Responsive Technology Partners

What's New

Responsive Technology Partners Awarded Inc. Best in Business 2020

Inc. Best in Business 2020

The world's most trusted business-media brand, Inc. offers entrepreneurs the knowledge, tools, connections, and community to build great companies. Its award-winning multiplatform content reaches more than 50 million people each month across various channels, including websites, newsletters, social media, podcasts, and print. Its prestigious Inc. 5000 list, produced every year since 1982, analyzes company data to recognize the fastest-growing privately held businesses in the United States. When the pandemic hit, Responsive Technology contacted all its customers and offered free, secure remote access through its support tools. The company offered a similar service to the chambers of commerce in each market it serves, along with their members, regardless of whether they were customers. In the past year, Responsive Technology raised funds for its local youth mountain bike program, provided free or discounted IT services to nonprofits, and raised more than $10,000 to get kids on bikes.

Cybercriminals Confess:

The Top 3 Tricks And Sneaky Schemes They Use To Hack Your Computer Network
That Can Put You Out Of Business

Cybercriminals and hackers are rarely shy about the methods they use to attack their victims. Many of them are more than happy to share how they broke into a business's network or how they walked away with thousands of dollars after successfully extorting a business owner whose company is now destroyed.

There are new stories out there to get your blood boiling as cybercriminals work to ruin people's lives and livelihoods. These criminals don't care what kind of damage they do. They only care about one thing: money. If they can get away with it – and many do – they'll keep on doing it.

It's up to the rest of us as business owners (and employees) to stay at least one step ahead of these cyberthugs. The single best way to do that is to stay educated on the latest threats. The second-best way is to stay up-to-date with the latest technology designed to combat cyber-attacks.

Here are three tricks of the trade cybercriminals are using right now in an attempt to get their hands on your money:

1. Ransomware. This is very common. It's a form of malware, and it can sneak onto your network and into your computers in a number of different ways:

- **Ad Networks.** These ads can appear on social media sites and on familiar websites. Someone clicks a compromised ad or pop-up, and it initiates a file download. It's quick and it can be confusing. This is where anti-malware and anti-ransomware come in very handy.
- **Malicious Links.** The cybercriminal sends you a legitimate-looking e-mail, supposedly from your bank or a familiar online store. It may even be disguised as an e-mail from a colleague. The e-mail contains a link or file. If you click the link or file, it installs the ransomware.
- **Hidden Files On Thumb Drives.** This happens way too often where someone brings a thumb drive from home. While the user doesn't know it, the drive has a malicious file on it. When the thumb drive is inserted into a networked machine, the file is installed.

No matter how the ransomware gets onto your devices, the result is basically the same. The ransomware goes to work and begins encrypting your files. Or it may completely block you from accessing your computer altogether. You'll get a full-screen message: *Pay up or never access your files again*. Some ransomware programs threaten to delete all of your files. Others say they will never restore access.

2. DDoS Extortion. Short for distributed denial of service, DDoS attacks are a relatively easy way for hackers to take down your business's online presence and wreak havoc on your network. These attacks mimic online users and essentially "flood" your network with access requests. Basically, it's as if millions of people were trying to access your website at once.

Your network simply can't handle that kind of traffic and, as a result, it goes down. The hackers can continue the attacks until you take action. That is to say, until you pay up. If you don't pay up, the hackers will do everything they can to keep you offline in an attempt to destroy your business. If you rely on Internet traffic, this can be devastating, which is why many businesses end up paying.

3. Direct Attacks. Some hackers like to do the dirty work themselves. While many cybercriminals rely on bots or malware to do the work for them, some hackers will see if they can break through your network security in a more direct way. If successful at breaking in, they can target specific files on your network, such as critical business or customer data.

Once they have the valuable data, they may let you know they have it. Sometimes they'll ask for money in return for the sensitive data. Sometimes they won't say anything and instead simply sell the data on the black market. Either way, you're in a bad position. A criminal has walked away with sensitive information, and there is nothing you can do about it.
Except, that last sentence isn't true at all! There are things you can do about it! The answer is preventative measures. It all comes around to these two all-important points:
- Stay educated on the latest threats
- Stay up-to-date with the latest technology designed to combat cyber-attacks

If you do these two things and work with an experienced IT services company, you can change the outcome. You can put the cybercriminals in their place and have a digital defense wall between your business and those who want to do your business harm.

