SYSCOM BUSINESS TECHNOLOGIES

Digital Hub

What's New

LATEST NEWS

Syscom is pleased to congratulate Victor Wasson, Project Engineer, on his 10-year anniversary as a member of our team! Vic brings a level of expertise to his role that consistently upholds our commitment to providing our clients with exemplary service.

Vic holds an Associate's Degree in Network and System Administration from Alpena Community College. In his free time, he enjoys doing home renovation projects, CrossFit, and spending time with family.

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Syscom Business Technologies is dedicated to technology success for your business. We support businesses throughout Michigan and Pennsylvania from our offices in Grand Rapids, Traverse City, Greater Metro Detroit and the Lehigh Valley. Over many years, our clients have truly seen increased success through our business relationship.

Scott Huxley, Managing Principal

Prepare Your Kids for A Successful School Year: Tech Tips to Maximize Learning Potential

Back-to-school season has finally arrived, and it won't be long before our kids are back in the classroom, learning all sorts of different subjects. Although it's an exciting time for our kids, this transition back to school is often difficult. Many of them enjoy summer more than any other time of year because they get more freedom to participate in their favorite activities. When school starts, they have additional responsibilities to keep up with to ensure future success.

As a parent, you play a vital role in your child's success, and there are some tech strategies you can use to help give them an advantage. Whether we like it or not, technology plays a part in our children's education and lives, so it's in our best interests to get familiar with the tech our kids use regularly and create guidelines to ensure they stay on task.

We've gathered some of our favorite back-to-school tech tips to help you prepare your children for a successful school year.

Protect Their Devices

If your children have a smartphone, tablet, or computer, they will likely use the Internet and visit various websites. Some of these websites may be unsecured and could download malware or a virus to their device, which can cause even bigger problems down the road. The device will likely stop working as efficiently as it should, and your family's personal information may become compromised. It's imperative that you download some type of antivirus or security software. Most web browsers offer free security features, but you can also buy enhanced security plans if you want extra protection.

You should also look into restricting certain websites and apps on your network and your children's personal devices. You don't want them to stumble upon a website that's not age appropriate or is unsecured.

Set Rules Around Screen Use.

Many experts agree that children ages 5 to 17 should not be on a screen for more than two hours per day. Screen overuse can lead to mental and physical health problems that could hinder your child's development. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry reports children ages 8 to 12 in the U.S. spend an average of four to six hours a day watching or using screens, and teens spend up to nine hours.

As the parent, it's your responsibility to enforce guidelines around screen time usage. While you might have been a little more lenient during the summer months, now is the time to set ground rules. Give them a certain amount of time they're allowed to use their devices for personal use and make it so they can only use the screens in public areas of the house, not a bedroom. That way, you can monitor what they're doing and how long they use their devices. Keep in mind that you will have to follow these guidelines to a similar extent, or your child will find your rules unfair.

> **Screen overuse can lead to mental and physical health problems that could hinder your child's development. As the parent, it's your responsibility to enforce guidelines around screen time usage.**

Back Up Their Data and Update Software

Your child likely has a lot of important information and documents on their laptop or personal computer. Make sure you're regularly backing up their data, so they don't lose it if something happens to the hardware. It's also a good idea to store and save everything to a cloud storage service so they can access their homework and other important files from other devices.

Finally, check their devices to see if any software needs to be updated. Companies are constantly releasing updates to their software to plug any cybersecurity holes and ensure it runs to the best of its ability.

Make Sure You Are Not Running OUTTATIME

Your software is only as good as its last patch. Reaching End of Life (EoL) or End of Service (EoS) means critical patches and updates are no longer available, leaving you vulnerable to various problems.

Some make the mistake of not rushing to upgrade the software because it is still functional. However, outdated software can lead to security risks, data loss, compliance issues and more.

To protect your business, we can help you identify outdated software and hardware and keep you current on the latest security threats and how to mitigate them. We can also update your systems to the latest versions to ensure the best possible protection. For a consultation, feel free to contact us.

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3 Tips to Improve The Customer Experience

Every business leader wants to create an ideal environment and experience for their customers. More customers means more referrals, which often equals more sales and higher profits. Figuring out how to go the extra mile for your customers can be difficult at times, especially when you're working with someone who is unhappy. Luckily, there are a few strategies you can implement to help improve the customer experience at your business.

