

# CST TECHNOLOGY TIMES

Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably

## "passionate NOT pushy"

By Lisa Brown, CEO & Founder

You don't realize how important a plan is, until you need one!

Shawn and I spent most of October in Florida. The plan was to take a much-needed vacation with our children and grandchildren to celebrate our birthdays and 20th wedding anniversary and spend time with our Florida clients. God had different plans!

We arrived in Florida on September 29th and the flight was lovely. No major delays or complications and Bella was an amazing puppy nestled under the seat in front of Shawn. It was great to see our two grown children, our daughter-in-law and our five grandchildren. We were all excited about heading to the Keys for a week-long vacation. We packed up our campers on October 3rd and made the drive down the coast to Jolly Rogers Campground. What an amazing vacation stop with beautiful amenities. The fishing and sunsets were incredible. If you are looking for a place, I highly recommend it. Although we were watching the weather, the initial indications of hurricanes were not concerning us, until October 6th. After talking to Campground Management, we decided to cut our vacation short and head home to secure both our children's home along with our daughter-in-law's parents.



From October 6th – 9th, we prepared for Hurricane Milton. IT WAS THE MOST NERVE RACKING EXPERIENCE WE HAVE EVER BEEN THROUGH! News reports did not sound good, so we prepared for the worst. We put up hurricane shutters, moved everything from outside, that could potentially fly around, to the garage, secured campers, vehicles and animals (our granddaughter has a horse).

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CST Group Inc.

This monthly publication is provided courtesy of Shawn & Lisa Brown, Owners.



### OUR MISSION:

CST Group Inc. is a PROACTIVE technology management firm that specializes in helping compliance-driven industries to SECURE, PROTECT and MANAGE their technology.



## HACKERS ARE WATCHING:

Follow These Simple Steps For Safe Holiday Traveling

As holiday travel picks up, hackers see a prime opportunity to exploit travelers who may let their guard down on their digital security. Security risks like phishing, public WiFi and lost devices can easily compromise your personal information during travel. But it's not just your data at stake – when employees let their guard down, they can unknowingly open the door to threats for their entire company.

According to World Travel Protection, only about 30% of companies require employees to follow basic cyber security measures while traveling. This leaves a significant gap in protection, potentially exposing entire organizations to serious risks. Here's how to safeguard yourself and your business during busy holiday travel.

### Safety Tips For Before, During And After A Trip

To avoid the stress of lost devices, stolen data or a security breach that could ruin your trip, make cyber security a priority by taking a few simple steps before, during and after your journey.

#### BEFORE YOUR TRIP



##### 1. Update All Devices

Software updates often include patches for security vulnerabilities.

##### 2. Back Up Important Data

If your laptop containing vital client presentations is stolen, a cloud-based or other secure backup will allow you to get your data back without significant disruption.

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### 3. Use Multifactor Authentication (MFA)

MFA adds an extra layer of security by requiring more than just a password to access accounts. This makes it much harder for hackers to gain access, even if they have your password.

### 4. Restrict Access To Sensitive Data

If you don't need certain files or applications while on the road, temporarily remove access. This reduces the risk of compromised sensitive information if your device is stolen or hacked.

### 5. Secure Your Devices

Ensure all devices are password-protected and encrypted. Encryption scrambles your data, making it unreadable to unauthorized users.

## SAFE PRACTICES WHILE TRAVELING



#### 1. Avoid Public WiFi

If you must connect, use a virtual private network (VPN) to encrypt your Internet traffic. This acts as a secure tunnel between your device and the Internet, protecting your data from prying eyes.

#### 2. Be Cautious Of Public Charging Stations

Public USB charging stations can be

compromised by attackers looking to steal data or install malware on your device – a practice known as “juice jacking.” Plug your charger into an electrical outlet or use a USB data blocker, which prevents data transfer.

#### 3. Never Leave Devices Unattended

Always keep your devices with you or securely locked away. If you must leave your laptop in your hotel room, use a physical lock to store it. Never hand your device to strangers, even if they appear to be offering help.

#### 4. Disable Bluetooth

Turn off Bluetooth when not using it, especially in public places. Hackers can exploit open Bluetooth connections to gain access to your devices.

#### 5. Pay Attention To Online Activity

Phishing, business e-mail compromise and online shopping scams are common during the holiday season. Always verify the authenticity of e-mails, especially those requesting sensitive information or urgent action.

## RETURNING HOME: POST-TRAVEL SECURITY CHECK



Security awareness doesn't stop once you get home. Sometimes, you don't know until you return that you've been hacked.

