

I-M Tech

Issue 2

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Welcome,

As we make our way into the last period of the year, our team is busy helping our clients navigate the annual cybersecurity insurance renewal process. Every year, cybersecurity insurance providers send a list of questions to their clients to understand their current cybersecurity measures, reassess each client's level of risk, and update their coverage in accordance with the questionnaire's findings. Seems simple, right?

Unfortunately, many business owners get themselves in hot water when they try to navigate these policy renewal questionnaires without the support of an IT service provider. Some check "yes" for measures they don't actually have in place, while others end up answering a question in a way that makes insurance providers deny future coverage. At I-M Technology, we work with our clients to get the proper cybersecurity measures in place, accurately represent their IT infrastructure, and understand each ask made by their insurance company.

Although an insurance renewal questionnaire can seem simple at face value, misrepresenting technical security measures can lead to loss of coverage, insurance fraud cases, and even countersuits from the insurance provider. Our team is passionate about propelling our customers to their most successful future, and this step is foundational in the digital world businesses operate within today.

As a business owner myself, when I started tapping into all the resources that were designed to help me succeed, my business started to grow in ways I never imagined. I read books, talked to other leaders, and got more comfortable asking for help when things were out of my area of expertise. Now, I try to give the same support to other business owners. IT is commonly outside the area of expertise for most business owners, but we're here to help.

Enclosed in this issue, you'll find articles from various thought leaders whose insights can help your business grow and thrive. Former FBI hostage negotiator Chris Voss goes



over three tactics to avoid during your next negotiation to take back control. Discovery Channel's Mike Rowe discusses how he came to host the iconic show *Dirty Jobs* and what he's learned throughout his career regarding the power of authenticity. World-class customer service consultant John DiJulius explains why creating an emotional connection with your clients in today's digital world is the key your business needs to enjoy long-term success. And lastly, on page 15, we review some software options conducive to business growth and some to avoid. You'll also get our take on AI tech tools when to use them, and when to go manual.

If you're looking for even more resources to advance your business, join us for Small Business Tech Day on November 16. We are thrilled to have Mike Michalowicz, *Shark Tank*'s Robert Herjavec, and the inventor of Siri, Adam Cheyer, in attendance. For tickets, visit our website!

At I-M Technology, proactively supporting our clients is our #1 priority. Cybersecurity insurance renewal season is just one example of how we do that. If your IT provider hasn't brought this up to you yet, reach out to them—or us! ■

Stuart Bryan
CEO & President
I-M Technology
I-MTechnology.com
Powering Productivity
Remember, you deserve world-class technology support!



Company Name:
Coast Guard Foundation

Name & Title:
Bradley Sisley, Senior Vice
President of Development

Location:
Stonington, CT

Website:
CoastGuardFoundation.org

Industry:
Coast Guard Support (Nonprofit)

Bringing The Backwoods Into The 21ST Century:

How Stuart Bryan Of I-M Technology Helped Bradley Sisley Of The Coast Guard Foundation Update Their IT And Bolster Their Cybersecurity Protocols

When you're a nonprofit organization that supports the morale, education, and wellness of the men and women of the Coast Guard, you have bigger things to worry about than if your Wi-Fi or phones are going to work that day. Unfortunately, these are the types of challenges that Bradley Sisley of the Coast Guard Foundation was facing, especially since they're located in a rural area a mile off a country road in Connecticut. That was until they found Stuart Bryan of I-M Technology who came in and completely overhauled their IT services, bolstered their cybersecurity protocols, and brought them firmly into the 21st century.

FROM OUTDATED TO UPGRADED

Just because the Coast Guard Foundation was founded in 1969 doesn't mean their technology services should also be from that age. "Before working with Stuart and his team, technology challenges were all around us. From old wires to outdated hardware, subpar internet, and spotty physical servers, we had very minimal IT services, and we were clearly not operating as efficiently as we could be," explains Bradley. "We did have email and [internet access], but it was all really just the bare minimum." The team at the Coast Guard Foundation knew there had to be a better way, so they began searching for someone who could help. "Although I wasn't there during the onboarding process, I know that once our team started looking, the name I-M Technology came up right away," says Bradley. "Plus, they were just down the road from us, which was advantageous since we always prefer working with local third-party vendors whenever possible." And thus, their partnership was forged.

