Your Best Year Ever
By Michael Hyatt

It's a new year - how will you crush it? Last year, many of us ended up putting our goals on the back burner. Now, it's time to kick our goals into high gear, but we need to recalibrate. That's where *Your Best Year Ever: A 5-Step Plan for Achieving Your Most Important Goals* by Michael Hyatt comes in. Hyatt brings together proven, research-driven insights that help readers create and achieve goals. He spells it all out. This book is motivating and helps lay down a strong foundation for working through your goals. If you struggled in the past, you aren't sure where to start or you simply need to recalibrate your goals, this book is not to be missed.

January 2021

**Bill Wright
Founder &
CEO**

Our Mission:
Technology systems that anchor your business and protect what you have built, from a company inspired to make the world better.

Finally Shed the Old This Year
~it's costing you much more than you think~

New year, new technology! If your business is still relying on older and aging technology, it's time to think about updating that technology. As it ages, the effort to keep it running comes with many hidden costs. While it may seem financially savvy to keep older hardware and software running, you may be setting yourself up for major costs down the road.

It's understandable why many small businesses shy away from investing in new equipment and software. They do the math and see a number that keeps rising. While the upfront costs of new technology - hardware or software - can be high (or higher than you would like), you have to consider what you would be paying for versus the cost of keeping aging technology running.

Let's start by looking at some of the "hidden" costs that come with using older or outdated technology. First, consider the cost of productivity.

The older technology gets, the less efficiently it runs. This applies to hardware and software. Hardware has a tendency to lag, even if it's well-maintained. Devices simply wear out with use. This cannot be avoided. But the productivity issues that come with aging hardware only get worse when you bring aging software into the mix. Over time, you will start to lose support from developers, and this comes with all sorts of problems. Here are three examples.

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Loss of Integration Older apps lose stable integration with companion apps. At one point, your CRM software may have worked perfectly with your billing software. As developers focus on newer versions of their apps, they stop updating past versions. The end result is more hiccups or errors. You risk losing data.

Loss of Compatibility Older apps aren't always compatible with newer apps. What should you do when still using an old software and your vendors or customers use the up-to-date version? It can result in a lot of aggravation on everyone's part, and you can end up losing customers. One Microsoft survey showed a vast majority of consumers - 91% - would walk away from a business if that business were using older technology.

Loss of Time and Money Factoring in slow equipment and a loss of integration and compatibility, aging tech makes it harder for your team to do their jobs. A recent study by Currys PC World found that employees lose an average of 46 minutes **every day** due to aging technology. That adds up to about 24 days per year and an average loss of about $3,500 per employee - though that number can vary wildly from industry to industry. You can be sure the cost in time and money has a ripple effect throughout the entire business.

While productivity takes a hit, there's another major issue that comes up when your business relies on aging technology: **security.**

As your tech ages, and as developers and support, this means you'll see fewer security patches. Eventually, there will be zero security patches, leaving you vulnerable. Developers may stop supporting older products, but hackers and cybercriminals will keep on trying to break those products. They know small businesses tend to update their systems at a slower pace, and this gives criminals an advantage.

If you get caught using outdated software and a hacker is able to break into your network, the costs associated with this kind of data breach can put a business under. It's devastating. The problem is made worse if you had limited IT security in place (or none at all) and weren't backing up your data. It's like handing your business over to the criminals! The importance of IT security cannot be overstated, and if you are working on older computers with outdated software, risks are greater.

So, what can you do? As we said before, many businesses assume that keeping their technology up-to-date is cost prohibitive. They don't want to deal with the upfront cost that comes with investing in hardware and software. While it can be costly, depending on your needs, there are ways to mitigate those costs.

One great example is through a Hardware-as-a-Service (HaaS) and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) company or program. These allow small businesses to stay current without having to drop a tidy sum in order to make it all happen. These services are often offered through managed service providers (MSPs) that are dedicated to helping small businesses with all of their IT needs, including keeping their technology updated and their network secure from outside intruders.

