



Tell Your IT Provider Right Away If...

1. You get a new employee or an employee leaves.

Although we want to help you onboard a new employee and most clients want a new email address added; its especially important to tell us when an employee leaves. If they still have access to your network, they can cause huge problems! They could also call the provider and request access to something and, if they are still included in your contact list, the provider may give them access as part of their services to you.

If the request sounds different from most other requests, we'll communicate with the company's primary contact or owner and get authorization, even for regular employees.

2. You are moving or expanding your business or location.

There's a lot involved when you remodel, expand or move your business. You've got to work with the contractor, the town or city for permits or business licenses, notify the utilities, cable companies, etc. Don't forget to consult your IT provider. We've had businesses call us in a panic because the contractor didn't put a network drop in the right location to be usable. Or, they never considered the network drop at all! It's much more expensive (and frustrating) to add a network drop after the build-out is finished.

3. You are getting a new phone system

If you are getting a new VOiP phone system, it needs access to the internet just like your computers. If the phone provider isn't familiar with firewalls, call your IT provider to be sure it's set up correctly

4. You're switching to a new software or upgrading to a new version. We see this situation all the time. You want all the new bells and whistles, or the better security and you

buy a new software or upgrade. The salesperson doesn't always ask what your computers are running on or which version of your operating system, like Windows, that you are using.

It's so frustrating when the new software or version crawls along because you don't have enough memory, a fast enough processor or the right video card to get the performance that you're expecting.

5. You get a Pop-Up saying that your computer is infected.

CALL Your IT Provider Right Away! Unplug your computer from the network.

Don't do anything else! Don't call the number, don't pay a ransom! Pop-ups are scams or ransomware attacks. Don't handle this yourself! You could lose everything.

6. You or an employee needs secure remote access.

We'll help you install the software and guide you through using it successfully. If you are allowing an employee to access your network remotely, be sure to check out our Remote Work Agreement and Guidelines at ACTSmartIT.com/wfh

These tips are from our new magazine

BEST PRACTICES 2022 Forty pages of sage advice to start 2022 off right.



- Business Best Practices
- Legal advice
- IT / Cybersecurity
- Human Resources
- Marketing
- PR

• And Much More!

Go to ACTSmartIT.com/mag to get your FREE copy mailed to you.

From the desk of

DAVID SNELL



Happy New Year and I'm DONE with Snow!

Our enclosed parking lot fills with snow with no place to go so we had to have it trucked away! What a mess! Other than that, we've weathered the storms pretty well here.



Welcome to our new tech, Orlando, or "Rando" as we call him. He's a wonderful addition to our team and very involved in our tech support. He has caught on faster than any new tech that I can remember! And, his Jamaican accent makes us feel like we are on vacation!

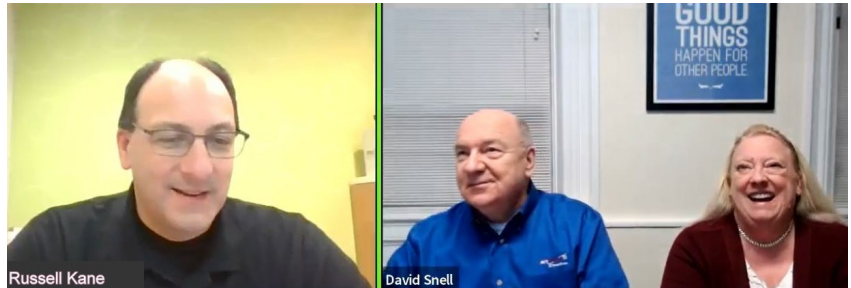
We were honored to be interviewed by Russell Kane of Dental Office Compliance a few weeks ago. We talked about the many ways you need to keep your business safe from cyber attacks.

Russell did a great job and touched on all the main points that healthcare practices and

general businesses need to be aware of. After all, Russell comes to Dental Office Compliance after a 25 year legal and compliance career, most recently at a global asset management firm where he served as a mutual fund chief compliance officer for 10 years and the firm's General Counsel for five years.

Check out Russell outstanding interview skills, and our lighting that made us cringe at: <https://www.facebook.com/lisa.kane.52493/videos/1067578077424469/>

If you follow us on LinkedIn, we've been posting tips and information from **Data Privacy Week** in January and **Identity Theft Awareness** week in February.