6 Time Management Tips
For The Busy Entrepreneur

Face it, there will never be enough hours in the day to accomplish everything you need to do. But, if you methodically review how you spend your days and instill focus and discipline while completing daily priorities, you will soon find more time to work on the long-term success of your business. Here are six ways to do it.

1. Conduct A Time Audit.
Sit down and review three months of activity. The data from the analysis will show where you spent your time (which projects, tasks and priorities demanded your attention) and with whom you collaborated to get the work done. The audit will also shed light on areas where you were distracted, where you were the most productive and which tasks/projects took more (or less) time than anticipated.

2. Eliminate Time Drains.
These are the kinds of things that sneak up on you and steal time that can be put to better use growing your business. Look for these time drains: not delegating tasks, not managing meetings efficiently (tip: always have an agenda!) and spending too much time writing/responding to e-mails. If you've done your job as a leader, members of your team can handle a majority of meetings and e-mails. You hired great people. Now let them do their jobs.

3. Take Control Of Your Calendar.
Remember, you drive your schedule; don't let others drive it. Block time throughout your day and guard against changing your schedule to work on tasks that are not important or urgent. The way you allocate your time has a direct correlation to your effectiveness as a leader and, ultimately, the performance of your business. Prudent calendar management will also send a strong signal to your team that you should take this seriously.

4. Plan Your Day.
When you know your priorities for the day, you will be better prepared to reset your work schedule if the unexpected comes your way. Once your schedule is set, block off chunks of time to work on your priorities. I recommend 90-minute blocks so you can concentrate on big-picture items or work on a group of related tasks. Stay disciplined and don't allow yourself to go over that allotted time.

5. Limit Interruptions.
Now comes the hard part. Once you start working on each priority, you need to remain focused. Close the door and don't answer the phone unless it's a critical issue. Avoid checking your e-mail. Don't let distractions slow you down.

6. Hold Yourself Accountable.
Share your tasks, priorities and deadlines with a colleague. Meet with that person at least monthly to review how well you managed your time. The probability of success increases when you have someone watching your progress and coaching you until you the cross the finish line.

Get Organized And Back On Track For The New Year

Top Business Apps To Get You Organized

If you're struggling to stay on top of your work tasks, there are some great apps avaliable to help out.

- **Asana** helps your business improve communication and collaboration. You can view all tasks and projects and follow progress on a communal board so you can communicate without having to rely on e-mail.

- **Proven** helps organize your hiring process by posting listings to multiple job boards with one click. You can also review and sort applicants with ease.

- **Boxmeup** organizes and tracks your packages, containers and bulk storage items to make storing and shipping a breeze.

- **Evernote** keeps all your notes organized in one place and allows you to easily share notes and lists with co-workers.

- **Trello** tracks your team's workflow. Whenever you make a change to a project or task, the app notifies each team member involved so you don't have to.

- **KanbanFlow** helps managers visualize overall workflow. It gives overviews of work status, tracks progress and assigns tasks to team members. Nerdwallet, Apr. 21, 2020

Top 5 Ways To Overcome Setbacks and Grow

After you encounter a setback, it can be hard to start again. But simply believing in yourself is the best way to get back on track.

1. **Recognize when failure is your fault and when it isn't.**
   Some setbacks are entirely out of your control. Learn to recignize the difference in your faults and what you can't control, then move forward.

2. **Learn from your mistakes and don't repeat them.**
   Immediately letting go of the regret of making a mistake can be hard, so instead, focus on what caused the mistake, then learn from it.

3. **Focus on your new goal.**
   Failure often comes from going after something we don't truly want. Discover what you really want so you understand what you need to work on.

4. **Celebrate small wins.**
   You don't have to wait to celebrate, even if you haven't reached your end goal. Validate yourself for completing smaller tasks, and you'll empower yourself to keep going.

5. **Find the right mentor.**
   This is someone who believes in you, even when you don't believe in yourself, and who can support you in reaching your goals. Find someone with the right knowledge and experience to learn from. *Business Insider, Sept. 16, 2020*

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