



Vacation and Travel Security Tips You Need To Know To Stay Safe!

No matter how you get to your destination or where you choose to stay, you will still be connected when you're on vacation.

Many travelers rely on technology even more to enhance their experience. As you embark upon your next adventure, stay cyber safe while away from home by following some simple practices to help keep your devices safe and your vacation plans from going awry.

GETTING READY TO GO

Before you head out on vacation, here's a simple security checklist to add to your packing routine:

Travel lightly

Limit the amount of devices you take with you. The more you take with you, the more risk you open yourself up to.

Check your settings

Set the privacy and security settings on web services and apps. It is okay to limit how and with whom you share information (like location tracking) – especially when you are away.

Set up the "find my phone" feature

This will allow you to find, remotely wipe data and/or disable the device if it gets into the wrong hands.

Password protect your devices

Make sure you require the use of a passcode or extra security feature (like a fingerprint) to unlock your phone or mobile device in case either is misplaced or stolen.

Update your software

Before you hit the road, make sure all security and critical software is up-to-date on your connected devices and keep them updated during travel. Turn on "automatic updates" on your devices if you're prone to forgetting.

Back up files

If you haven't taken a moment to back up the information, including files and photos, on your devices, do so before heading out for vacation. If something unfortunate does happen and you lose your device or access to it, you'll at least be able to recover the information you backed up.

ON THE GO

Now that your devices are updated, password protected, and backed up, there are a few steps you can take to improve your security while on the go:

Actively manage location services

Location tools come in handy while planning navigating a new place, but they can also expose your location – even through photos. Turn off location services when not in use.

Use secure Wi-Fi

Do not transmit personal info or make purchases on unsecure or public Wi-Fi networks. Instead, use a virtual private network (VPN) or your phone as a personal hotspot to surf more securely.

Think before you post

Think twice before posting pictures that indicate you are away. Wait until you get home to share your magical memories.

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From the desk of

DAVID SNELL



So far, this summer has provided the perfect amount of sun and rain to make my gardens grow like crazy!



I've planted broccoli again, but this time I've put netting over the bed to keep out the cabbage butterflies. They are beautiful and white and ate every bit of the broccoli last year.

I also had a local carpenter replace all my raised beds with pressure treated lumber that's also 2" taller than the old beds. This gives me deeper soil and the grandkids and I are going to try growing

carrots.

The cuke fences look awesome and we should be harvesting them starting in a week or two. I'll include photos in August's newsletter.

In this edition of our newsletter, Steve Dubin of PRWorks has an article on **"Do podcast appearances really work?"** I can tell you from personal experience that they do!

We all need Bernie Heine's **"7 Tips for Giving Constructive Feedback!"**

"The Simplest Way to Lower Overhead"

by Allison Nuovo is an eye opener!

Our cover story, **"Vacation and Travel Security Tips You Need To Know To Stay Safe!"** is directly from StaySafeOnline.org and was the topic of this month's monthly radio show with Attorney Mark Greene. You can download our show notes at **ACTSmartIT.com/travelsafe** and is a "must read" for anyone traveling inside or outside the country.

For an archive of our shows and their corresponding Show Notes, visit: **ACTSmartIT.com/markgreene**

Stay safe and enjoy the summer!



Dubin

Do Podcast Appearances Really Do Anything?

Somebody in one of my networking groups once asked me that question. As a guy who does a lot of PR, my response was "Of course!" Get the link. Post it on social and your website. Let the search engines do their thing.

I'm not sure that response satisfied my networking colleague. Even though PR has changed dramatically over the last 15 years, many still view it as:

1. Get coverage;
2. Phone rings;
3. Get business.

That still happens, yet perhaps not quite as frequently.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of listening to two clients on the same podcast. One client, Jack Mencini and Adam Sonnhalter of Maximum Value Partners, were the hosts. Peter Hans of Discovery Map International was the guest.

As Adam and Jack interviewed Peter, one thought came to mind. This podcast was telling their story.

As the guest, Peter talked about his business career and how he ended up leading Discovery Map. It's a cool story. Part of me was thinking that any prospective Discovery Map International franchise owner would think so as well and say, "That's somebody I would like to work with."