Our monthly spot on Mark Greene's radio show "So What About That Law?" on 95.9 WATD handled the Identity Theft issue. You can get a copy of our extensive Show Notes on our home page at **ACTSmartIT.com**.

Security training can help keep you and your business safe. We are putting together a monthly training session with **BullPhish** security training and the program will be available very soon. You'll be able to sign up for this vital training in March—watch for more information in our next newsletter!

Stay Safe!

David Snell

IMPORTANT UPDATE: INCREASES FOR 2022 MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE AND MAXIMUM WEEKLY BENEFIT UNDER MA PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

2022 Mileage Reimbursement Rate

The Internal Revenue Service recently released the 2022 standard mileage rates for businesses to use as a guideline when reimbursing employees for applicable miles driven for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes. Rates typically increase every year to account for rising fuel prices and vehicle maintenance and insurance rate increases.

The standard mileage rates for 2022 for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) are as follows:

- 58.5 cents per mile driven for business use (increased by 2.5 cents from 2021);
- 18 cents per mile driven for medical, or moving purposes for qualified active-duty members of the Armed Forces (increased by 2 cents from 2021);

14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations (the rate is set by statute and remains unchanged from 2021).

Weekly Maximum Benefit Under MA Paid Family and Medical Leave

The maximum weekly benefit amount under the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave has been increased for 2022.

A covered individual's average weekly earnings will determine his or her benefit amount, for a maximum weekly benefit of "up to" \$1,084.31 (increased from \$850).



Attorney Helene Horn Figman combines the specialized legal knowledge that a successful employment law practice requires with the range of skills and perspectives uniquely suited to the small and mid-size business client.

In addition to her private legal practice and administrative judicial duties, Attorney Figman has designed, organized and led numerous employment related education programs in both academic and workplace settings -- from both a legal and human resources perspective. For example, as a visiting lecturer in employment law at Bridgewater State College she has taught classes in contracts and labor law. While in an HR consulting role, she has also conducted numerous team building and motivational workshops for small business.

4 Ways to Better Support Your Employees

With a continuously changing and evolving workplace, it's more important than ever for leaders and managers to support their employee base holistically. As the **Great Resignation** continues on, people are quitting their jobs at record rates, with a common reason being that they are unhappy with their current position and want to change their careers. Employees often don't feel respected or trusted, and they lack a clear future with their current company or manager.

Now, more than ever before, effective management is the key driver of future success of any business. Leaders and managers can focus on four key areas described in the article below: career development, company involvement, financial wellness, and mental health to successfully listen to employee wants and needs and support their overall success.

Professional Support Career Development

While essential job functions and day-to-day tasks are crucial for employees to complete, leaders should also have a variety of strategies to help their employees grow professionally. One way to do this is through career development and delegation. Delegation is a great tactic to allow employees to learn different company tasks. This may be in the form of allowing them to present more in larger team meetings to prepare for client calls. Or, that could be having them prepare presentation materials instead of only internal documents. Avoiding the leadership mistake of thinking, "If you want to do something right, you have to do it yourself!" mindset will also help alleviate tasks that others can help you with. To get started, follow this simple but powerful delegation process, "DELEGATION: Like a Journey in 4 Stages." <https://theprofessionalbusinesscoaches.com/delegation-like-a-journey-in-4-stages/>

Another way to allow employees to grow is through job shadowing and mentorship. By pairing employees with another person in a separate department, you can improve cross-cultural collaboration and understanding. Some great conversation starters for these meetings may be, "What is the most challenging part of your job?" or "What is one characteristic that helps you be successful in this role?" This strategy can also help leaders retain top talent by providing visible and achievable methods for internal promotion and advancement.

Finally, be sure to stay in touch. Conduct weekly 1-1 meetings with all of your direct reports and others as needed. Be sure to start with check-in questions



and ask about how they are doing personally as well as professionally.

Company Involvement

The internet offers great opportunities for employees to be involved in

the company. Messaging apps are effective forms of direct communication that may connect employees thousands of miles apart. Before purchasing or implementing one of the many types of apps, leaders can compare the pros and cons of the top messaging apps for 2022, such as Flock or RingCentral, to see what would best meet their needs. (<https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-business-messaging-apps>)

Not only can these apps help employees collaborate on tasks, but they can allow them to connect on a personal level. For example, companies can create specific Slack channels if they're interested in talking about their favorite Netflix series, hobbies, or local restaurants.

