

The Tech chronicle

What's New

Looking for some fun this January? Here's a great list of great activities to get you out of the house and into the great outdoors.

Wilderness Sleigh Ride and Dinner, The Treetops Resort, Gaylord, Jan 02, 2021, 5:00 pm - 9:30 pm. Fee.

Plymouth Ice Festival—One of the largest free ice festivals in Michigan. Be sure to check out the lit ice gardens in the evenings. Friday, January 9, 2021— 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm Saturday, January 10, 2021 — 10:00 am to 10:00 pm Sunday, January 11, 2021 — 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

Zehnders Snowfest in Frankenmuth, MI—January 27-Feb 1, 2021, Bring the whole family to enjoy snow sculpting and ice carving competitions. There will be a warming tent, entertainment, children's area and fireworks. This is one of our favorite January Michigan events!

Tip-Up Town USA—Houghton Lake, MI, January 16-17, 2021. Beverage tent, fishing contest, entertainment tent, carnival rides, petting zoo, antique snowmobiles, ice slide, vendors, snowmobile drag races and a Polar Bear Dip! Check their website for times of events. The festival is held at the southern DNR boat launch, off of M-55 near the Pines theater and Pineview Golf Course.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Dennis Jock of DenBe Computer Consulting.

Did You Know?

Seul Choix Point Lighthouse in Gulliver has been guiding ships since 1895. The working light also functions as a museum, which houses early 1900s furnishings and maritime artifacts.



Finally Shed The Old This Year – It's Costing You Much More Than You Think

When was the last time you updated your technology? Between your hardware and software, if you are still doing business on older technology, you could be putting yourself at risk, and it could end up costing you big. As we begin a new year, it's time to take a close look at the tech you rely on every day.

While many small businesses tend to put off major technology purchases due to the upfront costs, by doing so, you may be opening yourself up to major costs down the road. These are hidden costs that businesses don't always consider when they decide to "hold off" on investing in new equipment or the latest software.

Here are five ways outdated technology can take a toll on your business:

1. It leads to a loss in productivity. Old
2. It leads to a loss of customers. Your
3. It leads to a loss of employees. If

technology has a habit of getting slow. This means your team has to waste time waiting for their PCs to turn on and their apps to load. Even well-maintained equipment is going to wear out over time. This problem is only compounded when your team has to use software that no longer works as it once did. Eventually, programs that once worked well together start to experience hiccups, and you risk losing data.

2. It leads to a loss of customers. Your customers want to know your data (which may also be their data) is secure. If you're using outdated tech, there's a good chance that data IS NOT secure. One Microsoft survey revealed that 91% of consumers would end their relationship with a business that was relying on outdated technology.

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employees have to deal with slow hardware and poorly-integrated software every day, they're going to get frustrated. They're going to get even more frustrated if nothing is done about it. The end result is high employee turnover. This alone can be a huge cost for a small business to absorb.

4. It leads to a loss of support. Over time, developers stop supporting their older products so they can focus on their new products. This also means they're devoting more attention to the customers who are using the newer versions. This can leave you in the dark if you run into a problem that you need help with. You may have to call in a third-party specialist to answer your question and fix your problem, and they will charge you accordingly.

5. It leads to a loss of security. A loss in support also means you aren't going to see security patches for your aging hardware or software. This makes you highly vulnerable to all kinds of cyberthreats, including data breaches, malware infections, and all kinds of other cyber-attacks. Hackers want to break into your network, and if you're using outdated tech, you make their job much easier.

When you factor in the costs associated with these losses, it

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can be staggering! It's enough to put some companies out of business (and it has). After a year that has left many businesses more vulnerable than before, you should be taking steps to avoid these kinds of losses.

Here's what you can do: as we head into a new year, take stock of your technology. It's unlikely you have to replace everything, but look at where you are most vulnerable. What issues are your employees experiencing? What hardware or software is no longer supported? Where are the gaps in your IT security?

The great news is that you don't have to answer these questions on your own. Even better, you don't have to drop a pretty penny to make it happen! You can work with a managed service provider (MSP) or a dedicated IT services firm that can help bring your business back up to speed. They can even help you mitigate some of the cost that comes with upgrading your technology. In the end, you, your employees, and your customers **GAIN** complete confidence in your business as you head into 2021!

Wouldn't it be nice to have a one stop shop for all your IT needs? Let us give you a quote for Website Hosting, Design, SEO and SMM.



Why not let DenBe be your one stop shop for everything IT?

- We can design your new website or transfer your existing site to our infrastructure
- We'd love to grow your business by handling your Search Engine Optimization
- Who has time for all that posting- we'd love to create content and handle all your Social Media Management
- DenBe Consulting can take all this off Your plate so you can run Your business

Pivoting in a Pandemic

If 2020 has taught the business world anything, it's the change is inevitable. Keeping your business in the black has been an astronomical struggle for some companies while others saw massive unexpected growth. While no one could have predicted all the chaos of 2020 business owners need to be planning for 2021 and it's a nerve-racking process. This year, we have to go back to the basics to piece together forecasts, budgets, marketing plans and all the unique things that are industry specific to your company. For starters- is your industry thriving, stagnant, barely surviving or on the verge of extinction? Being realistic about your answer to this question in key. If you answer yes to the latter options you need to pivot immediately. Next you need to look at your target market. Are you someone who mainly serves the hotel industry? What about restaurants- are they your main clients? When your client base takes a huge hit you either pivot or you take the hit with them. Is there a vertical market you could sell to? Is it time to shift to online sales? Would joint ventures with non-competing business associates help you to expand your market? Thinking out of the box has never been more crucial for business owners and managers. A local restaurant produce supplier opened a temporary store and pivoted to direct to consumer sales in an effort to stay in business. People were thrilled to purchase their produce from a local company instead of the chain stores. Hotels in college towns have offered special rates to international students who were asked to return home but can't return to their country due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. A great win for the hotels and the students. Is your budget realistic? If you were fortunate enough to get a government grant or loan you may have had some cushion but many establishments have used every penny to date. Making the hard choices financially can be the difference between keeping your doors open or losing everything. Negotiate with your vendors. When possible, work from home to eliminate office space. If you can't eliminate office space, look for a less expensive lease (commercial real estate is hurting too- negotiate!). Navigating this year will not be easy but if you're willing to think outside the box pivot when needed, the same entrepreneurial spirit that built your business in the beginning will direct your steps to success again.

