

TECH TALK

MONTHLY



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Dear Fellow Business Owner 🙌

Running a business is hard enough without having to play part-time tech expert too.

That's why we created this newsletter, to give you plain-English, practical advice about the technology you rely on every day.

Each edition is packed with useful tips, updates, and insights to help you keep your systems secure, your team productive, and your headaches to a minimum.

The content is jargon-free, so you can easily digest the information without having to open an online dictionary every few sentences.

My hope is that you will implement what you learn inside this newsletter to stay ahead of cybersecurity threats, avoid costly IT mistakes, make better tech investments, and have an overall more efficient team and business.

And if it reading it sparks a question or a "hmm, should we be doing that?" moment, feel free to reach out.

Even if we never work together, we're happy to point you in the right direction. After all, good advice should be easy to come by, and that's exactly what this newsletter is here for.

Enjoy the read,



Tony Loffi-Lara
CTO, Oasis Technologies

DID YOU KNOW ?

The QWERTY Keyboard Was Designed to Slow You Down: The QWERTY layout was created in the 1870s to prevent typewriter jams by spacing out commonly used letter pairings.

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Is Your Smart Office a Security Risk? What Small Businesses Need to Know About IoT

Your office thermostat, conference room speaker, and smart badge reader are convenient, but they're also doors into your network. With more devices than ever in play, keeping track can be tough, and it **only takes one weak link** to put your entire system at risk.

That's why smart IT solutions matter now more than ever. A trusted IT partner can help you connect smart devices safely, keep data secure, and manage your whole setup without stress.

Here's a practical guide designed for small teams getting ready to work with connected tech.

WHAT IS IOT?

IoT, or the Internet of Things, is all about physical devices, like sensors, appliances, gadgets, or machines, being connected to the internet. These smart tools can collect and share data, and even act on their own, all without needing someone to constantly manage them. IoT helps boost efficiency, automate tasks, and provide useful data that leads to smarter decisions for both businesses and individuals. But it also comes with challenges, like keeping data secure, protecting privacy, and keeping track of all those connected devices.

Steps To Manage IoT Security Risks for Small Businesses

1. Know What You've Got

Begin with all of your network's smart devices, such as cameras, speakers, printers, and thermostats. If you are not aware of a gadget, you cannot keep it safe.

- Walk through the office and note each gadget
- Record model names and who uses them



With a clear inventory, you'll have the visibility you need to stay in control during updates or when responding to issues.

2. Change Default Passwords Immediately

Most smart devices come with weak, shared passwords. If you're still using the default password, you're inviting trouble.

- Change every password to something strong and unique
- **Store passwords securely** where your team can consistently access them

It takes just a minute, and it helps you avoid one of the most common rookie mistakes: weak passwords.

3. Segment Your Network

Let your smart printer talk, but don't let it talk to everything. Use network segmentation to give each IoT device space while keeping your main systems secure.

- Create separate Wi-Fi or VLAN sections for IoT gear
- Block IoT devices from accessing sensitive servers
- Use guest networks where possible

Segmented networks reduce risk and make monitoring easy.

4. Keep Firmware and Software Updated

Security flaws are found all the time, and updates fix them. If your devices are out of date, you're wide open to cyberattacks.

- Check for updates monthly
- Automate updates when possible
- Replace devices that are no longer supported

Even older gadgets can be secure if they keep receiving patches.

5. Monitor Traffic and Logs

Once your devices are in place, watch how they talk. Unexpected activity could signal trouble.

- Use basic network tools to track how often and where devices connect
- Set alerts for strange activity, like a badge reader suddenly reaching the internet
- Review logs regularly for odd patterns

You don't need an army of security experts, just something as simple as a nightly check-in.

6. Set Up a Response Plan

Incidents happen; devices can fail or malfunction. Without a plan, every problem turns into a major headache. Your response plan should include:

- Who to contact when devices act weird
- How you'll isolate a problematic device
- Available standby tools or firmware

A strong response plan lets you respond quickly and keep calm when things go wrong.