### 1. Review Account Activity

Once you're back home, review your accounts and look for unusual logins or transactions you didn't initiate.

### 2. Change Passwords

If you accessed sensitive information while traveling, it's a good idea to change your passwords when you get home. This ensures that any potential compromises during your trip don't lead to long-term issues.

## Consider A Company-Wide Travel Policy

To further protect your business, consider implementing a company-wide travel cyber security policy. This policy should outline the expectations and procedures for employees traveling on business or working remotely. Key elements to include are:

- Guidelines for using public networks
- Reporting lost or stolen devices
- Responding to potential security incidents

Following these simple steps will significantly reduce travel-related cyber security risks and ensure that you can travel with peace of mind.



## IMPORTANT WEBINAR:

JOIN LISA AND CO-HOST, SHERRY BOYEA with COMMUNITY BANK to learn...

**"Smart Strategies for Protecting Your Finances and Your Business This Holiday Season"**

**Wednesday, November 13th at 9am**

- Navigating Online Shopping Risks
- Protecting Against Scams and Fraud
- Building a Culture of Security
- Develop and Implement Effective Training Programs for Your Employees

**Register at [www.cstsupport.com/webinar](http://www.cstsupport.com/webinar)**

## CARTOON OF THE MONTH



Take the groundhog - now that's a sweet gig."

## MARC RANDOLPH EXPLAINS HOW TO GET YOUR COMPANY THINKING LIKE A START-UP



After a failed attempt to sell to Blockbuster, Netflix founder Marc Randolph made a life-altering decision: if you can't join 'em, beat 'em. Despite being \$50 million in debt, Netflix ultimately succeeded in toppling the video rental giant within a decade. While this story is often seen as a beacon of hope for start-ups, it teaches established companies a different lesson: the real threat may come from an unexpected competitor who targets your weaknesses, not your strengths. Randolph says, "If you're not willing to disrupt yourself, you're leaving it wide-open for someone to disrupt your business for you."

Having worked with numerous early-stage companies, Randolph has identified five key elements that foster innovation and help companies disrupt their markets – or defend against those disruptions. These ideas provide a road map for thinking like a start-up, no matter the size of your company.

### 1. Innovation Can Happen Anywhere

You don't need to be in Silicon Valley to innovate. Randolph notes, "I just got back from Australia, where I saw a company using drones to implant seeds for reforestation by firing them into the ground from 60 feet up." The Internet has leveled the playing field, making it possible for anyone, anywhere, to develop groundbreaking ideas.

### 2. You Don't Need To Be A Genius Or Have Special Skills

Randolph knows entrepreneurs from all walks of life. One dropped out of college and transitioned from driving an ambulance to fighting forest fires before starting his own company. Another, a musician who spent a decade in a ska band, created and sold a

music-streaming service. Even teenagers are making waves in the business world. "I've found that the most disruptive people are not the A or B students," Randolph says. "They're the C students who managed to navigate the education system without having all the risk-taking squeezed out of them."

### 3. Embrace Risk, But Not Recklessness

A successful innovator embraces calculated risks that come from starting down a path without knowing exactly where it leads. "If you wait until you've figured out what's around the corner through analysis and research, someone's already beaten you there," Randolph advises.

### 4. Generate Ideas - Lots of Them

To innovate, you need more than just one good idea – you need hundreds. "It doesn't matter if they're big ideas or even particularly original ones," Randolph says. The Post-it Note, for example, which sells nearly a billion dollars' worth every year, wasn't groundbreaking but proved immensely successful. Knowing in advance if an idea is good or bad is impossible. The only way to find out is to take that risk, build something and put it to the test.

### 5. Confidence Is Key

Finally, you need confidence in your ideas, even when life gets in the way or others doubt you. "Everyone who has ever taken a shower has had an idea," Randolph quotes Nolan Bushnell, founder of Atari. "But it's the person who gets out of the shower, towels off and does something about it who makes the difference."

## SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH

### Portable-Charger-Power-Bank

The Portable-Charger-Power-Bank 40000mAh is a powerful solution for travelers who need reliable, fast charging on the go. Its 30W PD and QC 4.0 quick-charging capabilities can charge an iPhone 13 from 20% to 80% in just 30 minutes! Charging three devices simultaneously through its Type-C and dual USB ports is ideal for multitasking professionals.

Its large 40000mAh capacity ensures a week's worth of power, eliminating battery anxiety during travel.

