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With summer coming to an end, it's time to crack down and focus on your **fourth quarter**!

Get ahead now, *before* things start to ramp up and get too hectic. Starting sooner rather than later can help your business achieve— **and exceed** — objectives! Review your remaining budget and create a plan for future IT projects.

Creating a plan now can help end the **fiscal year on a high note**!

Virtualization:

Security Risks & Prevention

When it comes to protecting your business' technology and networks, virtualization security is overlooked. Like all technology, securing your virtualized infrastructure is crucial to your business' success.

Securing a virtualized setting can be complicated because it is a multi-tiered monitoring process: you need to monitor the security of the *virtual machine* and the *physical host*.

Here are some security risks posed by virtualization and how you can manage them:

Security Risks & Virtualization

Complicated Infrastructure
Much like the concept of virtualization, the infrastructure itself can be confusing. Trying to understand the

complex configuration alone can be a big headache. It can be difficult to identify irregularities within your virtual machines and your network.

Constant Change
Virtualized environments are constantly changing. Virtual machines can be created and added quickly. In fact, adding a new machine could go completely unnoticed because unlike physical equipment, virtual machines aren't visible in your work space.

When it comes to virtualization, the concern is "out of sight, out of mind." If you add too many virtual machines, they can become difficult to manage and protect. Oftentimes, security holes and weaknesses can be created in the process.

Misplacing Data
As your virtualized infrastructure grows, eventually you will need to move data from one machine to another. Some of your virtual machines will require different levels of security. You could accidentally move critical data to a machine that has minimal protection.

How to Reduce Risks
While these three security risks sound alarming, they can all be managed. The key to *effectively* secure your virtual machines is to implement security procedures.

Here are a few areas to cover:

Organization—separate and organize your test, development, and production virtual machines.

Audit—create a schedule to audit your virtual machine security. If possible, use tools to automate your security checks and processes.

What is Virtualization?
Virtualization is the process of creating a virtual computer system that *simulates* a piece of hardware, operating system, or a storage device. Virtualization allows your devices (such as a server) to run at full capacity. Virtualization empowers your IT infrastructure, so you can do *more* with *less* hardware.

Over the past decade, virtualization has become one of the most cost-effective business solutions.

Patches—perform regular security maintenance to ensure your virtual machines have up-to-date patches.

Overflow Management—create a system to monitor all your virtual machines. This allows you to identify what each machine is used for and manage them accordingly.

Responsibility—designate an IT professional to monitor your virtual machines for security gaps. If your virtual machines are properly managed, your security won't be an issue.

If you don't have the right defenses in place, your business will be vulnerable to all types of cyberthreats. If you want to learn more about virtualization, or if you need additional assistance with your virtualized infrastructure, call us today!

Technology Spotlight:
Aukey SH-PA3 Smart Plug

Have you ever been in bed, ready to fall asleep, and realized you left a lamp on? Now you need to get out of bed, walk across the room, and turn the lamp off. Well, with the **Aukey Smart Plug**, you won't have to get out of bed for the lights again!

The Aukey SH-PA3 Smart Plug is an affordable way to transform **ordinary electronics** into **smart devices**. This dual-outlet plug takes up space in one outlet and has two individually programmable sockets. On the front of the smart plug, you'll find two, three-pronged sockets, a power button, and two LED indicator lights.

The Aukey Smart Plug has a downloadable app for your phone. From the app, you can program each individual outlet, set timers, and control connected electronics. You can program each plug based on conditional factors such as time of day, temperature, humidity, or weather. For example, you can plug your air conditioner in and set it to turn on when the temperature reaches 80 degrees.

You can also manage device sharing with family members, and set up Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, and IFTTT integrations. That's right, you can use your Alexa and Google devices for hands-free voice control of anything plugged into the Smart Plug. Unfortunately, the Aukey Smart Plug is **not compatible** with the Apple HomeKit or Apple devices.

The Aukey Smart Plug allows you to automate your home, access your devices from your phone, or control your devices hands-free with Alexa and Google.

You can purchase the Aukey Smart Plug on Amazon for $24.99.

6 Ways To Turn Regrets Into Resolve

Regrets. We all have them. Some of us ignore them, while others wallow in them. Fewer learn and benefit from them.

Wouldn't it be great if you could benefit from your regrets and convert the negative emotions surrounding your missteps into positive emotions that fuel your success?

Here are six things you can do to achieve just that:

1. **It happened, so accept it.** Don't play "what if?" At this point it doesn't matter. The more you rehearse your regrets, the bigger your mistakes become.

2. **Deal with the emotional first and, as quickly as possible, let it go.** Why? Because if you don't deal with your emotions, the negative ones will continue to gnaw at you. Spend a few minutes going deep into the pain of the regret, and then loosen your grasp on it. Stop the negative from trickling in.

3. **Identify what you've learned.** No loss or setback should be wasted. If you don't find a lesson, you're likely to make the same mistake in the future.

4. **Decide what you won't do again.** Be clear on what to avoid. Pinpoint the biggest cause of your regret and, if you can't completely avoid it, be wary when you find yourself again in the same territory.

5. **Commit to a different and better course of action.** What's better than knowing what not to do? Knowing what to do instead.

6. **Let the disappointment feed you.** Disappointment is natural, but with the right attitude, it can be converted to resolve. Bring the same energy you formerly had about your regret and convert it into the positive energy of commitment and determination.

