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Ensuring Effective Collaboration



In any business, the capacity to collaborate is critical to success. In order to do so most optimally, it helps to carry out a few preliminary and overarching practices. Let's go over a few such practices to help bring your team's collaborative activities together.

Make Your Expectations Clear

In simple terms, you should make sure your team knows what you...



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About Virtual Business Solutions

We're in this business to help other small businesses grow and move forward. It's as simple as that. We're driven by the philosophy that if we help local businesses solve their IT issues so they can become more profitable and successful, then we will inherently grow along with them.

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Successfully Manage Your Cloud Resources



rely on it.

Cloud computing has been touted as one of the most innovative and important technologies for smaller businesses as they look to compete with larger organizations. How it makes this possible is by offering the dynamic computing environments that can help bring these smaller businesses into the information age without saddling them with massive infrastructure costs while doing so. That's not to say that the cloud is cheap by any means, and this month we will discuss how cloud computing is a great option and how if it isn't managed properly, it can be problematic for the businesses that

Cloud Computing Deployment

There could be a number of reasons why a business would choose to deploy cloud-based computing resources. The breadth of reasons are led by, what else? Money. The cost of new computing infrastructure is prohibitive for many small businesses and the pay-as-you-go structure that cloud resources present can be a major benefit for any-sized business. Additionally, businesses can pretty much get any type of computing environment in the cloud, including ultra-secure computing that meets all IT hosting security requirements for regulatory compliance.

Some Cloud Issues

It stands to reason that as cloud computing resources have advanced over the past decade that more and more businesses have identified them as a valuable addition to their IT infrastructure, but there are some issues that continuously pop up. The first is that with many

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5 Tools All Businesses Need to Maximize Their Effectiveness



The small business owner has to be diligent in the way they spend their company's resources. Technology, and the automation that it often brings, can work to make your business more agile and efficient, but traditionally it does come with substantial upfront costs. Additionally, it means committing big chunks of money on management, maintenance, and regular upgrades. Let's take a look at how other small businesses have been investing in technology to help you determine what you should be prioritizing.

Five Important Technologies

In a study conducted by Capterra, 699 small business owners were asked what types of technologies they considered necessary for their business. The responding parties thought that the five most important technologies they currently use are:

- Data & Information Security
- Dynamic Website
- Cloud Computing
- Customer Relationship Management
- Human Resources Software

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These Technologies Can Help Build Better Customer Relationships



Communication is critical if you want to maintain positive working relationships with your customers and clients. If you want

to optimize communication, you should be considering the latest and greatest technology solutions that provide operational benefits as well.

How Powering Communication with Technology Directly Benefits Your Business

The right communication technology can be incredibly empowering for your business practices, so you should not take this decision lightly. On the internal side of things, there are plenty of ways to keep your team aware of what's happening in their departments and across your organization. On the external side,

communication technology enables transparency and clear communication with your clients, as well as offering them value in how they go about taking advantage of your services.

Whether you are simply trying to communicate more effectively with your clients, or you are trying to save money by making communication more effective internally, the right communication tools can provide immense value when implemented correctly. Let's go over some of the best options you should consider.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

CRM systems play a major role in helping businesses maintain relationships with clients and customers. They are systems that allow companies to track their customers and their interactions with them, all through the use of one centralized

dashboard. This makes it easier to track this information, as it could otherwise be scattered throughout various inboxes and voicemails.

These solutions also provide integration with other business applications that can make certain processes much easier, like billing and signature requests. They can also offer insights into social media behavior, thus allowing for other methods of client onboarding. It's been proven that using a CRM tool can increase customer and client satisfaction by about 35 percent, so it's a noticeable improvement that should be considered.

Using Automation

It's certainly not easy to keep tabs on all of your contacts and prospects...