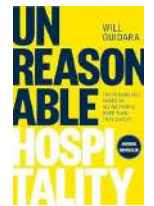
The built-in LED display and practical bright flashlight bonus feature make this power bank a dependable tool for every traveler.



## UNREASONABLE HOSPITALITY

By Will Guidara

Will Guidara was only 26 when he took over the run-down brasserie Eleven Madison Park and transformed it into a Michelin three-star-winning, world-class restaurant within 11 years. His secret sauce? Over-the-top, out-of-the-box and exceptional hospitality that customers couldn't forget. *Unreasonable Hospitality* by Will Guidara offers valuable insights for business leaders who don't want to provide simple customer service but rather an extraordinary customer experience. His innovative strategies, like creating bespoke guest experiences and fostering a culture of thoughtful communication within his team, provide practical takeaways for any industry. This book encourages leaders to rethink how they engage with customers and employees, illustrating that extraordinary service can turn routine interactions into powerful, memorable experiences that drive long-term success.



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We also worked with clients to prepare their businesses with battery backups, systems were moved off the floor, unplugged and secured. It was a busy four days of preparation. October 9 and 10th, Hurricane Milton hit.

What we learned from this event is **WE NEEDED A PLAN!** Our kids had been through this before so, if you know Sam, she had a checklist of all that gets done in preparation for a hurricane. We followed her process which took some of the pressure off.

Our clients did not have a plan though. Although they knew what to do, sort of, there was no written Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) in place.

Which brings me to all of you. As a business owner, you need a plan, and you need to create that plan when you are calm and levelheaded where you can make rational decisions. There is nothing more impactful than a firsthand count of a natural disaster to put your priorities in place. A DRP needs to be developed when you are calm and able to make important decisions that impact you, your employees and your financial security.

So, 2025 is the year we **MAKE A PLAN!** We have a service that provides you with an IT DRP template and I will assist you in developing it. If you are interested, please reach out to get on my schedule. I also want each of you to consider a Business Continuity Plan where you not only focus on your technology but your entire business and how it would be affected by a disaster that could cause long term downtime.

Also, as a reminder, we have two months left of the year. Please evaluate financials and consider upgrading equipment before the end of the year. Keep in mind that you may have some computers that can't be upgraded to Windows 11 and Windows 10 is at end-of-life in October 2025.

As we look forward, we will be having many discussions about AI. Shawn and I just returned from a conference where AI was the topic of discussion. It can be helpful in so many ways and CST will be developing some training on this so be watching for that. We also know that it can be incredibly dangerous. Developing some guidelines for your team will be important.

And on a personal note, Shawn and I are finally building our home in Florida. **NO, WE ARE NOT MOVING** but we will have a beautiful second home there that will also act as our Office while we build our clientele. Our daughter, Sam, moved to Florida sixteen years ago and our son, Evin, followed her three years later so this is a dream for us. Construction has already started with a six or seven month build time. I will be sure to keep you posted as the project continues.

Also, the team does a great job at sharing information on our social media accounts. Please like us on FB at [www.facebook.com/CSTGroupInc](https://www.facebook.com/CSTGroupInc) Our LinkedIn account is here: [linkedin.com/company/cstgroupinc](https://linkedin.com/company/cstgroupinc) and find us on TikTok @cstgroupinc

As Always,

**"passionate NOT pushy,"**  
Lisa

## TECH GIFTS TO AVOID BUYING

While a playful robot that uses facial recognition to analyze a child's moods might seem like an awesome gift for your nephew, it's not so great when you learn that data can be hacked by cybercriminals or shared for third-party advertising.

At the 2023 CES electronics exhibition, Jen Easterly, director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, told the Washington Post that most tech companies address safety problems when they happen rather than developing safety features proactively. Companies are "really focused on cost, capability, performance and speed to market, not on basic safety," she said.

No matter how well they promise to clean your floors or entertain your children, some tech products are not worth the security risks. Here are a few tech gifts to avoid and tips for wiser tech shopping.

### Beware These Tech Gifts

#### ❌ Camera-Enabled Devices With Bad Privacy Policies

Doorbell cams have one purpose: to see and hear everything around your home and neighborhood. Then it sends that data to the cloud. Poorly secured cameras could allow hackers to access live feeds, potentially giving them insight into when you're home and when you're away. Always choose devices with end-to-end encryption and transparent privacy policies.

