

# TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

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

## Cartoon of the Month



"Some of you are not hitting your targets."



**May 2020**

## 3 Ways To Stop Cybercriminals Cold In Today's Crazy Times

You've seen it. You've probably even experienced it. For what feels like forever now, just about everyone has been forced to modify priorities. As a business owner, you've probably been focused on shifting your business to accommodate this world crisis. You may even be investing more of your time in retaining customers and generating new cash flow. If you're like most people out there, you've barely even had time to think about cyber security and protecting your important data.

Maybe you've heard the saying "Never let a crisis go to waste." It's as if cybercriminals wrote it because that's exactly what they're thinking right now. In fact, they're probably working overtime right now to craft new

malware while our lives have been turned upside down. Yes, as you're focused on your business, hackers are finding new ways into your IT network. Their objective is to steal data and passwords, compromise your clients' private information and even demand large ransoms.

Did you know that cybercrime is expected to cost \$6 trillion (that's a 6 followed by 12 zeroes!) by the year 2021? Now is when hackers are expected to do their absolute most damage.

Here are three strategies you can use right now to help protect your business data, money and productivity during these unusual times.



"As a business owner, I know you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"

**Bryan Lachapelle, B4 Networks Inc.**

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**1. Guard Your Inbox.** People aren't paying as much attention as they usually do, which makes it the perfect time for cyber-attackers to send e-mails with dangerous malware, worms and viruses. Always carefully inspect every e-mail received and make sure you know the sender.

Here's another tip: avoid clicking links in the e-mail unless it's abundantly clear where they go. Also, don't ever download an attachment unless you know who sent it and what it is. While it takes a few extra seconds, double check by calling the person who sent you the attachment. Make sure you communicate these safeguards to everyone on your team, especially if they are working from home.

**2. Secure Your Company-Based Technologies.** During crises like this one, your passwords are a critical first line of defense. Don't wait for your company's finance data to be compromised. Make a point now to reevaluate your passwords and direct your team to create stronger passwords. Too many employees are guilty of using the same password across multiple applications. Use a unique password for every single application.

Your team may tend to save your passwords in their web browser. Don't do this. A skilled hacker can bypass the PIN required to access your saved passwords. Once they have the

password or PIN to access your web browser, they can steal as much as they want – credit card information, customers' private data and more! We recommend our clients use a password manager. It's convenient, but more importantly, it's far more secure.

**3. Secure Your Home-Based Technologies.** With the coronavirus pandemic, far more businesses are encouraging their employees to work from home. That means a lot of people are working from the living room or kitchen without giving a second thought to security. This negligence is an invitation to new cybercrimes.

Here are a few tips to ensure your work-from-home employees are keeping your network and data secure: make sure your employees and contractors are not using their home computers or devices when they are working from home. Add a firewall to ALL computers and devices that will be utilized at home. Finally, your network and data are not truly secure unless your employees utilize a VPN (virtual private network).

There's no need to invite in more problems by letting your computer and network security slide during these times. We would be happy to help you create or even improve your work-from-home environment.

While this coronavirus scare has negatively affected countless businesses, we are proud to say we are open and continuously servicing our customers. If you need additional security advice or would like to have a consultation to discuss how to keep your data safe or how we can help you work more effectively, simply connect with us today at 905-346-4966.

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## How Does Your I.T. Company Compare?

### Our April 2020 Help Desk Key Performance Indicators



92%

8 Business Hour  
Ticket Resolution



99%

Client Satisfaction



23 mins

Average Response Time

## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month



### Zepp Golf 2 Swing Analyzer

Improve your golf game with a device smaller than a golf ball. The Zepp Golf 2 is a remarkable piece of tech that attaches to the back of any golf glove. It's packed with sensors and delivers real-time analysis of your game.

Using Bluetooth, the Zepp Golf 2 pairs with your smartphone. As the data is analyzed, it's displayed on the accompanying app. It tracks your club speed, backswing positioning, hip rotation, consistency and much more. The Zepp Golf 2 also has a long-lasting battery – up to eight hours – so it will definitely make it through your next game without a hitch.

The Zepp Golf 2 is compatible with both iPhone and Android devices.

Learn more at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/zepp-golf-2) or [Zepp.com](https://zepp.com).

## How To Deal With Increasing Customer Expectations

The more you do for customers, the more they expect. That is the nature of customer service.

Excellent service providers scramble to meet the expectations of customers who have become accustomed to great service. Aggressive competitors continue to bump up their offerings in an attempt to take your customers from you. This has resulted in a perpetual desire by customers for more, better, different and/or improved.

