

The Tech chronicle

What's New

Spring is finally here this month! We have spent a long amount of time indoors and so many of us just want to get out and do something...anything. We have watched every show that even mildly interests us, we have put together every puzzle, we have been to all the state parks (and we still have not warmed up from that last hike we took) and if we never see another board game that would be perfectly ok with us. It's time to venture out.

Where can we go you ask? While there are not a lot of things happening, the state is slowly opening back up. We went bowling the other day and had a great time. Lanes were distanced, families stuck to their spaces and we were pleasantly surprised at how much we enjoyed it. We're not bowlers and our highest score was 114, but we were out in public doing something different.

We took a trip to Great Lakes Crossing and found that Peppa Pig World of Play, Sea Life Aquarium and Legoland were open and had a great protocol for getting families through in a responsible way. All the kids we saw seemed thrilled to be there. Our only recommendation is that if you want to eat afterward, make a reservation ahead of time. Due to the reduced seating restriction wait time for tables was very long.

If you're looking for more grown-up fun check out the Annual Motor City Blues Festival on March 18th. Tickets can be purchased via Ticketmaster and the event is held at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. Maybe head out early in the day and get in some ice skating at Campus Martius.

March 2021



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The Ambassador Bridge was named by Joseph Bower, the person credited with making the bridge a reality, who thought the name "Detroit-Windsor International Bridge" as too long and lacked emotional appeal. Bower wanted to "symbolize the visible expression of friendship of two peoples with like ideas and ideals."



3 Questions You Should Ask Any IT "Expert" Before Letting Them Touch Your Computer Network

There are seemingly countless IT services providers to choose from these days, and it can be challenging to tell one from another. However, not all IT services providers are created equal. Some offer independent services, while others are part of larger firms. Some are new to the field, while others have been around for years. There are also companies that put out slick marketing to grab your attention but make it hard to tell if they really live up to the hype.

Well, we're here to help you cut through the clutter. You want to hire someone who knows what they're doing and will take care of your business the right way. To do that, there are a few questions you should ask every IT expert before you let them anywhere near your network - to ensure you'll be in good hands.

1. What's Your IT Experience?

Education, certifications and hands-on

experience are all important. You want to know your "expert" is actually an expert. It's all too easy for someone to pass themselves off as an expert when they really have limited experience, so you should never hire an individual or a company without vetting them first. After all, this person (or team) will be handling EXTREMELY sensitive hardware and data essential to the operation of your business. This isn't the time to take risks or give someone the benefit of the doubt.

When you work with an IT services company, or MSP, you can generally expect that the people you work with are educated and experienced, but you should **always** ask. It's okay to dive in and ask them about their certifications, how long they've been doing their job and how familiar they are with your industry. And if you aren't sure what

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certain certifications are, feel free to ask follow-up questions. There's a very good chance they'll be more than happy to answer all of your questions, especially if they're a true professional who knows what they're doing!

2. What's Your IT Approach?

There are different approaches to IT and network security. You have the old-fashioned **break-fix** approach and you have the modern **proactive** approach. The break-fix approach used to be the staple of the IT industry – it was the business model of just about every IT support firm in the 1990s and early 2000s. This approach is pretty straightforward: something breaks, so you hire someone to come in and fix it. If many things break or something complicated breaks, you could be looking at a pretty hefty bill – not to mention the costs associated with downtime.

Today, most MSPs take a proactive approach (and if they don't, look elsewhere). They don't wait for something to break – they're already on it, monitoring your network 24/7, looking for outside threats or internal issues. They use advanced software that can identify trouble *before* it strikes. That way, they can go to work, proactively protecting your business so you avoid those hefty bills and long downtimes. These are companies that are willing to collaborate with you

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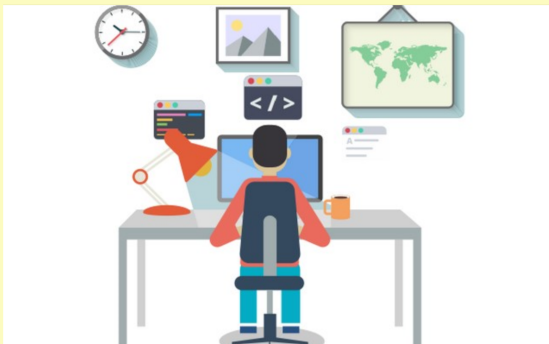
and your business to make sure you're protected, your IT needs are met and you're getting your dollars' worth.

