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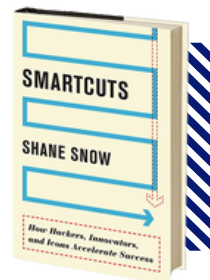
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SMARTCUTS

By Shane Snow

Many who crave success try to follow a similar path to obtain it. They'll make countless sacrifices, pay their dues and work diligently to climb the corporate ladder. Too often, this think-inside-the-box mentality limits these individuals instead of helping them grow. Shane Snow's Smartcuts flips the script by telling readers to ditch conventional wisdom to start thinking smarter about how to accomplish their goals. Through a conversational writing style, Snow explores real-life examples from business and pop culture to establish nine principles to help readers find success with less effort.



TIME IS MONEY

Time Management Skills Every Leader Should Improve

Most business owners know how important it is to be proficient in communication and problem-solving, but many fail to realize how important time management can be. When you ineffectively manage your time, every aspect of your business can suffer. Projects fall behind schedule, and your clientele will begin losing faith in your company.

Thankfully, we can improve our time management skills through practice, preparation and improved awareness. Here are three skills to improve so you can run your business more efficiently.

Punctuality:

If you say you're going to call someone or be somewhere at a specific time, be there at that time. You can improve this skill by being more aware of the clock and properly planning. Set alarms and reminders, but more importantly, be honest with yourself about your behaviors and why you're not being as punctual as possible.

Patience:

It's going to take some time for your projects to come to fruition and for your employees to develop the necessary skills to improve the efficiency of your business. Don't rush things; find other tasks to work on when your patience wavers.

Estimation:

When you plan out your tasks for each day, do you give yourself enough time to complete everything? Many of us overestimate or underestimate how long it will take to complete certain tasks, which inevitably causes delays and further frustration. Start tracking how long you take to complete tasks, and you'll quickly improve your time estimation skills.

Create The Healthy Work-Life Balance Your Mind And Body Need

Business owners and entrepreneurs are some of the hardest-working individuals in our country. They're constantly sacrificing for their business, but eventually this behavior takes its toll on their bodies and minds. If you own a business, it's important to dedicate some time every day to your hobbies, interests and passions – all it takes is a concentrated effort.

One great strategy to create a healthier work-life balance is adding your personal activities to your calendar. Adding items like family dinners or golf rounds to your calendar helps ensure you actually participate in these activities. It's also helpful to set some boundaries. Determine how many hours you're allowed to work each day and what activities you're not willing to miss. Once you establish a boundary and get into a strong routine, you'll feel much happier, and your business will still get the attention it deserves.



THE TECH CHRONICLE

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



HOW TO SAFELY SHARE PASSWORDS WITH EMPLOYEES

If you ask a security professional, you get by-the-book advice about sharing passwords: "Don't share passwords." But we know, in reality, that doesn't work. Your office might be sharing a single password for apps like SurveyMonkey right now to save cash on buying additional users, and some social media accounts don't even give you the option to have multiple log-ins.

Sharing passwords in your office is sometimes necessary for collaboration, and the best way to do this is by using a password manager. Affordable (some platforms even offer free versions), layered with security and simple to use, password managers are the safest and easiest way to store and share your company's private passwords.

Reasons You Would Need To Share Your Passwords

Share accounts are the biggest reason

businesses share passwords, whether their employees work from a physical office or at home. It improves collaboration and makes employees' jobs a lot easier.

Medical leaves, turnover, vacations and "Bob isn't coming in because he ate bad fish last night but has our Amazon log-in" are other reasons passwords get handed around like a plate of turkey at Thanksgiving dinner.

However, unsafe sharing habits will put your private passwords in the hands of reedy hackers, who can fetch a high price for your data in dark web markets. IBM Security reported that in 2022, 19% of all breaches were caused by stolen or compromised credentials.

So, how do you share passwords safely?

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WHAT'S NEW

We're witnessing several exciting innovations and enhancements designed to improve efficiency and security.

AI-Powered Predictive Maintenance: Leading managed service providers (MSPs) have begun integrating AI-driven tools to predict hardware and software failures. This proactivity ensures minimal downtime and maximizes productivity.

Enhanced Cloud Integrations: At MCS, we are focusing on seamless cloud integrations. We're seeing the continued rollout of tools facilitating smoother data migrations and backups.

Advanced Threat Detection: Cybersecurity remains paramount. New managed security solutions employ real-time threat detection, instantly identifying unusual activity and potential breaches.

Green Computing Initiatives: Acknowledging global sustainability movements, some MSPs have introduced eco-friendly computing solutions, aiming to reduce carbon footprints. Staying abreast of these updates ensures our clients can leverage the latest in managed computer services to maintain a competitive edge.



This monthly publication is provided courtesy of Steve Johnson, President of Maryland Computer Service.

OUR MISSION:

To build a community of success-minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.

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First, Avoid These Common Password-Sharing Mistakes

When it comes to password sharing, remember:

- 1. Don't send passwords via e-mail:** E-mail is the #1 target of hackers, and many e-mail services aren't encrypted. Those that are encrypted are still risky because e-mails are stored in several servers on their way to or from your account. That means your e-mail is sitting in a Sent folder, ripe for the taking by anyone who gets into your e-mail account, encrypted or not.
- 2. Never text or chat passwords:** Like e-mails, SMS messages or messaging apps like Slack aren't secure. Once a text is sent, it's available for anyone to see.
- 3. Stay away from storing passwords using pen and paper and shared documents:** Sticky notes, memo pads, Google Docs – NEVER write down your passwords.
- 4. Avoid the temptation to store passwords on your device:** If your device gets hacked, nothing stops that perp from taking every password you saved.

