The Tech chronicle

What's New

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Prepare Your Business For A Successful 2023
With These 3 New Year's Tech Resolutions

If you don't have goals for 2023, there's no better time than the first month of the year to make them. Whether you want to increase sales, customer loyalty or another essential key performance indicator, you must be intentional about your resolutions. If you keep it vague, you probably won't achieve your goals, so you need to be specific and start small. From there, you can build on your foundation until you've reached your objective.

Thankfully, there are some great tech resolutions you can implement to help your business accomplish its yearly goals.

Improve Your Customer Experience
Does your business have a website? The answer for most companies is yes, but is your website actually driving any sales? Do your customers enjoy the experience they gain from using your website? These are all questions you need to ask yourself because if you can answer no to any of them, then you need to reevaluate your website and digital customer experience.

If your business sells products, you must ensure the web pages are easy to navigate and the checkout process runs smoothly. If your business does not sell products online, utilize the space by writing and posting blogs to inform your clients about the industry or talk about events within your community.

Additionally, look into artificial intelligence chatbots if you don't already use them. Chatbots work around the clock to provide your

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customers with answers to their questions about your business, products or services. Some chatbots are even capable of learning, allowing them to provide more personalized communication.

Invest In Cyber Security

Cyberthreats and attacks occur daily. While large businesses that get attacked garner a lot of attention, small businesses are at equal risk. You must do everything you can to protect your business and customers. This month, take some time to evaluate your cyber security practices and determine where you need to improve. If your hardware is old and outdated, it might be time to update. When your software informs you it needs to be updated, do not wait. Most of these software updates include patches to better protect you from new cyberthreats.

Possibly the most critical part of your cyber security plan needs to be employee education. Your entire team needs to know and fully understand your cyber security practices and why you have them in place. If you don't run your team through cyber security training at least once a year, 2023 is the time to

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implement it. Make sure they know about password security, phishing scams, social media etiquette and the importance of protecting company and customer data.

Get Help With Your IT Needs By Hiring A Managed Services Provider

MSPs provide an excellent solution for small-business IT needs as they can handle everything behind the scenes, allowing you and your team to focus more on your important work. MSPs will take care of your data backup and disaster recovery, improve the quality of your computer systems and networks and ensure your team has all necessary software updates downloaded. MSPs can identify issues and fix problems before they become much more serious. Hiring an MSP is one of the few surefire ways to ensure your business stays protected from cybercriminals. And they've even become more affordable over the past few years. If you've been interested in hiring an MSP, there's no better time than the present. You'll be fulfilling a New Year's resolution while significantly improving and protecting your business.

The new year provides us with an opportunity to reset and refocus our attention back on improving our business. You have to make plans if you want to improve, though. Give some of these resolutions a try, and you'll quickly notice the benefits they bring to your business.

Maximizing Potential

Companies of all sizes may benefit from managed IT services since they offer a variety of technical support and maintenance services while also saving time and money. Managed IT services may benefit your company in several ways, including:

Proactive maintenance: Minimize untimely solution interruptions.

Expert support: Certified personnel willing to help without the high cost and overhead.

Cost Savings: Reallocate expenses to other parts of your business.

Increased productivity: Outsourcing your IT needs frees your staff to be more productive.

Scalability: Adapt to changing demands with minimal disruption.

The efficiency of your company may be increased at all levels with the aid of managed IT services. Additionally, your business may function more steadily and effectively in the modern era with healthy in-office technology and 24x7 IT services; this will help your business build stronger internal and external relationships.

Having people at your fingertips that care for the stability of your business alleviates all around stress.

Become A Better Listener

To be a great leader, you need to have phenomenal listening skills. If you're a fantastic listener, hiring talented teams, leading people and closing on your big sales is more effortless. Listening might even be the most crucial skill for getting hired at your dream job and achieving career success.

Throughout my work, I've observed different degrees of listening skills. To be the best listener, you need to listen to the highest degree possible. Here are my five degrees of listening skills, listed from worst to best.

