CD TECHNOLOGY TIMES

Insider Tips to Help Your Business Run Faster, Easier and More Profitably

Thomas Hill, President & Founder

"Worry is a thief that will steal energy and focus. I find that physical activity is one of the quickest ways to redirect my attention back to what matters and what I can actually do something about.

TRIVIA
CONGRATULATIONS

Jason Cardwell

FARMERS INSURANCE

There were 66 Superbowl commercials.

TURN TO PAGE 5 FOR THIS MONTHS TRIVIA

WHEN AN IT RELATIONSHIP STARTS TO FEEL LIKE A BAD DATE

Most bad dates do not begin badly. They start with quick replies. Clear plans. A sense that someone is paying attention. You leave thinking things are handled.

Business technology relationships often begin the same way. At first, support is responsive. Systems are set up. Problems get fixed. There's relief in knowing someone is "on it."

Technology fades into the background where it belongs.

Then your business grows. More tools are added. Your team gets busier. Security concerns grow. What once felt simple now feels complicated.

The Honeymoon Phase Ends

Replies take longer. Issues that were supposedly resolved return. You hear phrases like "we will look into it" more often than you'd like.

Before you know it, you're adapting your business to someone else's bad behavior.

You call. You leave a message. Maybe you send an email. Then you wait for hours. Sometimes days.

Meanwhile, your team is stuck. You're paying employees who can't do their jobs because IT "support" is missing in action.

That's not support. That's a bad date who says, "I'm on my way" and never shows up.

Healthy tech relationships don't leave you hanging. Problems get acknowledged,

triaged and fixed fast. Better yet, many of them never happen because someone is watching your systems before they melt down.

Why Tech Relationships Go Bad

Most small-business tech relationships fail for the same reason most relationships fail: No one is maintaining the relationship.

Tech often runs on a reactive model: Something breaks, you call, they patch it, everyone ignores it again, repeat. That's like talking to your spouse only during fights.

You're technically communicating, but you're not building anything stable.

Meanwhile, your business keeps growing, so the IT relationship that worked with five people and one shared drive doesn't survive with 15 people with more data and more apps being targeted by smarter criminals.

What a Healthy Tech Relationship Feels Like

A good tech relationship isn't exciting. It doesn't create drama. It feels calm.

A good IT partner doesn't just fix problems. They prevent problems. They monitor, patch and maintain quietly in the background so issues don't sneak up on you during payroll, tax prep or your biggest client deadline of the quarter.

continued from cover

Here's the real sign you're in a good tech relationship: You stop thinking about IT most days because it just works. Not trendy. Not magical. Reliable.

The Big Question

If your IT provider was a person you were dating, would you keep seeing them? Or would your friends say, "Seriously? You're still calling that guy?"

If you've normalized bad tech behavior, you're paying twice: in dollars and in stress. And neither one is necessary.

Spring forward

March 8

Lots Of Ways To Get Your Kids Into The Garden

With spring around the corner, there's no better time to get kids of any age off screens and involved with gardening. Whether they help with landscaping or complete their own small projects, or help bring food to the table, there's always something to do in the garden.

Give kids a section of the garden and let them start their own plants from seed. Choose larger seeds for smaller fingers like peas, beans, sunflowers and squash. These are all great choices because the seeds will germinate quickly and easily.

Plan a themed garden, like a salsa garden, a pizza garden, or one with rainbow-colored plants. Or pick one thing. I highly recommend cucumbers. Kids can tell eve-

ryone they are growing pickles. By the way, refrigerator pickles are super easy and last all year.

For seeds that don't do as well sowing directly, now is the perfect time to start seeds indoors. Try a countertop eggshell garden to start seeds. Poke holes in the bottom of eggshells for drainage before placing them back into the carton. Then spray the insides with water and fill with potting soil before pressing seeds in and covering them. Keep them warn and moist. When the seeds sprout, transplanting outside is easy. Squeeze, crack, and place the whole thing in the ground.

Teach them how to weed. It's the most essential task of gardening, with no fancy

equipment or even much of a learning curve. A little weed therapy will clean up the garden and clear the mind as well.

Of course, let them harvest their bounty. Check out our grandboy above cutting spinach leaves. Yes, kids will eat spinach with little fuss that they helped bring to the table. You can aways chop it up and put it in mac and cheese.

Get More Free Tips, Tools and Services At Our Website: www.CDTechnology.com

TECH TRENDS
YOUR BUSINESS SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO

Every year, tech publications release bold predictions about revolutionary trends that will "change everything." Before long, you're buried in buzzwords such as AI, blockchain and the metaverse, with little clarity on what truly drives revenue growth.