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5 Tools All Businesses Need to Maximize Their Effectiveness

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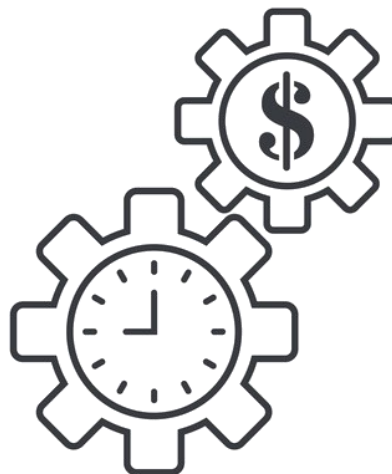
We'll go through each of these five to tell you how your organization can improve by deploying them.

Data & Information Security

With the use of technology, there comes some inherent risk. For every person using this information for the benefit of others, there is one that is looking to take that information and use it for personal (mostly financial) gain. That's why investing in comprehensive network security measures is viewed as uncompromisingly necessary.

The data security market is pretty large, and as a result, there are a lot of solutions you can implement to confront your network security problems. Before we go into them, however, we'd be remiss to not mention that much of your ability to protect your data lies not with the technology you use, but with your people. Understanding solid security practices is essential for any organization that is looking to avoid security issues.

Some of the best data security out there lies in some pretty well-known technology, such as antivirus and firewalls. Beyond that, the best way to protect your data is to invest in a comprehensive data backup and recovery platform. By taking frequent backups of your data you can protect it from any manner of threats. With a comprehensive backup plan in place you are assured that whatever trouble you have with your network, your data's security is on point.



A Dynamic Website

Nowadays, almost every business has

some sort of web presence. If they don't have a dedicated website, they use social media to interact with the large number of potential customers that utilize the Internet. For the growing business, it is important to invest some time and money in creating a web presence that helps you stand out. The best way to do this is by creating a website that offers customers a sample of your authority.

Having a well-designed, concisely worded, and easy to navigate website can go a long way toward engaging customers. This is especially true if you can find a way to leverage e-commerce capabilities. Giving customers a one-stop shop is a surefire way to get repeat business, and therefore is a solid place to invest company capital.

Cloud Computing

Nowadays, not only do businesses depend on cloud computing, but people do. It just makes sense as it provides...



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Successfully Manage Your Cloud Resources

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public cloud-hosted applications, the underlying infrastructure is managed by the provider, giving a business less control over their IT than they would probably like. Another issue is a security one. While the infrastructure the cloud resources are hosted on is sufficiently managed and maintained, it is also home to other customers' applications and data. This increases risk somewhat; as does transmission as all apps and data need to be transmitted over an Internet connection.

What You Can Do to Better Manage Your Cloud Resources

With a large percentage of organizations choosing to utilize cloud computing for one thing or another, strategies and solutions have been developed to circumvent the traditional problems that arose

from cloud computing deployment. Let's take a look at a couple of them:



Cloud Monitoring

If you are familiar with the way that IT administrators monitor and manage network resources, it won't be a big surprise to know that there is always a shred of doubt that a business' cloud

providers live up to their service level agreements. The best way to know that you are getting the cloud computing that you are paying for, especially if you are hosting mission-critical hardware with the provider, is to consistently monitor your cloud services.

Workload Automation

Workload automation has been an important IT management tool for some time and has evolved enough to help organizations manage their cloud computing resources. This allows businesses more flexibility to choose cloud-based resources while still hosting their mission-critical sources in house. Workload automation allows for what is called a...



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AI Can Help Your Business Stay Secure



When it comes to network security, businesses need all the advantages they can get, especially since cybersecurity as an industry is one which is rapidly adjusting and responding to an enormous amount of ever-changing threats. One way in which security researchers have attempted to subvert this security race is through artificial intelligence measures, a trend that promises to change the way businesses protect themselves more effectively.

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How Does AI Security Work?