When you factor in the loss of productivity (and the frustration that comes with that) along with the costs of data breaches, malware infections or cyber-attacks, it can easily be worth it to kick your old tech to the curb and embrace the new!

> *"One Microsoft survey showed a vast majority of consumers - 91% - would walk away from a business if that business were using older technology."*

Microsoft 365 Tip

Ever hit send on an email, only to realize you'd sent it to the wrong person?

Argh! But never fear. Outlook knows we all make mistakes from time to time, so it has a handy recall feature. Just open your sent folder, select the offending email, click Move, Actions, and Recall This Message. If you also want to delete the email from their inbox, select Delete Unread Copies of This Message.
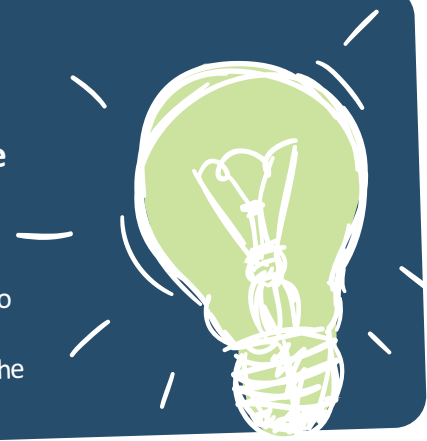
Can we help you help your people *get more done?*

So, here's a question to ask - what else could you do to help them achieve more?

If they were given the right tools:

- Tools to help them make the most of their time

- Tools that complemented what they do

- Tools that simplified processes

... could they get more done in a day?

Probably.

And fortunately, we live in an age where there is an app to help you do pretty much anything.

Why wouldn't you take advantage of that?

The thing is, it's too easy to get stuck in our ways. Yes, even when it comes to business. We log into the same software each morning, have the same grumbles about how we wish it did things differently; then carry on with our day.

Sometimes what we need is a new set of eyes. Someone who can stand back and see the simple solutions that we simply can't.

Because when something is a bait, it can be difficult to imagine a different way of doing it. Even if that new way is easier, and brings about more benefits - like a more productive team, and better customer satisfaction.

Could we be that new set of eyes for you? We'd like to offer your business a productivity audit.

During this audit, our experts will take a detailed look at your business, what you do and the tools you currently use to do it.

We'll talk to you about how your processes would work in an ideal world and help you to identify the apps or software that can help that to happen.

Before we carry out the review, we'll need to have a quick video call (no more than 15 minutes) to discuss your business, and to answer any questions you may have.

Visit //www.scheduleyou.in/53PTQqp to book your call

SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH
NexOptic DoubleTake Binoculars

You might not realize, but binocular technology has come a long way in the past 10 years. It's all thanks to advances in other areas of technology, including high-resolution cameras and high-resolution displays. Bring these technologies together along with some serious image processing, and you are left with NexOptic's DoubleTake Binoculars!

This pair of binocs is slightly smaller than a good pair of traditional lenses, but it comes with so much more, including a 12-megapixel sensor capable of shooting 4K video. It's GPS and WiFi enabled and has a Micro SD card port so you can easily save your photos and video. It's like a supercharged camera, but it has something your average phone camera does not: 10X digital zoom. It's great for travel or hobbies like birdwatching. Learn more at NexOptic.com/doubletake

Don't Let the Bad Guys Win!

If you haven't changed your passwords recently, now is the perfect time to do it! What better way to kick off the new year! It only takes a few minutes, and it's one of the simplest ways we can protect ourselves against cybercriminals.

Cybersecurity experts suggest changing our passwords every 1-3 months, but the more often you do it, the better. Hackers work overtime trying to break into apps and websites. They want usernames and passwords they can sell or exploit. If hackers get your passwords, they will try to use them. If you change your password frequently, it becomes MUCH harder for hackers to take advantage. So, put the bad guys in their place and plug in a new password!

