WCI Technology Insider

Insider Tech Tips – Written for Humans, Not Geeks

12 Months to $1 Million
by Ryan Daniel Moran

While first starting your entrepreneurial journey, you'll come across many sources that claim to give you an "easy path to success". Considering the fact that more than half of all businesses close within their first six months, it's safe to say that there is no easy path to success. Instead, it takes plenty of hard work and dedication to run a successful business, especially if you hope to reach the $1 million mark. In Ryan Daniel Moran's book, *12 Months to $1 Million: How to Pick a Winning Product, Build a Real Business, and Become a Seven-Figure Entrepreneur,* he explains that it is possible for your business to reach the $1 million mark within the first year by following his plan. He'll take you through step-by-step and explain how to grind, grow and reap benefits from your hard work.

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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.

Stay Compliant
by Upping Your Cyber-Security Practices

If you own or operate a business, there are plenty of things you must do to ensure success. You have to make the right hiring decisions; develop a product or service that you can sell; build relationships with clients, employees and partners; and much more. One of the biggest responsibilities that comes with owning or operating a business is ensuring that your business is compliant with any guidelines put in place by regulatory bodies.

Every business needs to make an effort to stay compliant, and a big part of that is making sure your cyber-security practices are up to standards. With technology rapidly advancing and regulations changing fairly often, you have to stay up-to-date on any changes that should be made going forward. You also need to make an effort to plug any holes in your current cyber-security plan.

You can do this by asking yourself a few questions and making the necessary adjustments if you answer no to any of the following:

- Is my business protected by a firewall and anti-virus software?

- Do I use backup solutions, and do I have a disaster recovery plan in place?

- Has my storage stayed up-to-date with any technological changes?

- Do I have any content or e-mail spam filtering software?

- What data am I encrypting?

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Ensuring that your business stays compliant will be extremely important in maintaining client and employee relationships. If a customer's information gets compromised because your business did not have the necessary cyber-security in place, they probably won't come through your doors again. As technology changes and evolves, so do many of the regulations and cyber-security practices that you should put in place. It can be difficult to become compliant if your business was lacking previously. Luckily, there are a few steps you can take to help ensure that your business becomes and stays compliant with any regulating bodies.

First, you should document all of the consumer data your business holds. If a customer asks what information your business has collected on them, then you should be able to give them an honest answer. You might also be obligated to share this information, you will be able to supply your customers with it if they ever do ask.

It can also help greatly to partner with a managed services provider who manages IT needs since they will be able to perform routine IT data checks and work to better protect your customer and the private information within you business. MSPs go a long way toward helping all of your potential IT needs, but their usage when it comes to cyber-security, protection and compliance should not be underestimated. Partnering with an MSP will help get your business on the fast track to becoming cyber-secure.

Another big part of ensuring that your business stays compliant is to introduce cyber-security training for all of your employees. Did you know that 95% of cyber-attacks start with human error? If your team has not bought into a cyber-secure culture, or does not know the proper cyber-security practices, you could be in some trouble. Make sure that cyber-security training is part of your onboarding process and continue to train your employees throughout their tenure with your business.

Once your employees are aware of the risks of cyber-attacks and have bought into a cyber-secure culture, it's time to upgrade your cyber-security. One of the best things you can do for your business is to invest in regular software patching. Technology is ever-evolving, and we should make the necessary changes to ensure it continues to cooperate with our network and systems. Put technology in place to cover these holes or partner with an MSP that can help take care of any lapses in your cyber-security.

Additionally, you should invest in some content-filtering software. There are plenty of toxic websites with nefarious intent that can wreak havoc on your cyber-security if accessed by an employee on your network. Content filtering allows you to restrict certain websites. It also goes a step further by recognizing patterns in websites that have malicious codes and blocking those websites that might pose a risk.

Cyber-security and compliance work right alongside each other. If you're trying to ensure that your business stays compliant, you need to buff up your cyber-security practices. There are many methods you can take to do this, but if you're unsure of where to begin, give us a call. We would be happy to help you take the next steps toward creating a cyber-secure business.

New to Microsoft 365

We approve the Approvals App

If your people spend a lot of time emailing each other to get approvals or sign off of documents, projects, or ideas, this one is for you.

The Approvals App in Teams allows you to manage the things you need to sign off, and those you need others to sign off, all in one super-organized place.

You can also see the status of each request and who it was sent to, at a glance.

Are you still running your business from your office?

Surprisingly, I'm NOT talking about hybrid or remote workers.

Instead, the question in the headline refers to your servers, your systems, and your network. Are they all in-house? Or have you - like countless other businesses - moved everything over to the cloud yet?

Migrating your business systems to the cloud can be a big and scary process. Then why are we seeing so many companies doing it?

