

# TECH TIPS

TECHNOLOGY INSIGHT THAT BUILDS BUSINESS



**HODGSON**  
CONSULTING & SOLUTIONS

## Inside This Issue

IT News, Trends And Information You May Have Missed in 2022 | 1

**FREE Report Download:**  
The Cybersecurity Threat Crisis | 2

Want Your Business To Survive Inflation? | 3

Can Your Business Handle A Ransomware Attack? | 3

2 Challenges E-Commerce Businesses Face And How To Overcome Them | 4

**December 2022**



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Robert Zehnder, President of Hodgson Consulting & Solutions.

### Our Mission:

To eliminate every technical frustration, obstacle and inefficiency for companies with multiple locations and/or a remote workforce.



## IT News, Trends And Information You May Have Missed In 2022

The year 2022 will soon be on its way out the door. It became a year full of ups and downs for many small businesses, but it still felt more promising than the past few years in the midst of the pandemic. Many small-business owners used this past year to reevaluate their IT services. Some needed to strengthen their cybersecurity defenses while others utilized new advancements to further assist their customer base.

If you're a small business owner, it's essential that you're aware of the IT news, trends, and events that took place in the recent past. In fact, knowing what happened in the previous year can allow you to develop plans for the future so 2023 will be successful for you and your business. You shouldn't continue following old trends because the competition will quickly leave you behind, and that could open you up to cyberattacks you didn't know existed. Don't worry, though; we're

here to help. Here are our picks for the most important IT events and trends of 2022.

### Refined Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) has come a long way over the past few years. Many people associate AI with video games or using GPS for travel, but many companies have started to implement AI in new ways to boost their businesses. It's even being used to automate certain tasks, provide insight through data analysis, and assist customers with their needs.

AI has proved incredibly beneficial when used to help customers, and this can be seen when looking at various small-business websites. They use AI to answer common questions their customer base has, which provides quick, efficient results for their customers, who leave satisfied with their interaction. Around 37% of businesses now utilize AI in the workplace, according

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to a survey conducted by Gartner. Another study by NewVantage Partners found that nine out of 10 leading businesses have investments in AI technologies. So, if you want to get ahead of your competitors, implement AI into your business.

### Managed IT Services Providers Continuing To Grow In Popularity

Gone are the days of having an in-office IT person or team. A more cost-effective solution has been gaining traction over the past few years and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Managed IT services providers (MSPs) install, support and maintain all the users, devices, and PCs connected to your network on a routine basis. MSPs can even prevent common problems such as lost devices, hardware failures, fires, natural disasters, and a host of other issues that can interrupt or outright destroy your IT infrastructure and the data it holds. The managed IT services industry is growing immensely. At the end of 2021, the industry was valued at \$239.71 billion, and it's estimated to grow by over 13% annually until 2030. Businesses of all sizes have realized the value of MSPs and are using them to their advantage.

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### Major Cyber-Attacks Of 2022

Cyberattacks happen all the time. As new cyber-threats emerge, we'll see more frequent and severe cyber-attacks over the next few years. Uber saw another cyberattack this past September that caused the company to shut down its internal messaging service and engineering systems in order to get to the bottom of the incident.

Cryptocurrency storage and blockchain were also high-value targets for cybercriminals. Ronin and Crypto.com suffered severe cyberattacks that required both companies to reimburse their users for the cryptocurrency stolen in the attack. Ronin was hacked for \$540 million, and Crypto.com was hacked for \$33 million worth of cryptocurrencies.

Small businesses weren't safe from cyber-attacks, either. While cyberattacks on big businesses make national news, small businesses are targeted more often since their cybersecurity defenses aren't as strong. That being said, it's imperative you ensure your business has efficient cybersecurity practices in place, so you won't have to worry as much about cyber-attacks.

The IT industry is consistently changing to keep up with new developments and advancements. If you're a small business owner, it's vital to keep up with the latest news and information so you can best protect your business and its data. When you stay ahead of the trends, it's much easier to prevent potential cyberattacks and threats.



## Free Report Download: THE CYBER SECURITY THREAT CRISIS

### Download This Free Report To Learn:

- The top 5 ways your company can be severely damaged by cybercrime and what you can do NOW to protect your business.
- The #1 threat to your business that even the BEST firewalls and anti-virus software can't protect against (and what you need to do now to remedy it).
- A common misconception about business bank fraud that will shock you - and simple things you can do to protect your bank account.
- NEW protections to put in place now including tools available to monitor cybercrime websites and data for YOUR specific credentials being sold or traded.

