A Missed Call is A Missed Opportunity

Are You Hearing This?

☐ "You sound like you're underwater."
☐ "I think they hung up."
☐ "You're cutting out."
☐ Missed or dropped calls.
☐ Unreliable and overly complex systems.

If you have boxes checked above, you could have the wrong phone system... An unreliable phone system can cause downtime and lost reliability which can lead to lost customers, lost revenue, and a host of other issues.

A VoIP, or Voice over Internet Protocol, option can deliver the same high-definition sound quality and dependability as a landline while delivering significant cost savings and many other features and benefits like:

☐ Make / transfer calls from anywhere.
☐ Team presence /status / location updates.
☐ Clear call quality.
☐ User-friendly interface.
☐ Employee training sessions.
☐ Individual / group chat.
☐ Screen sharing.
☐ View call / chat history.

If you'd rather be checking off these boxes, reach out today to schedule your free Phone System Assessment, call: (512) 388-5559 or visit: www.CTTSonline.com/VoIP-Services/

This monthly publication provided courtesy of CTTS, Inc.

Why Your Business Is The PERFECT Target For Hackers…
And What You Need To Do NOW To Protect Yourself

Everybody gets hacked, but not everything makes the evening news. We hear about big companies like Target, Home Depot, Capital One, and Facebook getting hacked. What we rarely hear about are the little guys – the small businesses that makeup 99.7% of employers in the United States, according to the Small Business Administration. It's these guys who are the biggest targets of cybercriminals.

Basically, if you run a business, that business is a potential target. It doesn't matter what industry you're in, what you sell, or how popular you are. Cybercriminals go after everybody. In 2018, a cybersecurity survey by the Ponemon Institute found that 67% of small and midsize businesses in the US and UK were hit by a cyber-attack.

For the cybercriminal, casting a wide net makes the most sense because it gets results. It puts them in a position where they are able to extort money, steal sensitive information, and ultimately profit off of destroying the property, prosperity, and reputation of others.

Why do cybercriminals love to target small businesses? There are a handful of reasons why small businesses make sense to attack.

1. Small Businesses Are The Most Vulnerable.

Business owners, entrepreneurs, and executives aren't always up-to-date on network security, current cyber threats, or best practices in IT. They have a business to run and that's usually where their focus is. Unfortunately, that means

cybersecurity can take a back seat to other things, like marketing or customer support. This also means they might not be investing in good network security or any IT security at all. It's just not top-of-mind or they may feel that because it's never happened to them, it never will (which is a dangerous way of thinking).

2. Small Businesses Don't Take IT Security Seriously.

Coming off that last point, it's true that many businesses don't properly secure their network because they feel that they aren't vulnerable. They have the mindset of "It hasn't happened to me, so it won't." Along those same lines, they might not even take password security seriously. According to research conducted by Trace Security, upward of 80% of ALL breaches come down to one vulnerability: weak passwords! Even in 2020, people are still using passwords like "12345" and "password" to protect sensitive data, such as banking information and customer records. Secure passwords that are changed regularly can protect your business!

> ## "67% of small and medium-sized businesses in the US and UK were hit by a cyber-attack."

3. Small Businesses Don't Have The Resources They Need.

Generally speaking, medium to large companies have more resources to put into IT security. While this isn't always true (even big companies skimp on cybersecurity, as the headlines remind us), hackers spend less time focused on big targets because they assume it will take more of their own resources (time and effort) to get what they want (money and sensitive data). Many small businesses lack the resources like capital and personnel to put toward IT security, so hackers are more confident in attacking these businesses.

Just because you haven't had any major problems for years – or at all – is a bad excuse for not maintaining your computer systems. Threats are growing in number by the day. While many small businesses might think, "I don't have the time or resources for good security," that's not true! You don't need to hire IT staff to take care of your security needs. You don't need to spend an arm and a leg securing your network. IT security has come a LONG way in just the last five years alone. You can now rely on IT security firms to handle all the heavy lifting. They can monitor your network 24/7. They can provide you with IT support 24/7.

That's the great thing about technology today – while many hackers are doing everything they can to use technology against us, you can use it against them too. Work with a dedicated and experienced IT security firm. Tell them your business's network security needs and they'll go to work fighting the good fight against the bad guys.

Do You Know CTTS?

At CTTS, our Team collectively has over 100 years of technology experience! We are also very diverse, having experience working in many different industries prior to joining CTTS. In fact, you may be surprised at some of the jobs we had before joining the CTTS Team….

Kurt   Jamie   Brandon   Ramon   Dominic

Can You Match The CTTS Employee To Their Past Job?