Leaders can also provide experiences surrounding community involvement for professional support. While this may be through conventional methods such as business partnerships with local charities or volunteer opportunities for employees to give back, it doesn't have to be. For example, employees can start their own 501(c)(3) nonprofit to serve their specific community. Companies such as Foundation Group even offer their expertise to help passionate individuals learn about bookkeeping, state and federal taxes, and compliance filings for nonprofits.

Personally & Professionally in 2022

By Bernie Heine | Professional Business Coaches | [TheProfessionalBusinessCoaches.com](https://theprofessionalbusinesscoaches.com)

Personal Support Financial Wellness

Each day, management not only has the opportunity to give its employees valuable insights on professional skills such as finances/budgeting, negotiation, and leadership, but they also have the chance to show employees how to apply these skills to their personal lives. One way to empower employees to use the financial management skills they learn in the workplace is through open-book management. By incorporating this hands-on learning style where employees are brought to the decision-making process, employees can learn mindful money management practices to apply to their personal finances. Not only is it beneficial for workers, but it can also be helpful to increase employee engagement and satisfaction by showing all employees that their opinions matter.

Another way that leaders can give employees the tools to succeed is by providing them with supplementary or online resources to improve their financial literacy further. As a leader, one thing to remember is that while you may be familiar with financial jargon, employees may not be. By talking about personal finance topics such as what credit score is needed to meet major life milestones and make large purchases like buying a home, employees can feel supported and encouraged by management to accomplish their goals. Another topic to give employees information on is what to consider while comparing a traditional versus a Roth 401(k). One easy way to do this is by making these resources available to the entire company through monthly online newsletters, bulletin boards, or links on the bottom of internal emails. You can also ask us at PBC about referrals to professionals who can help implement this.

Mental Health

Management also has a tremendous role in promoting mental health and a healthy work-life balance, especially as the pandemic continues. By reassuring employees that they have the means to care for themselves and their loved ones holistical-

ly, they can have peace of mind knowing that they're being treated as real people. For example, not receiving paid time off to get a COVID-19 booster may be deterring some employees from getting vaccinated. Employees may need flex time to attend to a sick loved one. In the end, not only will benefits drive company loyalty, but they will also help increase employee performance and motivation.

Yet again, online resources offer free tools that in-person, remote, or hybrid employees can all utilize, regardless of where they're physically located. These online mental health resources are especially important for subsets of coworkers who deal with increased emotional stress in the workplace. Studies show that women are often the "emotional custodians" at work, especially if they're in a managerial role. While it's important to have leadership that's diligent in checking in on others, women should also be sure to look after themselves to avoid burnout. Some ways that they can do this are through using these top mental health apps (<https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/mental-health-apps>) or one of the seven best free online therapy and mental health services for the new year. (<https://psychcentral.com/health/online-therapist-for-free>)

As a manager or leader, don't overwhelm yourself by trying to implement all of these suggestions at one time. Instead, focus on one or two suggestions to show your employees how much you value, respect, and appreciate them in 2022. Those are the keys to talent retention.

If you have any questions on how to implement these ideas in your business, please get in touch with us for a complimentary consultation.

<https://theprofessionalbusinesscoaches.com/contact-us/>





Alicia Piazzini, one of the founders of TheSpark.social, gives us her feisty suggestions for 2022:

We're STILL trying to wrap our heads around the fact that 2019 will soon be 3 YEARS behind us, that hasn't stopped us from forging forward into 2022 with goals and bomb @\$\$ strategies in mind!

1) Own. That. \$hit.

Business Owners: Forget Third-Party Data – Prioritize Your OWN!

Thanks to *certain* platforms (*cough*Facebook & Google*cough*) who have gotten a bit greedy in helping themselves to our data (okay let's be honest, **A LOT** greedy), there is more concern than ever over user privacy online.

Regulations are in place to address how these online mega beasts use our info. We have already seen tracking and data collection changes with Apple's iOS 14 updates. Not to mention [Facebook just announced](#) that they are pulling back on more targeting options come this January.

Times are changing...again. For YOU as a business owner, this means you should not only rely on 3rd party platforms to do your targeting and data gathering.

Bottom line: *Invest in your email lists, use your on-site analytics, and build your internal customer database.*

2) Truth Bombs Needed

Business Owners: Transparency is Key

Distrust in the media, news, and un-reputable online companies have led to a customer craving for transparency from brands – along with the fact that the average consumer is digitally savvy. Before someone does business with you today, they have done their research. They are INFORMED buyers. The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer survey revealed that many consumers see trust as a leading factor in their purchasing decisions.

