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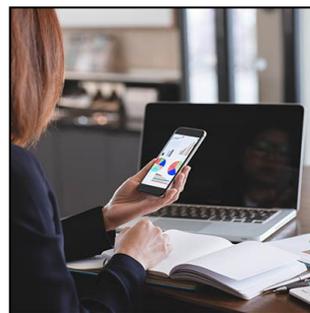
Is Low-Cost Broadband Internet Coming to Oneonta, NY?

One of the lessons learned from the pandemic is how many of us take high-speed Internet

for granted. While many of us have been able to continue to work or go to school remotely, this isn't the reality for a significant number of people. The crisis has crystalized how many communities don't have adequate access to broadband, which in turn can have far-reaching effects on a community's long-term survival...



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**The Smartphone Can Be Quite the Productivity Tool**

For a lot of businesses, employee mobile phone usage was once a big problem for them. There have been some businesses that actually hired someone to walk around their office telling people to get off their phones. Some businesses outlawed employee devices altogether. There probably are some businesses out there that still limit the use of these devices in their office, but for most businesses, their employees' smartphones are now completely part of their productivity strategy. Let's take a quick look at the shift from banned to benefit in this month's newsletter.

The Lead Up

Let's go back about five years (maybe a bit longer than that) to a time where not everyone had a smartphone. You had the holdouts with the burner flip-phones, you had the frugal person who couldn't imagine paying \$500 for a phone, and you had the person who didn't even bother having a phone at all. As smartphone technology started to get better and

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Over Half of Workers Will Work Remotely by the End of 2021, Gartner Reports

The COVID-19 pandemic forced much of the workforce to work remotely, but now that the pandemic is receding in several parts of the world, the question of if this workforce will continue to work remotely is up for debate. A report from Gartner suggests that things will move in the opposite direction from what you might expect. Let's dive into what this report suggests and what it might mean for your business moving forward.

TechRepublic reports that, according to Gartner, 51% of knowledge workers are expected to work remotely by the end of 2021. This number is up from 27% in 2019, a considerable increase no matter how you look at it. Another notable figure includes the number of workers worldwide expected to be remote by the end of 2021—32%—up from 17% in 2019. It should be mentioned that these numbers are specific to knowledge workers, which are defined as those who hold knowledge-intensive occupations. *TechRepublic* cites some examples, which include writers, accountants, and engineers.

These trends have forced many employers to consider how they will accommodate remote work in the future, and it's easy to see how it can benefit them, to an extent. They likely got a taste of what having a remote workforce would feel like during the social distancing

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Vendor Management Can Save You A Lot of Time and Money



When was the last time you actually had a decent experience working with a vendor?

Depending on who you are trying to contact and work with, it can either be an extraordinarily pleasant or an extraordinarily painful experience. Wouldn't it be nice if you didn't have to work with vendors at all? What if you could just contact a trusted resource who could handle everything for you? Well, you're in luck; that just so happens to be what vendor management is all about!

You might be surprised by the many benefits that come from vendor management services. Here are just a few of them.

A Single Point of Contact

Perhaps the greatest benefit of working with a managed service provider is that you don't have to memorize multiple points of contact for each of the many vendors that you work with. No more fumbling around through your contacts list to find the contact information for each of your vendors; instead, you contact your one point of contact and they will take care of the rest. It's way easier to handle than calling each individual vendor—especially if their services intertwine in any noticeable way.

To explain just how valuable this might be, let's consider a real-life scenario that you might encounter. Let's say that you have a Voice over IP system for your business. This means that you have a software solution that enables you to make calls. Naturally, this system will require some configuration, especially if you are opting to have the

system hosted off-site by a service provider. This means that your VoIP solution and your hosting provider are essentially linked, meaning that in order to resolve an issue with your system, you might have to contact both your VoIP provider AND your hosting provider, hoping that at least one of them will have the answers you might need to get operations back in appropriate order.

Now, if you take advantage of vendor management, you call one contact, who will get all the details of your needs, then reach out to all vendors involved to resolve your issue. Way better, right?

Less Wasted Time on Outreach

Consider the previously mentioned scenario. How much time do you...



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The Smartphone Can Be Quite the Productivity Tool

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better, so did the budget phones; meaning there was very little reason why someone would choose not to have a smartphone and the innumerable benefits that it brings.



Almost overnight, more people had smartphones than computers and did most of their computing right from their mobile devices. This is great, unless the phone is being used more than the workstation your business provided your employees. This led to a lot of businesses trying to police workers' smartphone use, which has obvious

problems. What could they do? Their workers were losing about an eighth of their productivity a day and not only that, the work was worse because they were constantly checking their phones.

Some genius came up with a plan to allow their workers to use their smartphones as much as they wanted as long as they were signed into a work profile. This accomplished two things, first, it allowed businesses to forgo the immense costs associated with purchasing, servicing, and maintaining smartphones for workers and it placated the employee's need to be able to have unfettered access to their smartphones. Outside of a couple procedural hiccups, most businesses have successfully taken on this method. Now, employees are available to the business more, and they can do more on a device they are all too familiar with.