Mark Sanborn, CSP, CPAE, is the president of Sanborn & Associates, Inc., an "idea studio" that seeks to motivate and develop leaders in and outside of business. He's the best-selling author of the books Fred Factor *and* The Potential Principle *and a noted expert on leadership, team building, customer service and company change. He holds the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association and is a member of the Speaker Hall of Fame. Check out any of his excellent books; his video series, "Team Building: How to Motivate and Manage People"; or his website,* marksanborn.com, *to learn more.*

Expert of the Month:

The Team at the William J. Hirten Company

In 1922, William J. Hirten started a company distributing religious goods and church supplies, and aptly named it the William J. Hirten Company. Before he retired in the 1950's, Hirten's company was one of the *largest* religious product suppliers in the world. Because the Hirten Company has over 95 years of success, they are our *Expert of the Month*!

In the early 2000's, the William J. Hirten Company formed a partnership with the Bonella family in Milan, Italy. This partnership gave the company access to numerous copyrighted religious images stored in the Bonella Library of Catholic Art. During World War II, the Bonella family saved *innumerable* pieces of religious artwork from German soldiers. They hid the artwork in underground tunnels to protect it from being destroyed. While some tunnels and pieces were ruined, the Bonella family preserved a majority of the art.

Current owners Jim Dean and Andrea Bonella purchased the company 11 years ago, and moved the company from Brooklyn, NY, to Cumberland, RI. In November of 2016, the company moved once more and settled into their facility in Attleboro, MA. By using the copyrighted artwork, Jim and Andrea have expanded the company to include a wide array of religious products. They sell everything from traditional items like rosaries and crucifixes to items like night lights, framed art, book marks, keychains and more! Because they have such a large selection of products, two of their largest customers are the **National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in DC** and **EWTN's Mother Angelica**.

Office manager, Cathy Anthony, believes their customer service makes them stand out from the competition. At the William J. Hirten Company, they never put customers on hold and they never let calls go to voicemail. Their staff is well-trained to answer all questions a customer could ask. The staff also works hard to ship orders within 24 hours—which is <u>unheard</u> of in this industry!

When asked what they like about working with us, Cathy recalls how we helped the company move from Cumberland to Attleboro. She states that "bringing you guys on board lifted a weight off our shoulders. We couldn't have done it without you." Cathy also complimented us on our customer service, saying that she likes the fact that our technicians take the time to work with everyone. Cathy told us that "everyone is helpful, polite, and very professional," and that our team always goes above and beyond. Overall, Cathy exclaims that "the whole team is great—they really are! I have complete confidence in the whole staff."

The William J. Hirten Company is a distributor, meaning they **only** sell to stores and internet companies, **not** individual customers. If you're a wholesaler or a company that would like to start a conversation about selling religious items, visit their website www.wjhirten.com or call them at 888-**WJHIRTEN** (944-7836).

The Best Ways To Communicate With Your Customers
Just like your marketing needs to zero in on target demographics, your communication strategies should differ from customer to customer. For baby boomers and Generation Xers, talking over the phone is a good bet, especially when an urgent message needs to be delivered. E-mail is excellent for those Generation Xers who consider it the be-all and end-all of business communication. Social media, however, is best for millennials who feel comfortable communicating via such platforms — and, as a bonus, response times are often much faster. Texting is an option with this demographic as well. Chat services on your website can be effective for a wide variety of post-baby boomers, as many people are more comfortable chatting via text rather than going through the trouble of calling you up. It's important to master all of these forms of communication to reach as many people as possible. *SmallBizTrends.com, 6/21/2018*

"There isn't a joystick. Try the chalk."
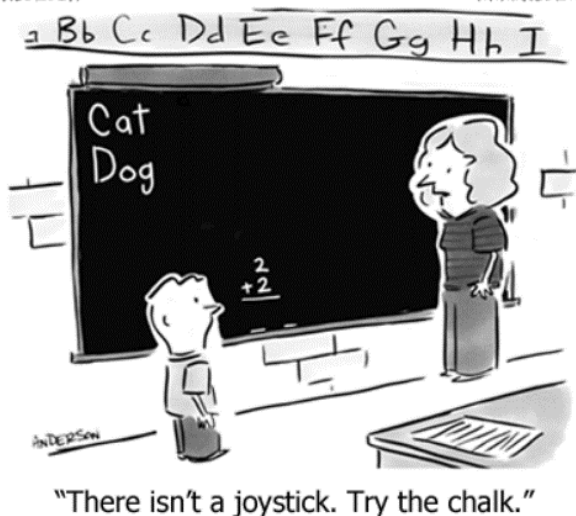
Two-Factor What?
Two-factor authentication (2FA for short) is a system in which you must verify your identity in two separate ways to access an account. Sound confusing? It's not. Here's an example:

After enabling 2FA on a Gmail account, you have to enter your password each time you log in. Then you are asked to enter a six-digit code that you pull from your phone, a jump-drive-sized key fob or a program on your computer.

Only then do you have access to your account. That way, if someone steals your password, they still can't get in.

If you aren't currently using two-factor authentication with your most sensitive data and systems, look into whether it might be an option. The extra 15 seconds it takes to pull up that second code is laughably short compared to the time you'd spend dealing with a hacked account.