Answer 2 correctly to WIN
STARBUCKS®

Send your answers to Marketing@CTTSonline.com for free coffee on us!

1. Who spent their summers basking in the sun as a camp lifeguard?

2. Who can you rent a bounce house and water-slide setup from?

3. Which groovy Team member spent some time collaborating on the Seattle Experience Music project?

4. Who had the sweetest job working in the Reese's manufacturing plant?

5. Which Team member can blow you away with their knowledge gained from working at the National Hurricane Center?

Client Spotlight:
United Way of Williamson County

United Way of Williamson County

Originally founded in 1887, the United Way continues to be the organizer for local charities and relief services, by bringing people, organizations, and communities together to be a part of local solutions.

There are nearly 1,800 autonomous 501(c)(3) organizations that make up the vast United Way network, each one governed and funded locally. Spanning more than 40 countries, this network serves 61 million people across the globe thanks to 2.9 million volunteers and 8.3 million donors.

For over 75 years now, the United Way of Williamson County (UWWC) branch of this network has served the residents of Taylor, Georgetown, and Round Rock. By providing help and hope for more than 55,000 Williamson County people each year through donations, sponsors, and volunteers, UWWC has continued to make it their mission to see that everyone in our community has the opportunity to thrive.

To support the needs of those in our community, UWWC focuses on three main areas, or pillars of support, in educational, financial, and health-related concerns.

Leading With Learning

Success in life begins with a solid education. Unfortunately, millions of children do not have the support they need to excel as they go through the educational system. In order to build a better foundation for future generations, UWWC works to support academic success for all Williamson County students.

Boosting school readiness at an early age builds curiosity, confidence, and helps parents reinforce learning naturally as their children grow. United Way's approach to education spans from cradle to career, ensuring that every child gets a strong start in life, that teenagers have the tools to learn and grow, and young adults can thrive in the job market.

Unfortunately, in Williamson County, as many as 3,500 preschool children do not have access to books because their families simply cannot afford to buy them.

By partnering up with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, every child enrolled will receive one free brand new, age-appropriate book each month from the time the child is born until his or her 5th birthday.

Children must live in the boundaries of the ten Williamson County elementary schools with the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students. To see if your child qualifies, visit www. UnitedWay-WC.org/Dolly-Partons-Imagination-Library.

Through these libraries, reading programs, book drives, and their Born Learning parks and playground program, UWWC provides easy and fun learning opportunities for families with children at all stages of their academic journey.

Client Spotlight: United Way of Williamson County

Support That Counts

Last year, 34% of the population in Williamson County said they were struggling to make ends meet, living paycheck to paycheck with no other means of support. The current coronavirus is causing this number to skyrocket.

Households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the cost of living in Williamson County are ALICE - a United Way acronym that stands for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. These hardworking members in our community are employed, often with multiple jobs. Yet, they are not earning enough to afford the necessities of life.

One way that UWWC helps these individuals and families is through their Online financial literacy workshops. These virtual learning opportunities offer clear, in-depth financial lessons to help people of all ages navigate difficult financial topics.

By increasing access to assets, income strategies, job training, and other fundamental necessities, UWWC is leading families and individuals to financial stability and income independence.

Healing Help

Williamson County is known for its large retirement community and the number of people at or above the age of 65 who belong to our community continues to steadily increase. Not only are most of the population in our county at high risk for COVID, but as this disease continues to affect us all physically, it also

affects everyone mentally with increased instances of child abuse and domestic violence.

UWWC fights for the health of all Williamson County residents through education, connections to healthcare options, and other supportive programs for those in need of health-related assistance and advice.

When the healthcare marketplace opens in November, staff members will help those who need assistance enrolling in a health insurance coverage plan and navigate the tedious process.

As the needs of the local population continue to change and evolve, their numerous relationships with various partner agencies allow UWWC the flexibility to change and serve the community wherever those needs happen to be.

Connecting the United

Aside from coordinating community events and relief efforts, the UWWC staff and their team of volunteers are usually out there connecting with businesses and organizations to build more relationships with those who can help and those who need help. If they didn't have access to the virtual world, it would be nearly impossible to make those connections and maintain their existing relationships.

A Client with CTTS since 2007, we keep their virtual and physical IT connections safe and reliable. With proactive monitoring software for easy maintenance, system statistics, and reports, we can make sure all their important data is safe, secure, and easily accessible in the event of a disaster situation.