Here's the truth: Most tech trends are hype designed to sell expensive consulting services, but buried in the noise are a few genuine shifts that will impact how you work. Let's focus on what really matters. Here are three trends worth your attention and two you can safely ignore.

Trends worth your attention

1. AI built into tools you already use

AI is no longer a separate tool you have to learn. It's being embedded directly into the software you already use every day. Your email program will draft responses. Your CRM will write follow-up messages. Your accounting software will automatically categorize expenses and flag any anomalies.

Why it matters: You're not learning new tools; you're just getting smarter versions of what you already use. Instead of asking "Should we adopt AI?" the question becomes "Should we turn on these features we're already paying for?"

What to do: When your software offers AI features, try them for two weeks before deciding if they help. Many will be gimmicky, but some will save hours.

Time investment: Minimal. You're already using these tools.

2. Automation without the headache

Building custom automations used to require hiring a developer or learning complex software. Now, new tools let you create workflows just by describing what you want in plain English.

Example: "When someone fills out my contact form, add them to my spreadsheet, send a welcome email and remind me to follow up in three days." The AI figures out how to make it happen.

Why it matters: Automation moves from "We should do this but don't have time" to "We can set this up in 20 minutes."

What to do: Identify one repetitive task your team does weekly. Describe it to an automation tool and see if AI can build it for you.

Time investment: 20 to 30 minutes to set up your first automation.

3. Security regulations get real

Cybersecurity is shifting from best practice to legal requirement. States are passing data privacy laws. Insurance companies are requiring specific security measures. Enforcement is getting serious.

Why it matters: Not having basic protections is becoming like not having business insurance. It's a liability you can't afford.

What to do: Cover three basics: multi-factor authentication on all accounts, regular data backups you can restore and written cybersecurity policies you follow.

Time investment: Two to three hours to set up properly.

Trends you can safely ignore

1. The metaverse for business

Virtual reality meetings have been "the next big thing" for a decade. Headsets are still expensive and uncomfortable. Unless you're in architecture or design, skip it.

What to do: Nothing. If VR becomes useful for mainstream business, you'll know because competitors will use it successfully.

2. Accepting crypto payments

Crypto sounds cutting edge, but it adds tax complexity, volatility and higher fees. Unless customers actively request it, stick to cards and ACH transfers.

What to do: If someone asks, politely say no. Reconsider only if multiple customers request it organically.

Focus on trends that save time, reduce risk and improve efficiency. Ignore the hype and invest where it truly benefits your business.

CYBERSECURITY BLIND SPOTS:

The Risks You Don't See but Hackers Do
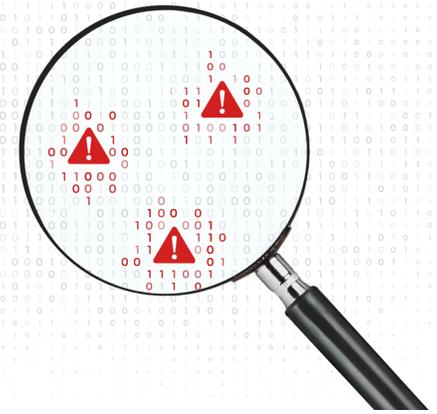
Every business leader understands the importance of cybersecurity. Yet the biggest threats often aren't headline-grabbing breaches. They're the overlooked gaps hiding in plain sight.

These blind spots may seem minor: a missed software update, an inactive account or an untested backup. But for hackers, they're open doors. Here are the most common gaps and how to close them before they become costly mistakes:

1. Unpatched systems

Every missed update is an invitation to attackers. Hackers track patch cycles and exploit known vulnerabilities.

Fix: Automate patch management and set alerts for lagging systems.

2. Shadow IT and rogue devices

Employees downloading unauthorized apps or connecting personal devices to your network can introduce malware that stays dormant until it's too late.

Fix: Enforce strict app and device policies. Regularly scan for unknown endpoints.

3. Over-permissive access

Too much access is dangerous. Hackers love accounts with excessive permissions.

Fix: Apply least privilege principles, mandate MFA and review permissions regularly.

4. Outdated security tools

Cyberthreats evolve daily. Old antivirus or intrusion detection tools can't keep up.

Fix: Audit your security stack and replace outdated tools before they fail you.

5. Orphaned accounts

Former employees' credentials often remain active, making them prime targets for attackers.

