Executive IT Insider
...The Exclusive Edge to Today's Technology
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This Month's News:

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Paul Riendeau, CEO of Southern New England Computer Services.

"Happy New Year to everyone! With the holidays behind us, now is the time to buckle down and kick the New Year off right! If you have any projects or plans for the upcoming year, get in touch with us and schedule a meeting. Also, visit www.itsupportri.com/terms-and-conditions to see our agreement updates for 2017. "

Your #1 MUST-DO Resolution For 2017

With every New Year comes the chance to reset priorities. Unfortunately, when the topic of implementing a data recovery plan comes up, the comment we most often hear is "I know I should, but I haven't gotten around to it yet…"

So…what if the pilot on the next flight you're on announces right after takeoff, "I know we should have run through our pre-flight checklist, but we haven't gotten around to it yet…"???

Without a solid backup and recovery plan in place, just one mission-critical file that gets lost or stolen could put your company in a world of serious hurt. When you compare the high cost of replacement, repair and recovery to the relatively trivial price of keeping good backups, the choice is an absolute no-brainer.

Why disaster recovery planning matters more than you think

Let's face it, data is the nucleus of your business. That means that a single ransomware attack could wipe you out in a matter of minutes. Today's cybercriminals are raking in literally billions of dollars (yes, billions) preying on the unwary, the poorly protected and those who "haven't gotten around to it yet." Let's consider the facts…

Ninety-seven percent of IT services providers surveyed by Datto, a data protection company, report that ransomware attacks on small businesses are becoming more frequent, and they expect that trend to continue. These attacks are taking place *despite* anti-virus and anti-malware measures in effect at the time of the attack.

Windows operating systems are most often infected, followed by OS X. Cloud-based applications, particularly Dropbox, Office 365 and Google Apps, are also being targeted.

Ransom demands typically run between $500 and $2,000. About 10%, however, exceed $5,000. And even at that, paying a ransom demand is no guarantee that encrypted files will be released.

For a typical SMB, downtime from ransomware can cost around $8,500 per hour, and will take an average of 18.5 hours of the company's time. That's a hit to your bottom line somewhere in the neighborhood of $157,250. Yet in many cases the ultimate cost has reached into multiple hundreds of thousands.

In a recent survey of 6,000 IT professionals by the Ponemon Institute, 86% of companies had one or more incidents causing downtime in the past 12 months. Typical downtime was 2.2 days, with an average cost of $366,363. And that's just the *average*. **Could your company survive that kind of hit?**

"Ransomware attacks are on the rise, since they can be triggered by just one employee…"

It's no wonder that 81% of smaller businesses suffering such an attack close their doors within three years.

It's tragic. And yet the solution is so simple…

The #1 antidote for a data disaster
What's behind these costly incidents? Here's the breakdown of contributing factors:

- Human error: 60%
- Unexpected updates and patches: 56%
- Server room environment issues: 44%
- Power outages: 29%
- Fire or explosion: 26%
- Natural disasters: 10%

Note that human error accounts for 60% of the breaches. It's no wonder then that ransomware attacks are on the rise, since they can be triggered by just one employee inadvertently clicking a bad link in an e-mail or social media site. Human behavior is hard to control. However, *the #1 antidote for a ransomware attack is*

having a secure backup ready and waiting to replace encrypted files. And when you scan through the rest of the list above, it becomes clear that, while you need to implement a comprehensive set of data security measures, having a solid and reliable data recovery plan in place and ready to go the moment disaster strikes is still your best defense.

Protect Your Company From A Knockout Blow In 2017
Cyberthreats are proliferating and are expected to grow throughout 2017 and beyond. Will this be the year you finally get your data backup and recovery plan DONE?

The choice is yours—exposure to a devastating loss…or rock-solid security. Let us help. Contact us at **401-684-3036** or email us directly at **support@itsupportri.com** and let's schedule a thorough Network IT Audit for your company, absolutely FREE. Do NOT wait until disaster strikes. Let's make 2017 the year you finally get things DONE. Contact us TODAY so we can keep *your* company's story from becoming yet another unfortunate statistic.

Technology Spotlight: Amazon Fire TV Stick

This past holiday season was ripe with awesome technology for the home or office. The biggest stocking stuffer was the new Amazon Fire TV Stick.

An impressive streaming device, the Fire TV features a voice-activated remote using Alexa. Searching is as simple as asking for a movie, show or even actor. If you prefer, you can install the app on your smartphone and use that as your remote as well. The search will even check your Netflix and Hulu content as well. Amazon Prime users also benefit from the Prime Library.

Performance is faster than the previous versions due to the upgraded hardware. With support for 1080p video, the stick holds up toe-to-toe with other streaming devices out there. It relies on WiFi for internet, so video quality will depend on your network speeds and signal strength.

Set at $40, it is on par with other streaming devices and is packed with a hefty amount of features. Those who are tech-savvy will enjoy the freedom offered by the Fire TV as it uses an Android operating system, which allows for more apps and installers. If you are looking for a 4K capable device, check out its big brother, the Amazon Fire TV Box for $90.

3 Ways Smart People Blow The Close

The weirdest thing happens when it's time to close a deal.

Smart people turn to mush! I've seen it a hundred times. Many of my teammates have PhDs and MBAs from the toughest universities in the world. They've performed at the top of their peer groups at places like McKinsey, Bain, the White House, GE, Marine Force Recon and Goldman Sachs.

While they're doing the work, they're confident, caring, even daring. But when it comes to selling the work, many of them struggle, before they overcome the three simple closing errors I'll describe for you here.