Client Spotlight: United Way of Williamson County

Recently migrated from an on-premise server to Microsoft 365, this made for a seamless transition in moving their staff to secure remote working environments. With Microsoft Teams, the easy collaboration between file and screen sharing, planning, and virtual meetings not only helps solidify their goals but unifies the organization as a whole.

Jodee O'Brien, CEO of United Way of Williamson County says, "The way we are able to come together in this platform makes it feel like we're meeting in person."

One of their favorite technology tools of late is the Nextiva, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), phone system. O'Brien calls this tool their, "Game-changer." With the ability for staff or volunteers to simply download the Nextiva app to their computer or mobile phone, calls are answered professionally and easily, no matter the user's location.

Heading for Hope

"When the work is done and needs are being met, we focus on keeping our team strong," O'Brien says. She strongly encourages her team to check their mental health by taking regular breaks and prioritizing family. This helps the team feel secure, which boosts confidence, productivity, and happiness.
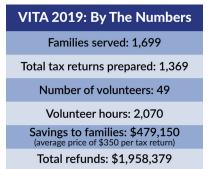
O'Brien says that it's about finding a balance. While many of their staff and volunteers still work from home, some alternate coming into the office which is open for appointments only.

For the safety and health of our community, other adjustments have been made to their upcoming events. The next event is the popular Leadership Breakfast, where the community typically comes together to share a meal, gain inspiration and encouragement from a keynote speaker, and recognize individuals and organizations within the community. This year's breakfast has gone virtual and will be broadcast Online on September 9th at 7:30 AM with a very special guest speaker, Joe Serio, Ph.D.

Another event that has a great impact on our community is the annual Day of Caring. Generally held each September, hundreds of volunteers come together to help local nonprofit agencies in need of a few extra hands. This year, there will be smaller group opportunities with a focus on outside projects in the open air.

How You Can Help

To help individuals and families in need in our community, there are many ways to show your support. You can donate your time, money, or expertise. Donors and volunteers can be individuals, businesses, or organizations. Business partners often sponsor events or give regular corporate donations.

Each tax season volunteers are needed to help with our VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program which provides free basic tax return preparation to individuals earning $55,000 or

VITA 2019: By The Numbers

Families served: 1,699
Total tax returns prepared: 1,369
Number of volunteers: 49
Volunteer hours: 2,070
Savings to families: $479,150   (average price of $350 per tax return)
Total refunds: $1,958,379

less annually. Clients often include minimum-wage earners, those who may be homeless, self-employed, and the elderly or people with disabilities. Volunteer positions include greeter, translator, and tax preparer. IRS-certified training is provided to volunteers interested in preparing tax returns. Learn more about this program and sign up to volunteer Online at www.WilcoFreeTaxPrep.org.

Help us spread the word - share this important work with your family, friends, and co-workers. If you are able to do more or need assistance for yourself or someone you know, call 512-255-6799. You can also visit their website at https://www.UnitedWay-WC.org/.

Back to Basics

A lot of time is spent staying protected from the newest type of scam or the newest cybercrimes, but as is true with many things, remembering the basics is the entire foundation of making sure you, your company and your clients remain safe.

Everyone in the company or organization should know basic security principles. Security principles and policies should be documented and part of every new employee training. Strong password requirements, Internet usage guidelines and only connecting remotely over VPN are examples of some common security policy items. Strict penalties for violating the security policies should be detailed.

It's not a good habit to save files onto your computer if there is a location on the network or on your server where they can live. They're much less likely to be backed up on your computer, whereas they'll reliably and regularly be backed up if they are saved on the server.

If you use websites or software that do not require regular password changes, set a calendar reminder to change the password yourself every other month.

As with other things, a little prevention goes a long way – remembering the security basics, and asking about them if you don't know what they are, is the single best thing you can do to protect yourself and protect the company.

3 E-Mail Productivity Tricks You Need To Know

1 **Turn Off Notifications.** Every time you get a ping that you have a new e-mail, it pulls your attention away from what you were doing. It's a major distraction. Over the course of a day, you might get several pings,

which can equal a lot of time wasted. Set aside a block of time for reading and responding to e-mails instead.

2 **Use Filters.** Many e-mail programs can automatically sort incoming e-mails. You define the sources and keywords, and it does the rest. This helps prioritize which e-mails you need to respond to soonest and which are most relevant to you.

3 **Keep It Short.** Most of us don't like to read e-mails – and so we don't. Or we quickly scan for relevant information. Your best bet is to just include the relevant information. Keep it concise and your recipients will appreciate it, and as a recipient, you'll appreciate it as well.

Small Business Trends, April 23, 2020