

CST TECHNOLOGY TIMES

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

"passionate NOT pushy"

By Lisa Brown, CEO & Founder

What are the odds that you will truly relax and enjoy the holidays? I am talking to every business owner, entrepreneur, and high level executive who runs a company. We are the ones that feel the weight of success. We have high expectations and many of us have employees with families who rely on us to put food on their table. That responsibility never goes away which means we are always working. Our day does not end at 5pm. We are constantly innovating and trying to grow so that the entire organization benefits. There is nothing more exciting for me than when a member of my team comes to me with "I have an idea"! I love it! That is what grows companies. IDEAS! But they also require work and lots of it.

As the end of the year approaches, I have been doing a lot of reflecting on the wins and losses of 2024. I have accomplished some amazing things this year. I wrote a #1 Amazon best selling book, "From Exposed To Secure", I was an Executive Producer and Cybersecurity Expert in an Amazon full-length documentary, "Cybercrime: Fallout", and Shawn, I and our team grew the company by a projected 18%. This all happened with hard work and dedication. I'm almost angry with myself for not enjoying the process of every accomplishment just a little bit more. Life happens so quickly and so many of us struggle with constantly being in a hurry to get stuff done without realizing how much we are getting done.

Is it sad that Thanksgiving is the holiday that reminds me of this? It has come and gone, and I paid special attention to my thoughts and attitude trying not to think about work. I enjoyed the calmness because the time with family comes with no expectations except for good food. I consciously try to notice my demeanor, slow it all down and just enjoy the day. I am incredibly thankful for my life. Shawn and I have worked so hard to grow this company with love, faith and integrity, so taking a day here and there to enjoy it is important. Thanksgiving reminds me of this.

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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.



THIS YEAR'S BIGGEST DATA BREACHES



According to *TechCrunch*, this year has seen some of the most damaging data breaches in history. In 2024 alone, hackers stole billions of personal records, and it's almost guaranteed your data is among those stolen records. Let's look at this year's record-breaking attacks and what you need to know about protecting your information.

includes records for people in the US, Canada and the UK.

Compromised data: 2 billion-plus records containing full names, current and past addresses, Social Security numbers, dates of birth and phone numbers.



1 National Public Data (2 Billion-Plus Records)

What happened: In December 2023, hackers accessed the systems of National Public Data, a background-check company. In April, 2.7 billion records with highly sensitive data for 170 million people were leaked onto the dark web.

Who is exposed: The stolen data



2 Change Healthcare (38 Million Records)

What happened: In February, the UnitedHealth-owned tech firm Change Healthcare was hacked by a Russian ransomware gang that gained access through systems unprotected by multifactor authentication. The attack caused widespread downtime for health care institutions across the US and compromised data for many, many Americans.

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UnitedHealth paid \$22 million to prevent data leaks, but another hacker group claimed to still have some of the stolen Change Healthcare data.

Who is exposed: Estimated data exposure for one-third of the American population (likely more).

Compromised data: Payment information, Social Security numbers and medical data, including test results, diagnoses and images.

3 AT&T
(Hacked TWICE)

What happened: In March, hackers released data for more than 73 million past and existing AT&T customers going back to 2019. Then, in July, data was stolen from an AT&T account the company had with data giant Snowflake (more on that in a bit). Reportedly, AT&T paid a ransom to the hackers to delete the data. However, if this data is leaked, it could expose the data of anyone called by AT&T customers, including noncustomers.

Who is exposed: 110 million-plus past and current customers and, potentially, noncustomers.

Compromised data: Personal information, including Social Security numbers and phone numbers.

4 Synnovis
(300 Million Patient Interactions)

What happened: In June, a UK pathology lab, Synnovis, was attacked by a Russian ransomware gang. The attack resulted in widespread outages in health institutions across London. Reportedly, Synnovis refused to pay the \$50 million ransom.

Who is exposed: Past and existing patients in the UK.

Compromised data: 300 million patient interactions, including blood test results for HIV and cancer, going back many years.

5 Snowflake
(600 Million-Plus Recordings And Growing)

What happened: In May, cloud data giant Snowflake announced a system breach caused by stolen employee credentials. Hundreds of millions of customer records were stolen from Snowflake customers, including 560 million from Ticketmaster, 79 million from Advance Auto Parts and 30 million from TEG.

Who is exposed: Millions of customers from many of Snowflake's 165 corporate customers, including those mentioned above, plus Neiman Marcus, Santander Bank, Los Angeles Unified School District and many more.

Compromised data: Customer records.

