

ALL THINGS TECH

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

What's New

For most of us, summer vacation is over, the pools are closing, the school buses are back on the road, we're enjoying the last BBQ's of the year, and kicking off the fall season for football, the symphony, and many other special events!

In August each year, we have our State of the Company at Ditka's; great food and drink, a chance to look back at the last 12 months, and look ahead to a new year. This year, our focus is 'Embrace the Change!' Technology doesn't sit still, so we'll all be 'embracing' new things, and not just the Fall leaves.

Watch for our fun logo on the techs' shirts and sweaters. Gus has some new armor!

- Catherine Wendt



Top 4 Strategies From Daymond John

This past June, I got to hear the one and only Daymond John speak at a small private event. You may know Daymond as a successful entrepreneur who has appeared on the hit ABC show *Shark Tank*. Best known as the founder of the clothing brand, FUBU, he is also the author of *The Power of Broke* – an insightful look into his life and what he did to find success.

Daymond brought a lot of that insight to the room. While he had a lot of great things to say, there were four business strategies that really struck a chord with me – strategies any business can learn from and use to improve.

INVEST IN PEOPLE This is the most important thing for a business to realize, as Daymond put it. He talked about how he (and the Sharks) invests in people, not companies. Think about it:

companies come and go. In fact, most companies will go. On the other hand, people learn from their experiences (good and bad), and they grow. Putting your people first is what gives companies staying power. Your team matters and your clients matter, and you should make every effort to ensure they know that.

DON'T BE REACTIVE – BE RESPONSIVE A lot of businesses are reactionary. This was a lesson Daymond learned working with prolific rapper and music producer LL Cool J in the late 1980s. When you react to something, you're already behind the times. Part of LL Cool J's success in the rap world was being responsive. He didn't just jump on trends, he helped create them. He recognized the rap world was constantly

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Catherine Wendt, President of Syscon Inc.

We love this stuff!

We are committed to helping businesses use technology to run their organization successfully and profitably.

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changing in terms of sound, lyrics, and style (including his fashion).

Daymond was able to market his FUBU clothing because he was doing things other clothing makers weren't. He was taking risks, working exceptionally hard (another one of Daymond's points was "always be hustling") and was willing to respond to changes in the marketplace.

BE TRUE TO YOUR WORD When Daymond first got the call from Mark Burnett to join *Shark Tank*, Daymond knew he had to turn down the show. Signing onto *Shark Tank* meant he couldn't appear on any other shows, and he was already working with the Kardashians – a family who, at the time, wasn't quite the household brand name they are today.

Daymond told Burnett he was going to stick with the Kardashians because he had given them his word (and likely signed a few contracts with them). He wanted to help the Kardashians get their brands moving. He saw their potential. The family got word that Daymond had turned down the *Shark Tank* deal and said, "No, don't let us get in your way!"

Daymond also recognized that the Kardashians are savvy businesspeople. As he put it, "They know their analytics." And that's true! That's why they found success on TV and in stores around the world where their many products are sold. But he wasn't about to leave them high and dry for his own gain. Eventually, they found a solution, and he joined *Shark Tank*, but he wasn't going to compromise his integrity. And that's something none of us should compromise on.

REMEMBER, YOU ARE THE BRAND The biggest brands are distilled down to three, four, five words. People know these words by heart, including Nike (Just Do It) and Apple (Think Different). You should have your own 2-5 words. "If you can't describe yourself in 2-5 words and you walk into a room, you leave it up to us to interpret."

Another thing to remember is that people associate your social media with your brand – whether you're intentionally posting content related to your brand, or you're an individual posting about your last vacation. What you share on social media is shared through a lens – your lens. Pictures, posts, you name it – it's all

a part of your brand.

That said, posting something negative will hurt that brand. It's always important to be mindful of what you post and encourage your team to do the same. Having rules and policies regarding what can and cannot be shared on social media will go a long way in preventing a catastrophe.

These four points only skim the surface of what Daymond talked about, but these are crucial things we all can learn from. It was great to hear him speak and to hear his story, and I send my thanks to him for all of his wonderful insights!

Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine visited a client in the 'artsy' East Nashville area and stayed at the beautiful church they designed as a hotel. Wonderful!

