

TECH TIPS

TECHNOLOGY INSIGHT THAT BUILDS BUSINESS



HODGSON
CONSULTING & SOLUTIONS

Inside This Issue

Start The School Year Strong. Parental Tech Tips To Ensure Academic Excellence | 1

Get Your FREE "Cybersecurity Tip Of The Week | 2

The Key To Scaling Your Company Efficiently | 3

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month | 3

Is It Time To Unplug? Avoid Burnout And Feel Mentally Refreshed | 4

Stay Ahead Of The Game. Be Proactive To Attract Younger Customers | 4

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Our Mission:

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



Start The School Year Strong Parental Tech Tips To Ensure Academic Excellence

In the coming weeks, kids from around the country will return to school to continue their academic journey. It's an exciting time in their lives, and many begin the school year with high hopes and expectations. Do you remember how enthusiastic (or disappointed) you were when the first day of a new school year arrived? Now that we're parents, we can put specific strategies and techniques in place to help our children find success when school resumes.

It's interesting to see how much has changed since many of us were in school, especially from a technological standpoint. Nearly every kid starts middle school with a smartphone, tablet, and laptop. While this has provided them with access to more information and opportunities, there are things that parents should do to keep their children protected and out of trouble.

If you have a kid returning to school

this month, try utilizing some of the following strategies to help your child start the year strong. You may even help yourself along the way!

Create Guidelines

Electronic devices like smartphones, tablets, and video game consoles can be fun for kids but can also be distracting. You shouldn't want your children to be on screens all day, as it can damage their mental health. There's no one-size-fits-all approach to screen time, so you must determine what works best for your situation.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry reports that, on average, children ages 8 to 12 in the United States spend four to six hours a day watching or using screens, and teens spend up to nine hours. Getting your kids to use their screens less can be difficult if they're already watching for multiple hours a day, but it's necessary in helping their development. Set specific hours

Continued on pg.2

Continued from pg.1

they can use their screens for personal use, or make them log the time when using their devices. If you're worried they won't be honest about their screen use, create a rule that they can only use the devices in public areas of the house, not their room. Put guidelines in place as soon as possible. If you wait until school starts, you will be looking at an argument and further disruption to their studies.

Monitor What They're Doing And Set Website Restrictions

Does your child do their homework on a computer? If so, how do you know they're actually working on their homework? Keep a watchful eye on your children when they're using their devices to ensure they're using them properly. They may trick you to get a few more minutes of screen time. Continually check on them while they're using a screen to do their homework, and don't be afraid to take a closer look.

You should also look into setting up website restrictions on your network. You don't want your child stumbling upon an inappropriate website, and

you don't want them on an unsecured website that could put your network and personal information at risk. Set up website restrictions through your network and each device to ensure your child doesn't go where they shouldn't be.

Talk To Them About the Dangers Of Social Media

If your child doesn't have one already, at some point they will create a social media account so they can stay up-to-date with everything going on with their friends and family. Social media can be harmless when used cautiously; you must explain that to your children. Let them know other people can see everything they post, so they need to think carefully before posting anything, especially pictures. As a best practice, turn off all social media applications' geolocation and messaging features. That way, your child won't receive message requests from strangers or inform strangers of their location.

If you have a social media account, you should also be cautious about your posts. Your child will look at your account for direction, and if you post questionable content, there will be some confusion. It might even cause them to ignore your rules.

The start of a new school year is an exciting time in your child's life. You can help set them up for even greater success by implementing a few tech strategies to help them focus and keep them out of trouble!

“Children ages 8 to 12 in the United States spend four to six hours a day watching or using screens, and teens spend up to nine hours.”

“I DIDN'T KNOW”

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The Key To Scaling Your Company Efficiently

As a business owner, you know that continuous, steady growth is an essential part of success. When you're ready to get serious about scaling your organization, several vital activities must happen. Documented workflows and processes, streamlined hiring, onboarding and training, well-oiled marketing systems, and more top the list. One key but often overlooked element of scaling success that can make or break your efforts is leveraging technology to enhance operations quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively.

One resource necessary for growth is the cloud. The cloud, which now integrates with numerous AI tools, giving it more capabilities than ever before, allows you to streamline and automate your operations without large, unnecessary investments.

In this article, we'll cover what the cloud is, the major benefits you should take advantage of, and how you can use it to grow your organization without overspending.