3. What's Your GUARANTEED Response Time?

This question often gets overlooked, but it's one that can make or break your business – and it can make or break your relationship with your IT services provider. You need to know that you won't be left in the dark when something goes wrong within your network. If you're experiencing a cyber-attack, or a power surge has taken out part of your server, the cost to your business can be catastrophic if your IT services provider can't get to you right away. The longer you have to wait, the worse it can get.

You need to work with someone who can give you a guaranteed response time in writing. It should be built into their business model or, better yet, the contract they want you to sign when you hire their services. They should be doing everything they can to instill confidence that they'll be there for you when you need them. If you're working with an IT company that doesn't have your full confidence, you may need to rethink that relationship.

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Does your email address matter?

It's not entirely unusual for a new business that's just starting out to use an email address from a free service to save time by using Gmail, Yahoo or AOL. You may think it's a great way to save money and after all, you already use it for your personal email. Realistically this decision is probably costing you money by driving away potential customers. According to a survey by GoDaddy, 75% of U.S. ecommerce customers think it's an important trust factor for a small business to have email that matches their website domain.

Too often, small businesses try to save money when it comes to their email addresses by using a free email service. Why is this a bad idea? Your customers think it's sketchy. Statistics tell us that 33% of consumers doubt the trustworthiness of a generic email used for a business and 23% of consumers have reservations about giving their credit card details to a company using an email address from a free service. Knowing how hard it is to get new customers, you don't want something as simple as an email address casting doubt on your trustworthiness.

There's more to it than your customer image. The security of many free email services leaves much to be desired. Services such as Yahoo and AOL have some of the worst security records in the business, with multiple huge data breaches on record. Free email services also often do not support 2FA (Two Factor Authentication), which is an additional security measure that every email service worth their salt should at least offer to their customers. This security measure helps stop an attacker that has managed to get your email address and password from logging in to your email account. Not to mention many free email services (Gmail is the exception) offer little to no spam protection. They can't seem to stop even the most obvious spam emails from reaching your inbox.

What if disaster hits? You could lose all your email and vital communications with customers. Most free email services offer no solution for backing up your email. If they suffer some kind of server failure or software problem and all your email disappears, they have no obligation or incentive to fix it. A proper email provider has solutions for backing up your email in an automated manner so in the event of some kind of failure, you can always get your email back.

In this technological age, you need to present yourself in the best possible light. To gain trust and look more professional you really "should" have your email match your domain name. To protect your email and boost your security you really NEED to have your email match your domain name. Paying for email service is such an inexpensive way to give your business credibility and security.

Making & Keeping Customer Connections In A Digital Era

Make the value that you give your customers so high it doesn't matter what the price is. Based on the experiences your brand consistently delivers, your customers should have no idea what your competition charges. You don't need to raise your prices. You need to bring value and better service. This includes employee training – and be sure they understand how to build and keep relationships.

3 Strategies To Dominate The Relationship Economy

- Use technology to allow employees to focus on what's most important: building relationships that result in higher customer loyalty.
- Build a culture that creates emotional connections with your employees.
- Create relationship-building training for new and existing employees.

Things That CAN Be Trained:

- Authenticity
- Insatiable curiosity
- Incredible empathy
- Great listening skills

The 1 Thing That CANNOT Be Trained:

- The ability to love people

Let's focus on what can be trained and what these traits look like.

Authenticity:

- You love what you do, and it's obvious.
- You're transparent – if you have bad news, don't hold it back.
- You are as committed to the success of your customer as they are.
- You know your clients' top three goals for the year.
- Your customer should not be able to imagine a world without your business in it.



