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Inside This Issue...

Cybercriminals Confess: The Top Tricks Used To Hack Your Network... Page 1

Frustrated By Trying To Remember All Those Passwords?... Page 2

What Every Small Business Owner Must Know About Protecting Their Company's Critical Data... Page 2

Investing In Your Future... Page 3

3 White Lies VoIP Salespeople Will Tell You To Make The Sale... Page 4



"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and let our knowledgeable staff of technicians help put an end to your IT worries!"
Greg Sweers,
ACTS360

Cybercriminals Confess: The Top 3 Tricks, Sneaky Schemes And Gimmicks They Use To Hack Your Computer Network

1. We're masters at getting you to click on fake e-mails. One of the most common ways hackers gain access to computer networks and devices is via phishing e-mails. Gone are the days when you could easily spot a spammer's e-mail because of its poor English, typos and punctuation mistakes - attacks are getting more and more sophisticated. That's because cybercriminals have access to the same cutting-edge online marketing tools that legitimate companies have, giving them the ability to send highly targeted messages that look completely legitimate from sources you trust. These e-mails often use your name, your professional title and may even reference a group you belong to. Further, if you click on the e-mails or respond, you're inviting a hacker into your network that bypasses a firewall and antivirus software. The only way to avoid getting snared by a phishing e-mail is to NEVER click on, open or respond to any e-mail requesting personal information, passwords, login details, etc. Always go directly to the site.
2. We automate attacks that work around the clock. Hackers have software programs that systematically test millions of possible passwords to break into your PC. Easy-to-guess passwords are worthless against the power, automation and sophistication of these super-apps that will constantly hammer away at guessing your password. Because of this, make sure your passwords contain both uppercase and lowercase letters, at least one number and special characters - and NEVER use easy-to-guess passwords like "letmein" or "password."
3. We can use legitimate web sites to attack you. A growing number of cyberattacks are coming via "drive-by" download, where a hacker gains access to a legitimate, honest business web site (or sets up a site that looks legit on every level) but has malicious code installed called an "exploit kit." An exploit kit can discover a vulnerability fast by probing your operating system, browser and the software you have installed (like a PDF reader or video player) to find a way to access your PC or network. If you (or your IT company!) aren't applying regular security updates, you are unprotected against these exploits.

While these are common ways hackers gain access, there are dozens of other more straightforward ways hackers gain access if you are not diligently updating and patching your network, maintaining an up-to-date firewall, antivirus and spam-filtering unified threat management system. The days of "That could never happen to me" are gone - and if you want peace of mind that YOUR business isn't a "sitting duck" to hackers, call us or a free security assessment and protection plan. You'll discover if you truly are protected from common hacker attacks and what you can do now to avoid being an easy target. Call today at 813.699.5356.

Frustrated By Trying To Remember All Those Passwords? Here's How You Can Solve It

Are you still writing down all your passwords on a Post-It note? Maybe that used to work 10 years ago, but today, with SO MANY sites requiring a password and so many of us using multiple devices to access web applications, that's really not an effective way to manage all the passwords you have. Plus, it opens the door of temptation to use the same password on everything (a security risk) or using easy-to-remember passwords (also a security risk).

What you need is a password manager. This will allow you to use good, strong passwords for all your sites without having to remember them. There are at least a dozen good ones on the market that are free or require a nominal fee (under \$40 per year). The one that's getting the highest ratings right now is LastPass 3.0 Premium. It offers an impressive and comprehensive set of features with an easy-to-use interface, and is inexpensive at \$12 per year. Second in line is Dashlane, which also offers a robust number of features, even some that LastPass lacks, but carries a bigger price point at \$39.95 per year. Sticky Password Premium handles essential tasks better than most, and a portion of every purchase goes to help endangered species. Sticky Password will run you roughly \$19.99 per year.



Free Report Download: What Every Small Business Owner Must Know About Protecting And Preserving Their Company's Critical Data And Computer Systems



This report will outline in plain, non-technical English common mistakes that many small business owners make with their computer network that cost them thousands in lost sales, productivity and computer repair bills, as well as providing an easy, proven way to reduce or completely eliminate the financial expense and frustration caused by these oversights.

Download your FREE copy today at <http://acts360.axionthemes.com/protect/> or call our office at 813.699.5356.

Client Spotlight: LLT Academy

LLT Academy is a charter school located in Tampa, Florida. With a growing campus, diverse student body, dedicated staff and talented direction, LLT's success is measured one student at a time. They have been a client of ours since 2009 and Acts 360 has been committed to assisting them throughout their growth process. During their recent expansion of adding a new building, we have offered them assistance from early planning to project completion to make sure their technology is cutting edge and functioning seamlessly as they welcome students into their new facility.

BELOW ARE THE TOP 3 BUDGET BUSTING MISTAKES you'll want you avoid when moving or expanding your business:

Mistake #1-Trying to save money by using your employees to move your computer Network. Don't hire your staff to disconnect, move and reconnect computers, phones and other devices. Be smart and hire an IT pro to pack and move your network.

Mistake #2-Not hiring the RIGHT IT firm to move your network. NEVER hire a company who wants to quote moving your network over the phone. Be sure to check references from other clients, ask for proof of insurance and look for a professional, organized approach to the project.