After an initial assessment period when Stuart and his team came in and looked at the organization's needs and the challenges it faced, they got straight to work. "The first thing they did was optimize the systems we already had in place. Our Wi-Fi was terrible, and much of the wiring needed to be replaced, so they came in and did that right away. Then we looked at moving our phones to a digital system, which we still use today, to make it more stable," says Bradley. "Eventually, we started hiring remote employees in 2012 that were working from home offices, so Stuart helped us organize and streamline that as well. They were able to start putting us in that remote field about eight years prior to COVID, so when the pandemic hit, we were able to accelerate the things we were doing for our remote workers for all of our office workers, making the transition seamless."

Not only that but Stuart and his team at I-M Technology have been integral in helping the Coast Guard Foundation move from physical servers to the cloud. "Since more than half of our workforce is remote—by design, not due to COVID—it just makes sense to make the move. Now, everything we work on is entirely cloud-based, and the only interruptions we have to deal with are things out of our control, like if the hosting site is having a problem, for example. Otherwise, it's made our office much more efficient, and we are rarely ever left without the ability to work," notes Bradley. He adds, "Another thing I should mention is that I-M Technology worked with us to create a plan to use our previous servers until their useful life had expired before moving us over to the cloud. I appreciated this because then we didn't waste any money, and the transition was tiered, making it that much easier."

PROTECTION MADE EASY

But it wasn't just the hardware and basic technology that I-M Technology upgraded. It was also their cybersecurity protocols. "For us, the biggest risk factor is phishing emails. So, what Stuart did was add an additional layer of protection for things like our email while also ensuring there's employee education

on how to recognize such cyber threats. For example, whenever an email comes from outside our offices, it has a warning on it, which is really helpful if someone is trying to mimic our CFO or President," mentions Bradley. "I would definitely say that cybersecurity is the most significant risk our business, and other businesses, face in today's world." However, with I-M Technology in his back pocket, it's not something that he has to think much about. "Though cybersecurity is our biggest risk," says Bradley, "it takes up a very small part of my brain thanks to I-M Technology. And this gap between knowing it's our biggest vulnerability and not having to worry about it is precisely where our trust in I-M Technology lies."

When asked what he would tell other business owners and decision makers who were looking to upgrade their IT, Bradley says, "I would remind them that IT, and specifically cybersecurity, is not an area they want to underspend. Yes, you can easily overspend, but you certainly don't want to underspend, because a data breach or cyberattack can ruin a small business. Also, remember that you get what you pay for, and that the cheapest option is not always the best for your company." He adds, "What I can say is that over our 15+ year partnership with I-M Technology, every recommendation along the way has been the right one at the right time, and that's priceless."

Ultimately, having I-M Technology come in and completely overhaul their IT processes while bolstering their cybersecurity protocols has allowed Bradley and his team to get back to doing what they do best – tackling the toughest challenges that the Coast Guard members (and their families) face on a daily basis. So, if you need robust technology solutions from a trusted IT firm, look no further than Stuart Bryan and his team at I-M Technology! ■



5 Essential Tech Tools To Grow Your Business And Two You Should Not Waste Your Money On

BY STUART BRYAN

Growing your business involves learning how to make money and hang on to it responsibly. When you're in the weeds, it's easy to think that a fancy piece of well-marketed software could help you dig your way out. That's usually not the case, and you'll likely end up paying for software that you don't need and barely use, and that burns through your bank account.

On the other hand, there is some technology that most growing organizations benefit from. When set up and implemented correctly, these softwares can improve operations, increase efficiency and lend a hand to revenue-generating efforts. Investing in the right technology is not a wasted expense. However, with so many options, especially with the new wave of AI-powered digital tools, it can be challenging to decide which ones you need and which ones are distractions.

