



NEWSLETTER



NEW IN THE NEWSLETTER

- Page 1.) Hackers Hate These 6 SMB Cybersecurity Tricks (and why they work)
- Page 3.) Rocking the Business World: Gene Simmons' Guide to Entrepreneurship
- Page 4.) Fluffy Robot for your Bag: Cute or Creepy?
- Page 4.) Smart Sharing: Location Updates Without Oversharing
- Page 4.) Are You using AI to Create Charts yet?

In This Edition:

we begin with six cybersecurity strategies that are simple, affordable, and incredibly effective –especially for small and mid-sized businesses. We also feature leadership insights from Gene Simmons, whose entrepreneurial journey offers practical lessons in perseverance, innovation, and smart business growth. Additionally, we explore emerging tech trends that are poised to transform the workplace in 2025 and beyond. From real-time AI communication coaches to productivity-boosting wearable tech, we cover the tools that can give your business a competitive edge.

Hackers Hate These 6 SMB Cybersecurity Tricks (and why they work)

The perception that SMBs have limited resources, smaller budgets and often a “that won’t happen to us” mindset makes them attractive to hackers. Although it’s true that SMBs don’t have the resources of Fortune 500 companies, you don’t need that kind of money to protect your business. Here are six simple strategies hackers hate because they’re affordable, surprisingly easy to set up and highly effective.

1. Two-Factor Authentication

The #1 way hackers get access to business accounts is through stolen credentials. Two-factor authentication (2FA) and multifactor authentication (MFA) have existed since the mid-2000s and remain among the best ways to protect your information. 2FA requires things to log in – your passwords and a second factor, like a text message code. If a hacker guesses or steals your password, they still can’t get past that second layer of protection.

Happy
Easter!



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

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

Continued on pg. 2

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Many platforms, including Google Workspace and Microsoft 365, already offer 2FA for free. Still, it's underutilized by SMBs, with an MFA adoption rate of only 34% or less, compared to 87% among large companies, according to JumpCloud's 2024 IT Trends Report. 2FA is very simple and effective – don't sit this tip out!

2. Updates

Cybercriminals love outdated software because it's full of unpatched vulnerabilities they can capitalize on. Ransomware attacks are notorious for targeting vulnerabilities in operating systems and applications months after security patches are available. Set up automatic updates for your systems, apps and software so you're always running the latest version. Employee awareness training, regular reminders and even revoking access until patches are installed can help hold employees accountable.

3. Employee Training

Over 90% of data breaches start with phishing e-mails, CISA reports. Designed to look like real e-mails from banks, retail companies or coworkers, they are stuffed with harmful links designed to steal your passwords and data. Cybercriminals bank on naive employees who can't tell real e-mails from fake ones, and AI is making these e-mails even harder to detect. Regular employee awareness training is one of the top defenses against phishing attacks and can reduce phishing risks from 32.5% to 5% in 12 months, according to a recent study by KnowBe4.

Research shows that the most effective employee awareness training includes real-world examples, simulated attacks and regular reinforcement through short, interactive training sessions.

4. Data Encryption

The modern world operates on data, and encrypting this data is the most effective method to protect it. In fact, most cybersecurity insurance policies require it. Encryption is like turning your information into code that only authorized people can unlock. Even if hackers intercept your e-mails or customer data, encryption keeps it useless to them. SMBs often hesitate due to costs or complexity, but modern tools like Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 make it simpler and more affordable.

5. Limit Employee Access

Every employee with open access to every folder, file and document significantly increases the risk of accidental (or intentional) changes to your system. Setting up limited access can feel inconvenient initially, but it doesn't have to disrupt employee workflows. An experienced IT team will ensure that employees can run all the applications they need while having access only to what's necessary. For example, a marketing intern doesn't need the ability to access payroll data or network settings. If employees need access to complete specific tasks or projects, consider using a system that grants temporary admin access. Once their project is done, the access goes away.

6. Data Backups

Ransomware is one of the biggest threats facing SMBs today, with 46% having experienced attacks, according to a recent report by OpenText Cybersecurity. Hackers lock up your data and demand payment to get it back, but even payment isn't a guarantee you'll see your data again. Use the 3-2-1 rule – keep three copies of your data on two different types of storage media, with one stored off-site, such as in the cloud or on an external hard drive disconnected from your main network. Just as important: test your backups regularly. Nothing's worse than restoring your data after an attack, only to discover that your backups are incomplete or corrupted.

These simple, cost-effective strategies are a nightmare for hackers and a boon for SMBs looking for more peace of mind. If any of these strategies are missing from your cybersecurity, now is the time to integrate them into your business.



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Rocking the Business World: Gene Simmons' Guide to Entrepreneurship

There's no denying Gene Simmons is a quirky character, even without the makeup. Globally renowned as a rock star in the band Kiss, it's no surprise he showed up to his interview at a recent industry conference clad in all black and wearing dark sunglasses that seemed glued to his face. But behind the moody persona, Simmons is an incredibly successful entrepreneur with a net worth of \$400 million. However, it wasn't always this way.