How To Protect Yourself

You can't stop companies from getting hacked. However, you can prevent the situation from worsening for YOU by taking a few extra steps to protect your data. Here's what to do:

- **Review your health-related communications:** With so many breaches affecting health institutions this year, pay attention to your statement of benefits and look for services you didn't receive. If you spot something fishy, tell your health care provider and insurance company right away.
- **Freeze your credit:** This will stop criminals from opening a credit card or loan in your name.
- **Update your log-in credentials:** If you know what accounts were hacked, change your credentials, and also change the credentials to major accounts like your bank. Set up alerts too, so you're immediately aware of any unusual activity.
- **Be wary of e-mails:** After a breach, hackers access all kinds of information and may use that to send fraudulent e-mails. Slow down, read carefully and verify requests before taking any action.



FREE WEBINAR:

Strategic Planning for 2025: Are you Ready? Build a Strong IT Foundation With Our Expertise

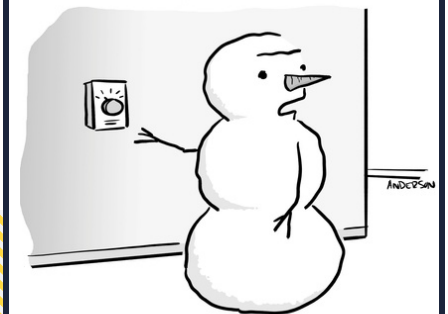
If you rely on your technology for daily operations and growth, seeking to enhance your resilience against potential IT disruptions, this webinar is for you!

Wednesday, December 11, 2024 at 9am

- Disaster Recovery Planning: Prepare for the Unexpected.
- Risk Assessments and Penetration Testing: Identifying Vulnerabilities BEFORE They're Exploited.
- Educating Your Staff: The Front Line of IT Security
- Documenting Your IT Infrastructure: Building a Blueprint for Success.

Register at www.cstsupport.com/webinar

CARTOON OF THE MONTH



"OK, who set the thermostat to 33?!"

PASSION ISN'T ENOUGH: TIM GROVER EXPLAINS WHY OBSESSION IS KEY TO SUCCESS



Passion is the key to success – that's what many of us have been taught to believe. If you want to be great, you must be passionate. However, Tim Grover believes we've been told wrong.

Tim Grover is a renowned speaker, author and performance coach with over 20 years of experience speaking to businesses, entrepreneurs and leadership teams aiming to be the top in their fields. Known for his work with athletes like Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant and Dwyane Wade, Grover teaches audiences the mindset of elite professionals so they can apply it to their own success. At a recent industry conference, Grover shared his secret to success: It's not passion that equates to success. It's obsession.

Be Obsessed

Grover draws a clear line between being interested in something and being obsessed with it. "Interest is passive," he explains. If you want to take your business to the next level, you must be all in because when you're obsessed, you pay attention to every tiny detail. As a performance coach, Grover read every injury report for his athletes so he knew how to lace their shoes. He watched hours of video footage and knew every step and landing so he could design training plans. "That's obsession," he says. "That's why they kept me around for such a long time."

Act On Your Passions

"You don't follow your passion," Grover explains. "You act on it. You excel at it." In business, hesitation can lead to missed

opportunities. Once a decision is made, you must fully commit to it because excellence is a long game. There will be moments of pressure driving you beyond your comfort zone and moments that feel very isolating. "Excellence creates distance. It creates distance between you, your friends, your enemies, your family, your free time," Grover says. This isolation isn't necessarily negative; it's a byproduct of striving for greatness. It will separate you from everyone who is average – from people who don't understand the behind-the-scenes work it takes to truly succeed in your passion. People will try to pull you down, either out of jealousy or a lack of understanding, but excellence requires a singular focus that many won't understand.

Balance Is A Myth

People often say that successful people need balance. Grover argues that if you try to balance everything – work, life, relationships – while striving for success, you'll be mediocre at all of them. You'll never grow if you're pulled in too many directions. The key to success is ditching balance, focusing on fewer, more important priorities and cutting out distractions. "Everyone has time for what they put first," he explains.

Excellence is a long-term journey that demands obsession, action and a refusal to settle for mediocrity. "Write your own story," Grover says. Put down the self-help books and "look deep down inside yourself and stop looking for everybody else to get you to that next level."

SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH

DJI Mini 3

If you're looking for a gift that will genuinely impress this holiday,



consider the top-rated and budget-friendly

DJI Mini 3 drone. It's perfect for any adult who loves tech, photography or exploring new creative hobbies. Its 4K UHD camera captures stunning, crystal-clear aerial shots – ideal for casual flyers and those wanting to take breathtaking photos or videos.

The drone's wind resistance and three-axis gimbal ensure smooth, stable shots, even in less-than-ideal weather. With an extended battery life offering up to 51 minutes of flight (with the optional Intelligent Flight Battery Plus), it provides plenty of time to explore and capture epic landscapes. The DJI Mini 3 is fun and creativity combined, making it an unforgettable gift.