7. Limit What Each Device Can Do

Not every device needs full network access. The key is permission controls.

- Turn off unused features and remote access
- Block internet access where not needed
- Restrict device functions to exact roles only

Less access means less risk, yet your tools can still get the job done.

8. Watch for Devices That Creep In

It's easy to bring in new devices without thinking of security risks, like smart coffee makers or guest speakers.

- Have a simple approval step for new devices
- Ask questions: "Does it need office Wi-Fi? Does it store data?"
- Reject or block any gear that can't be secured

Catching these risks early keeps your network strong.

9. Encrypt Sensitive Data

If your smart devices transmit data, ensure that data is encrypted both during transmission and while stored.

- Check device settings for encryption options
- Use encrypted storage systems on your network

Encryption adds a layer of protection without slowing things down.

10. Reevaluate Regularly

It's easy to secure your office tech once and assume it stays that way. But tech changes fast, and so do threats.

- Do a full check-in every six months
- Reassess passwords, network segments, and firmware
- Replace devices that don't meet today's standards

With a regular schedule, you keep ahead without overthinking it.

WHY THIS ACTUALLY MATTERS

Smart devices simplify work but can pose risks if not properly secured. More businesses are experiencing cyberattacks through their IoT devices than ever before, and these attacks are rising rapidly. Protecting your systems isn't about expensive high-tech solutions, it's about taking simple, smart steps like updating passwords, keeping devices up to date, and knowing what's connected.

Project Chaos to Clarity: How Microsoft Planner Transforms Small Businesses

In the past, teams relied on sticky notes and endless email threads to manage tasks. But with today's hybrid work environments and fast-moving deadlines, that approach just doesn't cut it anymore. Effective project management is now essential to stay on track and ahead.

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According to McKinsey, the average worker spends **28% of their week** managing email and nearly 20% just hunting for information or colleagues to help.

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This article introduces Microsoft Planner, a versatile tool that's just as effective for simple task management as it is for complex enterprise projects. It's easy to get started with, yet powerful enough to keep multiple projects organized and on track. With a bit of guidance from an IT partner experienced in supporting small teams, Planner can transform the way you organize, collaborate, and deliver results.

A SIMPLE WAY TO MANAGE TASKS

Microsoft Planner brings everything together in one place, making it simple and intuitive for small teams to jump in and start using right away. Here are a few ways that Planner helps you stay productive.



Organized Task Boards

Think of Planner like a shared to-do board where your whole team can create tasks quickly, assign responsibilities, add due dates, checklists, files, and notes, and move tasks through stages like To Do > In Progress > Done.

This organized view allows everyone to stay on track without the need for long email threads or disappearing messages.



Built-In AI to Supercharge Efficiency

In July of 2024, Microsoft added Copilot to Planner, which leverages AI to help you do things like summarize tasks and plans, create tasks or subtasks using natural language, and get progress updates and reminders automatically.

Microsoft's new Project Management Agent goes further, analyzing goals, breaking work into tasks, and even suggesting who should handle them. These helpers free your team to focus on creative work, not mundane task management.



Task Details That Keep Teams on Track

Every task in Planner comes with all the details you need. Just click on a task to set start and end dates, assign priorities and include checklists, attach files and assign responsibility, set dependencies to ensure tasks are completed in the correct order, and link to relevant Teams channels for context and collaboration.

This makes sure nothing important falls through the cracks and keeps conversations right where they belong.



Smooth Integration with Microsoft 365

Planner isn't a standalone app; it's designed to work seamlessly with the tools you already use like: Teams, Outlook, SharePoint, Loop, Power Platform, Excel, Power BI, and Viva Goals.

With everything linked together, you gain clarity, reduce friction, and create real momentum.



Templates Save You Time

Why start from scratch when you don't have to? Planner offers ready-made templates, some are available in the free version, while more are available in paid plans. Just pick a template, customize it, and you're ready to go. It's a quick way to launch projects without reinventing the wheel.

Make Planning a Habit, Not a Hassle

We're here to help you every step of the way. From setup to confident use, we'll tailor Microsoft Planner to fit your team's unique needs. Let's simplify project management together, schedule your consultation today.