The Best Way To SAFELY Share And Store Your Passwords

We recommend using reliable password managers because they have multiple layers of encryption so only those with a key (your master password) can see it, AND

“ IBM Security reported that in 2022, 19% of all breaches were caused by stolen or compromised credentials. ”

they include more robust security and sharing features like:

- **Zero-knowledge architecture:** Not even your password manager service can see the information you save in your vault.
- **Multifactor authentication (MFA):** For added log-in security.
- **Unique password generation:** Creates strong, random passwords to improve log-in security.
- **Fake log-in page warnings:** Warns you if a page is spoofed by hackers.
- **Breach or weak password notification:** Alerts you if one of your passwords was leaked or if your current password is weak.
- **Simple, secure built-in password sharing:** Some password managers let you choose which passwords your employees can see and keep others in a private vault. Others, like Keeper, let you share documents or records without exposing credentials.

To use password managers, you only need

to remember one password – the master password. One downside is that whomever you share a password with needs an account for the same service. However, most password managers have corporate accounts, so this shouldn't be a problem.

A Word To The Wise: Look out for password managers with a bad security track record, like LastPass, which was breached in 2022, 2021, 2016 and 2015.

Smart Businesses Use Password Managers

It's a good idea to avoid sharing passwords as much as possible, but when you have to, use a reliable password manager to ensure you have control over exactly who sees your credentials. Talk to your employees about safe password hygiene, host regular security-awareness training for employees and use MFA with every account. It's not just safe business – it's smart business. If you're not sure which password manager to use, give us a call and we'll get you set up with one.

“I DIDN'T KNOW”

Unfortunately, That Excuse Doesn't Replenish Your Bank Account, Resolve A Data Breach Or Erase Any Fines And Lawsuits.

- It's coming ...
- That day a hacker steals critical data, rendering your office useless...
 - That day your bank account or credit card is compromised...
 - Or that day your customers' private lives are uprooted...



Cybercriminals and hackers are constantly inventing NEW ways to infiltrate your company, steal your assets and disrupt your life. The ONLY way to STOP THEM is this:

You Must Constantly Educate Yourself On How To Protect What's Yours!

Now, for a limited time, we have the perfect way to help reduce your risk and keep you safe! Simply sign up to receive our FREE “Cyber Security Tip of the Week.” We'll send these byte-size quick-read tips to your e-mail inbox. Every tip is packed with a unique and up-to-date real-world solution that keeps you one step ahead of the bad guys. And because so few people know about these security secrets, every week, you'll learn something new!

Get your FREE “Cyber Security Tip of the Week” at: www.marylandcomputerservice.com/cyber-security-tip-of-the-week

WHAT IS CONFIDENCE?



Confidence is a fundamental trait in the world of business. You may think all the great CEOs and entrepreneurs of the last few decades have never lost their confidence, but you'd be wrong. New CEOs usually have impostor syndrome and struggle with the idea that they're good enough for their role. Self-made billionaires worry that their fortune will take an embarrassing hit. Even private equity investors look at the looming recession and grow concerned.

We often find leaders are less confident when they obsess about things out of their control rather than take action in areas where they have some control. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that most CEOs are externally most worried about a recession, global trade and politics. Internally, they're much more concerned about retaining top talent, avoiding disruptive technologies and developing the next generation of leaders. While it's good to be aware of the external issues, it's much more important to master the internal problems within your control.

In order to fully boost your confidence, you must have a high level of confidence in your team. If you are already confident in your

team, keep doing what you're doing to hire and develop top talent. If you aren't confident in them, then you should work on hiring the right people. If you've found yourself in this position and are simply not confident enough in your team, you can do a few things to remedy the situation.

Your first option is to invest your own time into hiring, training and developing your team yourself. You need to set ample time aside to truly master the necessary skills to see the best results. Additionally, you can hire a company like ghSMART to do it for you. We can devise options for an immediate fix that will help adjust your confidence while building your team's skills.

Confidence is not necessarily an inherent trait we get from our genes. We can build and grow our confidence skills by managing the things within our control. There will always be uncontrollable outside pressures, and there's simply nothing we can do about it. Instead, focus on hiring and maintaining top talent, developing your company's digital capabilities and training the next generation of leaders. You'll see positive results before you know it.

Dr. Geoff Smart is the chairman and founder of ghSMART, a leadership consulting firm that exists to help leaders amplify their positive impact on the world. Dr. Smart and his firm have published multiple New York Times bestsellers. He stays active in his community and has advised many government officials.



ADAPT WITH THE CHANGES

To Reach Continued Success

The economy is constantly evolving, and your business needs to adapt with it if you hope to stay relevant. Currently, our economy is in a strange state due to recently coming out of a pandemic, and many economic experts believe we're teetering on the edge of a recession.

If you want to see success in the coming years, you need to focus on these two areas.

Hiring: Don't let location stop you from hiring the best talent for each open position. Hire remote and hybrid employees if they are the best fit for the job.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI isn't going anywhere, so becoming familiar with it now will help you develop an advantage over your competition.



CARTOON OF THE MONTH



“SON, THERE ARE THREE THINGS I WANT YOU TO NEVER FORGET... NEVER GIVE UP ON A DREAM... MARRY FOR LOVE... AND USE 8-DIGIT COMPLEX PASSWORDS!”