See the situation from the customer's point of view.

It's your business, and you know how it operates, but that doesn't mean you know everything about every situation or can disregard your customers' concerns. Think about it from their perspective before you respond in a manner that could reflect negatively on you and the business. If you wouldn't want another business owner or manager to say it to you, don't say it to your customers.

Give your customers the attention they deserve.

Your customers won't like being passed off to other associates or being treated disrespectfully. Give them your full, undivided attention, and take what they say seriously. If you find this difficult, pretend you're talking to a relative, boss or someone else you hold in high regard.

Don't be afraid to ask for feedback.

Sometimes, your customers won't tell you when you're doing something they don't like. Send out surveys or directly ask your customers for feedback. You'll be surprised by what they say and may even discover a few ways to improve your business.

The Secret to Motivating Your Employees: Look at Your Management Systems

"How do I motivate employees?"

Academics and managers have pondered this question since the dawn of the study of management. After advising thousands of successful and unsuccessful leaders for nearly 30 years and analyzing their performance, I have observed a pattern that stands out.

Great leaders don't ask this question. First, the term "employee" sounds condescending and patriarchal, so great leaders call their coworkers "colleagues," "associates" or "teammates." Second, great leaders see management systems as the prime movers of colleague behavior and the resulting outcomes. They don't place the blame on "employee motivation." Below-average managers wonder how to motivate employees, and they are achieving below-average results typically due to one or more management system failures.

Managers wonder how to motivate employees typically after a breakdown in hiring systems, clarity of expectations or rewards/results alignment. Let's illustrate with an example. Pat is an employee at a company that sells and installs solar panels on houses. The average employee sells and installs solar panels on three homes per week. But Pat is only completing one house per week. Why?

First, Pat doesn't like to talk with people but instead prefers to use tools and complete installation projects. Second, it's unclear whether Pat is expected to sell.

Third, Pat knows the company's fixed salary pays the same no matter how many houses are completed in a week. Wise leaders can see Pat doesn't have a motivation problem. In contrast, the manager has a management problem that can be fixed in three easy steps.

Hire Right: Poor hiring systems lead to hiring someone like Pat (who doesn't like talking to people) for a job that requires selling. Perhaps Pat would be a star performer if the job were designed to focus on installations, not selling.

Clarify Expectations: Is Pat supposed to sell or just install? This sounds like a ridiculous question, but many large and small organizations have poorly defined job expectations that result in a diffusion of energy by colleagues. A clear set of measurable outcomes, with results reviewed frequently, is an antidote to unclear expectations.

Align Rewards to Results: If it is more valuable to an organization that colleagues deliver higher output, then it makes sense to reward the person accordingly and proportionally. Attempts to "push" employees to deliver greater output without any increase in expected rewards is disrespectful and illogical. If you're a manager wondering how to motivate your team, start by looking at your management systems. They could be causing your lack of morale.

Dr. Geoff Smart is chairman & founder of ghSMART, a leadership consulting firm that exists to help leaders amplify their positive impact on the world. Dr. Smart and his firm have published multiple New York Times bestsellers. He stays active in his community and has advised many government officials.

Inside This Issue

Using AI to Generate Copy? Proceed with Caution!

During the last year, we have seen artificial intelligence appear nearly everywhere. One particular AI tool that has taken the world by storm is ChatGPT. ChatGPT and other language-processing tools can be incredibly beneficial when used correctly. However, too many business leaders are making common mistakes with these tools that hurt their businesses without even realizing it. Here are some things to keep in mind if you're using AI to write articles for your blog and other marketing materials.

It's not always accurate.
Most of these tools are just pumping out information programmed into their databases. This can result in inaccurate information. Always double-check the statistics and information provided to ensure everything is factually correct.

It's not personal.
Most people don't want to read articles that weren't written by humans because they're generic. If you're using AI to write for you, go back through it after it's done and add your personal flair to the writing.

It won't be creative.
These tools work by scanning through the Internet to provide you with the requested information. They can't produce unique and imaginative thoughts; they can only regurgitate what other people have already written.

Our Locations