#### ❌ AI-Integrated Devices

In 2022, images from iRobot's AI-enabled Roomba were leaked online. Although the company claimed test users consented to



share data, it underscores the risk of AI devices collecting extensive information about you. Read the privacy policy closely. If you can't customize data settings or companies aren't clear about how they use your data, shop elsewhere.

#### ❌ Tracking Devices For Kids

Tracking devices for children might seem like a thoughtful gift for families, but these devices can expose children's real-time location to hackers, stalkers or third parties. In 2021, the popular family safety app Life360 was found to be selling user location data to data brokers, according to reporting by The Markup. A safer approach is to discuss location sharing openly with your kids and use built-in features like Google's Family Link or Apple's end-to-end encrypted location sharing.

#### ❌ Genetic Testing Kits

In 2023, nearly 7 million 23andMe users had their ancestry data hacked – a stark reminder of the risks of genetic testing. Criminals are drawn to this highly sensitive data, and companies like Veritas and Ancestry.com have also faced breaches. Beyond theft, there's the issue of law enforcement's ability to access this information. Remember, once you spit into a test tube, you give away your genetic information, that of your close relatives and even future generations.

## GIVE THE GIFT OF YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION WITH NOTIFICATION GROUPING

Constant notifications can be a relentless distraction, pulling you out of meaningful conversations. This holiday season, group your notifications to collapse multiple notifications and instead receive a summary and turn off topics you actually don't want to see. Then devote that free time to your family and friends as you celebrate!

In your iPhone, go to Settings -> Notification and choose the app you want to get notifications from. Next, tap Notification Grouping. Then you can

pick from Automatic, By App or Off. To group notifications, choose By App. For Android users: Go to Apps & Notifications in Settings. Tap to see the list of all your apps and pick the ones you want to group notifications for. Next, tap Notifications. Then, look for an option called Notification Grouping or Bundled Notifications and turn this feature on or customize it based on how you want app notifications grouped. Voilà!



## HAPPY NOVEMBER EVERYONE!

The end of the year is quickly approaching and of course we all have a long to-do list. CST's Tech Team is, as always, working hard to keep you safe and anticipate changes in security protocol. Be watching for updated emails that are important in securing your data. We are also working on new training and educational resources for you. If you are struggling with something, please call me and I will work with Lisa on developing a plan to educate. 2025 is the year of EDUCATION!. The back office is gearing up for 2025 as well as we work on speaking engagements. Lisa LOVES to educate so if you have an opportunity for her, please let me know. We like to prepare for events as far in advance as we can, so the sooner we confirm events the better because the calendar fills up fast around here!

These last few weeks of the year are the perfect time to work on organizing. Maybe there is some old paperwork you can shred, or if you don't need easy access to it, store it? A clean, organized space promotes productivity!

As always, if there is anything you need, please reach out. We never want our clients to struggle with their technology as that truly is the reason we exist.

We hope you have a great Thanksgiving and enjoy time with those you love.

*—Jessica—*

## Important Dates in November

**3rd- Daylight Savings**

**5th- Election Day**

**11th- Veterans Day (OFFICE CLOSED)**

**28th- Thanksgiving (OFFICE CLOSED)**

## Tech Humor...

**What do ghosts wear  
when their eyesight  
gets blurry?**



## FREE WEBINAR

**JOIN LISA AND CO-HOST, SHERRY BOYEA with COMMUNITY BANK to learn...**

**"Smart Strategies for Protecting Your Finances and Your Business This Holiday Season"**

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**For Further Details And To Register, Go Online To:  
[www.cstsupport.com/webinar](http://www.cstsupport.com/webinar)**

## Q & A with Carrie

your friendly Account Manager



DEAR CARRIE,



I RECENTLY LEARNED MY COMPUTER WILL NOT UPGRADE TO WINDOWS 11 AND WAS TOLD I WILL NEED TO REPLACE MY COMPUTER NEXT YEAR. WHY CAN'T I KEEP USING MY WINDOWS 10 UNIT?

SINCERELY  
ALWAYS SKEPTICAL

DEAR ALWAYS SKEPTICAL,

THAT IS A GREAT QUESTION. WHILE I KNOW THAT EVERYONE LOVES AND IS COMFORTABLE WITH WINDOWS 10, MICROSOFT IS GOING TO STOP SUPPORTING IT IN OCTOBER 2025 (MUCH LIKE APPLE DOES WITH THEIR IOS). ONCE THIS HAPPENS, YOU WILL NOT GET ANYMORE WINDOWS UPDATES OR SECURITY PATCHES. THIS WILL MAKE YOUR COMPUTER RUN SLOW, VULNERABLE TO ATTACKS AND OPENS THE DOOR TO YOUR PERSONAL DATA BEING BREACHED.

