frogworks
Managing Your Technology So Your Business Doesn't Croak.

Ribb"IT" Review

"In February there is everything to hope for and nothing to regret."

-Patience Strong

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

We are excited and proud to announce that Frogworks has been recognized as one of the world's best MSPs by Channel Futures!

Channel Futures MSP 501 2018 WINNER

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S BEST MSPs

MSP Owners Share Their Favorite Business Books

Successful people tend to share a common habit: reading. They read a lot.

In fact, Warren Buffett was once asked about the key to success, and without missing a beat, he pointed to a stack of books and said, "Read 500 pages like this every day. That's how knowledge works. It builds up, like compound interest. All of you can do it, but I guarantee not many of you will do it."

And he's not alone, Bill Gates, Mark Cuban, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and Oprah Winfrey are all on record as citing their reading habits as being a major player in the success they've had.

So, with all of this mind, we asked business owners all over the country what their favorite business books were and how they made an impact on them as business owners and got some great responses, so please enjoy!

Jim Bachaud, CEO of Stratocent Technologies

All three of the following books are awesome.

First up is 3 Laws of Performance*by Steve Zaffron and Dave Logan. It relates to personal responsibility and organizational management in a way that will transform your experience of life.*

Second is Turn the Ship Around*by L. David Marquet. Written by the commander of a nuclear submarine, this book is all about empowering teams and lifting people up.*

The third book is Never Split the Difference*by Chris Vosswhich is mandatory reading for anyone in customer service, sales, or any occupation requiring resolving upsets or problems, or negotiating contracts. Priceless.*

Mark Adair, President of Adair Technology

I also recently finished Never Split the

Difference *by Chris Voss. I appreciate the blending of his entertaining — and sometimes shocking — FBI stories, and how the lessons learned apply to business.*

The book reinforced being present, intently listening, and the importance of rapport/ relationships. The book gives you exact phrases to use, avoid, and why. It helps demonstrate the massive impact of what we say and how we say it.

Rodney Sees, CEO of Accurate Computer Solutions

Eat Their Lunch *by Anthony Iannarino. This book teaches you how to bring a higher value to a potential client, who is using your competitor. And of course, if applied to your current clients, it keeps your competition from displacing you.*

Michael Wayland, Managing Director of Byte-Werx

The Checklist Manifesto *by Atul Gawande. It really helped contextualize and change my mindset on automation and SOPs. And I think it was a great stepping stone for organization in my business and my personal life.*

Kasia Subieta, Vice President of Spot Migration

Crucial Conversations *by Kerry Patterson,Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzlerreally showed me how to have difficult, uncomfortable and emotional conversations with all my key relationships rather than just fighting or fleeing.*

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I used the skills it taught me the other day in a conversation with an employee that I upset, that moved the situation from hurt feelings to understanding, and strengthened our relationship.

Will Foret, President of Spot Migration
Extreme Ownership *by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin. This book helped me lead by example and taught me that employee failures are actually failures on the leader. By being a better leader, employees follow suit.*

The other book is Traction *by Gino Wickman. This helped razor focus our company on growth and singing the same song; rowing the company in the same direction. It helped influence our decisions on the employees we hire and how we talk about Spot Migration — whether it's in a sales meeting, in marketing, prospecting or client meetings. It helped us figure out how to verbalize the drive of Spot Migration.*

George Monroy, CEO of Monroy IT Services
Extreme Ownership *by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin. This book is a godsend! It really changed my worldview and has given me a new way to think and solve every day challenges both big and small. I now know that I have the power within me to affect change, even when I think things are out of my control. I highly recommend this book to everybody.*

Ryan Rosencranz, President and CEO of FullScope IT
The E-Myth Revisited *by Michael Gerber. This book explains why 80% of small businesses fail and provides some traps to avoid. Gerber explains the importance of defining the different roles and responsibilities of an entrepreneur and why one person can't do them all. This advice helped me grow my business by starting with a rock-solid foundation.*

Chris Plouffe, President and CEO of CSP Technologies
Same Side Selling *by Ian Altman and Jack Quarles. This book is about stopping the games that some play in sales. There is no winning or losing and we are all on the same team. It helps us become problem solvers vs sellers and use FIT (finding impact together) to solve the puzzle that is our prospect's needs.*

