TECHNOLOGY TIMES

"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably"

Traditionally Flawed

Think about your workspace, what makes it unique, what benefits are there for working the same space as your coworkers. In an office you can walk over to a co-worker and show them a document you've been working on; need to hold a meeting? Just grab a conference room down the hall, want to plan a lunch outing with coworkers? They are usually within earshot. The atmosphere of the office is something engrained in us from grade school through college, focused on the task at hand, hardcopies of all documentation, doors closed, butts in seats; full steam ahead. Just like classrooms, the workspace is unrecognizable to what it was 20 years ago. According to a study by Swiss company Zug, 70% of the global workforce telecommutes at least one day a week, while 53% work remotely for at least half the week. As communication technology advances, it allows humans to spread further and further apart while remaining digitally no further than your keyboard or smartphone. It is estimated that almost 70% of jobs will be remote by 2025, and with studies showing the benefits of employees working remotely, the future it seems is set.

But this is hardly the first time the office workplace has seen a major shift due to improvements in technology. Slowly over the last century every piece of equipment has been converted to a digital process, starting with the switch from typewriters to word processor in the late 70's. Before that the copy machine was being pioneered in an effort to make offices more efficient. In the 1980's the fax machine went off with a bang, allowing businesses to send images back and forth over telephone lines. Most of the workforce doesn't even remember when these changes took place, most weren't even part of the workforce, and a smaller percent weren't even born yet. The biggest

change happened in the early 2000's when the rise of global internet began to take shape. This spawned widespread consumer email, instant messaging, search engines, online marketplaces, social networks, and video chatting, giving users a way to chat face to face over great distances. The faster we can communicate the more efficiently we can work and collaborate, and up until now the fastest way to communicate was face to face, so real work needed to be done locally. In our current working environment, you can utilize a mobile device almost anywhere and have a face to face conversation with someone across the state, continent, or globe.

We are currently in the midst of another major technological overhaul, with cloud storage and computing. The practice of using shared computer resources and storage without direct active management via the internet; so even the computers are working remotely.

As technology draws us closer, people are breaking free of unified locations; ditching the commute to the city for logging into work from home or setting up a conference from your local library. The office isn't the only thing going remote. Educational institutions, college and high school alike, have begun to offer online degrees and hybrid courses, hybrid being a mixture of remote and on-campus learning. We can collectively commence the deconstruction of social norms, like 9-5 office jobs, hour long commutes, fluorescent overhead

"That's how we've always done it" doesn't hold so much water anymore.

lighting.... distractions. We as humans rarely ever get things right the first time. We live at a point in time when traditions are being questioned in the light of scientifically conducted studies, and the construct of "that's how we've always done it" doesn't hold so much water anymore.

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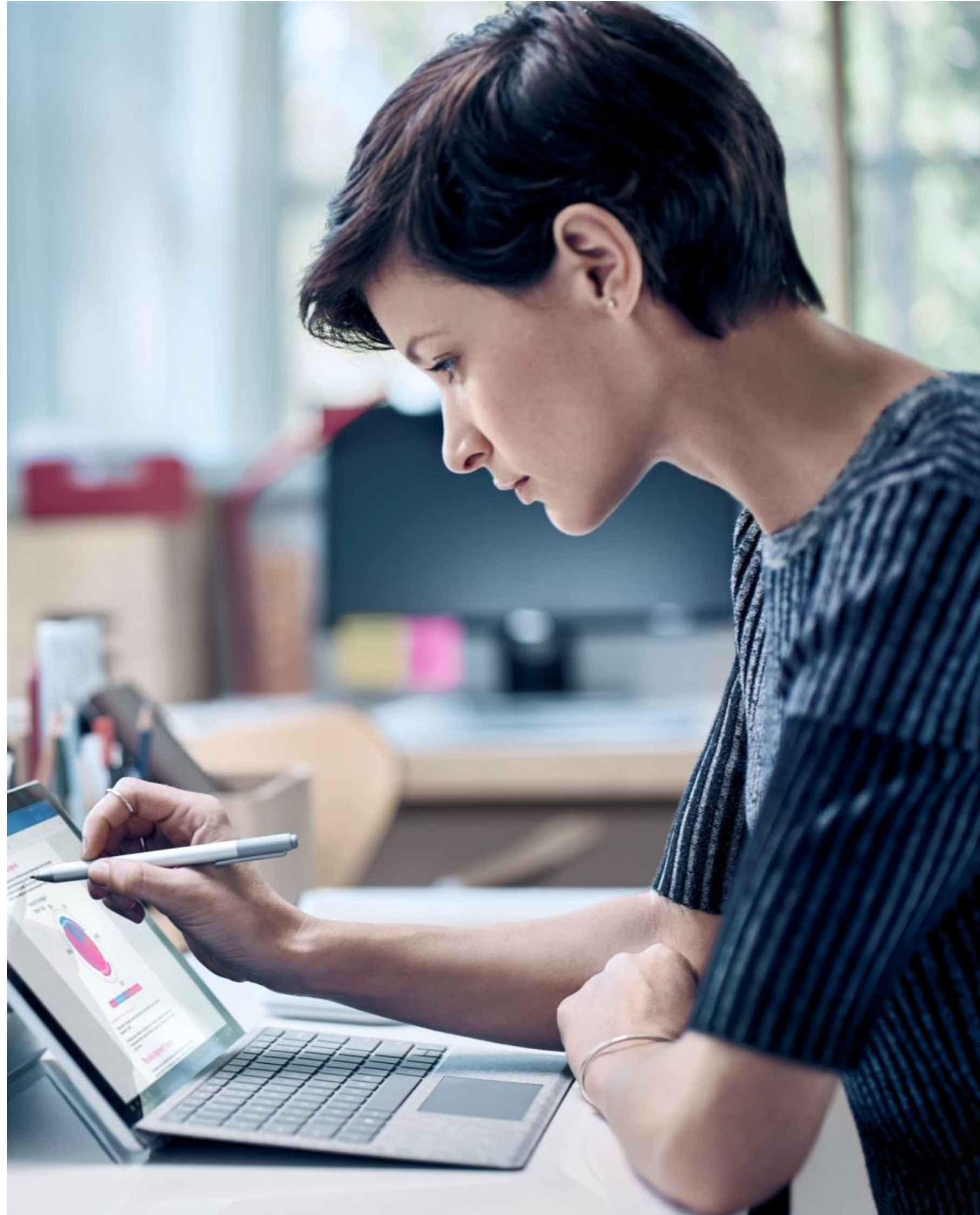
Shiny New Gadget of The Month