SINCERELY  
YOUR FRIENDLY ACOOUNT MANAGER, CARRIE

## TURNING DOWN THE VOLUME ON STRESS: Why Leaders Are Choosing Mindfulness Over Hustle

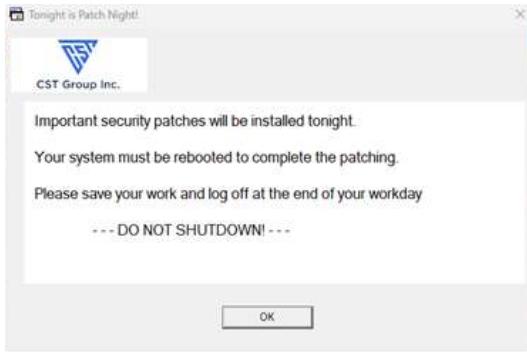
Meditation and mindfulness practices have been studied in a range of contexts – from college students to hardened marines (who showed faster stress recovery with mindfulness-based mind fitness training). Leaders who meditate think more clearly, stay calm in chaos and make smarter decisions. You don't need a mountain retreat to channel the Zen; meditation apps like Headspace, Calm and Insight Timer provide pocket-sized guided sessions to ease into this practice anywhere, anytime.

Want to meditate without interruptions? Just hit "Do Not Disturb" on your phone. On Android, swipe down and tap "Do Not Disturb." Apple folks, find it under "Settings" > "Focus" > "Do Not Disturb." Customize it to keep those calls and notifications quiet. This way, you can meditate peacefully and stay sharp for those big business moves.

# Security Corner

Part of CST's security protocol is our management of Windows security patches. I am hoping to clarify how the process works and what your part in this security process is and how necessary it is to ensure we keep you up-to-date and secure.

Wednesday morning everyone will see a white notification box on your screen (see below screenshot).



As the notification states, you need to, at the end of your workday Wednesday, save your work, LOG OUT and leave your computer on and connected to internet. The simplest way to achieve this is to just restart your computer at the end of your workday and walk away. This will accomplish the log out and your computer will be ready to do patches and do a restart that is needed for security updates Wednesday evening after hours.

If your computer user does NOT have a password, please add one to enhance security measures.

If you follow those simple steps, you will not encounter any issues when you log into your system next.

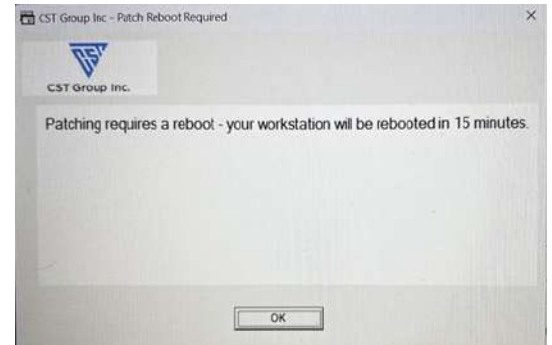
**\*\*\*NOTE\*\*\* If your system is not on and connected to the internet so this process can complete on Wednesday evening, then you are going to experience the following.**

When your system is turned back on and connected to the internet, our software is going to run the updates AND FORCE a restart of your system with a notification giving you 15 minutes to save your work. Then it restarts!

This can be very disruptive to those who do not follow the process and ignore the warning. All work they/you have done that was not saved will be lost!

We understand the struggles, but our job as your security team is to ensure every computer is updated, patched and scanned. We need your cooperation in this. Please simply restart your system Wednesday at end of day!

Dedicated to your Security,  
The CST Tech Team



## BIG REWARDS

### For Your Referrals

## \$50 OR \$500

IT'S WORTH SPREADING THE WORD!

We'll offer you **\$50** as a gesture of appreciation, once you introduce CST Group to a qualified colleague and they complete the initial appointment whether they become a client or not.

If your referral becomes a managed client, we'll provide you with a **\$500** bonus at the end of their first month of service.

SO, YOU MIGHT BE  
WONDERING – WHO  
MAKES AN IDEAL  
REFERRAL?

- Any business with 10 or more computers
- Needs help with its network, backup, compliancy, support, and security
- Wants 24/7/365 peace of mind

Full Details Here:

<https://www.cstsupport.com/about-us/referral-program/>  
or call us at 877-954-4100