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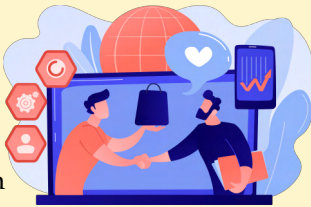
## Want Your Business To Survive Inflation?

### Focus On Customer Service

Small-business owners face many challenges when trying to run their businesses, but difficulties grow exponentially during times of inflation. They must find new ways to ensure that costs remain low while profits increase. If you're a business owner facing this dilemma, you don't need to reinvent the wheel; you should focus on your customers. A recent study from Microsoft found that 96% of consumers think

customer service is important in their choice

of loyalty to a brand. This means you should continually go above and beyond for your customers. A great way to do so is through customer service management software that allows you to stay connected to your customers. Developing and maintaining customer relationships will lead to increased loyalty and sales.



# Can Your Business Handle A Ransomware Attack?

Most people have adapted well to the digital world and ransomware attacks. Our daily lives now include much time spent online. With the help of our laptops and mobile devices, we talk with friends, attend meetings, go shopping, and so much more. And while we use these modern conveniences, many of us aren't even aware that serious risks are lurking everywhere on the Internet. Today, ransomware is the primary threat to businesses of every size.

### What Is Ransomware?

Ransomware is a form of malicious software that hackers employ to take your data or render it inaccessible, only relinquishing it after you pay a ransom. It's just like how a regular ransom operation goes, except that the hostage, in this case, is data.

These attacks seldom happen independently. Usually, they are a component of a complex phishing strategy. Over the years, online criminals have developed more sophisticated methods to lure average individuals and even educated professionals.

### How Serious Are Ransomware Attacks

These days, it would surprise you at the hefty sums that exchange hands. Some multinational companies have paid hundreds of thousands of dollars because of a ransomware attack!

Ransomware has become a daily thing and is now one of the leading online threats worldwide. From 2020 to 2021, the number of ransomware attacks doubled. Throughout the pandemic, there has been a shift in the approach toward large corporations that pay higher ransoms.



What's the reason for the rise? Because it works. Sometimes the ransom seems unbelievably high, but it's not a random number. Hackers consider how big a company is and how much they value its data. In setting a ransom, they make it lower than the price of data restoration. Hence, companies opt to pay the hackers and rely on their backup strategy. While the FBI discourages companies from paying the ransom, it might seem like the only viable option.

### What Can You Do To Protect Your Business?

The best way to prevent ransomware attacks is to adopt a proactive attitude, which is also the best way to stop many other online dangers. Defend your system before the attack. You must also have a reliable backup and recovery plan to fall back on after a breach.

Phishing is one of the most common means of entry for ransomware attacks. If you have trained your employees in online safety measures, these attacks are easy to remedy.



# 2 Challenges E-Commerce Businesses Face And How To Overcome Them

With the Internet came a new digital marketplace that allowed people to purchase specific products they couldn't find in their hometowns. These days, most businesses offer a way to buy their products or services online, whether it's through their personal website or an e-commerce marketplace like Amazon. Despite this, selling online brings new challenges you don't often see when selling from a brick-and-mortar location. Here are some challenges to watch for and solutions to overcome them.

## Payments

Oftentimes, e-commerce businesses need to deal with chargebacks. This happens when a customer disputes a charge on their credit card statement, causing you to lose out on the sale and the item. To avoid this, have a clear and concise return policy. You should also keep detailed records of all transactions and shipments to prove the

customer received their order.

## Shipping

Shipping delays can leave customers feeling frustrated, even if they aren't the company's fault. You can't do anything to control hazardous weather, but you can set



a reasonable range of time for your customer to receive their item. You don't have to promise two-day shipping just to compete with Amazon. It can also help to utilize shipping management software to automate your shipping processes.

## Coping With Stress

Nearly everyone deals with stress at

some point in their lives, and most business leaders struggle with it regularly. The good news is that you don't need to live with extreme levels of stress. There are simple solutions to help you cope better. Below, you'll find three ways to lessen the amount of stress in your life.

- Be aware of how much stress you take on. You need to know how much stress your body and mind can reasonably take on before you start to struggle.
- Set boundaries and say no when needed. You can't agree to do every task or help every person without adding more stress to your plate. Know how much is too much, and don't take on tasks that are too demanding for your current state of mind.
- Meditate, breathe deeply, and exercise to relax your body and mind. Stressors won't feel so drastic when you're relaxed.