6 time management tips for the busy entrepreneur

Face it, there will never be enough hours in the day to accomplish everything you need to do. But, if you methodically review how you spend your days and instill focus and discipline while completing daily priorities, you will soon find more time to work on the long-term success of your business. Here are six ways to do it.

1. Conduct a time audit

Sit down and review three months of activity. The data from the analysis will show where you spent your time (which projects, tasks and priorities demanded your attention) and with whom you collaborated to get the work done. The audit will also shed light on areas where you were distracted, where you were the most productive and which tasks/projects took more (or less) time than anticipated.

2. Eliminate time drains

These are the kinds of things that sneak up on you and steal time that can be put to better use growing your business. Look for these time drains: not delegating tasks, not managing meetings efficiently (tip: always have an agenda!) and spending too much time writing/ responding to e-mails. If you've done your job as a leader, members of your teams can handle a majority of meetings and e-mails. You hired great people. Now let them do their jobs.

3. Take control of your calendar

Remember, you drive you schedule; don't let others drive it. Block time throughout your day and guard against changing your schedule to work on tasks that are not important or urgent. The way you allocate your time has a direct correlation to your effectiveness as a leader and, ultimately, the performance of your business. Prudent calendar management will also send a strong signal to your team that you should take this seriously.

4. Plan your day

When you know your priorities for the day, you will be better prepared to reset your work schedule if the unexpected comes your way. Once your schedule is set, block off chunks of time to work on your priorities. I recommend 90-minute blocks so you can concentrate on big-picture items or work on a group or related tasks. Stay disciplined and don't allow yourself to go over that allotted time.

5. Limit Interruptions

Now comes the hard part. Once you start working on each priority, you need to remain focused. Close the door and don't answer the phone unless it's a critical issue. Avoid checking you e-mail. Don't let distractions slow you down.

6. Hold yourself accountable

Share your tasks, priorities and deadlines with a colleague. meet with that person at least monthly to review how well you managed your time. The probability of success increases when you have someone watching your progress and coaching you until you the cross the finish line.

Andy Bailey is the founder, CEO and lead business coach at Petra, an organization dedicated to helping business owners across the world achieve levels of success they never thought possible. With personal experience founding an Inc. 500 multimillion-dollar company that he then sold and exited, Bailey founded Petra to pass on the principles and practices he learned along the way. As his clients can attest, he can cut through organizational b.s. faster than a hot knife through butter.

Bye 2020. Thanks for nothing. Here's how to get the most from your people in 2021

What a year we've left behind.

Although, with many of the negatives we had no control over, came some positive changes to the way we all do things.

So many businesses now have people working from home on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. As much as no one asked for this, it's been great to see how many business that we work closely with have adapted. And, in the process, they have become more flexible.

This flexibility often results in a more motivated, engaged workforce. Who really appreciate the ability to work different hors and work from home (WFH). This is a huge benefit. Especially if you're looking to hire new people.

Because what's the greatest competitive advantage in your business? It's your people, of course.

We believe that offering flexible working and the choice between WFH and going into the office, will help you attract the very best people in your field.

This year is going to be a "buyer's market" for employers. A great opportunity to take on truly excellent new people.

But, of course, along with this comes a responsibility to give everyone the tools and accessibility they need to be able to excel at their roles from wherever they choose to work.

That means you, as the business owner or manager, need to be on top of issuing the right devices, keeping security tight, and network access open, but safe.

After the 2020 lockdowns, hopefully you've already got the fundamentals in place. But going forward, it's as important to offer your team as much IT support in their homes, as they get in the office.

Do you need help with that? Let's chat.

LATEST TECH ALERT

You can't beat a good night's sleep

We all know how important it is to sleep well. But for those of us who struggle, it's not always as easy to know how to improve our sleep.

The Beddit Sleep Monitor promises to not only track sleep, but to monitor your heart rate, breathing, and even your snoring! You can set sleep goals and the monitor should, over time, help you to improve your sleep cycle.

Worth a try if your business is keeping you up at night and you need some more shut-eye!

