Ribb"IT" Review

The world's favorite season is spring. All things seem possible in May.

-Edwin Way Teale

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Alex Bleam, Owner of Frogworks

*"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we **shine**! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"*

- Alex Bleam, Frogworks

Are Ex-Employees Threatening Your Company's Security?

As a business owner you've probably taken steps to secure your network behind a wall of defenses and instituted monitoring practices to keep hackers out. But what if one of the biggest threats to your network security comes from the inside?

The fact is, ex-employees may be in the best position to steal valuable data, wreak havoc on your network, and tarnish your brand image.

While most companies are taking extraordinary measures to keep the bad guys out, many are leaving the door open for ex-employees to compromise their security.

A recent survey conducted by OneLogin found that almost half of the survey respondents were aware of former employees who still have access to corporate applications. The quantitative survey was completed by 500 US-based IT decision makers.

The survey results also showed that "Failure to de-provision employees has caused a data breach at 20 percent of the companies represented in the survey."

44% of the survey respondents were unsure that former

employees had been removed from their networks at all.

The good news is that while former employees can represent a grave threat to their former employers, attacks and breaches from ex-employees are one of the easiest threats to guard against. All it takes is a bit of planning to develop consistent procedures that deny access to all company resources from the moment former employees walk out the door.

Here are the steps you should be taking to guard against potential threats from former employees.

Remove Access for all Former Employees Immediately

Change Email Passwords
Employees who can still access to their email can do damage in many ways, from stealing clients, to copying important or confidential email threads. Remove access right away to prevent problems.

Remove Network Access
Be sure to delete the ex-employee's user account so they

cannot access your network. This is especially important for ex-employees who routinely accessed the network remotely.

Revoke Active Software Licenses
Prevent employees from modifying work product, deleting files or creating other disruptions by revoking the licenses to any software they accessed.

Review Access Levels on Your Network

One of the best ways to minimize the damage that any former employees can do, is to limit access from the start. Only give employees access to the systems and resources they need to perform their jobs, no more. Review permissions throughout your organization to ensure that critical resources and information can only be accessed by those who really need them.

Create Consistent Off-Boarding Procedures

Every company, regardless of size, should have a comprehensive off-boarding plan in place that includes cutting off access to the company network and related resources.

At FrogWorks, we recommend making a list of all resources that company employees access and creating a checklist to follow when off-boarding an employee. You may need multiple checklists, depending on an employee's position within the company. For example, you might need to remove different access permissions or resources for management personnel than you do for a receptionist or customer service representative.

Creating a checklist makes it easy to be sure no steps are missed and that the same procedures are followed for every single ex-employee, regardless of how they left the company.

Be sure to document your processes and update specific procedures on a regular basis. Outdated information can make it more difficult to be sure all access avenues have been addressed.

Deactivate Dormant Accounts

If you have not been consistent about your off-boarding procedures in the past, make sure you review any dormant or inactive accounts in your system. These accounts are open invitations, not just for former employees, but hackers as well.

While we would all like to live in a world where former employees simply go on to their next job without missing a beat, it's imperative to take the right steps to protect your business and your network.
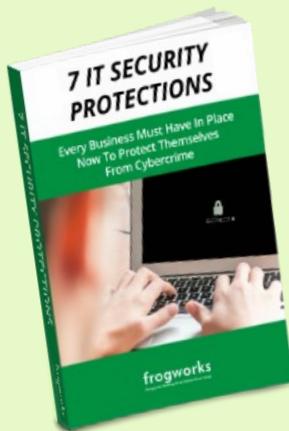
Following the guidelines we've outlined here will go a long way to making sure you aren't caught off guard by an angry ex-employee.

If you have any questions about how to create iron-clad off-boarding procedures for your business network, FrogWorks is always happy to help. Just give us a call at 240-880-1944.

3 Changes To Your Website That Are Proven To Improve Conversion

How's your company's website? How well does it convert? Do you know the answer to that question? If you don't, that's a problem.

Most company websites are varying degrees of ineffective, but there's good news. You can potentially change that by doing these three things!

Measure your results

Too often, an entrepreneur will spend money to have a website built, and once it's up and running, that's it. Items marked off of the day's "to-do" list, and onto the next thing.

Unfortunately, that's very far from what it takes to make your website work. It's incredibly important to measure the response to your website and make changes to increase your conversion.

Experiment with competing calls to action on multiple landing pages to see which one works the best. If you're not testing on a near-constant basis, you are leaving money on the table.

Experiment with different approaches to get people to sign up for your mailing list. Try new headlines. Try a radical redesign. Even a "failed" test is revealing. Over time, these ongoing experiments will help improve your conversion rates.

Get To The Point, FAST!

Today's consumer has access to so much information at such great speeds that it is much harder to get their attention for long. The reality is that most of your site's visitors aren't sure if they want to buy from you or not. Tell them why they should as close to the top of the page as possible.

Tell them what sets your company apart from the rest, and what you bring to the table that's different and compelling at or near the top of your website. This is commonly called "above the fold".

Your copy isn't the only place you need to be quick. Studies suggest that for every second it takes your page to load, you lose 7% of the people visiting your site. Be relentless about optimizing your page's load times. It should be virtually instantaneous. Work hard to eliminate bottlenecks in page loading speed.