Fix: Automate offboarding to disable accounts immediately.

6. Misconfigured firewalls

A firewall is only as strong as its settings. Old or temporary rules create vulnerabilities.

Fix: Audit configurations, document changes and remove unnecessary permissions.

7. Untested backups

Backups aren't a safety net unless they work. Many businesses discover too late that theirs are corrupt or incomplete.

*Fix: Test backups quarterly and store **them securely in immutable storage.***

8. Missing security monitoring

You can't protect what you can't see. Without centralized visibility, threats slip through unnoticed.

Fix: Invest in continuous monitoring or partner with an experienced IT provider.

9. Compliance gaps

Frameworks like GDPR or HIPAA aren't just paperwork. They're essential for strong security.

Fix: Conduct regular compliance reviews and maintain documentation.

Bottom line: Identifying blind spots is only the beginning. The real value lies in fixing them quickly. Start with these fixes and you'll strengthen your defenses where it matters most.

gogrit.us

EASY-TO-PUSH LEVERS

FRAMES THAT SUPPORT UP TO 400LBS AND 24"W SEATS

0-DEGREE TURNING RADIUS

ADJUSTABLE FOOTREST AND ACCESSORIES SUPPORT RIDERS UP TO 6'5"

RUGGED 9" WHEEL TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES

OPTIONAL TRAIL HANDLES FOR EXTRA ASSISTANCE WHEN YOU WANT IT

REMOVABLE SEATBACK

SEATBELT

QUICK-RELEASE WHEELS

MOUNTAIN BIKE WHEELS FOR GRASS, GRAVEL, SAND, SNOW, DIRT, PAVEMENT, MUD, OR ANYWHERE ELSE YOU WANT TO RIDE

"The look you get when you say, 'Let's circle back.'"

Mobility Challenge? The Great Smoky Mountains Is The Place For You

The very idea that mountains could be an accessible for mobility challenges seems crazy, but in the case of The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, it's true.

The park has several fully paved trails, and it offers a fantastic mobility option: the GRIT Freedom Chair.

These all-terrain manual wheelchairs are free to use -- first-come, first served Sundays through Wednesdays at the Sugarland Visitors Center.

The park has some key paved trails suitable for any kind of wheelchair.

- Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail, near Gatlinburg: This is the park's flagship fully paved, ADA-accessible trail—a gentle 0.5-mile loop through a cove hardwood forest with stream views, rock walls, historic stone chimneys, and benches (many with paved pull-offs for wheelchairs). Designed for all abilities.

- John Oliver Cabin Access Trail, Cades Cove: A newer half-mile paved path (nearly 8 feet wide) leading to the historic John Oliver Cabin. Great for all devices.

- Clingmans Dome Observation Tower Trail (at the highest point): A paved (asphalt) path to the tower with a cement ramp at the end. It's steeper than the others, so a powered wheelchair or scooter with good battery/motor power is ideal.

Check the official NPS accessibility page (nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm) or call Sugarlands Visitor Center for the latest on trails/GRIT chairs.

For motorized devices: Confirm battery range, and bring extras if needed as there are no charging stations on trails.

Park rules: Mobility devices are permitted on accessible paths; service animals too.

WELCOME

MOUNTAIN MORTUARY SERVICE, LLC

We want to officially welcome Mountain Mortuary Service LLC who has been serving Knoxville and the surrounding area with quality service since 1994. Mountain Mortuary Service LLC is a full service mortuary service that has served the needs of area funeral directors, families and funeral directors across the globe. They are the oldest independently located mortuary service in Knoxville, TN, providing funeral homes with quality and timely 24/7 service. We are thrilled that they chose to trust us with their IT needs.

March 2026

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It's time to get MORE from your communications.

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO *love* YOUR BUSINESS PHONES!

It' time to be:
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- **More Collaborative**
- **More Mobile**

PHONE | CHAT | VIDEO CONFERENCING | FILE SHARING | ALL IN ONE APP

Schedule A FREE 10-Minute Consultation Call

Call 909-7606

CD TECHNOLOGY - AFFORDABLE IT HELPDESK AND CYBER SECURITY SUPPORT IN 20 MINUTES OR LESS

Join us **March 26th** for a

Networking Lunch & Learn

AI In The Workplace: Helpful vs Risky

12:00pm
6535 Jackie Lane
Knoxville, TN 37920

SCAN TO REGISTER

Seats are limited, reserve your spot today

https://www.cdtechnology.com/ai-in-the-workplace-helpful-vs-risky/

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