FlexSafe Is Here To Protect Your Valuables

Beachgoers all know the security dilemma that comes with a stray wallet. When it comes time to put on your trunks and head into the sea, do you bury your valuables in the sand? Hide them under a towel? Or leave them be and hope for the best?

For all of those who find each of these options less than ideal, there's **FlexSafe**. It's a handy, personal, portable safe designed to stave off thieves, wherever you are. Water-resistant, slash-proof, RFID-blocking and equipped with a heavy-duty three-digit combination lock, it turns you from an easy target to a walking fortress. The bag-shaped design clips into itself, allowing you to secure it to a beach chair, umbrella or any other unwieldy surface and go on your merry way without worry. At $59.99, it could be a sound investment for those of us finding ourselves leaving our valuables exposed on the regular.

Microsoft Teams wins Enterprise Connect Best in Show award and delivers new experiences for the intelligent workplace

Today, at the Enterprise Connect event in Orlando, Florida, Microsoft Teams won the Best in Show award for the second year in a row in recognition for its vision for making communication and collaboration easier for the entire workforce, including those on the frontline. This week marks the second anniversary of the worldwide launch of Microsoft Teams. Over the past two years, Teams has grown significantly in both new capabilities and customer usage, as the hub for teamwork that brings people together and fosters a culture of engagement and inclusion. We're unveiling eight new capabilities in Teams that make collaboration more inclusive, effective, and secure. More than 500,000 organizations, including 91 of the Fortune 100, use Teams to collaborate across locations, time zones, and languages, including Cerner, Cox Automotive, dm-drogerie markt, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Hendrick Motorsports, Konica Minolta, Lexmark, Mitsui & Co., National Bank of Canada, Pfizer, Razer, Ricoh, and Trek Bicycle. Teams is currently available in 44 languages across 181 markets, and soon we'll roll out support for nine additional languages, including Hindi, Filipino, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada, and Malayalam.

Teams makes collaboration more inclusive, effective, and secure

Microsoft Teams is improving workplace collaboration by helping organizations move from an array of disparate apps to a single, secure hub that brings together what teams need, including chat, meetings, and calling, all with native integration to the Office 365 apps. Users can customize and extend their experience with third-party apps, processes, and devices, giving them the tools they need to get work done. Following the customizable mobile Teams experience announced in January, today we're unveiling eight new capabilities in Teams that make meetings more inclusive and effective while delivering new levels of security and compliance. Customized backgrounds takes our intelligent background blur technology further, allowing participants to select a custom background, such as a company logo or an office environment when working from home, to appear behind them during a meeting or video call. This improves the effectiveness of remote meetings by encouraging the use of video while minimizing distractions.