1. **Not Listening:** It's tough to listen when you are the one making all the sounds in a room. Don't be the one doing all the talking.

2. **Not Talking:** Your future boss may think you are not smart enough to keep up or you don't really care if you just sit there and don't talk.

3. **Nodding And Saying 'Mm-hm':** Oh, good, at least you're alive. But just nodding and making moaning noises is not super-insightful and does not build rapport.

4. **Reflecting On What You Heard:** If someone says, "Our growth strategy is primarily through international expansion," then a pure reflection would be to say, "So your growth strategy is international." Your future boss will say, "Yep," and will be only mildly impressed with you.

5. **Reflecting On The Emotion Behind The Statement:** Understanding why someone is saying something with a specific emotion can give you further insight and the ability to read between the lines and give them a proper answer.

Here's an example. Imagine if your future boss just told you the industry is changing extremely fast and the company has been struggling to keep up. Degree 4 would be to say, "The industry is changing fast. The company has to change fast." This is child's play compared to Degree 5 listening.

Degree 5 listening would be something like, "It sounds like everything is changing so fast. It must be stressful keeping up."

Your future boss will say, "Yes, it is."

Then you add, "You need to count on your team and know they can keep up with the speed of change."

Your future boss will say, "Exactly." Once you first hear the word "exactly," the probability you will receive a job offer is at least 80%. That is because your future boss feels that you understand them, you care and you are the person to deliver them something good or remove something bad.

We seek safety with others. We need to know whether someone is an ally or an enemy. Reflecting on the emotion behind a statement can help leapfrog you right into "ally" mode with your future boss and get you your dream job.

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■ Turn Your Problem Employees Into Dedicated Team Members

As a business owner or leader, you will inevitably deal with a problem employee at some point in your career. They may have been an outstanding interviewee, but once they join the team, they're nothing but a source of drama or laziness. A problem employee can quickly reduce morale, productivity and even customer satisfaction scores. Many business leaders have wondered what the best approach is for handling a problem employee. While there's no guaranteed method since every situation is unique, there are a few things you can do to make discussions with problem employees as effective as possible.
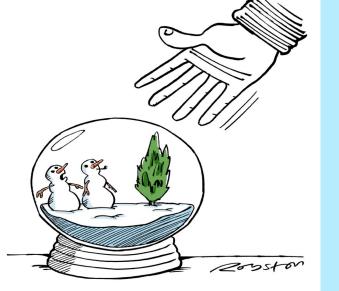
Prepare Ahead Of Time.
Discussing concerns with a problem employee isn't something you should do on the spur of the moment. Take some time to analyze their behavior, understand all perspectives of the situation and determine if the employee understands the problem with their behavior and if they know their expected level of service. If this is an initial conversation, reset the standard and see if they make any adjustments. If their behavior does not improve, you need to take further action.

Discipline Through Coaching.
When you notice a problem, talk with the employee about it and devise a mutually agreed-upon solution. Focus on their performance issues, not anything personal. Give clear expectations and provide ways for them to achieve their goals. You control this situation, so follow up when necessary.

"Looks like we're in for another extreme weather event."

■ How To Create More Meaningful Conversations

The best way to learn more about other people is by talking to them. Not everyone is a gifted conversationalist, though. When you struggle to hold conversations, you're less likely to build meaningful relationships or leave an impact on people. Thankfully, there is a foolproof way to improve your speaking skills. It all relates to the questions you ask.

When you meet someone new, how do you approach them? You probably ask, "How are you? What do you do? Where are you from?" While these questions help you understand basic information about someone, they won't produce a meaningful conversation. Instead, be more specific or intriguing with your questions. Try asking others, "What's your story? What do you consider a defining moment in your life? Why did you choose your line of work?" These questions will spark more conversation and make you appear more interesting. You can even use them while interviewing potential new hires to learn more about who they are.