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### Can Your Computer Support Consultant Answer These 3 Questions Correctly?



There is a massive difference between being able to fix a broken computer and managing the IT for an entire business. It's critical that the person/people/company managing your IT understands the reason you have IT in the first place.

If you are shopping around for a new IT consultant, you want to make sure you are asking these questions...



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<https://dti.io/ans3quest>

## 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.

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## How Your Small Business Can Benefit from the Internet of Things



The Internet of Things (IoT) is one of the most interesting technology markets emerging for small and mid-sized businesses for some time. It can cut down on a lot of time and effort in several different functions of your business. We'd like to spend some time this month taking a look at some of the ways small and mid-sized businesses are utilizing the IoT.

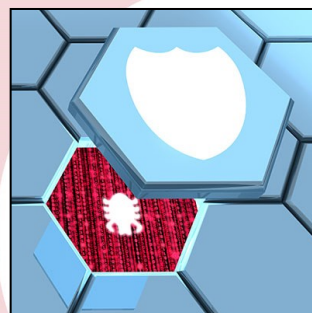
Before we get into individual use cases, we should admit that the concept of IoT devices over the years has been connected to a wide range of cybersecurity issues. Obviously, this should bring up some concerns, but when implemented properly and safely, they can bring a lot of value and automation to your business. We can't stress enough how important it is to have an IT professional who knows how to integrate new tools into an environment that has extremely important data flowing in and out of it regularly.

### IoT Improves Business Automation

With all the tools out there that claim to improve efficiency, it is difficult to identify which of them can actually work for your business. Really what you should be looking for are ways to automate repetitive and mundane tasks so that your employees don't have to spend a

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Understanding the Vulnerabilities and Exploits You'll Face



We understand that cybersecurity can be difficult to think about at times because of the terminology thrown around by industry professionals, but we want to do our part to help clear up some of the confusion. Today, we're going to discuss the difference between vulnerabilities and exploits, as well as how your organization can do everything it can to ensure that both are minimized on your company network.

### What Are Vulnerabilities?

Vulnerabilities are cracks in the code of the various solutions your business uses throughout its day-to-day operations. Hackers can use these cracks to gain access to a system. Unfortunately, vulnerabilities are something that the development and cybersecurity communities have had to, and will continue to, deal with, and there is no way to really stop it. Let us explain.

Sometimes vulnerabilities go undiscovered for a long period of time, only surfacing after they are either no longer relevant or when they are actively being exploited by hackers.

*(Continued on page 3)*



## IT Project Management for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses

To get a successful technology project, you need the perspective of the pros

Every business should be looking to technology to increase efficiency and accomplish their organizational goals. When a business looks to introduce new technology, it often presents challenges that could impact its ability to function optimally.

Our team of dedicated IT technicians are proficient in helping our clients deploy the technology they need in a manner that ensures they can hit the ground running. If you have some anxiety about adding the technology that can immediately improve your business because your team lacks the knowledge and experience needed to do so, we can help!

### End-to-End Support for IT Projects

Providing the stable hand needed to see your IT projects through

The fact is that IT projects can put a strain on your business, especially if they aren't well managed. At Directive, we pride ourselves on making all technology-based...



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## 5 Reasons Why You Need Managed IT



When it comes to your technology, you can never be too careful. It's critical that you look at your IT infrastructure as an investment, and one that will save you countless hours and considerable sums of money if you take proper care of it. Here are five reasons your business should prioritize proactive IT maintenance over reactive, or break-fix, IT maintenance.

Proactive maintenance and management means that you are identifying issues and addressing them before they become major problems. This naturally leads to less downtime, as you are addressing the issues that lead to downtime before they have a chance to develop any further.

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### More Productivity

While you might have once been focused on reacting to problems, you can instead reclaim this time and spend it on more productive initiatives. For example, maybe you spend half an hour every morning wrestling with your computer to work properly. If you take care of it and nip these issues in the bud, you can use that time to instead outline your plans for the day, leading to more focused work throughout the workday. All of this compounds over time, too.

### More Predictability

Technology can be unpredictable at times, to say the least, but when you proactively maintain your technology, you are essentially planning for the future and all of the possible scenarios that could occur. All of this makes it easier to make decisions about when...



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## How Your Small Business Can Benefit from the Internet of Things

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lot of their time focused on them. The Internet of Things presents an opportunity to fill in a lot of the gaps with tools that can actually improve efficiency. One of the most notable ways it can help is in the management of your brick and mortar locations. Smart technology has made significant strides in centralized management and security since their inception and can provide your business with the following functionality:

- **Managing temperature** - IoT sensors can control HVAC systems and adjust heating and cooling to save energy. With energy prices currently in a steady climb, this can add up to significant cost savings over time.
- **Managing lighting** - As with HVAC controls, controlling the cost of lighting in your business' location(s) can be of great benefit. In fact,

according to the U.S. Department of Energy adding IoT lighting controls can reduce lighting energy consumption by nearly half.

- **Managing building maintenance** - Sensors connected to a business' IT infrastructure or machinery can deliver the data needed to allow managers to make more informed decisions about their business. This can have a positive effect on location maintenance and scheduling.
- **Energy consumption** - On top of controlling costs, IoT tools can provide managers with a lot of great information to help make decisions that not only help the bottom line, they also can improve efficiency and productivity. know, the better. The IoT provides a lot of good information for decision makers to use...



