

NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 5
DECEMBER 2023

VOLUME 5
DECEMBER 2023

NEW IN THE NEWSLETTER

Page 1.) Ensuring Employee Safety During Remote Work This Holiday Season

Page 2.) SolarWinds SEC Charges Illuminate the Personal Side of Cybersecurity Responsibility for Small to Mid-Sized Business Owners

Page 2-3.) AI Wants to Help Us Shop

Page 4.) Jesse Itzler's Approach to Fight Off Complacency and Make 2024 the Best Year

HAPPY 6 YEAR ANNIVERSARY LYNN!

In This Edition:

In the holiday spirit, these articles embrace the festive season with a unique twist. From AI becoming the modern Santa's helper for online shoppers to Jesse Itzler's journey mirroring a holiday transformation, they echo the spirit of personal growth during Christmas. Ensuring employee safety during remote work takes on an extra layer of importance during the holidays, emphasizing cybersecurity like a protective ornament on a tree.

Finally, we discuss how small to mid-sized business owners find a personal responsibility to safeguard their reputation, as a result of recent changes with the SEC.

2. Clear Remote Work Policies

Provide employees with clear guidelines on remote work, including expectations for availability, communication, and security protocols. Ensure everyone is on the same page.

3. VPN for Secure Connections

Encourage employees to use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) for a secure and encrypted connection. A VPN helps protect sensitive data and communications while working remotely, especially when accessing company networks or information.

By implementing these measures, you can help ensure your remote employees have a safe and productive holiday season. Wishing you and your team a secure and happy holiday from LoyallTy!

Ensuring Employee Safety During Remote Work This Holiday Season

As the holiday season approaches, many employees continue to work from home. It's crucial to prioritize their well-being and safety, even outside the office. Here are some essential tips to keep your remote workforce safe:

1. Cybersecurity Awareness

Remind employees to stay vigilant against cyber threats. Encourage strong password practices, the use of secure Wi-Fi networks, and regular software updates to protect sensitive company data.

This monthly publication is provided courtesy of Kari Renn, President of LoyallTy.

Our Mission: To make IT work at work so our clients can focus on their company goals without interruption.



Happy Holidays!

Get More Free Tips, Tools, and Services



www.loyalty.com



920-489-3187

The Personal Side of Cybersecurity:

The recent charges brought by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) against SolarWinds and its Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), Timothy Brown, offer critical and deeply personal lessons for small to mid-sized business owners. While the charges relate to a large corporation, the implications are highly relevant for smaller enterprises, where cybersecurity responsibility often falls directly on the president or owner.

Transparency and Accountability - Safeguarding Your Reputation

The most significant lesson here is the importance of transparency and accountability in cybersecurity. For small to mid-sized business owners, there's a personal and emotional aspect to this responsibility. Your company's reputation is on the line, and the extent of the damage is within your control. Hiding or downplaying security risks can tarnish your hard-earned reputation and the trust of your valued customers. It's not just business; it's deeply personal.

In smaller organizations without a dedicated CISO, the owner takes on the responsibility of managing cybersecurity. It's not just a duty; it's a personal mission to protect your livelihood.

You must be capable of understanding and communicating security issues to safeguard your business effectively. This underscores the need for transparency, accountability, and informed decision making regarding security. Your business's survival is at stake.



Legal Protections and Whistleblowing - Shielding Your Legacy

Business owners must also be aware of legal protections and incentives, similar to those available to corporate whistleblowers. Initiatives like the DOJ Civil Cyber-Fraud Initiative and the False Claims Act provide support and encouragement for reporting security issues to avoid inaccurate external reporting. Your legacy is at stake, and these measures can protect it.

Implications for Small Business Owners - A Matter of Responsibility

These charges should encourage small to mid-sized business owners to become more proactive about cybersecurity. Your business is not just a source of income, it's your responsibility. Demand transparency, prioritize security, and establish a culture of accountability to protect what you've built.

Recognize that cybersecurity is a business issue, not just an IT concern, and that your personal commitment is paramount.

A Call to Action - Guarding Your Business and Reputation

In light of the SolarWinds case, small business owners should take this as a heartfelt call to action. Be well-informed about cybersecurity risks and vulnerabilities in your organization. Be open and proactive in addressing these issues. Remember, your business is not just a name on a sign; it's your responsibility and reputation.