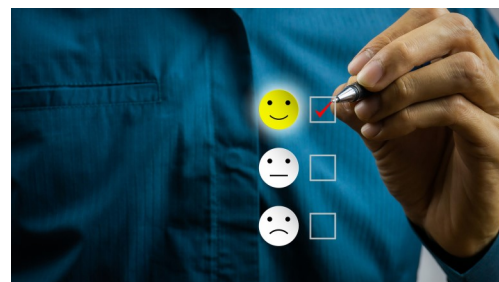
In most cases, "good enough" isn't enough. The great art and science of business is to improve product and/or service offerings without giving up margins or increasing prices beyond what customers are willing to pay. It really is about adding value without spending too much to do it.

Any business that can't do this will be relegated to competing at the low end of the market on price alone, and that is a difficult place to be.

Rally your team, from engineering and manufacturing to sales and support, to regularly brainstorm how you can profitably grow your value proposition. Customers will increasingly demand it.

Here are eight things you can do about them.

1. Find out what is important to customers: what they require and what they desire. You're not clairvoyant, so routinely ask customers for input.
2. Explain your value proposition when you must say no. If you can't do something the customer wants, explain why. But see if there is something acceptable you can do instead.



3. Educate customers about the value you create for them. If they don't know about it or appreciate it, it isn't valuable.

4. Hold quarterly sessions with your team to brainstorm how to add value to the customer experience.

5. Evaluate the entire customer experience. Look for failure points and irritations that can be eliminated and improvements that can be made.

6. Pay more attention to your customers than to your competition. Know what your competitor is doing, but put your customer at the centre of your focus.

7. Pleasantly surprise customers whenever you can. Work with your team to brainstorm ideas on how to do that.

8. Treat better customers better. Treat all customers well, but those who spend more should get preferential treatment.

Business goes to the bold and innovative. Creativity and imagination are the best tools for continually rethinking your value proposition. Good execution delivers and makes customers glad they keep coming back to you for more.



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## A Public Service Offer To Niagara Business Owners/Managers Coping With Covid-19

As a business member of the Niagara community, I wanted to take this time to extend some assistance to my fellow business owners and managers. A few months ago when we learned of the seriousness of Covid-19, as the proactive partner we are, we started the process of setting up all of our managed clients for the possibility of working from home. With our team having completed that work some time ago, it has left us with the unique ability and capacity to help others in our business community. As a public service, we are offering to help Niagara and Hamilton-based businesses that are able to let employees work from home do so safely and securely, by helping them set up the required infrastructure to allow their team to do so. In some cases, we can perform this setup remotely and with no requirement for anyone to come onsite. **Here's what we are offering:**

### For smaller offices where most employees currently work off desktops (5 - 20 staff):

We are extending our remote access toolset at **no charge** until the end of May (subject to change) to any company not yet set up to work from home. This allows someone to use their own home computer, to remotely connect to their office computer. We may charge a very small, highly discounted setup fee, but it's well worth it if your staff can continue to work from home. We will try as best as possible to keep it a no-costs. Most of the time we can have all this setup with your assistance in less than a few hours. In addition, we will extend our cybersecurity stack **FREE** to those home users that are using their home computers so that they don't risk compromising your corporate networks while working from home.



### For slightly larger office or where most employees have laptops (10 - 30 staff):

We are offering to temporarily loan your organization a Sophos XG Security firewall, until at least the end of May (while stocks last). Once installed, we will assist your team to configure their company laptops or home desktops to safely and securely remotely connect to your office by creating self-help documentation on how to access and configure the service. This unit will be on loan at least until the end of April, and possibly longer depending on the fluid situation. If your office has a simple setup, we will extend this at **no cost** provided the setup takes less than 3 hours to setup. Some slightly more complicated setups may have a small charge to offset our costs.

*To take advantage of any of the above offers, please call us today at 905-346-4966. We would be happy to help!*

## Do These 3 Things To Make Sure You Don't Get Hacked

**Train up.** Get your entire team trained on IT security fundamentals and best practices. They should know how to create strong passwords, how to safely access the web and how to securely use email – including how to identify phishing scams. They should have a clear understanding of today's threats and how to be proactive in addressing those threats.

**Invest in good tech.** You should be invested in solid malware protection, including antivirus software and firewalls. All of your data should be backed up to the cloud and expertly secured using encryption software. You should also be invested in threat monitoring.

**Establish relevant systems and processes.** Have standard operating procedures (SOP) in place to train employees, respond to threats and access networks. For example, are employees connecting with unverified devices from home? Establish rules on what can and cannot happen. Another example: are your cloud backups set up correctly? Is someone checking it? Again, have SOP in place to address these kinds of issues. *Small Business Trends, Feb. 13, 2020*

## 3 Ways To Grow Your Business Without Spending A Dime

**Follow a thought leader in your industry.** Whether you follow them on social media or their blog, keep up-to-date with the issues they're talking about. Then do further research into those issues. This keeps you in the know and more likely to learn something you can easily apply to your own business.