Insatiable Curiosity:

- You're dying to learn about others.
- You want to know about both familiar and unfamiliar subjects.
- You're willing to meet as strangers but leave as friends.

Incredible Empathy:

- You look at things from the customer's perspective.
- You put yourself in your customer's shoes.
- You listen and think from the other person's point of view, allowing their message to become much clearer.
- You're wary of empathy fatigue and able to reset yourself.

Great Listening:

- You give them fierce attention.
- You ask a question and then more questions.
- You don't defend questions and instead explore new ones.
- You bounce questions back.
- You fight the urge to reply before you finish listening.

Every employee should possess these four traits, and you should be willing to train your team to deliver on these traits. When you successfully bring these four elements together, you are set up for success and have the foundation to build and maintain strong relationships with your customers.



Leah Tobak is a Project Manager with Petra Coach. With a background in public relations and marketing, she's done a lot of work building relationships with customers and prospective customers. Outside of the corporate landscape, Leah is an international model and is known for her work in front of the camera.

■ Top 4 Security Certifications You Should Have In 2021

GIAC Security Essentials (GSEC)

Ideal for those who may not have an extensive background in IT security and networking but who work in an IT security (or similar) role and want a baseline certification. No prerequisites. Learn more at [GIAC.org/certification/security-essentials-gsec](https://www.giac.org/certification/security-essentials-gsec).

(ISACA) Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)

Less technical and more managerial. Ideal for those in IT and risk management roles that are not strictly technical. Prerequisites for certification include five years experience in information security (including three years as an information security manager). Learn more at [ISACA.org/credentialing/cism](https://www.isaca.org/credentialing/cism).

(ISC)² Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)

A high-level certification aimed at those with an extensive and knowledgeable IT security background. This certification is in

very high demand by companies around the world. Prerequisites include five years experience in a position related to CISSP (or one year of experience plus a four-year degree). Learn more at [ISC2.org/certifications/cissp](https://www.isc2.org/certifications/cissp).

(ISC)² Certified Cloud Security Professional (CCSP)

Ideal for those experienced in IT security with an emphasis on cloud-based solutions. Prerequisites for certification include a minimum of five years of full-time IT experience (with three years in information security). Learn more at [ISC2.org/certifications/ccsp](https://www.isc2.org/certifications/ccsp).

Infosec, Dec. 22, 2020

■ The Scientific Reason Your Employees Value Opinions Over Facts

The research is clear: people have a habit of putting more value on opinion rather than fact. It's because it's easy! This is discussed in Daniel Kahneman's best-selling book, *Thinking, Fast And Slow*, and in numerous research papers. Accepting opinions requires less thinking than evaluating facts.

Data-driven companies need to take this into account when it comes to their teams. According to Kahneman, some people are "type 1" thinkers or fast thinkers, and opinions mean more to them. Others are "type 2" or slow thinkers – they take their time and evaluate what they hear.

Michael Schrage, research fellow at MIT Sloan School's Center for Digital Business, says you can't just switch between the two types of thinking automatically. It's more fundamental – you have to change people's mindsets over time. His suggestion is to incentivize analytical, fact-based thinking and recognize employees who take this approach. *Inc., Oct. 29, 2015*

■ 3 Simple Yet Effective Ways To Boost Employee Morale

1. Focus On Mental Health. Whether it's your own mental health or the mental health of anyone on your team, make sure everyone has the time and space they need to take a break and refocus their energy. Make sure anxiety and stress are recognized and addressed in a positive way.

2. Be With Your Team. Simply being present and available for everyone on your team goes a long way. Have regular one-on-one chats just to see how things are going and to ask if they need anything. When they do need something, do what you can to help (and be sure to follow up).

3. Recognize Your Employees. Recognize their work and reward them. Everyone should be aware of the effort individuals and teams put into their work. At the same time, make sure they have ownership over their work and give credit where credit is due. *Inc., Nov. 4, 2020*