At its core, AI security is a set of tools that can automatically identify and respond to perceived threats on a network. This autonomous activity is dictated and guided by previous or similar activity, so you can say that AI security solutions grow more adept at identifying threats over time. Since AI is always trying to learn more about how to identify threats, you can expect a large number of false positives and false negatives

during this process, but overall, the process involved is much less involved on your part because it is automated. AI security can even piece together trends and identify suspicious activity in that regard, making it quite sophisticated for a security solution.

What Are the Benefits?

Security professionals are expensive to find and hire, especially for small businesses with limited budgets and deadlines. AI can shore up these problems by providing an automated system that can identify and learn from threats over time. Furthermore, AI can actually decrease the amount of time invested in discovering threats, which also in turn cuts down on costs over time. However, it should be noted that AI security can become a burden if your organization has no one to manage or maintain it.

Is AI Security the Future?

Considering the decreasing trends in cybersecurity employment, it makes sense for an autonomous and automated solution to increase in popularity and usefulness. If left unchecked, this unfilled labor gap could increase to 3.5

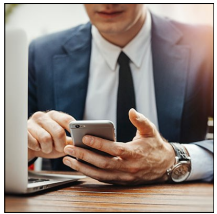
million positions by the end of this year! AI makes for an easy-to-implement solution that does not care about hiring and training practices, but it is expected that AI will be more effective if it is used to make workflows and procedures of security employees easier and more efficient. How Can Your Business Use AI Security? AI security is not exactly inaccessible to small businesses. In fact, there are plenty of security solutions out there specifically geared toward small businesses that can be scaled according to their specific needs and security goals. We can implement AI security that aligns with your organization's operational goals and works toward improving operations for your existing employees.

You can count on Virtual Business Solutions to help your business stay apprised of the latest security measures and developments, including AI security. To learn more about how you can secure your organization's future with the latest and greatest technology solutions, reach out to us at (504) 840-9800 ext. 105.



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Smartphones Can Have a Legitimate Purpose in the Workplace



Did you know that people tend to spend an average of 3-5

hours on their phones every day? The smartphone might be one of the most useful modern tools out there, but it can get in the way of running your business if you let it. Here are a couple of ways you can get the most out of your smartphone for business purposes.

What Does the Average Smartphone Usage Look Like?

People tend to use their smartphones in different ways, but there are certain trends that emerge. Here are some of the popular things people use their smartphones for:

- Texting (88%)
- Email (70%)
- Social Media (68%)
- Camera (61%)
- News (58%)
- Shopping (56%)
- Weather (54%)
- Banking (45%)
- Watching video content (42%)
- Gaming (41%)

Making phone calls is suspiciously omitted from this list. The study shows that only about 35 percent of users make phone calls with their smartphones on a daily basis. Up to a quarter of respondents claim they haven't made a call in the past week, and a third of them state that they ignore calls unless they are expecting them. Even five percent of people claim they have never made a call with their current smartphone.



How Can Your Business Use This Information to Improve Your Mobile Reach?

If you want your staff to use their smartphones to make and receive calls, it might be a tall order, to say the least. However, if you want to improve your business' mobile reach, there are several benefits to doing so. Here are just a few of them.

Improved Productivity

If you can improve employee engagement, you can improve their productivity. Several studies show that work/life smartphone correlation, whether it's for using personal devices or for a BYOD policy, leads to a 20 percent increase in profitability. Naturally, this is a result of increased productivity. You might be worried about employees spending too much time on their phones, but the fact of the matter is that the numbers do not lie in this regard.

Reduced Turnover

Since phones have become intertwined with the lives of employees and people all...

Virtual Business Solutions has been serving the Metairie area since 1999, providing IT Support such as technical helpdesk support, computer support and consulting to small and medium-sized businesses. It's always been our goal to provide enterprise-level IT practices and solutions to the small business sector, with small business prices. Our experience has allowed us to build and develop the infrastructure needed to keep our prices affordable and our clients up and running.

Tech Trivia

84% of businesses say that cybersecurity and resilience is a top priority for 2022.



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