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## Understanding the Vulnerabilities and Exploits You'll Face

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This is because of the nature of software development; no developer, no matter how skilled, can take into account the development of new and unpredictable threats, hence the ongoing battle between security researchers and developers versus hackers. Vulnerabilities are the reason why you want to apply patches and updates regularly, so you can dodge any potential exploits aimed at them.

### What Are Exploits?

If vulnerabilities are the roads that hackers use to access your network, you can think of exploits as the vehicle used to drive on them. Exploits are when a hacker actively seeks to use a vulnerability to gain access to a system or spread a threat. The biggest difference between vulnerabilities and

exploits is that a vulnerability is a theoretical weakness, whereas the exploit is the thing that is actively taking advantage of it. Exploits are incredibly dangerous and demand the utmost attention in order to preserve network integrity.

### What Do You Do?

We recommend that all businesses take a three-pronged approach to anything related to cybersecurity, including the following:

- Apply patches and security updates as needed to remove vulnerabilities, thereby lessening the chance of suffering from an exploit or data...



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<https://dti.io/undsexploit>

## Tighten Things Up With Better Collaboration



Costs are rising and companies need to do more with less. Not only that, they depend on several de-

partments of their business to work together to meet customer demands and complete projects. Let's take a look at some collaboration tips and the tools that can help build a better, more collaborative and productive business.

### Find the Right Resources

An issue many businesses run into when undertaking major collaborative tasks is expecting A-level work from someone that isn't trained or experienced in doing that type of work. This can happen because of improper project management and delegation, or it can simply be because there are heavy workloads on the more experienced resource. Regardless of what the reason is, having your best people doing their best work on what they're best at is sure to help take your business where you want it to go.

### Lines of Communication

Communication is a key component to any collaborative endeavor, but if your team doesn't have access to the robust communications tools that are now available, your team's efficiency may be less than desirable. Since most teams are made up of workers from different departments, they may have different perspectives and ideas. Having productive lines of communication can lead to better products, better services, and the production of more revenue.

### Stay on Task

One crucial issue some multi-user projects need to establish early on is shared goals. Not just the result that they want to see, but also timelines, deadlines, and so on. Not every member of your team is going to think the same way and having shared goals will be important to fulfill the work as expected.

### What Technology Can Help?

Technology is a big part of collaboration in modern business. Here are three...



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## CYBERSECURITY TIPS

### Cryptocurrency Investment Phishing

Cybercriminals are targeting the booming cryptocurrency market to make a killing off of human error.

In this micro training we're taking a look at the how, when, and where of these latest scams and offering some tips on keeping yourself, your contacts, and your crypto-wallet safe.

In this Micro Training video, learn some of the best practices for using social media securely.

<https://dti.io/cryptoinvstmntphishing>

### Get our Cybersecurity Tips to your inbox weekly!

Each week we send an email with FREE cybersecurity tips to help you to avoid a data breach. These tips can be used to educate yourself and your employees on security best practices.

Sign up today!  
<https://dti.io/gettips>

## REVIEW DIRECTIVE ON



We would *love* to hear your feedback, and would be incredibly grateful if you could take a couple of minutes to write a quick Google review for us. This will allow us to improve our service and let others recognize the value we provide.

*Thanks in advance!*

<https://directive.com/review>

## Marketing Ideas & Tips for Your SMB

### Five Reasons You Need To Use a High-Quality Template for Your Website



Your website is the primary marketing tool for your business, and as such, it must look and operate as expected. It has become a pretty standard practice for smaller businesses to use prebuilt WordPress or Joomla templates as opposed to paying a designer to build a custom website from scratch. It saves money, and it gets you, essentially, the same end result. However, not all templates are created equal. An inferior

template or theme will end up costing you in the end.

What kinds of problems do we commonly see with third-party templates or themes? Quick note: Joomla calls them templates, WordPress calls them themes. To keep the rest of this post simple, we're going to continue referring to them as templates.

The template determines the look and feel of your website. Most templates are customizable, and most also come with

hard-coded elements and features to make them stand out from one another. Usually, once you commit to a template, it can take some work to move to a different one, because design elements you were once using might not be available in the new template you choose, or might not be coded in a way that just carries over. It's all pretty complicated, and no solution is perfect. We're going to...



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<https://dti.io/5hqwhy>

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.

### Employee Spotlight: Chris Gilbertson



We're all about celebrating our people here at Directive, acknowledging what makes them the unique individuals we're so happy to work with. This time around, we wanted to introduce you to Chris Gilbertson, sales engineer and all-around cool guy.

Raised in Laurens, NY, Chris G (as we call him) grew up with Devin and Dillon Chase as his close friends. A few years after earning his Associates degree from Tompkins Cortland Community College, that connection came in handy. Now he works closely with Devin to make the sales that we rely on. Chris G loves that he can work with his friends, both new and old, assisting businesses with their growth.

When he isn't closing deals, he's a fan of hanging out with friends, playing video games, and going out to eat. At home, Chris G has adorably-named pets: two cats (Jolee and Schnikes) and two dogs (Pip and Boomer). Someday, he'd like to double his number of dogs. He'd also love to travel the world and skydive, but we're not ready to let him go just yet. Thank you for everything you do, Chris G... we look forward to more years with you on our team!



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