1. Hit mute.
Recently I was with a colleague in the boardroom of a billionaire CEO of the #1 company in his industry. Getting this client to sign on the dotted line was a layup. After the CEO talked for the better part of an hour about the ways he wanted our help, he asked a question to wrap up the conversation. Rather than bring it to a close, my colleague's mind hit "mute." Silence. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock… The clocks on the wall (showing local times in NY, London, Mumbai, Shanghai…) were ticking so loudly they sounded like the drumbeats you hear before a public hanging. I heard 20 drumbeats—20 seconds of silence while the client was expecting us to wrap up the conversation and close this deal! Finally my colleague recovered, and we ended up with a happy outcome. But the 20 seconds of mute didn't help. Clients want help wrapping up a conversation and turning it into an action plan. Don't just sit there—close!

2. Dazzle with complexity.
Another teammate and I were sitting with a private equity investor who wanted our help. My colleague talked at 90 mph, offering complex, nuanced analyses, interspersed with questions that had multiple parts, lots of commas; and even a semicolon here and there, just like in this sentence. Her intent was to show how smart she was. And this was supposed to dazzle the client into hiring us? The actual effect was the client felt he couldn't get a word in edgewise. This is a common pitfall for smart people coming out of consulting backgrounds—the urge to overwhelm the client prospect with data, analysis and complicated questions that are designed to show how smart you are.

3. Win the argument (lose the deal).
My eyes went big and I felt hot flashes creep up my neck when I witnessed a cardinal sin. One of my colleagues put his hand up in a "stop" gesture. In the face of our client. The consultant said, "Let me stop you there. I think your logic doesn't hold. The data tells a different story. Here's why…" The client was not impressed. Folks, serving clients isn't about winning arguments. It's about understanding the client and figuring out how to get them what they want. You are on the same team. If you forget this, you may win the argument, but lose the deal.
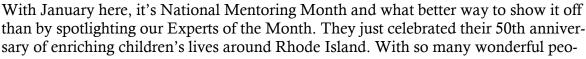
Geoff is Chairman & Founder of ghSMART. Geoff is co-author, with his colleague Randy Street, of the *New York Times* bestselling book *Who: The A Method for Hiring* and the author of the #1 *Wall Street Journal* bestseller *Leadocracy: Hiring More Great Leaders (Like You) into Government*. Geoff co-created the Topgrading brand of talent management. Geoff is the Founder of two 501c3 not-for-profit organizations. SMARTKids Leadership Program™ provides 10 years of leadership tutoring and The Leaders Initiative™ seeks to deploy society's greatest leaders into government. Geoff earned a B.A. in Economics with Honors from Northwestern University, an M.A., and a Ph.D. in Psychology from Claremont Graduate University.

Experts of the Month:
The Staff of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State

With January here, it's National Mentoring Month and what better way to show it off than by spotlighting our Experts of the Month. They just celebrated their 50th anniversary of enriching children's lives around Rhode Island. With so many wonderful people working together, it was hard to single out just one person when they all contribute to such a worthy cause. With this said, the entire staff of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State are our Experts of the Month!

Founded in 1966 by Dr. Dorothy Pieniadz, BBBSOS originally started as Big Sisters of Rhode Island. It was established as an all-volunteer mentoring organization dedicated to Traditional Mentoring, bringing together trained, adult females and younger, at-risk girls. In 2010, they expanded their services to also include boys in their mentoring program and later adopted the name Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State to more accurately reflect their services. Now, over 50 years since it was founded, BBBSOS not only does mentoring, but raises money for scholarships, programs, and services to support their mission. They also have paired up with Savers to better serve the community, by collecting gently used clothes and other household goods for those in need. This includes the multiple Donation Centers across the state along with their headquarters in Cranston.

Their core values define how they conduct themselves and their organization when interacting with the families they serve, their volunteers, their donors, their partners as well as each other and the entire community. They are driven by a true desire to improve the lives of children in RI. With their core values focusing on respect, accountability, integrity, safety and empowerment, it takes a truly special person to embody the BBBSOS culture. However, any mentor or "big" you meet will tell you how rewarding it is to know that they changed a "little's" life. If you ask any "little" that is in or has graduated from the program, they will tell you how their lives changed for the positive by having someone there for them, their "big" that makes a difference.

If you are interested in donating, mentoring or just contacting Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State, you can call 401-921-2434 or check them out online at www.bbbsos.org or on Facebook.

Get your desk in order with these three handy gadgets. Got piles of books and magazines stacking up that you haven't read yet? Clear the clutter with the IRIScan Book Executive. About the size of an ordinary pen, it scans all that reading material into digital files you can take with you to catch up on while waiting in line at Starbucks. Or in flight on your next business trip. If you need a clock on your desk but find it distracting, try the Click Cube Clock. With its attractive, minimalist design, it shows the time only when you tap it or snap your fingers. Then top off these gadgets with the Happylight Energy Lamp for a bright outlook on the New Year! *-Inc.com*

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"Just once I wish someone had a bone to pick with me."

Are spies watching you through your webcam? A hacker uses a link on a social media site to trick you into visiting a page that secretly installs a bug on your computer. That bug quietly takes over your webcam, allowing somebody to watch your every move. You can block these Peeping Toms with a piece of electrical tape over your webcam's "eye." Or you can get an app to help keep them out entirely. Oversight for Mac, built by former NSA employee Patrick Wardle, runs in the background, looking for attempts to take over your webcam. Windows users can use Who Stalks My Cam. It too runs in the background and alerts you to any suspicious activity—like shifting your webcam into secret spy mode. *-FieldGuide.LifeHacker.com*