Jason Penka, Founder and CEO of Tech Junkies
Scaling Up *by Vern Harnish. We have been going through this book as a company for the past few years. To me, this is the definitive guide to build a growth-based business. As my company has grown the book has become more and more valuable.*

The Pumpkin Plan *by Mike Michalowicz. I read or refer to this book at least once a year. It reminds me to focus on building my business around the clients I WANT to do business with. The book has helped me find multiple niches to hyper focus our services toward growing our business. I highly recommend the audible version — you get extra tidbits from Michalowicz as he reads through the book.*

Jason Smith, President of ZATIS Technology Group
Profit First *by Michael Michalowicz. This book helped me to implement an amazingly simple concept with the multiple benefits of not only making payroll (I.e. paying myself first), but also helping to make sure to put aside profit versus waiting and wondering where it went after-the-fact. It's an easy read; well worth it. And a word of advice, don't get discouraged when your accountant tells you it's not a good idea — I've been down that road already. It's been great for my business and my family. I highly recommend it.*

Joel Couch, Owner of Dynamic Technical Solutions
Leadership Step by Step: Become the Person Others Follow *by Joshua Spodek. This book was the first book I've seen that actually gives exercises to build leadership skills. I have purchased the physical book to actually "do" this book, as opposed to just reading it. It's well worth your time if you want to improve your leadership skills.*

Alex Bleam, President of Frogworks
The Ideal Team Player *by Patrick Lencioni.As business owners, one of our most difficult jobs is to surround ourselves with staff who will work well with others, see the corporate vision, go the extra mile and want to come to work every day because they love what they do. It seems like finding people who will do their job is hard enough — but getting them to be part of a cohesive team is even harder. The author, through the telling of a story of a fictional company, walks you through the process for finding people who want to be part of your team. The book was compelling and encouraging for all business owners who are wondering if true team players can be found. The author's answer is, 'yes, it can be done, and let me show you how.'*

New Windows 10 Updates Will Use 7 GB Of Space

Microsoft has angered a portion of their user base with a change that's coming in the next build of Windows 10. As of the next build, the OS will reserve a whopping seven GB of space on your hard drive, so that big updates don't fail for lack of space. Unfortunately, the change means that the OS will really hog hard drive space. For many Windows 10 users, that's no big deal. They have hard drives with plenty of storage space.

Sadly, that's not the case for everyone. If you're a Windows 10 user and your hard disk is on the full side, then having to reserve 7GB for your OS on top of the space it already occupies, may be a bridge too far.

Unfortunately, there's not really any way around it. The change is coming, and if you turn off automatic updates, you run the risk of missing critical security patches. The only real solution then, is to do some spring cleaning and purge old files that are taking up space on your current drive, and/or invest in some additional storage such as an external hard drive.

The good news on that front is that storage is incredibly inexpensive these days, so the investment won't break the bank. Even so, it's a pity that it's going to be necessary for some users.

The coming change is likely to dis-proportionally impact low-income PC users who tend to gravitate toward value-priced PCs. As relatively inexpensive as storage is, budget-priced PCs tend to skimp on hard drive space. Hardest hit will be the users of incredibly inexpensive 32GB flash-drive PCs, as the change will result in the loss of more than 20 percent of the total available storage capacity.

If you own a low-end PC that doesn't have a big drive, or if your existing drive is near capacity, be advised. The change will impact you unless you take the steps outlined above.

Malware Drains Your Computer's Resources Without Your Knowledge

Cryptominers are among the most common type of malware in the wild today, based on the latest research by digital security company Check Point. While there are dozens of variants deployed by hackers, the cryptojacker "Coinhive" is the malware of choice this year. Once installed on a computer, it works in the background siphoning off your computing power to mine Monero any time your computer is on and sending the gains to the hackers.

The second most popular is a piece of malware called Jsecoin, which is a JavaScript-based miner that can be embedded into websites and runs in a target's browser. Then there's Cryptoloot, which is a Coinhive competitor and works in much the same way.