Content cameras and Intelligent Capture in Microsoft Teams Rooms will soon support an additional camera for capturing content, such as information on analog whiteboards. Using any USB camera, Microsoft Teams Rooms leverages Microsoft's new Intelligent Capture processing to capture, focus, resize, and enhance whiteboard images and text, so remote attendees can clearly see whiteboard brainstorming in real-time, even when someone is standing in front of the whiteboard. Coming later this year.

Microsoft Whiteboard in Teams meetings provides an infinite digital canvas for meeting participants to work together directly in Teams. With upcoming support for Whiteboard in Microsoft Teams Rooms, in-person attendees can also contribute. You can even add content from a physical whiteboard onto the Whiteboard canvas without having to recreate it from scratch. Whether you choose to participate from the meeting room or remotely, Whiteboard in Teams enables everyone to actively participate in the conversation. Now in public preview.

Live captions & subtitles make your Teams meetings more inclusive for attendees who are deaf or hard of hearing, have different levels of language proficiency, or are connecting from a loud location. Improve meeting effectiveness by allowing attendees to read speaker captions in real-time, so they can more easily stay in sync and contribute to the discussion. English preview coming soon.

Secure private channels allow you to customize which members of the team can see conversations and files associated with a channel. You can restrict channel participation and exposure when needed without having to create separate teams to limit visibility.

To learn more about these announcements and more, read Microsofts detailed blog on the Teams Tech Community.

■ 4 Things You Should Do RIGHT NOW To Protect Your User Account In Case It Gets Hacked

Last year, the top 15 hacks compromised more than 2.5 billion user accounts. You can safely assume that, even if you haven't been notified, it's likely your data is out there as well. So, get savvy and follow these simple tips.

1. Enlist in protection. In the wake of these high-profile breaches, many companies have extended free credit and identity monitoring as an olive branch to stave off lawsuits. Take advantage of it. Even if it's not free, it might be worth investing in.

2. Close loose ends. Only make an account for sites you actually visit regularly. Use guest accounts whenever possible, and delete accounts you never use.

3. Use a password manager. Seriously, most people's passwords are an absolute joke. A password manager allows you to use a different, powerful and unique password for every account you have while still being able to remember it.

4. Freeze your credit. If you have been notified of a breach and you're worried, you can take drastic action and set up a credit freeze with each credit agency you work with. Alternatively, you can just set up a free fraud alert. Inc.com, 12/11/2018

Top Tips To Protect Your Business From Social Engineering Attacks

Every year, millions of attacks are successfully carried out against businesses just like yours. It's important to know what you're up against and how to protect yourself. The most common social engineering tactic is phishing, often coupled with a strategy called pretexting.

By gaining the trust of the victim, hackers are able to lure them into giving out sensitive personal information. Also be on the lookout for baiting, in which attackers offer free downloads, such as movies or e-books, and demand personal information from the victim. The best tools against phishing are online filters that automatically detect phishing scams, security programs, antivirus programs and education on best online practices. It should be obvious to your employees that giving out personal or company information is something they should never ever do outside of trusted sites that they can confirm are genuine.
SmallBizTrends.com, 2/28/2019

■ The Questions Entrepreneurs Need To Ask To Succeed

Many entrepreneurs fall into the same cycle. Working their fingers to the bone just to keep their heads above water. No exercise, no healthy food and no time for their family. If this sounds like you, then you are indeed in the trap.

Chasing Your Tail

Popular entrepreneur and author Barry Moltz coined a phrase to describe these tendencies: the Double Helix Trap. It works something like this: You work as hard as you can, focusing your efforts on servicing your clients, but then sales drop. You're busy servicing clients, after all, not selling. So, then you do everything you can to boost sales. You network like mad; you call prospects; you do everything you can to book more business. But then, since you are selling, you're not making money. You need to do the work to make the money! So, you shift back to servicing clients and not selling. You've fallen into the trap!

Self-Evaluation Time

Luckily, believe it or not, there is a way out of the trap. All you need to do is ask two simple questions, answer them honestly and then take two simple actions. Every 90 days, ask yourself, "What's working?" List all the things you've been doing over the past three months that have been making you money. Whether they're specific market techniques, specific high-spending clients, specific services that are bringing in profits or anything else, they're worth tracking. Once you identify what's working, you now need to amplify it. But this is only half of the equation. The other half is to ask yourself, "What's not working?" List everything that is bringing you and your business down. Afterward, you have two options: reduce and eliminate it as quickly as possible, or find a way to change it so that it gets into the working category by the next 90-day evaluation.

Trusting the System

Obviously, this 90-day time-frame analysis system is not scientific. And I'm sure there are a million arguments out there stating why some things need several years before hitting their peak. But the point is that a lot of parts of your business can be evaluated every 90 days, to great benefit. Those questions are definitely worth asking. And once you do ask them, you'll ask yourself why the heck you didn't stop that a long time ago, and you'll get started on more of the good stuff a lot sooner!