This Issue:

What You Need to Do to Improve Your Supply Chain's Efficiency
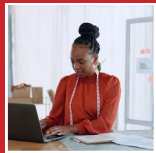
Small and medium-sized businesses are continuously grappling with the complexities of their supply chain. If you're trying to compete with industry giants, the right technology is more accessible and affordable than ever. This month, we will go into some of the ways you can make your supply chain more efficient...

Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/bettersupplychain

About Directive

We are a technology consulting firm specializing in technology implementation and management for businesses. We're known for providing big-business, Enterprise-Level IT services to small and medium-sized businesses.

Visit us **online** at:
newsletter.directive.com

Merry Christmas!

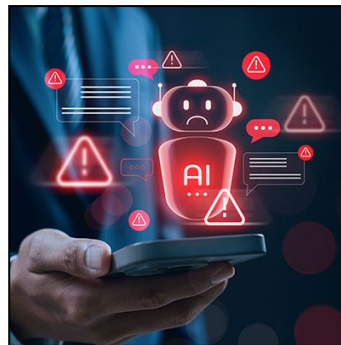## 4 Hidden AI Dangers Every Central NY Business Owner Should Know

It's happening in your office right now. An employee, trying to boost productivity, pastes a chunk of your confidential client list into a public AI tool to draft a marketing email. They see it as a clever shortcut. You should see it as a massive data breach waiting to happen. The explosion of AI tools like ChatGPT is a game-changer, but for unprepared businesses in Oneonta and beyond, it's a dangerous new frontier.

The Double-Edged Sword of Workplace AI

Artificial intelligence is not just a buzzword; it's a revolutionary force. It can draft reports, analyze data, write code, and brainstorm marketing campaigns in seconds. For small and medium-sized businesses in central NY, this power promises unprecedented efficiency and growth.

However, just like the early days of the internet, this new technology comes with a new class of threats. Without a clear policy and the right security measures, you're not just using AI; you're letting it use you—and your sensitive business data.

Your Business Is Not Too Small for Managed Services
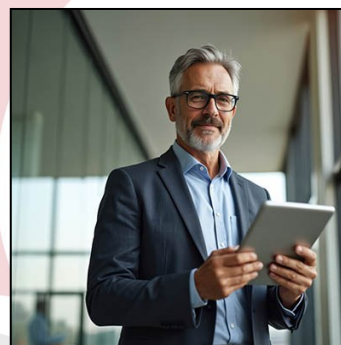
Many business owners, especially those running small or medium-sized enterprises and even startups, often wonder if their company is big enough to justify investing in managed IT services. The common misconception is that outsourced IT support is only for larger businesses with complex networks and hundreds of employees. The fact is that there is no minimum size a business must reach to significantly benefit from managed IT services.

The proverbial sweet spot for Managed Service Providers (MSPs) often lies squarely within the SMB market, typically businesses with 10-to-100 users. This is where the cost-effectiveness, specialized expertise, and strategic advantages of managed IT services can be most beneficial, offering an alternative to the prohibitive costs of building an in-house IT department.
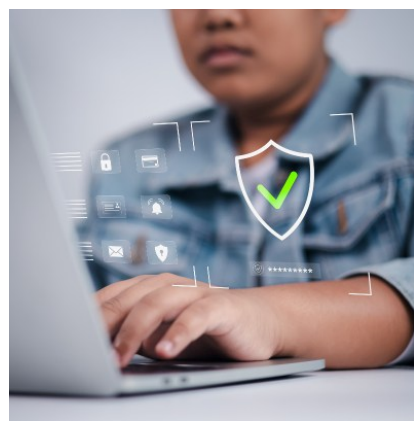
Why Your Business Can't Ignore Data Privacy Compliance Anymore

Every day, your small-to-medium business handles sensitive information: customer names, credit card details, employee records, and vendor contracts. This data is valuable, not just to you, but to the hackers and regulators who are paying attention. The old idea that *"only big companies get audited"* is completely outdated. Data privacy compliance has moved from a niche legal issue to a core operational requirement for every SMB owner and manager.

So, What Exactly *Is* Data Privacy Compliance?
Think of it this way: Data privacy compliance is simply following the rules for how you treat people's personal information.

It's a framework that governs how you collect, store, use, and ultimately dispose of data that can identify a person (things like an email address, phone number, health record, or even an IP address)...

**Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/securebizdata**

A Good Endpoint Security Strategy Can Save Your Bacon

The way businesses protect their computer networks has changed. Now, every device connected to the network—like computers, phones, servers, and smart gadgets—is a crucial point of defense. This means that each device can be a weak spot if not properly secured.

If you don't use the same security rules for all devices, you're creating an easy target for cyberattacks.

That's why it's so important to have a complete plan for securing all devices. This plan should focus on seeing all devices on the network, finding threats quickly, and using a "Zero Trust" approach.

The Endpoint: A Common Target for Attacks
Cybercriminals know that a company's security is only as strong as its weakest point. Often, this weak point is one of its endpoints, the computers that team members use to work, store company information, and connect to the network.

- **Human Error:** Your team members are just people interacting with their computers, making them vulnerable to tricks like phishing (fake emails designed to steal information) and targeted attacks on specific software. If one person's computer is successfully attacked, it gives criminals a way to get into the network and find more weaknesses.
- **Stealing Data and Passwords:** Devices often hold or can access important company information. If a device is compromised, it can directly lead to the theft of company secrets, private personal details, and network passwords, allowing attackers to go deeper into the system...