THE LONG GAME

By Dorie Clark



In a world where instant gratification rules and the pressure to achieve is relentless, Dorie Clark's *The Long Game* is a

refreshing call to step back, think strategically and invest in your future self. Clark, a renowned business strategist and Duke University professor, makes a compelling argument for shifting our focus away from tempting short-term wins to more gratifying long-term successes. Clark shares practical frameworks and real-world stories that show how seemingly minor efforts lead to significant achievements if we're patient and persistent. With engaging storytelling and actionable insights, *The Long Game* encourages readers to step back from the daily grind, prioritize what truly matters and invest in their future selves.

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Christmas on the other hand, has become so commercialized that it no longer feels like it is about the birth of Christ, our Lord and Savior, but about how many gifts you get and the stress of having to purchase the ones you give. Can anyone relate? The anticipation and preparation for Santa to appear with his magic of delivering presents with just a sleigh and reindeer all while we know exactly how much work went into a 30 minute holiday. Lets be honest, once the kiddos are up and presents are open, the holiday hoopla is over. This isn't to say that adults all over the world aren't stressed out about having dinner on the table and trying to entertain a somewhat dysfunctional family, but I believe this has become the norm. Preparation and exhaustion prevent us from enjoying the reason we are celebrating in the first place.

My point is this, there is NO job or work responsibilities that should take precedence over your peace. Be mindful of all that life gives you. Reflect and enjoy your successes and slow down enough to appreciate it.

My 2025 goal is to simply enjoy every minute trying not to take for granted the little moments that make up life. I will continue to act on every opportunity even if it scares me because I would never have written a book or starred in a movie if I didn't take that leap of faith. I will take more time with our children and grandchildren and appreciate their crazy and chaotic lives.

I hope you take some time to reflect on the year and plan for 2025. It is going to be amazing!

Now, lets talk about this issue of Technology Times...

Please take some time to read our featured article "This Year's Biggest Data Breaches". If you thought your information was safe, you would be mistaken. This article details the most impactful breaches that affected YOU.

Remember how I mentioned being a self-employed entrepreneur takes effort and the struggle of letting it go during "downtime"? Read "Passion Isn't Enough" on page 3. It is Tim Grover's perspective on the key to success and I agree whole heartedly. I am obsessed with CST Group and I hope, if you are self employed, you are obsessed with your company.

On page 4, read the article "Are You Managing Your Vendor Security Risks?". This one talks about understanding and protecting yourself from the risk of vendors. I am talking about your printer company, internet and phone provider, software vendors, etc. Consider speaking with them on how they are protecting your information.

I also want to personally invite you to our final "Cybercrime: Fallout" movie premiere. It is going to be held at the Regal Theater, Salmon Run Mall in Watertown, NY, Friday, December 13th. Doors will open at 5:00 pm with a movie start promptly at 6pm. You will find the details on the insert of this newsletter. I encourage ALL of you to make it a date night and attend this incredible premiere.

On behalf of myself, Shawn and the entire CST Staff, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

As Always,

"passionate NOT pushy"
Lisa

ARE YOU MANAGING YOUR VENDOR SECURITY RISKS?

As the year winds down, innovative businesses often reflect on what's gone right – and what needs improvement. Beyond wrapping up projects and planning for next year, one critical task shouldn't be overlooked: managing vendor security risks. Vendors play an essential role in your business's success, but they also present a severe cybersecurity risk if you don't vet and monitor them effectively, especially if they handle sensitive data.

What's A Vendor Risk?

Many businesses rely on trusted vendors, such as cloud services or file-sharing tools, to carry out day-to-day operations. If that vendor gets hacked, your sensitive data is suddenly – and dangerously – exposed. A perfect example is the 2023 MOVEit Transfer breach, where attackers exploited vulnerabilities in the vendor's software, giving them access to critical data like customer information and business records for thousands of organizations. BlueVoyant's State of Supply Chain Defense report showed that organizations experienced, on average, 4.16 supply chain breaches in 2023 that impacted operations.

Vendor breaches are more than annoying – they could also lead to data loss, diminished customer loyalty or even legal issues. This year, consider adding these best practices to your end-of-year review to manage your vendor risk:

1. Review Vendor Contracts

Like you, vendors need to be held accountable for following industry-standard practices like encryption, secure data storage and incident response protocols. Start your vendor risk review by checking to see if your contracts have the necessary security clauses, and make sure your agreements outline these



expectations clearly so you and your vendors know what's at stake.

2. Conduct Vendor Security Audits

If you haven't done it recently, it's time for a thorough security audit of your high-risk vendors. This will help you understand if they're implementing strong cybersecurity measures, such as multifactor authentication, encryption and regular system updates. Knowing where your vendors stand gives you a better handle on your own security.