Then I thought about Adam and Jack. In conducting the podcast, they let Peter tell his story and asked questions that made it easier for him to do so. Very similar to what they do in their small business coaching practice.

My lasting thought was that anybody who heard this for the first time might be intrigued enough to want to know more about Discovery Map—if they were shopping around for a business opportunity.

Those listening to Adam and Jack and thinking about working with a business coach might also dig a little deeper.

For both businesses, the podcast gave listeners a very good idea of the styles and types of people they would be working with. When you make an investment in a business or retaining a coach that level of comfort is very important.

Going back to my networking colleague's comment about whether a podcast appearance does anything? I've always thought so. This podcast was Exhibit A as to why it can be a very effective tool in telling the story of your business—even if you're the host.

To hear that podcast, Dirty Little Secrets of Small Business, go to

<https://dirtysecretsofsmallbusiness.com/episode/the-6-year-itch-with-peter-hans-of-discovery-map/>



Steve Dubin is the president/founder of PR Works, a full service PR/Marketing firm based in America's hometown Plymouth, MA. The company serves as an outsourced PR/Marketing department for many small and mid-sized business and helps navigate the overwhelming number of advertising options. He can be reached at www.PRWorkZone.com



We All Need Bernie's 7 Tips for

By Bernie Heine | Professional Business Coaches | TheProfessionalBusinessCoaches.com

It's normal for everyone to make mistakes from time to time, and we learn through them. As a leader, a critical part of your job is to disclose those errors for the individual and the team to improve. The tricky thing is that, often, the feedback message gets interpreted the wrong way and contributes to an even more significant loss in performance. Effectively giving constructive feedback, although seemingly easy to do, is not a part of everyone's skillset. With that in mind, we're about to introduce you to 7 tips that might help you get the real message out there.

Giving Constructive Feedback—What It Actually Is and How to Do It Correctly.

Before we begin analyzing each of the tips individually, let's briefly touch upon what constructive feedback is. Feedback, as a whole, is a commentary on performance. That generally means that it can be both positive and negative in nature. Constructive feedback, as its name suggests, encourages employees to do their best work by taking note of past actions that could have been done differently. In a sense, feedback is an act of love. We give it because we care about the person and want them to succeed.

The line between such feedback and criticism is thin, so paying attention to the tips below is especially important if nurturing a positive workplace atmosphere, along with improving productivity, is the ultimate goal.

Also, most important, feedback needs to be couched in the recipient's value system, what matters to them, and their goals. Otherwise, you are just giving opinions, and those tend to push people away. Feedback should be about the progress they are or are not making in achieving their goals, not your opinion about them or their performance. Opinion pushes people away, makes them defensive, or invites an argument. Feedback invites them in.

#1 Preparation Matters

When part of the job hasn't been done properly, emotions could overwhelm you and cause you to say everything on your mind there and then. However, that is often not the best approach since, in the heat of the moment, opinions rather than feedback might be said. The whole point of constructive feedback, as already mentioned, is to motivate an individual to do better. If you are too quick to expound your opinion, they will probably get discouraged and make a mistake all over again.

That's why preparing for the employee's conversation is essential. Make a script and adhere to it as much as pos-

sible to prevent yourself from saying anything you didn't plan on saying. And remember, as much as possible, make it about them achieving their goals, not only about your standards. Of course, if you are catching them doing something right, feel free to quickly compliment them on their success as long as you can easily relate it to their goals.

#2 Provide Feedback as Soon as Possible

If an employee has made a mistake, it's important to inform them of it as soon as possible. Otherwise, the risk of repeating the mistake in the meantime runs high, and they may assume that all is well. Too often leaders will say nothing all year and then offload their criticism at the annual review meeting with statements like "you always..." which is the worst practice.

#3 Giving Constructive Feedback Should Be a Regular Occurrence

Instead of being a one-off thing, giving feedback with the purpose of helping employees succeed should be done on a regular basis. For instance,

Don't open the conversation by mentioning something the person isn't good at. Instead, focus on the positives. Compliment them for the actions they have taken so far that have brought great results. Starting the conversation on a positive note will help the employee feel comfortable and valued. As a result, they should be able to better accept the constructive feedback that's about to come their way... and of course, in the end, learn from it. you could make it a habit to hold weekly or monthly meetings with your team members. The topic of the meeting could be precisely the things that were done properly and those that could have been done a bit better.