That's simple - there are SO many benefits.

First, it saves you money. That's because you only pay for the data you need rather than having a little bit more "just in case". And it means that your systems won't hold you back as your business grows.

But then there's the security aspect, too. When you migrate to cloud services, you benefit from a higher level of protection against data breach and theft. Plus, cyber-security aside, if you had a disaster in the office, such as a burglary or a fire, you'd know your data is safe.

Of course, it's a tricky process and there's a lot of planning involved. But, if you're working with an expert to make the transition, you can rest assured that things will go to plan.

We recently wrote a guide to cloud migration. It goes into more detail on the pros and cons of moving your business to the cloud. Would you like a copy? Just drop us an email and we'll send it over to you.

Why Validation is Important to Your Franchise System

For many franchisers, the validation stage in the investigative process is an incredibly important opportunity that they don't take advantage of. It's a chance to convince franchisee candidates that your franchise is worth their time, effort and money. If you're a franchiser, you need to have a solid validation strategy to convince franchisees to sign on - and that might take some effort. Below, you'll find the four main reasons the validation process is important to your franchise system.

1. You can demonstrate your brand's value
2. You'll gain more trust and credibility from your potential franchisee
3. You can show off your support network
4. They'll get a greater understanding of the big picture

10 Habits to Ensure Equality in Your Hybrid Team

Businesses across the country are switching over to hybrid work environments. If you're in this boat, you may be wondering how to keep things fair between your remote and in-office employees. Below you'll find 10 habits to implement that will create an equal environment for all of your employees.

Change How You Track Productivity When you work in an office, many consider "working" to simply mean being in a work environment. If you have a hybrid team, you need to come up with a new system to track productivity. This measurement should be based on output results.

Standardize Your Meetings
It can be awkward and frustrating for a remote employee who can't hear or see what's going on during a meeting due to poor camera angles or audio issues. It can help to have your entire team meet on Zoom, rather than just those who are working remotely.

Use Public Channels
Use public channels like Slack or Microsoft Teams for communication between your team to ensure everyone is in the loop.

Digitize Your Resources
You need to have digital resources readily available for your remote team members because they can't simply ask their nearest coworker of check office records for information.

Keep Remote and Office Workplaces Consistent
You may have spent a lot of money designing your workplace but you also have remote employees who may be working in cramped spaces. Make sure your design principles extend to your remote employees. This will help so that productivity, safety, training and brand representation will all remain consistent.

Diversify Company Rituals
Many businesses focus on creating a company culture, but this becomes difficult with remote and in-office employees. You need to make sure your company and team-building rituals include everyone.

Equal Rewards
There should not be a difference between the rewards your in-office and remote employees receive. Make sure you are acknowledging your remote employees on public channels and sending them gifts or perks since they can't participate in team lunches.

Coordinate Team Schedules
If you have employees coming and going from the office at all hours of the day, communication can get fuzzy. Try to keep your departments' schedules lined up so people can still use on another as resources.
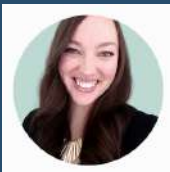
Repeat Important Announcements
Your remote employees will not be in the break room hearing about everything that's happening in the office. You need to keep them informed of any ongoing developments with the business or other major announcements.

Seek Feedback
You should always try to get feedback from your remote and in-office team members so you can make necessary adjustments. The experience needs to work for all of your employees, so feedback is critical.

By putting some of these tactics into action, your hybrid team will be working more cooperatively and efficiently than ever before.

Laurel Farrer is the president of the Remote Work Association and CEO of Distribute Consulting. She specializes in advocating for the impact of workplace transformation on corporate and economic growth.

What would you love to see next?

Is it just us, or have productivity tools improved really dramatically over the last couple of years?

OK, so a little thing called Covid-19 may have had something to do with it. But, as business owners and managers, we're really reaping the rewards that the hasty change to the way we work has brought about.

Compared to a few years ago, we save so much time by holding video meetings and collaborating using tools like Teams and SharePoint. We've even figure out hot to book meetings without countless emails back and forth trying to find a time when everyone is available.

And the even greater thing is, there seem to be updates and new apps being released pretty much every week.

We're being spoiled 😳

With this is mind, in our office we've been talking about the next apps we'd like to see on our computers and devices. While it might be a while till we get an app that can freeze time, there have been some great ideas.

So, we wanted to ask you: what application would you LOVE to see to make your business better, or even help you out in your free time?

Would you like something that automatically prioritizes your day's work? Or how about a gadget that makes you a coffee when you really need it?

We'd love to hear your ideas, so share them with us on social media!

Did You Know?