**Use your best testimonials.** If someone posts a great review on Google, for example, reach out and ask about using it in your marketing. Or reach out to customers who you already have a good relationship with and ask if they're willing to give you a testimonial. It builds credibility.

**Partner up.** It pays to develop partnerships with existing vendors or other businesses that are adjacent to yours. That is to say, look for opportunities to share customers. If you have a customer who's looking for a specific service you don't offer, point them to someone who does (your partner). And your partner will do the same. Reach out into your business community and see what kind of relationships you can form. *Business Insider, Feb. 13, 2020*



# Simple Strategies to Work From Home



We must praise humankind for its resiliency. We have had to adapt to working in an office setting to working in a home office setting overnight. Our ability to adapt to this sudden change really puts into **perspective the importance and innovations in technology.** To make sure you and your team are working from home in a safe and effective manner, follow these simple steps.

## EFFICIENCY

### 1. Your Internet Connection

In order to work from home, you must have an active Internet connection. Not only does the connection have to be active, but it must also be fast enough to cope with your workload. To check your internet speed, you can use sites like [www.fast.com](http://www.fast.com) or [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net). Ideally, you would like to have a Download speed of 10 Mbps and an Upload speed of 5 Mbps. In the event your home internet connection goes down, you can use your data on your mobile phone as a hotspot. The only caveat before doing so is to make sure you have the data capacity to do so.

### 2. The Cloud is Your Friend

As easy as it is to simply save an important file directly on your computer, it is not the wisest. If your computer were to crash and the information saved on it was unrecoverable, those files would be gone forever. Likewise, if your computer needed to be repaired, depending on the economic situation, a repair technician may not be able to physically fix it. That is why it is important to save your work files in the Cloud. There are many toolsets that you and your team can use to make sure your important files are safe and secure in the Cloud.

### 3. Morning Huddle

There is a plethora of things to call it – roll call, catch up, update, etc. Begin your mornings with a 20-minute video call with your entire team. You can share personal and business good news, discuss upcoming tasks, and any urgent matters that need tending.

### 4. Stay Connected

Despite its many advantages, a disadvantage of working remotely is the lack of social interaction. Many of us would take a few minutes to catch up with colleagues in the break room, by the water cooler, or by the coffee machine. With the progress technology has made over the years, it is still possible to stay connected. Take a few minutes out of each day to reconnect with your colleagues – have an open Zoom meeting room where people can pop in and out, take a 5-minute “coffee” break video phone call. You have options to stay social.

### 5. Keep Your Culture

Just because you are not in the office does not mean the culture of your organization should change. You can have fun. Make the best out of any given situation. If you and your team usually have happy hour on Friday afternoons, do so virtually. There are many ways you can keep your company culture alive.



# Simple Strategies to Work From Home (con't)

## SECURITY

Rest assured, when the world is in panic mode, cybercriminals are thinking of all the ways they can get hold of your invaluable information. They will find a way to maximize their profits from our uncertainties. It is important to remain vigilant during vulnerable times. Stay safe from scammers and cybercriminals, make sure you know what to look for.

### 1. Phishing Emails

If you get an email from what seems to be a legitimate organization, check the sender's email address. If there are spelling mistakes or it just does not look right, odds are that it is a scam. Often, they will also include a link for you to click for more information. Do not, by any means, click that link. It is highly likely that malware will be installed on your computer without your knowledge. The scammers may encrypt your files and demand money for them to be decrypted. In these types of situations, the best thing to do is to delete the email and mark it as Spam to avoid receiving an email from this sender going forward.

### 2. Complex Passwords

The more complex the password, the harder it is to crack. If you are worried that you will forget your complex password, use a Password Manager. A Password Manager can generate and save passwords on any given website. You do not have to worry about remembering your passwords, it will remember them for you. They are encrypted and secure from cyberattacks.

### 3. Back It Up

An extra layer of security on top of Microsoft Office 365 or Google G Suite is a prudent way to make sure your files are safe from any accidental or malicious data losses. There are many cloud-based platforms that will put your mind at ease in case such an incident should occur.

### Summary

The beauty of these tools is that they are built to be flexible, informal, and user friendly. You work hard for your customers and for your team. By following these simple steps, you are ensuring that all your hard work is safe and secure.



B4 Networks offers IT support to professional businesses across Southern Ontario for a monthly flat-fee. We take the time to understand the individual business issues of each of our customers to ensure their IT strategies position them to maintain leadership in their respective market.