#4 Don't Beat Around the Bush

One thing that the leadership at nwmoving.com has learned from years of experience in handling employees

Giving Constructive Feedback

and customers is that it's important to be as direct as possible. Don't beat around the bush. Discuss concrete actions only and get to the point rather than talking about everything in general.

When I took a leadership course at the Center for Creative Leadership many years ago, they taught us a very simple but valuable feedback technique called SBI, Situation-Behavior-Impact. SBI is a direct way of giving feedback that keeps the message focused on the actions and not opinions. Here is an example of how to apply this tool:

Situation: Where I observed you – This morning at our staff meeting

Behavior: The behavior I observed – While discussing the marketing plan, you cut off the speaker, inserted your comments, and didn't allow for a discussion or disagreement.

Impact: The impact your behavior had on me or what I observed in others – Your comments made me feel uncomfortable in responding, and I saw other team members roll their eyes.

#5 Emphasize Positive Things

Don't open the conversation by mentioning something the person isn't good at. Instead, focus on the positives. Compliment them for the actions they have taken so far that have brought great results. Starting the conversation on a positive note will help the employee feel comfortable and valued. As a result, they should be able to better accept the constructive feedback that's about to come their way... and of course, in the end, learn from it.

#6 Don't Overwhelm Your Employees

There might be a number of things that you would like to discuss, but should you discuss all of them at once? While you certainly could, we don't necessarily encourage you to do so. You are better off sticking to a maximum of two to three topics. This will make it simpler for the other party to remember the points that you have talked about. It will also give them a bit of time to process everything and implement the suggested ideas. Once they have corrected the initial mistakes, you can move on to discussing the other ones. While you're at it, also remember to praise them for the area in which they have improved.

It's of high significance that you gradually provide feedback, as that's precisely what will prevent people from thinking that everything they are doing is wrong. Remember, the whole point of this is to motivate employees. In no way should they feel as if they aren't a valuable asset to the company!

#7 Put Yourself in the Employee's Shoes and Listen to Their Opinion

Don't immediately assume that just because you believe that something is correct, it actually is. The individual might have been right to do what they have done all along. In fact, it could be you who's wrong. That said, it's important to look at things from the employee's perspective when giving constructive feedback. Allow them to explain why they have taken one approach, despite you believing they should have taken another. Let them ask you questions as well. This will help you better understand them and their actions. On another note, the whole sharing of feedback should be a two-way conversation. It isn't and should never be a monologue.

Professional Business Coaches, Inc.



At PBC, we have helped build the capabilities of many customer service teams. Some of our programs are also listed on the Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund site, where Massachusetts employers receive a 50% grant from the State.

Go to: <https://workforcetrainingfund.org/programs/express-directory/> and search for **Professional Business Coaches** for more information or make an appointment



The Simplest Way To Lower Your Overhead Costs

Your business has survived Covid, and now it's facing an ever-increasing inflation. Your costs are out of control, the budget is ballooning, and there's no end in sight. Having a productive and profitable business now requires a different approach.

Did know you are likely overpaying for many of the services you use every day?

Maybe you are paying more than you should for basic services like Internet or phone. Or maybe you are not optimizing your energy consumption and rate. Or maybe your utility bills have errors, discrepancies and mistakes that you can correct and pay less.

Fortunately, the right cost reduction strategies can help you regain control of operating expenses and get your company back on track. Cost reduction does just what it suggests. It's a way for companies to cut overhead costs and boost the bottom line.

According to Allison Nuovo, of **Bill Reduction Group**, a company that negotiates with providers to help consumers and small businesses lower their monthly bills, "Companies base their pricing off the premise that they are going to charge a high rate and that you are going to call and negotiate it down, but a lot of people don't realize that's how it works, so they end up paying that really inflated rate. Unfortunately, most people don't know they can vie for better rates, and if they do, the odds are stacked against them if they don't know precisely the right questions to ask." she says.

