’t dependent on any of the common, pithy traits like trust, passion, honesty or engagement, but I don’t think it necessarily has to do so much with a leader’s team. I think that lasting success still starts when one person commits to make the most useful change that will bring about the most good for their business.

Successful leaders aren’t successful just because of the things that they do on their own. They find success in hiring the right people for the right jobs. That’s ultimately what leaders do: they assemble talent and allocate it toward a worthy goal. They have to understand a person’s strengths and weaknesses and perceive if and how that person will further the mission of the team, whatever that may be. With a stellar team in place, the decisions of one person become less and less important.

If you don’t think that hiring a talented team is the ultimate sign of your success as a business leader, then maybe I can convince you if I approach my point from a different angle. In my book *Who*, which I wrote with Randy Street, one of the first things we established was that one of the biggest problems facing companies today is unsuccessful hiring. At the time, it cost companies \$1.5 million per year, and the average company had a success rate of just 50%. Wouldn’t it make sense that solving this problem, which is arguably the most important problem many companies face, would be the key to lasting success?



Dr. Geoff Smart is the chairman and founder of ghSMART, which serves Fortune 500 companies and helps their CEOs make impactful, successful decisions. He is also the author of the New York Times best-selling book, Who, and many others.

Marshall Goldsmith is one of the most successful leadership coaches currently working. He is the only two-time #1 Leadership Thinker in the world, as ranked by Thinkers 50. He has written 42 books, many of which are best-sellers.

“Co-managed IT is a means by which growing companies can have access to all the tools and knowledge necessary to protect their data without paying the full cost.”

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: **“5 Critical Facts Every Business Owner Must Know Before Moving Their Network To The Cloud.”**

This report discusses in simple, nontechnical terms the pros and cons of cloud computing, data security, how to choose a cloud provider and 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
www.DirectConnect.net/cloud

Cartoon Of The Month



“It was after her third failed attempt at deciphering the captcha that Rachel began to suspect ...”

Keep Up With The Competition



Consumers continue to value the online shopping experience. To take advantage of this trend, small businesses should use AI and its capabilities to stay competitive.

Automate Certain Steps For Efficiency
Welcome e-mails (with your business’s mission, goals, etc.) have an open rate of 60% to 70%. By automating this process, you almost guarantee more interest in your business.

Cater To Each Customer Personally
Shoppers today want businesses to know exactly what they want. With AI, you can get their previous purchase data and create a unique shopping experience for each individual customer.

Sell More, Work Less
AI can make having an online store easy by tracking customers’ purchase data and managing marketing campaigns based on that data.

The pandemic illuminated customers’ desire for a digital shopping experience. AI will help you stay in the game.