Let's review all of these software options, starting with the five tech tools you should use to grow your business:

1. Direct Messaging Platforms – Whether everyone is in-office, remote, or hybrid, a communication tool is a must. These tools allow for targeted communication that can be one-on-one, small, select groups, entire departments, channels within the organization, or the entire organization. This feature helps to keep messages relevant instead of consuming everyone's time. Tools like Microsoft Teams or Slack are popular options that offer video call capabilities, integrate with other tech tools, can leverage AI, and more. Other critical factors to consider when choosing which software you'll use are whether it's high-speed, easy to use, scalable, and whether the software company provides great support.

2. Project Management Software – This is essential for internal and external projects to keep you on track, on budget and organized. Using this tool, you can work with others on your team to set deadlines, assign tasks, monitor deliverables, track issues, connect with clients for feedback or approval and more. However, there are many options available that have more features than you need. When choosing project management software, first see if there are any industry favorites. For example, JobNimbus is specialized software for roofers in the contracting industry. Others exist specifically for health care. Finding these unique options can help you get the project solutions you need. If you're looking for a general tool, software like Monday, Asana and ClickUp all continue to top the popularity chart.

3. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software – If you've been tracking leads and customers via pencil and paper or with a simple spreadsheet, this tool will change the game for you. CRMs allow you to store your customer information in one place, which can help streamline your sales process, strengthen customer relationships, increase sales and help you run a smoother operation. Again, look for industry-specific options first. After that, tools like Keap or Salesforce come highly recommended.

4. Cloud Computing Solutions – These are vital for all organizations that share data or collaborate on projects. The cloud is a web-based hub that holds all your data virtually and can be manipulated by anyone with access at any time, even at

the same time. It syncs to all connected devices to share changes in real time, allowing for better collaboration and scale-up as your company grows. Cloud platforms to consider are Microsoft Azure, Google Drive, Amazon Web Services (AWS) or Dropbox.

5. Cybersecurity Solutions – Digital tools make running your company easier, but they invite new threats into your business. Cybersecurity is a serious issue for business owners. You handle sensitive data, financial information and more for you and your clients, so safeguarding it against cybercriminals is necessary. Computers, USBs, mobile devices, servers and networks must all be secured. While there are antivirus and firewall solutions available for you to set up on your own, having an IT company with a cybersecurity expert on the team monitoring your network is recommended. Hackers break through the standard firewalls regularly, which leaves people who think they are protected unknowingly exposed. With 24/7 monitoring, an IT team can patch those holes before cybercriminals can find them.

Those are five tools all business owners would benefit from. But what about items you don't need? Here are two you can avoid wasting money on:

1. Ineffective AI Tools – With the launch of ChatGPT, a wave of new AI-powered programs has popped up. It seems like there is an AI tool for everything. The problem is, can these tools be used effectively? Many programs were rushed to market and are still in the early stages of development. They have frustrating bugs and limitations and don't produce quality results. Be selective about which AI tools you use. Do you need it? Does it work? Remember, whenever you sign up for another free trial or create an account, you're giving your private information to a company that could experience a data breach. Choose carefully!

2. Duplicates – Are you paying twice for the same tool? As software companies merge and develop new features, you might find that you can consolidate your tools in one place. For example, if you're using Canva to design images for social media and something else like Hootsuite to schedule them, you could reduce the number of tools you use from two to one because Canva can schedule the posts for you! There are likely other areas in your business where this can happen. Spend some time evaluating what you invest in to see if you can eliminate anything.

When it comes to running an efficient business, choosing the right tech tools is critical to your success. Instead of spending your valuable time researching the best options, let our tech experts help. Using our *free* Network Assessment, we can help you identify bottlenecks and areas of opportunity in your business to help you save money, improve productivity and grow. Book your free assessment with us now or call our team to get started. ■



Stuart Bryan is CEO & President of I-M Technology. They are based in Norwich, CT and to find out more about what they do and how they could help you, please visit I-MTechnology.com.

— SMALL BUSINESS —
TECH DAY



Save The Date For Our Second Annual Small Business Tech Day

November 16, 2023

Uniting Business With Current Technology To Maximize Productivity And Profits In Your Business While Staying Protected And Secure

For More Details And To Register
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