5 Simple Ways to Keep Your Business Data Clean

Data is everywhere, and if you are not utilizing it to your advantage, you are missing out. It is found in emails, customer profiles, inventory systems, or basically throughout your entire workflow. But relying on outdated or inaccurate information can lead to confusion, slow down your team, and ultimately cost you a lot of money.

With the right IT partner and these simple steps, you can keep everything clean and running smoothly.



DON'T LET DATA BE THE THING HOLDING YOU BACK

Better data means smoother workdays, clearer decisions, and happier customers. Ready to stop wasting time on messy info? Reach out today and let's get your data back on track.



Decide What Info Actually Matters

Identify the key data that keeps your business running smoothly, like customer contacts, order details, or payment terms. Then, create simple guidelines your team can easily follow. When everyone uses the same format, it keeps things organized without making it complicated.



Show Your Team the Right Way to Do It

Most data errors occur when people aren't sure what's expected of them. Rather than overwhelming your team with lengthy manuals, provide a simple, clear guide. How should names be formatted? What's the correct way to enter addresses? A brief, straightforward session without jargon can make a big difference in maintaining consistency.



Tidy Things Up Often

Don't wait too long to clean up your data. A quick monthly review helps you spot duplicates, fix mistakes, and update old info before it creates bigger issues.



Use Smart Tools to Prevent Errors

Some mistakes can be caught the moment they happen. You just need the right tools. Use form validations so emails, dates, and numbers follow the right format. Then make certain fields required, like phone numbers or email addresses. If your CRM allows it, set up automatic checks for common errors.



Keep Your Documentation Updated

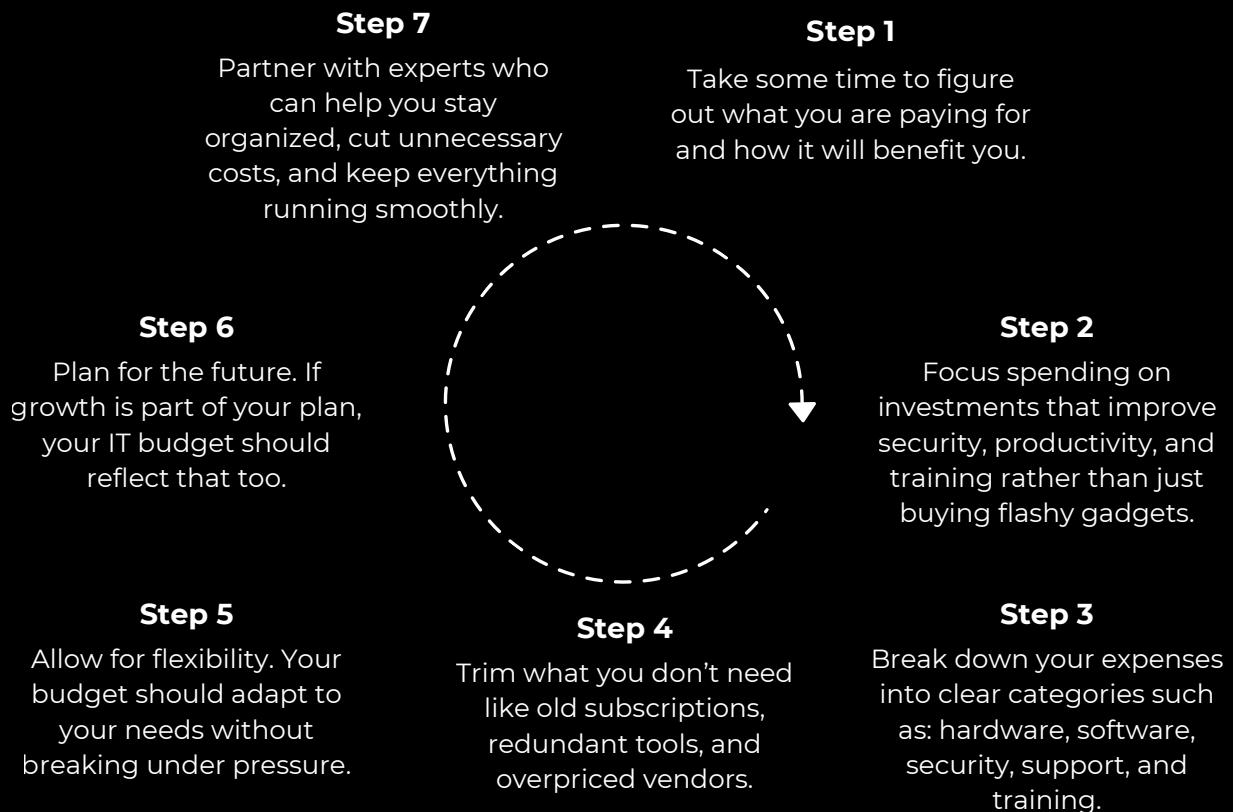
Things change fast with new systems, tools, and team members. That's why it helps to keep a simple note on where your data comes from, who handles it, and how it should be used.