Pandemic-Era Mobile Productivity

Before the COVID-19 pandemic shifted the way people conducted business, you did begin to see more flexibility growing inside of businesses. Where

there was once a concerted effort to control the means of productivity, more businesses were providing employees the ability to have more time collaborating remotely.

Then the pandemic hit.

Many of the jobs that were once completed 9-to-5 inside an office were being moved off-site for public health reasons and companies had to immediately shift the way they managed their businesses. That remote flexibility that was once looked on as an employee perk became the way business was going to be handled, at least in the interim. Companies that had been toying with remote strategies and mobile productivity were in a better position to keep operational effectiveness up and saw productivity maintained where other companies saw sharp declines. The benefits of a mobile management platform became obvious pretty...



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Over Half of Workers Will Work Remotely by the End of 2021, Gartner Reports

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phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now that workers are confident they can perform their jobs remotely, employers now must ask if it is beneficial for workers to return to the office, or continue to have them work remotely. In fact, this is evident in Gartner's 2021 Digital Worker Experience Survey, which cites that 70% of employees work at least part of their workweek out of the office.

Remote work does come with its fair share of challenges, chief among them being the procurement of tools and technology solutions that accommodate it. If you are going to have staff

work remotely at least part of the time, if not all the time, then you need to make sure that you do your part to help them be successful while working remotely. This includes making sure that they have access to important files and documents, solutions that connect them to the workplace and your in-house workforce, and ensuring that they can access everything they need in a secure fashion.

Of course, having access to all of this also depends on having devices that are capable of working remotely. You will need to equip your employees with devices like laptops and smartphones that can accommodate remote work—

and with the global chip shortage still in full swing, it's no surprise that finding the right equipment might be a bit challenging at the moment. Still, we recommend that you consider all of these aspects of remote work for any of your employees who might be considering it at least part of the time.

As for how you can prepare your business for remote work, Directive has you covered. We can equip your business with the tools necessary to get work done outside of the workplace...



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Encryption Is a Major Key to Security



The term "encryption" has found its way into the mainstream, appearing just about anywhere information

security is brought up. Whether it is ransomware encrypting data or the encryption protecting your password security, it is a powerful tool that can be used for both good and evil. Let's discuss the former and how you might use encryption in the workplace.

At its core, encryption is a way of securing data through the use of encoding. One way to understand its basic concept is to think back to ancient times before computers existed. If a letter or document contained sensitive information, the sender might hide it in plain sight through the use of a cypher and key. The key would be known to the one receiving the letter or document, so only they would know its true nature. Anyone trying to intercept it would not be able to decrypt the message.

In the more modern sense, encryption is more akin to a kaleidoscope. Everything in sight is still there, but it's all jumbled up and doesn't make any sense. The

decryption key is used to put the true picture back together. Decryption keys are only found on approved devices or accounts that should have access to this data. In this way, the data is secured while it's in transit from one location to the next. Encryption has grown extraordinarily complex over time, and it's not unheard of for businesses to leverage what is known as military-grade encryption technology.

As for how you can use encryption, you can think of it as a security solution that is valuable whenever you want to ensure total privacy and security of data. For example, many organizations will use a virtual private network to keep data transfers private while out of the office. Others might use encryption for file storage. Encryption is practically a standard for websites these days as well, particularly those associated with banking and other sensitive information. Encryption also aids in compliance, and in some industries it might be necessary.

Obviously encryption is a great asset to use when securing data, but it is frightening to say the least when it is used...



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Cybersecurity Tips

Cookies

With so many sites requesting that you accept their "Cookie Policy", it's important to know what this truly means and how these cookies factor into your security and privacy.

Learn more about cookie policies:
<https://dti.io/cookies>



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Marketing Ideas & Tips for Your SMB

Using a Business Card to Stand Out Against Competitors

Best Practices to Create Your Best Business Card

Despite what you might think, there are many benefits of having a business card and it is **still** a marketing tool that can bring your business many leads and help keep you top of mind.

That's why it's extremely important that yours is designed in a way that stands out to the recipient.

What Can a Business Card Do for Your Business?

A business card can do something that other, more modern, marketing efforts like a website can't—and that's continuing to "touch" your leads and prospects long after the initial contact.

If the first point of contact for a lead is your website, you'll only have their attention for however long they stay on your website. Once they leave, that's it, they're gone and there's a very real chance that they may never return to your website again.

A business card will keep your leads and prospects interacting with your business longer; giving them a tangible reminder of your business and what you can do for them. Every time they glance at your business card, you're reminding them to go check your business and services out later.

Find out What Other Best Practices You Need to Know to Design Your Own Business Card

Inside our *Best Practices to Create Your Best Business Card* white paper you'll see some of the history behind business cards and other useful information that you should spend some time considering when trying to design your own, like:

- Material and Shape
- Content
- Design
- Your Audience
- Your Company Culture
- Production and Price

Get the Whitepaper!

Download your **FREE** copy of our *Best Practices to Create Your Best Business Card* white paper today! You just need to fill out a quick form and begin downloading.



We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is our success, and as you grow, we grow.



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