In conclusion, while the SolarWinds case may have targeted a large corporation, the lessons it offers apply equally to small and mid-sized business owners. Your personal connection to your business is undeniable, and it's your duty to protect it. Should you be part of a cybersecurity incident, the extent of damage to your reputation is in your hands. Your responsibility and reputation are on the line. Scan the QR code to read more details about the charges against SolarWinds.

Did You Know?

One in six shoppers use generative AI to inspire shopping decisions

AI Wants To Help Us Shop... Are We Okay With That?

You've probably noticed the little elf helping you around retail stores this year. No, it's not the teenager at the mall in red-and-white stockings and a green, felt hat. It's AI.

Log in to Amazon, and you'll see suggested products like winter decorations, novels or toy recommendations for kids. Add that remote-controlled car into your cart for your nephew, and you'll get recommendations for batteries and gift wrapping, too. This is no accident – generative AI uses your past purchases and recent searches to curate this personalized display. At the end of your shopping affair, you can share your experience, which is data fodder for AI to learn and improve your next shopping venture.

One in six shoppers use generative AI to inspire shopping decisions, according to a 2023 Salesforce survey. However, data by SAP Emarsys reports that roughly half of consumers feel it positively impacts their online shopping experience. What is generative AI, and what does it mean for our holiday shopping – and our privacy?



FREE REPORT: 🧦🧦🧦

THE BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE TO IT SUPPORT SERVICES AND FEES

- 🧦 The three most common ways IT companies charge for their services and the pros and cons of each approach
- 🧦 Exclusions, hidden fees and other "gotcha" clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to
- 🧦 How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn't anticipate



CARTOON OF THE MONTH



What is Generative AI?

Generative AI takes data (provided by humans) to create something new, like music, text, images or even personal shopping recommendations. Beyond simply following commands, generative AI can study existing data on the Internet to “think up” entirely new content.

How AI Is Used to Shop

Imagine hiring a personal shopper who also happens to have your entire internet shopping history – searches, views, shopping carts, purchases, and online interactions (including third-party data) – PLUS every product review and insight available online, handy in seconds. Thanks to this nearly endless supply of data, generative AI seeks to “help” consumers shop in multiple ways, including:

- **Creating a (Creepily) Personalized Shopping Experience:** Generative AI can curate personalized shopping lists or recommend products based on an individual’s preferences by analyzing past behaviors and predicting future interests.
- **Providing Chatbots and Customer Support:** Generative AI-driven chatbots can assist customers with queries, recommend products or help troubleshoot problems, often in a more sophisticated and human-like manner than traditional chatbots.
- **Improving Fraud Detection:** AI can recognize and learn scammer behaviors using its predictive and deep learning capabilities. This helps payment platforms pinpoint problem purchases without impacting legitimate ones.

Cons and Privacy Concerns

AI is only as good as its data. It’s not perfect, and there are some ethical and privacy concerns to be aware of, like:

- **Data Collection:** For generative AI to offer a personalized experience, it requires data – lots of it. This could include shopping habits, product views, search queries, etc. The question is: How much data on consumers is too much, and where is it stored?
- **Potential for Misuse:** With the ability to generate realistic content, there is potential for misrepresentation or misuse, such as creating fake product reviews.

Implications for Business Owners: Opportunities and Responsibilities

There are several benefits for business owners who opt for AI to improve their customer’s experience. Personalized recommendations lead to longer site visits and potentially higher conversion rates. Automation via AI can streamline operations, particularly in customer support and product visualization.

However, you also have a responsibility to your customer’s privacy. Businesses must ensure they’re transparent about the data they collect and how they use it. This includes providing clear opt-in and opt-out options for consumers. Additionally, with the increased collection of consumer data, businesses have a heightened responsibility to protect that data from breaches and unauthorized access.

Be a Smart AI Shopper

It’s crucial that you understand the terms of service and privacy policies of online platforms. Know what data you’re sharing and with whom. Periodically check and manage the data permissions you’ve granted to different e-commerce platforms, and always secure your accounts with multifactor authentication.

Enjoy the benefits of AI recommendations but diversify your sources of information and your shopping platforms. For example, you’ll want to verify AI-powered recommendations on other product review websites like Wirecutter or Consumer Reports.

AI Chatbot or No, Demand Excellent Customer Service

Even though a growing number of people are happy to interact with and benefit from generative AI, most people still expect excellent customer service from a human, according to Salesforce. As online platforms harness data to tailor experiences and predict behaviors, consumers should remember they have the power to drive the standards. By voicing expectations and preferences, shoppers ensure businesses prioritize genuine human interaction and responsiveness alongside their digital innovations. After all, even in a world dominated by algorithms, genuine customer service remains at the heart of a truly exceptional shopping experience!



it's our word.