7 Smart Tips to Boost Your WiFi Network's Performance



- ➔ **Upgrade Your Hardware:** Invest in equipment that can handle today's demands and grow with you down the line.
- ➔ **Give Priority to What Matters Most:** Prioritize important traffic like video and phone calls, ensuring they get the bandwidth they need first.
- ➔ **Divide Your Networks:** By dividing your network into smaller segments, you reduce congestion and boost security.
- ➔ **Balance Server Load:** Share workload across servers keeps systems running smoothly during busy times and helps your team stay productive without delays.
- ➔ **Adjust Your Setup for Efficiency:** Make sure to regularly check your router, switch, and firewall settings. Using network monitoring tools can help you quickly identify and fix any problems.
- ➔ **Watch for Threats Before They Slow You Down:** An Intrusion Detection System (IDS) can keep an eye out for unusual activity that might be slowing down your network.
- ➔ **Build in a Backup Plan:** Having a backup internet connection or extra equipment means your team can keep working, even if something goes down.

Strategic Ways to Plan Your Business's IT Expenses



10 Knowledge Management Strategies That Will Unlock Your Team's Brainpower

Is your team constantly reinventing the wheel? It might be time to build a smarter way to share what you already know. Smart knowledge management strategies (KMS) can help solve this problem. Here are 10 of our favorite tips:


- **Start with the Right Questions:** Before diving into solutions ask smart questions like: "What information gets lost around here?" Or "What do teams need access to but can't seem to find?"
- **Choose the Right Tool and Not the Flashiest One:** Many tools act as a knowledge hub, including wikis, folders, and messaging apps. What really matters is keeping it simple, searchable, and easy to access.
- **Keep It Focused and Logical:** Once you have a space to store knowledge, it's time to organize it. People should be able to find what they're looking for within a few clicks or keywords.
- **Make Content That's Actually Useful:** People want quick, clear answers that solve the problem, so keep it simple and add visuals or steps whenever they help.
- **Split Internal and External Knowledge:** Some knowledge should stay internal, like hiring processes, while other content can live on your website as a customer resource.
- **Assign Responsibility and Ownership:** Appoint a "knowledge champion" or a small team to oversee the system.
- **Make It Easy to Contribute:** When someone figures out a better way to do something, it should be easy for them to share it with the team.
- **Tie It into Everyday Work:** Your knowledge hub is something you should use daily and not keep stored in some folder.
- **Track What's Working:** Keep track of things like what articles are viewed most, what's being searched for frequently, and repetitive support questions. These insights can shape your next update.
- **Celebrate the Wins:** Each time someone finds an answer in your hub instead of asking around, you save valuable time, and those savings add up quickly. Share the positive insights that you find while tracking progress..

Thank You!

Thanks for taking the time to read this month's newsletter. We hope you picked up a few helpful tips or ideas to make your tech work a little smarter for you.


If you ever have questions, or just want a second opinion on anything IT-related, we're only a phone call or email away.

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