Does your team need an at home VoIP upgrade?

As WFH rolls into another year, don't forget to look at the phones your team use.

You don't just have to default to them using their mobile. There's a huge amount of choice available.

For example, you could easily let them access your business's usual VoIP phone network from their home. So, people can still direct dial them on the same number.

There are huge benefits to this. Apart from helping them to compartmentalize work calls and personal calls, the sound quality of calls on VoIP can be significantly better than on a traditional phone.

In terms of the kit needed for this, that can be tailored to each person's personal preferences.

Some will want a traditional handset. That's easily done. Others will prefer a headset. And some may just want the VoIP software on their laptop, and not have a "proper" phone at all.

All these options and more are easy. And allow you to give each member of your team the setup that suits them.

Three questions for you:

1. Do you currently have an IT support company?
2. How happy are you with them?
3. If the answer isn't "they're amazing", let's jump on a Zoom

Everything that happened in 2020 taught businesses round here just how important proactive, responsive IT support is.

If you'd like to set up a 15 minute Zoom, go to my live calendar at

https://www.scheduleyou.in/53PTQqp

QUESTION
How do I keep my laptop battery in good health?

ANSWER
The batteries in most of our devices these days are Lithium ion batteries, which are easy to take care of. Read your device's instructions for the most accurate advice. But, in general, the battery will last longer if you don't let it go flat between charges, keep it cool, and don't leave it plugged in when it's on 100%.

QUESTION
Is it ok to use public WiFi?

ANSWER
Public WiFi isn't secure. Even if it needs a password to access, other people could still see what you're doing if they wanted to. That said, you can use it more safely if you turn off sharing on your device, and use a VPN (Virtual Private Network) if you're doing more than browsing the news.

QUESTION
Do I really need to 'eject' USB drives?

ANSWER
Yes! To improve performance, computers store tasks, so they can complete a few at the same time. So, when you move a file across to a USB drive it may say it's completed, but it may not actually be done. If you just remove the USB drive, you risk data loss. Hitting eject ensures your file is moved as it should be.

Tech Fact #1

Did you realize the Firefox logo isn't a fox? Because of the browser's name, people assume it's a fox. But it's actually a red panda.

Tech Fact #2

We read at different speeds, depending on what we're reading from. **If it's a screen, we're 10% slower** than if we were reading from paper.

Tech Fact #3

On average, spam emails get one reply for every twelve million sent

Tech Fact #4

Always plug in your USB the wrong way round first try? **So do 86% of people.** So, don't be embarrassed.

Technology Update

Is everyone in your business working on a device that's best suited to their role?

Technology can be exhausting, with the constant new releases, updates, and ever evolving capabilities. But, without it, things would be very different, wouldn't they?

We know it can be costly to furnish your team with new devices. However, it is worth taking some time just to check that everyone has the right device to do their job to the best of their ability.

For example, an additional monitor might benefit someone working in design. Or a speedier processor may be more suitable for someone working on big projects.

Taking a little time to assess this now could increase productivity and save you some time further down the line.

