Responsive Technology Partners

What's New?

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new security practice, led by Mike Livingston, MCP, MCSE. Mike joined the team as VP Business Development of Security Solutions and brings a wealth of security and operational practice experiences. Mike is a proven business development leader and technology executive with a wide range of experience across commercial operations. The new security services practice will focus in increasing the depth and breadth of our current security solutions and open new markets for advanced security offerings such as vulnerability assessments, zero-trust network access, compliance solutions and advanced data protection solutions. We are very excited to have Mike on the team!

These Technologies Hold The Keys To Growing Your Business

After a roller coaster of a ride in 2020 and into 2021, businesses just like yours are looking to the future. Their eyes aren't just on recovery. Many businesses are eager to make up for lost time, and they want to bring new customers into the fold.

There are countless growth strategies out there, but one area offers a lot of options you can dial into your specific business needs: technology. Under the umbrella of tech, you have plenty to choose from. It really comes down to finding the right solutions that fit the current or future needs of your business.

This month, we'll dive into two ways you can utilize various technologies to grow your business in the second half of 2021 and in the years to come. Let's get started.

Using Automation

Many businesses have yet to crack the code on automation. They aren't sure how to implement it and make the most of it. And that's okay. Automation comes with a few hurdles, like just getting started for one. It's an investment of time and money. However, once you get started, it does the rest.

A majority of daily business activities can be automated. One increasingly popular form of automation is artificial intelligence (AI), often used by chatbots. In the past, chatbots were useless. From the user standpoint, they never worked as expected. But those days are over; thanks to major strides in AI technology, chatbots are automation kings.

Chatbots are highly customizable. You can use them as the first "person" a customer or potential customer sees when they visit your website. From there, a chatbot can ask questions and mimic a real person. But here's where the automation really comes into play: if a potential customer has a specific request or question, the chatbot can instantly direct them to the person within your company who can help. It saves a lot of time.
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Automation is also useful when it comes to collecting data. Now, you can rely on numerous apps to collect different types of data and have it all sent to one place. For instance, you should have forms on your website where people can input data, such as their name and e-mail (and other similar data you may be interested in). You lock free content (such as special reports, books, videos, demos, offers, etc.) behind a "data wall." Once a potential customer gives you what you want, they get access and you have a lead.

Investing In IT Security
Many businesses went through huge changes last year. One common change was the shift to remote or hybrid work models. In the process, these businesses had to figure out a lot of things on the fly, from how to get their employees up and running to making sure their data was secure.

Unfortunately, many businesses, particularly small and medium-size businesses, struggled to balance getting their employees up and running and staying secure, due to a lack of resources, support or know-how. They ended up having to focus on one or the other – data security often got left in the dust. And in the mix of it all, growth completely fell off their radar.

We're going into Q3 2021, but many businesses still lag behind when it comes to their IT needs. Not investing in network security, and an overall IT security strategy, has the potential to hold your business back and prevent the growth you're looking for. Not only is your data at risk from both internal (hardware failure, data loss, etc.) and external (data breaches, cybercriminals, etc.), but there are also other issues to be aware of.

Here are a few questions to consider:
- **Do your employees have strong endpoint security? (Are their devices and network connections secure?)**
- **Are they trained in IT security protocols? (Do you have protocols in place?)**
- **Are your network and IT needs scalable? (Do they allow for growth or are they static?)**

These questions are a starting point. If you aren't happy with the answers, it's time to fill the gaps and give your business the advantage it needs for the future.

Getting Started
If technology still eludes you, you want to jump into the cloud or automate parts of your business, or you need to boost your data security, your best next step is to partner with a managed services provider (MSP) or a firm that specializes in IT solutions. You never have to do any of these things on your own – especially if you have questions or aren't sure how to get started. This is the kind of partnership that can put your business on the path to hitting your growth goals and set you up for tech success!

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Mastering Authentic Leadership

When I think of the old definition of leadership, I think of corporate CEOs pretending they don't have weaknesses. Instead of using more productive leadership habits, they're focused on fixing, managing and controlling perceptions to get what they want (the same way a drug addict fixes, manages and controls perception to get the next hit).

Great leaders in the future will lead in a fundamentally different way. The only people who have been systematically trained in the new, authentic model of leadership are recovering drug addicts. This is probably not the first time you've heard about leadership, and you may be familiar with my story and stories like it. And we have all been impacted by addiction in one way or another. As a recovering addict, I've been there. But I've also been in leadership positions.