Although cryptojacking software dominates the top-ten list, they're not the only types of malware on it, and this year's list features two venerable contenders: Emotet and Ramnit, both of which are banking Trojans that have been in circulation for a long time.

New Ransomware Encrypts Data And Steals Payment Info

There's a new strain of ransomware being deployed with increasing frequency. Believe it or not, it's even more dangerous than the strains we've seen in recent months.

Unlike other types of ransomware, this one not only encrypts your files and demands payment (which is bad enough) but it also attempts to steal your credit card information via a PayPal phishing page included in the code.

Most of the ransomware we've seen will lock up your files and demand payment in BitCoin. This one offers you the choice of paying the fee via PayPal and provides a "helpful" link to facilitate payment.

Unfortunately, the link in question doesn't point to PayPal, but to a phishing site that the hackers control. The site tries to get you to enter your credit card information, along with your PayPal credentials. Most victims will be in such a rush to get their files unlocked that they won't even think to look. Despite being a convincing copy of the PayPal payment screen, the domain is definitely not PayPal.

Of course, even after you hand over all the required information, no payment will be made. The victim will get a message that their PayPal account has been locked. No matter, the hackers already have your financial information and can max out your credit card or drain your bank account depending on the card information you provided.

This is the most sophisticated ransomware-based attack we've seen to date and is a clear sign of things to come. Based on the early success this new strain is enjoying, we can expect to see an increasing number of hackers employing similar tactics as the threat matrix continues to shift, change, and evolve.

That's bad news for IT security personnel, who are already struggling to stem the tide. Stay on your guard.

While all of these threats are bad, the one that's getting a lot of attention from security professionals is a relative newcomer to the rankings called Smoke Loader. Interestingly, Smoke Loader isn't dangerous by itself, but then again, that's not its real goal. It's a gateway malware. A Trojan whose express purpose is to infiltrate a system and then download additional malware.

The specifics are entirely open-ended. If a hacker using Smoke Loader to infiltrate a system wants to follow that attack up with a cryptojacker, he can do that. If he'd prefer to launch a ransomware attack, he can do that too. The sky is basically the limit.

New Amazon Order Confirmation Emails Could Be Phishing Attempts

According to Alexa, Amazon is the 4th most visited website in the United States and ranks 8th worldwide. To say that it gets a lot of traffic every day would be an understatement, which is why a newly discovered phishing campaign pretending to come from Amazon is so disturbing.

Although Amazon sees heavy traffic every day of the year, things get especially frenzied during the holidays as shoppers flock to the company's website to buy Christmas presents for friends and family. Scammers know this and seek to take advantage of unwary shoppers, thus the genesis of their latest campaign. The security firm EdgeWave has been monitoring the development of the campaign.

Scammers are sending out well-crafted, sophisticated emails that appear to come from Amazon, featuring subject lines designed to draw the attention of online shoppers, such as "Your Amazon.com Order" Or "Your Amazon Order (order number) has shipped."

Naturally, if you've purchased something from Amazon, you'll be inclined to open the email to get more information. You'll then be presented with something that appears to be a legitimate order confirmation, although lacking in any specific details about the product.

In lieu of that, the scammers have placed an 'Order Details' button in the email, inviting users to click for additional information. Unfortunately, clicking the link downloads a word document onto the user's device. If the user tries to open it, they'll get a message that says they need to enable content in order for the message to be properly displayed.

What this does in actuality though, is enable macros, which hackers and scammers have been using for years to inject malicious code onto PCs around the world, and sure enough, that's exactly what happens in this case.

EdgeWave researchers have tested the poisoned document and discovered that as the download begins, what is apparently being downloaded is a file called 'keyandsymbol.exe'. However, embedded in the code, they found references to mergedboost.exe.

By now, most people know better than to click links or open files, even when they seem to come from a trusted source. This latest campaign underscores the importance of ongoing education and friendly, periodic reminders.

Have you ever lost an hour of work on your computer?

After working with dozens of small and mid-size businesses in the DC Metro area, we found that 6 out of 10 businesses will experience some type of major network or technology disaster that will end up costing them between $9,000 and $60,000 in repairs and restoration costs on average.

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