In a recent report, 63% of businesses said they'd had a security breach as a direct result of a member of their team side-stepping security measures.

Smh.

To help your team make smart cyber-security decisions, they need training to understand why security measures are in place.

How often does your business talk openly about cyber-security? How often do you do formal training for them?

If you need help in accomplishing these steps, reach out to us. We'd love to help.

Technology Update

Finally, guest joining you on Teams meetings will not be able to benefit from live captioning. This handy feature went live for everyone at the end of last month.

Did you know that you can view live captions in up to six different languages during a meeting? And event organizers can select a language from a list of more than 50.

In just a few years, Teams has become the must have communication and collaboration tool for businesses.

What's your favorite feature?

Question

How does speech recognition work?

ANSWER
Software breaks down your speech into individual sounds, then analyses them using algorithms to find the most probable word that fits. it will also look at sentence structure that humans typically use.

Question

How can I make my passwords more secure?

ANSWER
Use a password manager. It will generate and store long strong random passwords for all your accounts. We can recommend the best one for your business.

Question

Is a paperless office really better for security?

ANSWER
While paper documents are impossible to steal remotely, once they are lost, there's no chance of recovery. Go paperless and invest in a good backup... just make sure your IT partner is regularly checking it's working properly.

Who will win this month's quiz crown?

You do have a crown for the quiz winner, right?!

1. **Which state can be typed using just the middle row of a QWERTY keyboard?**

2. **What company introduced the computer disk in 1956?**

3. **In which decade was the @ sign chosen to be used in email addresses?**

4. **What's the name of the space where you enter data in an Excel Spreadsheet?**

5. **What is a beta test?**
The answers are on page 8.

Tech Fact #1

The first ever camera, a camera obscura, took a massive 8 hours to snap a photo. Imagine holding your pose that long... luckily, that photo was the view from the inventor's window 190 years ago. The first ever photo of a human was in 1839. That only took 10 minutes of exposure.

Tech Fact#3

in 1982, the computer was named TIME magazine's Man of the Year

Tech Fact #2

In 2012 a robotic fish was placed in a tank of real golden shiners. The robot simulated the fishy motions so well, it was eventually accepted and became their leader.

Bill's Favorite Business Gadget of the Month

Still spending lots of time on video calls and meetings? You need a great headset. How about the $129 Logitech Zone Wired Headset.

It's useless for calls on the go. But at your desk this is the perfect headset for clear audio. The noise-cancelling microphone even picks up low volume speech. It is Teams-certified which means you can launch Teams from the headset with a single button push.

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Inspirational Quote of the Month:

"The key to success for everything in business, science and technology is never to follow the others."

- Masaru Ibuka, co-founder of Sony

QUIZ Answers

1. ALASKA

2. IBM

3. 1970'S (1972 TO BE PRECISE)

4. A CELL

5. A TRIAL TEST OF COMPUTER SOFTWARE BEFORE IT'S COMMERCIAL LAUNCHED

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The Worst Month for the Stock Market Since the Pandemic Began

The stock market saw a very rough start to kick off 2022. Some stocks that saw rises throughout the past two years suffered from the opposite effect in January. Vaccine make Moderna, one of the last year's top-performing stocks, started the year down nearly 40%. This drop is believed to be caused by research suggesting that the firm's booster shot is less effective against the omicron variant.

Another company that experienced a big drop is Netflix. They had poor fourth-quarter earnings and saw their shares drop 37% in January. With higher prices announced for every streaming package on Netflix, it seems unlikely that their stock is in for an immediate bounceback. Other stocks that had a major negative trend in January are Etsy, Advanced Micro Devices, Nvidia, Caesars Entertainment and Domino's Pizza. Stocks have swung wildly since the year began, and only time will tell if things return to a level of normalcy for many companies that had stock increases throughout the pandemic.

Using Multiple Public Clouds in Your Business? Try Out Cross-Cloud

Public clouds are commonplace among businesses these days. A public cloud is an IT model where on-demad computing services and infrastructure are managed by a third-party provider and shared with multiple organizations using the public Internet. About 73% of businesses are currently using two or more public clouds. This is becoming a problem because most public clouds are not designed to operate alongside other cloud systems.

Almost half of technology executives report that their cloud structure is increasingly complicated, but they are looking to increase consistency across their public cloud environments. The cross-cloud operating model is aimed at fixing any inconsistencies between clouds and making them more compatible with each other. With cross-cloud, operators can deploy, monitor and manage apps for every cloud. This will allow businesses to spend more time working on their business and less time trying to manage multi-cloud dilemmas. The VMware Cross-Cloud services portfolio is an industry-first, multi-cloud architecture that unifies app and cloud infrastructure, development and operations.