Shorter Forms Improve Response

People often walk away from a purchase for no other reason than the order form is long and confusing.

Microsoft May Remove Windows Paint From Operating System

"Paint" is one step closer to being a thing of the past.

In May of this year, Microsoft caught a surprising amount of flak when they announced that the venerable app, which had been included with the OS in every release since 1985, would be going away and replaced by a newer, sleeker version called Paint 3D.

The company had not expected any backlash on the matter and was sent scrambling when tens of thousands of people complained loudly in forums all over the internet.

The company quickly revised its position, explaining that while Paint would no longer come pre-installed on future releases of Windows, it would still be available on Microsoft's app store. This move seemed to mollify Paint's surprising number of fans and followers, but now, Microsoft is in the news again over the surprisingly cherished app.

In a recently released Windows 10 Insider Preview, the following message was discovered when accessing Paint: "This version of Paint will soon be replaced with Paint 3D. Classic Paint will then become available in the store."

Note that this message was not displayed upon opening Paint itself, but rather upon clicking the "Product Alert" button at the top right corner of the app screen.

While the news is certainly no surprise, given the above, the sparse wording of the message does raise the question of whether the transition will be occurring during the next Windows 10 release. So far, the company has not offered any sort of clarification or confirmation.

In any case, we're now one step closer to saying goodbye to Paint. While it was never a very good image editing program, it has proven to have a surprisingly deep base of support. Support or no, however, the day is soon coming when it will be a thing of the past, unless users go to the store and manually download and install it.

Make sure your order form process is quick, streamlined and painless. The more hoops you make someone jump through to complete their transaction, the more likely they are to simply abandon it. Keep your forms down to the minimum about of information needed to successfully complete the transaction.

No matter if you're new to the world of business or a seasoned pro you're almost certain to get plenty of advice about how to increase your sales. The reality is that the concepts are not that much different from increasing your sales in the brick and mortar world.

There are many other steps you can take to improve conversions on your website. If you commit to doing the three things outlined above, you will have a great start to seeing a measurable difference in your conversion rates.

Can Outsourced Telemarketing Help My Business?

Recently I met with a client about what they were currently doing to generate new leads. "Well, Herman. I'm thinking about starting up with an outsourced telemarketer to set face to face appointments for me. What do you think?"

I think it is a great move. While setting your own appointments in house is the best way to use telemarketing, you have to know where your limits are. Sometimes, you just don't have the resources or patience to deal with cold calling. One of the biggest hurdles for many business owners, really anyone, is a fear of rejection. The second biggest hurdle I know business owners deal with is the fear of wasting money. The first fear stops us from telemarketing on our own. The second stops us from letting others telemarket for us.

To that end, let me share an experience I had with outsourced appointment setting.

I spent probably $6k over three months. I went on about 20 appointments. I had 9 awful/unqualified visits (4 computers, home office, that sort of thing) and about 6 good ones and 4 excellent ones (highly qualified/motivated/serious issue the day we called). Every time I went on a crap visit I got all worked up about how it was wasted time and money, even the kind of good ones disappointed me, the great ones seemed like a small win that didn't level out. I was scared I was wasting time and money.

Here is the deal. I was wrong. My whole mindset was ignorant and foolish, because in the end I worked those leads like my business depended on it and landed two monthly recurring revenue deals and some project work. The monthly recurring revenue ended up being about $120k in revenue. I paid $6k total and made nearly $180k on one simple campaign. Telemarketing done right is the one of the best investments you can make IF YOU CAN CLOSE! If you don't have a documented sales and follow up process, don't bother telemarketing. That's really true of all marketing.

I live and breathe marketing and even I had the wrong mindset going in. Each lead that didn't buy seemed like wasted money to me. Even with my modern marketing mindset I got stuck on the old mindset of marketing being an expense. I forgot the first two secrets to marketing that I teach, Investment & Commitment. Now with time behind me I would tell you that was an excellent investment.

Four tips you can do to improve your telemarketing results:

1. Create A Loose Presentation: Don't just go in blind and expect to "wing it". If you want to see success you have to have a process that you can implement, test, and revise. I don't expect you to run from a script for the rest of your life. Instead, create a list of discovery questions and a list of answers to common questions prospects have. Get with a friend and practice having a meeting. The more you practice, the more confident you will become.

2. Listen to win: Make that first meeting 100% about learning about their needs. They will tell you exactly what they want. If you are clever with your questions, they will tell you the price they are willing pay as well. Then rather than talk them into what you want to sell, show them that you have what they want.

3. No Means "Not Today": Again I would get frustrated and blame the lead generator for failure. All lead gen can do for you is get a sit down. It can't make them buy, and it can't close the deal. Sometimes people are interested, but they aren't ready today. Use the next tip to help you turn this situation around.

4. Document a follow up procedure: So you have met with the person and it went ok. Sometimes they don't buy, sometimes they do. That's not the end of your contact with them. Marketing is a circle of revenue. You should create a follow up procedure for those who buy and another to keep in touch with the ones who aren't ready to buy today.