Simmons opened up about his childhood, revealing a depth often masked by his public persona. "The fire in your belly, it never burns hotter than when you can remember what it felt like to be hungry," he explained. Simmons rose from a poverty-stricken childhood in Haifa, Israel, where he sold fruit roadside to survive. The son of a Holocaust survivor, Simmons learned early on that perseverance was nonnegotiable. In fact, he's critical of anyone with a passive work ethic. "There [are] so many opportunities. We're just sitting there going, 'I wish somebody would give me a chance,' and the chances are just going right by you," he said. What differentiates regular people from uber-successful ones, Simmons insisted, is their willingness to fall in love with the labor that success requires.

"The most successful people in the world are no different than you are, except they work longer and harder, that's all."

Many Americans aren't taught about taxes or the workings of the economy during their school years, but that's no excuse to let opportunity pass us by. According to Simmons, understanding business is a personal responsibility – or, as he put it, an "inferred fiduciary duty to yourself." This means always looking for knowledge that positions you strategically for success. "Be at the right place, with the right thing and the right time. That's on you," he said.

For any business leader, staying informed and having a continuous improvement mindset is critical to navigating the ever-shifting landscapes of capitalism and economic turbulence. This includes being open to diversification, another of Simmons' strategic business tips. His investments are not siloed in the music industry. Instead, they are spread from restaurant chains to reality TV.

This approach cushions financial risks and opens up multiple revenue streams. "It really is because all the knowledge...is available on the Internet for free. The rest is just hard work," he pointed out. For Simmons, the secret is simple: tap into the vast online reservoir of information, pair it with relentless effort and keep innovating.

Most people consider business success strategic and tactful, not a particularly creative pursuit. But Simmons argued otherwise. "Business is art. Every step you take is either going to make you money or it's going to cost you money," he said. It's a delicate dance, and Simmons' rising journey from selling fruit in Haifa to building a vast empire exemplifies how determination and smart decision-making can turn adversity into opportunity. This underlines a vital truth for all entrepreneurs: success comes from seizing opportunities, continuous learning and unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence.

Innovative Tech Trends to Explore in 2025

April showers bring...fresh tech ideas! Forget smart vacuums or noise-canceling earbuds; 2025 offers AI-powered coaches for your video calls, advanced collaboration tools and wearable tech that does much more than count steps. Here's what you need to know about these game-changing trends and how they can shape the way you do business.

Real-Time AI Communication Coaches

With so many employees working remotely, they often miss out on organic mentorship due to the lack of face-to-face interactions and genuine feedback. AI-powered conversational tools address this challenge by providing real-time feedback during video calls and analyzing tone, body language and phrasing.

Continued on pg. 3

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These tools are gaining traction across organizations, providing live feedback for professionals in sales, marketing and even public speaking.

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Advanced Collaboration Tools for Teams

The global collaboration software market, projected to grow to \$19.86 billion by 2032, is fueled by the popularity of remote work, the widespread integration of cloud technology and the rising demand for tools that help teams collaborate instantly. Video conferencing that translates language instantly, AI-powered meeting summaries and integrated team chats make remote work more seamless. For example, a small design firm can collaborate on projects in real time with international freelancers, while a local restaurant chain might use mobile communication apps to update menus instantly across locations.

Why it's a game-changer:

Advanced communication tools help break down language barriers, vastly improve follow-up efficiency through AI-driven functionalities and offer extensive integration to connect your business with even more tools.

**Wearable Tech that can Boost Productivity and Improve Safety**

We are entering an era in which wearable technology is transforming how work gets done. In 2025, expect to see improved wearables like smart glasses, watches, rings, AR headsets and sensor-embedded clothing revolutionizing industries, including logistics, health care, retail and field services. Imagine logistics workers navigating warehouses with real-time inventory updates displayed in their smart glasses or health care professionals responding faster, thanks to instant access to patient vitals on their smartwatches.

Why it's a game-changer:

Advanced wearable tech is about more than productivity. By delivering critical information immediately, it enhances safety, reduces errors and improves situational awareness.

In an increasingly competitive and tech-driven world, make 2025 the year of embracing innovations that simplify, strengthen and future-proof your business.

Fluffy Robot for your Bag: Cute or Creepy?

One of CES 2025's quirkiest (creepiest?) reveals was the Mirumi robot – a part-owl, part-sloth companion that clips to your bag and swivels its head to watch others as they stroll by. Created by Yukai Engineering, it's equal parts adorable and unsettling – perfect for sparking conversations or just freaking out strangers on your commute.

Smart Sharing: Location Updates Without Oversharing

Instead of sharing your location 24/7, choose "Share trip progress" in Google Maps or "Share ETA" in Apple Maps to send updates only when you're on the move. It's a simple, practical way to keep friends or family in the loop and stay safe during late-night rides or busy travel days.

**Are You using AI to Create Charts yet?**

You don't need to be a design expert; you just need to know how to ask the right questions. Try prompting, "What type of chart or visual would work here?" to let AI help you turn data into clear, impactful visuals in seconds.

**Fitness Apps are Tracking More than your Heart Rate**

Apps like Fitbit, Strava and Nike Training Club don't just track your workouts – they also sell your data to advertisers. Since around 80% of top apps share your info, it's a good idea to review and limit your sharing permissions to protect your privacy.