3. Monitor For Emerging Risks

Cyberthreats evolve quickly and so do the risks your vendors face. Regular monitoring of your vendor's security practices, like tracking vulnerabilities or breaches, will keep you on top of any emerging threats.

4. Update Your Vendor List

Now is a good time to clean house. Cut ties with vendors who aren't living up to your security standards and tighten your relationship with those who are proactive about protecting your data. Consider creating standardized onboarding and offboarding processes for vendors, too, so old vendors don't have unwarranted access to your organization.

BEWARE OF WIFI SQUATTING

When did you last check who has access to your WiFi network? If it's been a while, you'll probably be surprised by who's hanging around. Managing your WiFi access is an important step to keeping your data safe because unwanted WiFi squatters could, at best, slow your WiFi speeds and, at worst, have access to any device or file connected to your network, like household security cameras. To see who has access to your WiFi, find your router's IP address (you can find

instructions online about how to do this), type the IP address into your browser and log in. Next, look for a list called "DHCP Client" or "Connected Devices." Review the list, and if any unknown devices are on it, update your WiFi password and reconnect only the devices you trust.





Happy Holidays!

It's time for some holiday cheer. CST loves everything about the holiday's; from the bright lights and colorful decorations, to amazing food and time with friends and family. We also understand how this time of year can be stressful for everyone. Fear not because CST can help relieve some of that stress.

We know many of you are online shopping and if you are worried about your employees checking out retail sights at work, we can help. Sometimes simple training is all it takes but if you need to lock your technology down we can make that happen. Give us a call to chat about some protocols you can put in place to keep the cyber criminals out.

Happy Holidays,
#staycybersafe

=Jessica=



IMPORTANT DATES IN DECEMBER

- 11th - Wednesday Webinar with Lisa
- 13th - Cybercrime: Fallout Movie Premier (Regal Theater)
- 24th - Christmas eve
- 25th - Christmas (OFFICE CLOSED)
- 31st - New Years Eve

Tech Humor...

What is a computers favorite
type of music?



FREE WEBINAR



"STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR 2025: ARE YOU READY? BUILD A STRONG IT FOUNDATION WITH OUR EXPERTISE"

- Disaster Recovery Planning
- Risk Assessments and Pen Tests
- Training and Education
- Documenting!!

Join us Wednesday, December 11, 2024 at 9am!

For Details And To Register, Go Online To:
www.cstsupport.com/webinar

TYLER'S TECH TIPS

Holiday Shopping is happening so this months tech tip is one you will want to share.

Shop on reputable websites ONLY

I know it is tempting to click that email advertising an incredible deal or scan a QR code but try to refrain. Only shop on major retailers, and trusted websites.

If a deal seems too good to be true, it usually is.



For more tech tips
check out our
Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/CSTGroupInc>

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.



A MUST SEE...

MOVIE PREMIERE OF "CYBERCRIME: FALLOUT"

December 13th, 5pm Doors Open, 6pm Movie Start

Regal Salmon Run Mall

21182 Salmon Run Mall Loop West

Watertown, NY 13601

Join Lisa and Shawn at the Regal Theater in Watertown, NY to premier *Cybercrime: Fallout* BEFORE it is released on Amazon.

If you are a business owner, entrepreneur, or executive, this movie is a MUST see. This FREE movie event highlights the day-to-day struggles and triumphs of Technology Managed Service Providers as they defend against relentless cyber threats. The film offers a realistic portrayal of the cybersecurity landscape, making it a must-see for every small business owner, entrepreneur or executive interested in digital security.

This full-length documentary marks an important step in the cyber security community in their mission to educate the public and specifically business owners on the lurking dangers and onslaught of cybercrime that is spreading throughout the world.

**DECEMBER 13, 5PM-DOORS OPEN,
6PM-MOVIE START**

**GET YOUR TICKET HERE:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/CYBERCRIMEFALLOUTPREMIERE](https://bit.ly/cybercrimefalloutpremiere)**



BIG REWARDS

For Your Referrals

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 1-877-954-4100

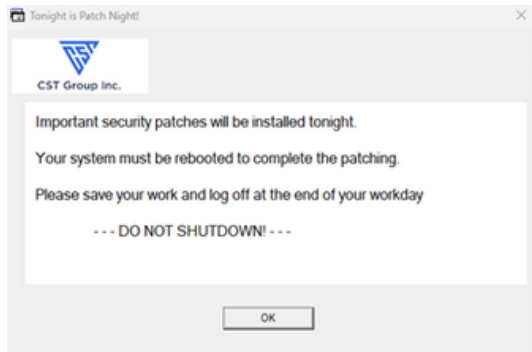


Security Corner



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