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https://dti.io/endpointsecure**

4 Hidden AI Dangers Every Central NY Business Owner Should Know

Top AI Risks Your Business Can't Afford to Ignore
Before you encourage everyone on your team to start using public AI, you need to understand the pitfalls. These aren't hypothetical problems; they are real-world risks that are already impacting businesses.

Leaking Sensitive Data into the Void
When your staff uses a free, public AI model, where does that information go? The short answer: not somewhere you control. These models use the data they are fed—your financial reports, your marketing strategies, your employee reviews—to train themselves.

This comes with massive risks. You are essentially handing over your company's trade secrets. This sensitive information could potentially be surfaced in a response to another user from a completely different company. In 2023, employees at Samsung accidentally leaked confidential source code and internal meeting notes by pasting them into ChatGPT.

AI Can "Hallucinate" and Get It Wrong
AI is incredibly powerful, but it's not infallible. Sometimes, it makes things up. These fabrications are called...

**Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/aidangers**

Your Business Is Not Too Small for Managed Services
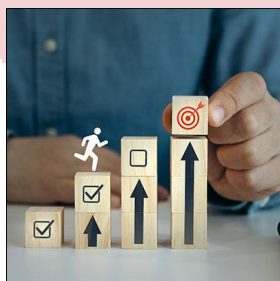
(Continued from page 1)

Let's break down why your business, regardless of its current size, might be perfectly positioned to thrive with managed IT.

The Myth of Too Small

If you're a sole proprietor using cloud software, a startup with a handful of employees, or a growing small business feeling the pinch of technical issues, you're not too small for professional IT support. You're actually in a prime position to benefit from predictable costs, proactive maintenance, and comprehensive network security that can prevent future headaches.

Instead of focusing on headcount, consider these critical indicators that your business is ready for managed IT services:

Technology is the Backbone of Your Business

If your IT systems went down for an hour, a day, or heaven forbid, a week, what would be the impact?

If your business relies heavily on its network, specialized software, or cloud applications to serve clients or perform core functions, then consistent uptime and performance are extremely important.

Think about it. If you are an e-commerce business, your website is your storefront. Downtime means lost sales and damaged reputation. If you're a medical practice or law firm, you rely on specific software for...

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https://dti.io/mspbigorsmall

4 Easy to Follow Tips for Assigning Tasks

One of the core responsibilities of a manager is to get the best work done efficiently. It's not just about delegating; it's about strategic assignment. It is often the key to unlocking both peak employee performance and maximum return on the company's dollar. Poorly assigned tasks can lead to confusion, rework, burnout, and wasted time. This month, we thought we'd share our proven framework for assigning tasks that truly get the most out of your employees' time and the company's money.

Let's start from the beginning:

Define Clarity and Purpose

The single biggest time-waster is a vague request. Before the task leaves your desk, ensure you can answer these three questions for your employee:

What is the deliverable? Why is this important? What would constitute success?

It's really that simple.

Know Your People

This is where the financial ROI truly comes into play. You don't want your most expensive, highly-skilled engineer spending two hours formatting a spreadsheet that an intern could do in 30 minutes.

You will want to assign tasks based on expertise. A task should be...

Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/assigntasks

CYBERSECURITY TIPS

Updating Pro Tips

Setting up automatic updates helps take the guess work out of when and how to update your software and apps.

For this Micro Training, learn the benefits of updating systems, and gain some tips on how to efficiently and effectively protect your devices through updates.

View this tip and others at:
https://dti.io/updatetips

Get our Cybersecurity Tips directly to your inbox!

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Thanks in advance!

https://directive.com/review

Marketing Ideas & Tips for Your SMB

6 Tech-Savvy Email Marketing Tips for Central NY Businesses

Today, email isn't just for internal memos. When used correctly, it's a powerhouse tool for growth. It is our humble opinion that technology should do two things: keep your business running and help your business grow.

Here are tech-savvy strategies to master your email marketing and make the most of this powerful tool.

1. Split Up Your Lists (Market Segmentation)
You wouldn't give every employee in your office Administrator access to your server, right? You tailor permissions based on their role. You should treat your email lists with the same level of organization.

This process is called market segmentation, and it is vital for keeping your audience engaged.

Why Segmentation Matters
Think about your daily interactions in Oneonta. You speak differently to a long-time vendor than you do to a brand-new prospect. If you send a "Welcome to our services" email to a client who has been with you for ten years, it feels impersonal and robotic.

By dividing your list into groups—such as "Prospects," "Active Clients," or "Past Customers"—you ensure the right message hits the right...

Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/savvyemails

Charlotte & Chris Chase

Tech Trivia
Google consumes energy for about 200,000 homes annually.

Community Spotlight: First Night Oneonta

We have the privilege of working with many cool organizations in and around Oneonta, giving us a close look at what they're about. We believe these businesses deserve all the attention they can get, and will do what we can to showcase them. This time, we wanted to point you toward Hill City Celebrations and the work they do for our community.

Originally known as First Night Oneonta, Hill City Celebrations was founded in 1997 as a means to celebrate arts and culture in a family-friendly, alcohol free way. A board of local community members (each with impressive resumes filled with public-focused contributions) runs the organization's various events, with support from numerous Oneonta staples. We're proud to be one of the businesses that offer this support!

Hill City Celebrations will soon display their Annual Festival of Lights, beginning December 13th and lasting until January 1st, 2026—which just so happens to coincide with their annual First Night Oneonta New Year's Eve party, held at the Foothills each year. We encourage you to take advantage of these events and celebrate our community with us!

I DON'T EVEN CHECK MY LIST ANYMORE. AI DOES IT NOW. TWICE.