Loyalty

REFERRAL PROGRAM

Recommend Loyalty and get a \$200 VISA for every qualified appointment booked.

Loyalty will meet with your referral and determine if we are a good fit for their IT needs.

Loyalty will propose a best-fit solution to solve their IT problems and concerns.

Your referral becomes a Loyalty client - you get a \$1,000 VISA!!

JESSE ITZLER'S APPROACH TO FIGHT OFF COMPLACENCY AND MAKE 2024 THE BEST YEAR:

Itzler is a serial entrepreneur with 30 years of experience. He's built and sold five companies, including Marquis Jet, Zico Coconut Water and 29029 Everesting. He's a NYT bestselling author, ultra-marathon runner, father of four, husband, son, brother, and friend.



After a handful of pull-ups, Jesse Itzler dropped down from the bar and, panting, said, "Okay, I'm done." In a spark of insanity or genius (you decide), Itzler had invited a Navy SEAL to live with him for 30 days. Step one was a fitness assessment – or so Itzler thought. After a few pull-ups, he was maxed out. He asked the SEAL, "What's next?" "What's next?" the SEAL barked. "What's next is we're not leaving until you do 100 more." Itzler threw his hands up, saying, "That's impossible!" "I already know what your biggest problem is," the SEAL said. "The limitations you put on yourself are self-imposed."

Two hours later, Itzler did what he thought was impossible – 100 pull-ups. He asked himself, "If I'm underindexing by 100 pull-ups, what other areas in my life am I underindexing?"

It wasn't a physical endurance test the SEAL was running. It was a mental fitness test. After his 30-day experience with the SEAL, Itzler wrote a NYT bestselling book about his personal and professional transformation. Today, he travels nationwide helping others get the most out of their lives and careers.

Itzler Asks Us:

What areas of our lives are we underperforming in because we BELIEVE we can't get any better? Our business? Relationships? Health? When was the last time you did something you loved, regardless of how busy you were at work or home? If you're not getting the most out of your life right now, you're not alone. Itzler shares four ways we can kick complacency out of our lives for good.

4 Ways to Get the Most Out of Our Work and Lives

When Your Mind Tells You to Stop, Keep Going:

This philosophy has many names: grit, persistence, perseverance, or resilience. Itzler calls it the 40% rule. When your brain says, "I'm done," it means you're only at 40%. Our brains are biologically wired to stop when we experience discomfort, but we're more capable than we think.

Keep the Momentum:

When you hit an important goal like closing a high-paying client, dropping 30 pounds, or hitting a salary milestone, Itzler says that's precisely when you press on the gas pedal. Don't stop. Make a new goal: one more client, one more pound. When you create small wins, your momentum never stops.

Pressure is a Privilege

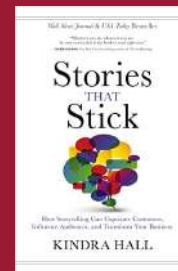
As business leaders, we play for pressure. Pressure makes great things happen. If you don't have enough pressure on your shoulders, Itzler says, you need to put some on by doing what people expect PLUS the things they don't. Go the extra mile.

Self-Doubt is the #1 Enemy of Success

We put limits on ourselves because we doubt our abilities. The time is never "right," or we don't have enough experience. Itzler's approach is Ready. Fire. Aim. It'll never be the right time to start the business, ask the girl, run the race, etc. But do it anyway because, as Itzler reminds us... "We didn't come this far to only come this far."

A WORD FROM THE LOYALTY TEAM...

Don't miss out on the chance to share your valuable feedback and enter our Google Review Competition! As the year comes to a close, we want to remind our fantastic community that the competition is in full swing and will be closing its doors on December 31st. Your reviews mean the world to us, and to show our appreciation, we're offering a special incentive for your participation. Take a moment to share your thoughts on your experiences with us, and stand a chance to win exciting prizes!



READING CORNER

Stories That Stick By Kindra Hall

How Storytelling Can Captivate Customers, Influence Audiences and Transform Your Business

Whether at the dinner table, around the fireplace or while watching our favorite Netflix series, we all love a good story. In her book, *Stories That Stick*, Kindra Hall breaks down four types of storytelling and how businesses can use them to communicate better and drive more engagement. Although the book is written primarily for business owners and entrepreneurs, it's easily applicable to HR and marketing leaders who want to get started on a path to more effective messaging.