It's worth noting that supplies of some hardware are STILL a little erratic due to Covid production interruptions. It's certainly worth planning more, and making sure you have spare technology available.
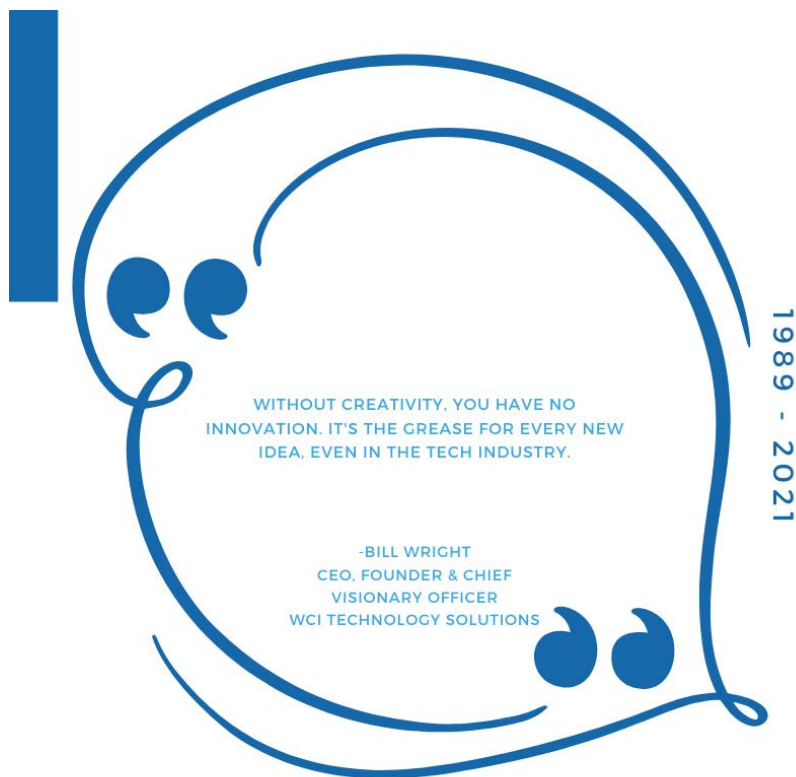
As always, if you need any help, give us a call.

WCI TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Inspirational Quote of the Month:

"If future generations are to remember us more with gratitude than sorrow, we must achieve more than just the miracles of technology. We must also leave them a glimpse of the world as it was created, not just as it looked when we got through with it."

-Lyndon B. Johnson, former US President

WITHOUT CREATIVITY, YOU HAVE NO
INNOVATION. IT'S THE GREASE FOR EVERY NEW
IDEA, EVEN IN THE TECH INDUSTRY.

-BILL WRIGHT
CEO, FOUNDER & CHIEF
VISIONARY OFFICER
WCI TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

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4 ways to make sure your business is ready for what 2021 may bring

As you prep for the coming year, here are four things you need to give your business a serious edge.

1. **Head to the cloud.** Back up your data to secure cloud storage. This makes it a breeze for you and your team to access. Should anything be disrupted onsite, you have a backup you can turn to.

2. **Update, Update, Update!** Patch all of your security solutions, apps, programs - you name it. You don't want to accidentally leave yourself open to security exploits because you're four months behind on the latest security patch.
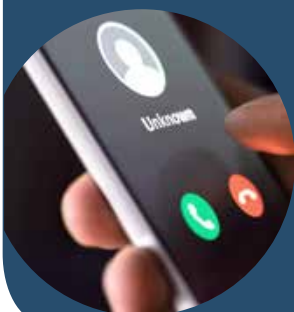
3. **Dive into software-as-a-service (SaaS).** One great way to stay ahead of the curve on software is to pair with a SaaS for your various needs, such as marketing, project management or billing. It's easier to keep updated and integrated with the latest and most reliable software on the market.

4. **Call your MSP.** Talk to your managed service provider to make sure all of your current needs are being met. Do you need additional protection? Do you need to back up data more frequently? Do your employees need more IT security training? Look for gaps and work together to fill them.

The "Human Firewall"
What is it and why you should be freaked out by it

Social engineering is a scary thing, and we're all vulnerable. It starts when scammers try to build trust with their victims. They trick their victims into handing over email addresses, physical addresses, phone numbers and passwords.

Scammers often use phishing emails (and sometimes phone calls) posing as legitimate sources to get this information. They might tell you they're a representative at your bank or your favorite online store. They may even pose as one of your colleagues. They prey on your desire to help or fix a problem.

Social engineering works because scammers know how to break through the "human firewall," or the people in your organization. You can have all the malware protection in the world, but hackers can still break in by exploiting your employees.

How can you protect yourself and ensure your human firewall isn't breached? While no method can stop social engineering completely, ongoing cyber security training can go a long way in patching that firewall. When your team knows what to look for and how to deal with it, they can stop the scammers in their tracks.