Stop Recurring Problems

Some of the biggest challenges with companies today are "**RECURRING PROBLEMS.**" I'm talking about situations, hassles and mistakes that happen **over and over again** and never get resolved. These occurrences are worse when they happen to customers because if they happen too often, customers will quit doing business with you. Consider what **RECURRING PROBLEMS** do to employees - frustration sets in, morale plummets and so do productivity and profits.

I heard it once stated that recurring problems eat up more than 40% of the average productivity of a company. That may seem a bit high to you, but consider the fact that rarely is a problem just one person's problem. The employee who discovers the problem will most likely get others involved in dealing with it. What they were originally doing will come to a halt, causing that productivity to be lost while a remedy is figured out.

To make this an even bigger problem, according to estimates based on a recent University of California Irvine study, refocusing your efforts after just one interruption can take up to 23 minutes. So, every time you come up with a quick fix, you are adding an **additional 23 minutes** of lost productivity with every occurrence.

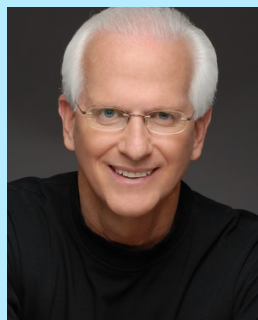
Time, which is money, is a precious commodity that we can't afford to waste. It is imperative to gather data on problems that are **RECURRING** and hassling employees and customers so you can address them. You want a process to be hassle-free, so get your employees involved in identifying recurring problems. Your



employees are closest to the problem and can give you valuable insight into what is really going on. In turn, this will reduce costs, increase profits, and improve efficiency across the board.

The Ritz Carlton Hotels requires employees to log all incidences of customer or employee problems or concerns and turn them in daily. **This information helps them make improvements that will save them time and money, improve working conditions and morale and increase customer satisfaction.** A problem identified is a blessing because you can't fix what you don't know to be wrong. No company wants frustrated employees or customers, and a 40% loss in productivity is a scary statistic that needs to be addressed.

But understand this: do not start this process if you have no intention of following through on correcting the recurring problems. Be responsive to the issue identified and fix it. Eliminate **RECURRING PROBLEMS** and watch your morale go up, efficiencies improve, complaints go down and profits soar.



Robert Stevenson is one of the most widely recognized professional speakers in the world. Author of the books How To Soar Like An Eagle In A World Full Of Turkeys and 52 Essential Habits For Success, he's shared the podium with esteemed figures from across the country, including former President George H.W. Bush, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, Tony Robbins, Tom Peters and Stephen Covey.

■ A Scary New Threat To Your Network's Security

More people are working remotely than ever before. Many businesses had to make a huge shift in 2020. At the same time, cybercriminals used the shift to attack as many people as possible. They knew that with more people working at home, there would be a window when cyber security wasn't a priority – and they were right.

Because businesses had their hands full getting their teams set up for remote work, IT security slipped through the cracks. Cybercriminals used their greatest tool to their advantage. That tool? Human error. Hackers sent out phishing emails and attacks at an unprecedented rate. *Infosecurity Magazine* reports that phishing attacks increased upwards of 30,000% over the last year!

This highlights the need for strong IT security for the remote workforce. Remote workers must

be trained up on the latest cyberthreats, especially phishing scams. They also need serious endpoint security on their at-home devices (such as antivirus software and other malware protection). If you need them to access your network, security **MUST** be in place, and that includes the use of a VPN. *usecure*, Oct. 8, 2020

■ The Very First Thing You Must Do This Year

Before you turn your attention to the big goals you've set for your business in 2021, **there's one very important thing** you need to do ASAP: **a cyber security audit**. You need to know where you and your business stand against today's many cyberthreats. An IT security assessment will tell you how capable you are of withstanding or blocking data breaches, malware infections and much more. When you know where the gaps are, you can fill them, giving your business the edge in 2021.

■ Is Reading On Your Resolution List? See Unexpected Reads From The Top CEO's In 2020

If it's time for a new reading list, look no further than some of the top reads from 2020, as picked by CEOs. Here are a few of their picks according to the online library, Perlego.

- *The (Honest) Truth About Dishonesty: How We Lie To Everyone – Especially Ourselves* by Dan Ariely: This is a book about cheating. Why do people do it? Does it have a purpose?
- *How To Make Anyone Like You: Proven Ways To Become A People Magnet* by Leil Lowndes: This is a book with a self-explanatory title. The author walks readers through ways to get people on your side and how to better interact with others.
- *Great Speeches Of The 20th Century* by Bob Blaisdell: If you want to be inspired, look no further. This is a collection of speeches that captivated audiences at the time and in years following.
- *The Shallows: How The Internet Is Changing The Way We Think, Read And Remember* by Nicholas Carr: This book is a thoughtful look into current technologies and how they shape the way we think, form relationships and interact with the world. *Business Insider*, Sept. 1, 2020