Mistake #3-Not giving your phone, Internet, and cable vendors enough advance warning. Did you know that internet and telephone connections require as much as six weeks advance notice to be installed, tested and ready for use?

Consult your IT provider in the early planning stages to ensure you have what you need before the drywall goes up!

Would you like your company to be featured here in our "Client Spotlight"? Just give us a call at 813-699-5356



Investing In Your Future

I've counseled a lot of professionals over the years on the need to market consistently. The excuse I frequently hear is "I can't afford it." I've never quite understood that mindset. It's a little like a farmer who buys a helicopter to cruise around his holdings, but never has enough money for fertilizer. In business, marketing is the way you make things happen. Marketing takes money. Since it does eat up a lot of cash, it's crucial that you put your money where it will do the most good. Here are two strategies.

Strategy One - Take a systematic approach to building your marketing budget. In any successful business, marketing is not optional. You must budget for it just as you budget for labor, equipment, facilities and supplies.

Here are three good reasons:

An effective marketing plan can provide the best return on investment of any expenditure you can make. You are investing your life in your profession because you believe in it. So why not invest your money in it?

A proactive marketing strategy is the best hedge against business slumps, especially when the national economy slows down.

A good marketing strategy gives you more control over the overall shape and growth pattern of your business. You can make good things happen, instead of just reacting to whatever happens.

You can't budget for marketing just by saying, "I'm going to spend X dollars on marketing during the next year." You must take complete charge of the way every dollar of your advertising budget is spent. This means devising a complete marketing plan, allocating the funds to implement it, then supervising the execution of every detail.

How much should you spend on marketing? That question brings up the next strategy for budgeting for maximum return.

Strategy Two - Create a sound marketing budget formula and stick with it. Every business is unique, and each has its own most productive budgeting formula. You may budget on the basis of:

A percentage of annual sales.

A projected sales approach: Project the sales you want to generate, and estimate how much it will take to generate that much volume. Then allocate the funds needed.

A percentage of your gross or net profits.

A combination of all three of those factors.

It doesn't matter whether you use one of these specific formulas, but it is vital to have one that works well for you – and that you use it consistently.



Dr. Nido Qubein is president of High Point University, an undergraduate and graduate institution with 4,300 students from 40 countries. He has authored two dozen books and audio programs distributed worldwide. As a business leader, he is chairman of the Great Harvest Bread Company, with 220 stores in 43 states. He serves on the boards of several national organizations, including BB&T (a Fortune 500 company with \$185 billion in assets), the La-Z-Boy Corporation (one of the largest and most recognized furniture brands worldwide) and Dots Stores (a chain of fashion boutiques with more than 400 locations across the country). As a professional speaker, Dr. Qubein has received many distinctions, including the Golden Gavel Medal, induction into the International Speaker Hall of Fame and as the founder of the NSA Foundation in Arizona.

3 (Little?) White Lies VoIP Salespeople Will Tell You To Make The Sale

Thinking of replacing your old phone system with a brand-new VoIP system to save money? Before you do, make sure you know these half-truths VoIP salespeople will tell you that may not be 100% legit.

1. VoIP will save you a boatload of money! For most, this is absolutely the case. However, if you're a single, smaller office, you might not see as big a cost savings as you think. Most of the money saved is in reduced overhead expenses and lower phone bills; however, the initial costs of installing a system can be pricey, essentially eliminating any real cost savings as a whole. Just make sure you look at ALL the costs over a year's time, not just the money saved on your phone bill when comparing one system to another. That said, larger offices with multiple phone lines and branch locations can see a HUGE savings in costs, thereby making VoIP a much smarter, cost-saving choice.
2. You won't experience garbled sound, dropped calls or other problems with OUR system. This is one area to tread carefully. Buy the wrong system and you absolutely WILL sacrifice call quality. Without getting too technical, there are 4 ways to deliver phone calls via the Internet: SIP trunking, hosted IP PBX systems, on-premise IP PBX systems and hybrid or blended (on-premise and cloud) systems. Of the 4, the one we've found the most effective is using a hybrid of on-premise and cloud to deliver the

most reliable and highest quality sound (feel free to contact us for a detailed and more technical explanation). However, nothing is better than running a small test in your own environment – so before you commit to any phone system, ask to have a phone installed on your current network to test.

3. Our VoIP phone works on any network. Not true! Depending on the age of your network, your firewall, the speed, bandwidth and reliability of your Internet connection, and a few other factors, you might be faced with upgrading your network to make your new VoIP system work. A network assessment for VoIP would need to be done to determine exactly what, if anything, would need to be upgraded. If you work with a provider that does not insist on performing a comprehensive assessment, run away fast! Without knowing what's going on with your network, there is a strong possibility you will be very disappointed with the quality and performance of your VoIP system.

Want to find out if VoIP is right for you? Call us to run a HONEST evaluation of your network, Internet connection and current phone system and costs to determine if a VoIP system will deliver high-quality phone service at the cost savings you want: 813.699.5356 or send us an e-mail to getacts@acts360.com.

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"We drilled down, but we didn't like what we found, so we filled it all back in."



ACTS360
2408 Airport Rd
Plant City, FL 33594
813.699.5356



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WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Those Passwords?**

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You To Make The Sale**

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