We have a saying in recovery: "A head full of recovery will screw up your using." Once you know something, you can't unknow it. It's all about "screwing up" your perception of leadership. But first you have to understand your addiction – that thing you do over and over again despite the negative consequences.

There are three behaviors addicts exhibit:
1. Saying yes to something you should say no to (getting high)
2. Hiding your weakness ("I never talked about how much I was struggling")
3. Avoiding difficult conversations (such as interventions and getting clean, thus preventing solutions)

As a professional, you waste 500 hours every year doing these three things. It's possible you are an addict and all you have to do is accept the possibility that you are an addict. When you realize this, you can begin to say no instead of yes. When you do, things will start to change – that isn't to say it's easy.

You can tell a leader to just stop over-committing, stop being inauthentic or to stop working at 5:00 p.m., but these things are scary – and we aren't addressing the real problem: addiction. Leaders are addicted to their "mask" – that thing they hide behind as they exhibit those behaviors.

What can you do about this? I had a 12-step process to address my addiction, but it boiled down to three things:
1. Practice rigorous authenticity.
2. Surrender the outcome.
3. Do uncomfortable work.

You learn to lead in a fundamentally different way. Addicts have exclusive access to these kinds of principles. So, I'm sharing these same ideas with you, to help you know you can get clean and change the way you lead.
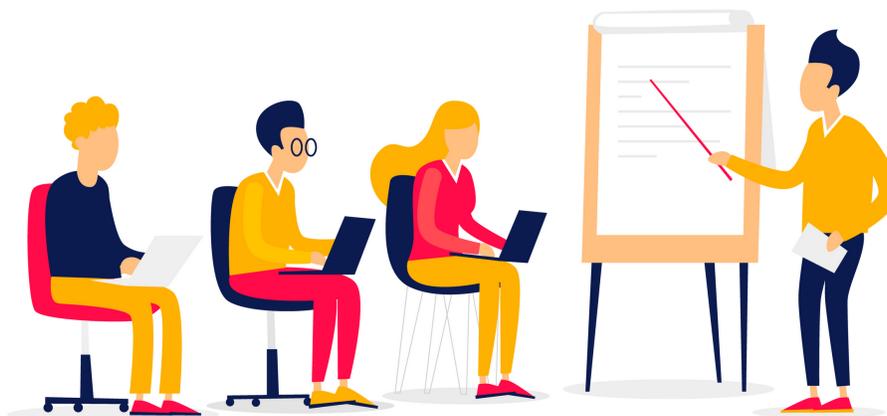
P.S. Be sure to check out the accompanying Petra Coach webinar at www.PetraCoach.com/mastering-authentic-leadership-with-michael-brody-waite.

2 Things Every Customercentric Brand Needs

When you're building a new brand from the ground up or rebranding, there's a good chance you're thinking about the customer. How can my brand connect with customers? Not every business puts thought into their customer experience, nor do they strive to connect with the customer outside of the sale, but for a brand to be successful, that connection is a must. Here are two things every business must do in order to build a customercentric brand.

1. Be Empathetic. Understand where your customers are coming from. What are their needs, wants and desires? What's causing them stress? Be there for customers and their problems. You might not be able to solve every problem, but by listening to their needs and helping them (even if that means referring them to someone who can help), you make a positive difference in how they perceive your brand.

2. Know Your Customer. You need to have a "full view" of your customers. Not only do you need to understand the demographic you serve, but you also need to get personal and understand what they like and dislike. It goes hand in hand with knowing what they need and want. The more you know about your customer, the better you can serve them. Send out surveys. Ask them about themselves when you engage with them in person or online. Build this approach right into your business.

- Forbes, April 15, 2021

Responsive VoIP

Cloud-Hosted VoIP Solutions:

A Cloud-Hosted VoIP system allows your employees to have the full features of an enterprise phone system while working from everywhere.

With Responsive VoIP, you can expect:
1. Cuts your phone bill significantly.
2. No upfront hardware costs.
3. Free additions, moves, and changes for the lifetime of the contract.
4. Remote workers can make and receive calls from anywhere.
5. A local support team you can trust.

Right-Sized Solutions For Your Business:

Your business is unique! We implement a solution tailored to your business and your needs.

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