It is really a very simple concept, but often hard to get across in your marketing. Here are a few simple ways to step it up:

- Share 'behind the scenes' and 'How To' videos
- Be open about your products, processes, and expected results
- Think about your sales process: do you educate your customers enough or provide them valuable content?

- Create a mission statement that is authentic, and then carry that mission through in all your marketing. Your **social media brand voice** should echo your mission and values

Bottom line: Consumers want to do business with companies that are honest, open, and give them answers.

3) Get to the point already!

Short-Form Video for All Types of Businesses

Thanks to TikTok (and Reels), short-form video is here to stay and these video social platforms have set the precedent. While TikTok's user base may still mostly consist of Gen Z, it is likely that even your grandparents have watched some type of short-form video at this point! This trend has already expanded to other platforms – for example, Youtube shorts, and we will be seeing even more channels with short-form video placements in 2022.

Why do they work? **15-60 second clips of video are digestible pieces of content that give consumers a handful of information. The more creative and authentic, the better.** Overall, it is TOF (top of funnel) because you can't fit much content in such a short time frame, but they are relevant to your buyer's journey and should NOT be ignored.

Bottom line: Short-form video isn't just a trend – these video snippets have yielded the second high-

est ROI for B2C marketing in 2021, according to Hubspot, and deserve attention as we head forward into 2022.

4) Micro Marketing for Mega Results

Business Owners: Use Micro Influencers for Mega Impact

Along with the theme of transparency being a necessity, consumers in 2022 will increasingly seek social proof when considering businesses. Social proof can come in the form of customer reviews and testimonials, but using influencers adds another layer of trust and credibility when done right. A huge win for small businesses is that '**Micro Influencers**' have entered the social spaces and this means you can hire an influencer with a smaller audience and, typically, a smaller budget. Micro Influencers typically have less than 100k followers, but in this case it is **quality over quantity**.

The benefits of a smaller audience, beyond the budget, is that these influencers can be **hyper local** and/or **hyper-focused**. They are typically very aligned with a particular niche and know their audiences well. Almost any type of business can use an influencer, and the metrics for tracking ROI don't change just because they are Micro. It goes beyond just products and makeup.

Bottom line: In 2022, we will see more B2B companies, services, and local businesses incorporating influencer marketing into their strategies.



Alicia Piazza

Co-Founder of TheSpark.social

My passion for my job stems from seeing client success brought on by innovative, creative & custom approaches to marketing. I have over 8 years of media experience which includes media buying, print, direct mail, event marketing, and all aspects of social media and digital marketing.

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In This Issue

- ◆ Tell Your IT Provider Right Away If...
- ◆ Important Update: 2022 Milage Rate & Maximum Benefits Under MPMFL
- ◆ 4 Ways to Better Support Your Employees in 2022
- ◆ Marketing Predictions for 2022
- ◆ And MORE!

Plan Ahead for the Phase Out of 3G Cellular Networks *It's not just effecting your phone—your car may have a problem, too!*

From David's Tech Talk Radio Spot on 95.9 WATD Every Tuesday Morning at 8:10am

Excerpt from David's February 1st radio spot...

If your mobile phone is more than a few years old, you may need to upgrade your device before your mobile provider shuts down its 3G network, to avoid losing service. For more information on your mobile providers' plans for 3G retirement and how you can prepare, contact your provider directly.

Does this just impact phones?

No, other devices, such as certain medical devices, tablets, smart watches, vehicle SOS services, home security systems, and other connected products may be using 3G network services. And don't forget about devices that use cellular connectivity as a back-up when a wired internet connection goes down. If the device is not labeled, contact the monitoring company or other service provider to confirm how the device connects and whether your device may be impacted.

A large number of new cars made in the last decade, even some in the 2021 model year, were built with their connected services running on 3G. That includes things like in-nav traffic and location data, WiFi hotspots, emergency call services, remote lock/unlock functions, smartphone app connectivity, voice assistants, and even concierge services. For a list of vehicles affected, check this URL:

<https://www.thedrive.com/tech/43187/how-the-3g-shutdown-in-2022-could-screw-your-car>

To read David's complete article, go to ACTSmartIT.com/3g