The cloud is simply a global infrastructure of servers that gives you remote, on-demand access to computer system resources, including data storage, over the Internet instead of on your computer's hard drive. With these capabilities, your business doesn't need to invest in its own hardware or software licenses, allowing you to pay only for

what you use when you use it. Software and hardware can be expensive, making this a great solution for businesses in growth mode without unlimited budgets.

How can the cloud help your organization? Here are 5 benefits to consider:

1. Economies of Scale

As mentioned, with most cloud-based programs, you can expand the services as your business grows. When revenue increases and you take on more clients, you can choose to upgrade your services or invest in new features or capabilities, so you never pay for more than you need at the time. It takes only a few clicks from an administrator.

2. Enhanced Collaboration

In a digital world, we need real-time access to tools for collaboration, no matter where our employees are. Cloud-based programs can typically be accessed anywhere in the world on any device by multiple members of the team simultaneously. This allows colleagues to work on projects together even if they aren't in a physical office or are in different time zones, increasing productivity all around.

3. Increased Automation

You can save money and your employees' time by having cloud-based programs automate certain repeatable tasks such as regular backups, logging

and monitoring networks, resource allocation, and much more. Most business owners don't know how many tasks they can automate or how much money and time they can save until they have an IT professional review their network.

4. Faster Access to Resources

With the cloud, your employees no longer have to wait for extensive downloads or installations. Most tools are readily available instantly, making it easier and faster to get work done.

5. Reduced Disaster Recovery Costs

Disasters rarely damage cloud-based data and assets that are hosted virtually on servers, not on hardware in the office. Your IT professional should have multiple backups of your data, so if something goes wrong, it will be easy to get it back up and running.

Cloud-based programs are a great resource for business owners who want to scale. They are easy to use, simple and flexible to expand, cost-effective, great for collaboration, more secure than other programs, and much more.

SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH

The Phillips SmartSleep Wake-Up Light

Sleep is essential in our lives. When we don't get enough sleep, we feel physically and mentally drained. Many of us wake up in the morning feeling groggy and state that we're simply not morning people, but what if that wasn't the case? After using the Philips SmartSleep Wake-Up Light, you'll wake up each morning refreshed and renewed. This light acts as an alarm clock that simulates the sunrise over the course of 20 to 40 minutes to help you wake up steadily. If you don't wake up naturally with the color change of the sunrise feature, you can choose one of six sounds to entice you out of bed. It's easy to set up and will completely revolutionize your mornings.



Is It Time To Unplug?

Avoid Burnout And Feel Mentally Refreshed



Our phones are always with us, making many areas of our lives more convenient. We can communicate with our friends, family, and coworkers easily; look up important information instantly; and read through our e-mails effortlessly. Although our phones and other electronic devices have brought a lot of good into our lives, there comes a point when we have to disconnect and unplug from them for our mental health and to connect with the world around us.

Burnout is one of the biggest obstacles that business owners, leaders, and employees face. They spend their days completing and working on projects, and when night rolls around, they stay buried in their devices as they continue to work or research things related to their business or industry. They think this will put them ahead, but they're doing more harm than good.

When you get home from work for the night or if you're going on

vacation soon, put your phone down and try to live in the moment. Your work will always be there for you to go back to. Keeping your phone and work away while you're not actively at your workplace is the best way to avoid burnout and live a happier lifestyle.

Get Comfortable Outside Your Comfort Zone

We all have activities and situations that push the boundaries of our comfort zone. Nobody likes to be uncomfortable, but stepping outside our comfort zones provides us with new growth opportunities. Here are a few ways you can become more comfortable being uncomfortable.

- Establish the boundaries of your comfort zone. Before attempting to tackle your discomfort, understand what makes you uncomfortable and why.
- Start small with little changes to your routine. You don't have to dive in headfirst right away. Ease yourself into it so you don't become overwhelmed.
- Insert yourself into unfamiliar situations. Take a class at your local community college or join an organization.

Find a mentor. You're going to want someone who will stick by your side and push you when things get tough.

Stay Ahead Of The Game

Be Proactive To Attract Younger Customers



As the years pass, your business will start working with new generations of customers. Many Gen Z adults are already in the

workforce, and it won't be long before Gen Alpha joins them. These younger generations come with their own set of standards, beliefs, and ideals that you must familiarize yourself with if you want to stay relevant with your consumers. That's why you have to be proactive if you want to attract these individuals to your business. Learn about their trends and interests, and find ways to incorporate them into your marketing and company messaging. If you decide to stay reactive, it will constantly feel like you're playing catch-up. Don't wait to make the necessary changes that will improve your business!