While it's often said that everything is negotiable, there are some budget-busting bills that take precedent, such as cable, internet and TV, satellite TV and radio, telecommunications, home security, insurance, waste management, water delivery, pest control, merchant processing, subscriptions and more.

Reps, in general, tend to make a lot of mistakes when you are negotiating your own bill, and there are instances they will flat-out lie to you. So, when you get told there's nothing better they can do, it's worth your while to call back and try again. Even if

you get told there are savings, it's very common for someone to get their next bill and find absolutely nothing has changed." Allison suggests that after you call and negotiate a bill, call a second time and speak to someone different to make sure they tell you all the same details. "Then you don't have to wait a full month to find out you didn't save any money," she said.

Regardless of WHY you are overpaying, the HOW to lower your bills is simple.

Allison's team at Bill Reduction Group has saved consumers and businesses over \$14 Million dollars in less than 2 years. With our AutoPilot smart technology and seasoned team of negotiation experts we will ensure you're not being overcharged. No matter the size of your business, we can lower your bills for fixed operating expenses. Simply provide us the bills you would like us to negotiate and give us authority to negotiate on your behalf and we'll go to work lowering your bills without changing your service! When we are successful, we split the savings with you. When we are not successful you don't pay anything.

For more information visit
<https://www.billreductiongroup.com> or
 call Allison Nuovo 781-820-5396.



Vacation and Travel Security Tips You Need To Know

Continued from Front page

Protect physical devices

Ensure your devices are with you at all times. If you are staying in a hotel, the best thing to do is lock them in a safe. If a safe is not available, lock them in your luggage. Don't leave devices unattended with strangers. Using your device at an airport or cafe? Don't leave it unattended with a stranger while you get up to use the restroom or order another latte.

Stop auto connecting

Disable remote connectivity and Bluetooth. Some devices will automatically seek and connect to available wireless networks. And Bluetooth enables your device to connect wirelessly with other devices, such as headphones or automobile infotainment systems. Disable these features so that you only connect to wireless and Bluetooth net-

works when you want to. If you do not need them, switch them off.

If you share computers, don't share information

Avoid public computers in hotel lobbies and internet cafes. If you must use a public computer, keep activities as generic and anonymous as possible. Don't log into accounts or access sensitive information. If you do log into accounts, such as email, always click "logout" when you are finished. Simply clicking the "x" on your browser does not log you out of accounts.

Thanks to [StaySafeOnline.org](https://staysafeonline.org) for these tips <https://staysafeonline.org/resources/vacation-and-travel-security-tips/>

For our full report, visit:
ACTSmartIT.com/travelsafe

If You Have a Microsoft Windows Server 2012 R2

Microsoft released this Server operating system on November 25th, 2013. Mainstream support ended October 9th, 2018 and Extended Support ends on October 10, 2023

This means that Servers installed with Windows Server 2012 R2 will need to be replaced on or before the extended support end date to remain compliant.

This gives you about 16 months to put away money towards a Server replacement

The Extended Security Update (ESU) program

This is a last resort option for customers who need to run certain legacy Microsoft products past the end of support. It includes Critical* and/or Important* security updates for a maximum of three years after the product's End of Extended Support date. This is a PAID option which renews annually for up to 3 years and is only recommended for medium to large enterprises.

"Pricing for Extended Security Updates will follow the license model for the server. For example, coverage on Windows Server is licensed by core and is required for all physical cores on each server. Extended Security Updates pricing will be 75% (annually) of the license prices of the latest version of SQL Server or Windows Server"

Version	Start Date	End Date
Extended Security Update Year 3	Oct 15, 2025	Oct 13, 2026
Extended Security Update Year 2	Oct 9, 2024	Oct 14, 2025
Extended Security Update Year 1	Oct 11, 2023	Oct 8, 2024
Original Release	Nov 25, 2013	Oct 10, 2023



Future Planning for Microsoft EOL (End of life) dates. Keep these dates in mind as your server's operating system end of life draws near. For instance, if you start putting away some cash to replace your Windows 2016 server now, you'll have 5 years to build up that fund.

Windows Server 2016 - End Date: Jan 12, 2027 — Windows Server 2019 - End Date: Jan 9, 2029

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