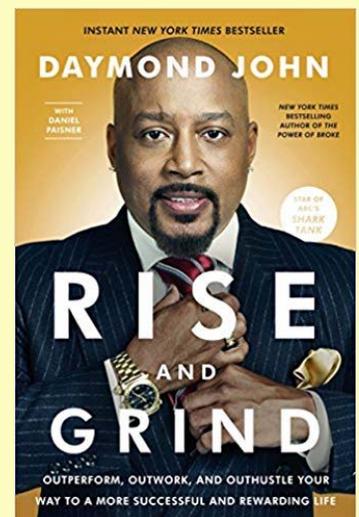
Larry returned from Kenya where he and a friend visited the Mully Children's Home. A reminder that we are so blessed!

'It's amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.'
- Harry S. Truman

Rise and Grind by Daymond John

I was feeling a little beat up when I started this book; so glad I dug in anyway! The day-in and day-out effort seems unappreciated sometimes, like it's all for naught! In this book, I was reminded of the power of rising every day and grinding it out with purpose, efficiency, and focus.

Great to hear the daily routines and background stories of so many successful people that Daymond has been able to meet, work with, and interview including Catherine Zeta-Jones, Kyle Maynard, Lola Alvarez (a Mom with a mission), Carlos Santana, Jake Kassan and Kramer LaPlante (those cool watches), Joel Osteen, and other amazing people. Daymond includes his thoughts and take-aways from his personal experiences, and from the impact these people, and others, have made on his life and career. I enjoyed his live presentation to our group, loved having my picture taken with him (check out last month's newsletter), and really enjoyed reading the book. Recommended! - CMW



Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



TC1200 Flashlight

Having a reliable flashlight can make a big difference, whether you're on the job or just at home when the power goes out.

Meet the TC1200 Pro Tactical Flashlight, a flashlight designed with incredibly high standards. Made with aircraft-grade aluminum, it's durable (it survived a 21-mile fall to Earth) and has a powerful beam that is 25 times brighter than an ordinary flashlight (it boasts five modes: low, medium, high, strobe, and SOS – the strobe feature can even temporarily blind an animal or person, if necessary).

At 1200 lumens, this flashlight can shine a light on any situation. It uses three AAA batteries or 1 Li-ion rechargeable battery. Learn more at bit.ly/2NGAGB5!

From the Techs

Two Really 'Good' Phishing Email Scams

Our bookkeeper received an email that looked like it was from me. It was from Catherine Wendt and the email address was text@tmobilelte4g.com.

It said I was thinking about an Employee Incentive program and I'd like to 'spring some surprises and put a smile on some faces today.' Then I asked her to purchase some gift cards 'today' and suggested Google Play/Best Buy/and Target. The final touch was to keep it confidential until we give them out and it was signed 'Catherine' from my mobile phone.

She didn't see it until later in the day so she wasn't able to get all of this done. She went to Mary and apologized and said she'd get to it right away. Interesting...

So a couple of things:

- We don't use T-Mobile
- My 'From' email is 'Cathy Wendt,' not 'Catherine'
- I don't send last-minute things like this; I always give the staff advanced notice; they're busy!
- I don't send email through my phone very often
- I was actually at the office all day on the day it was sent, right down the hall!

Mary knew all of this and was very suspicious, so she asked to see the email and helped Diane learn these clues. Diane's a smart cookie with experience at an IT company; this one was 'good' though!

The next email was the following week, a Tuesday again, but earlier in the morning. It also said 'From'

Catherine Wendt, but this time the email address was text@sprintwirelessmessages.com. A very similar request, that we've been brainstorming some employee incentives, and would she 'quietly and discretely' buy the cards. It said to 'Revert to this email' instead of 'Reply' and it was also signed 'Catherine.'



We don't use Sprint either and there were grammar/word choice errors this time. I think she was targeted since she is a new employee, and they knew just enough about the rest of our company to make the whole thing convincing.

Bottom line? Educate your staff, tell them that you will not make this kind of request via email or text; all monetary requests have to be a phone call. And, anything that says not to tell anyone is automatically suspicious! - CMW

Target Registers Down Two Days In A Row

In June, Target stores could not process credit card payments at their registers for about two hours, once on Saturday, and again on Sunday. There were long lines and frustrated customers.

The good news? There was no data breach, no customer data was at risk! Their IT team and vendors were on it right away.

No one likes a work interruption. It seems even the big guys experience trouble once-in-a-while. – CMW

Capital One Breach – How?

You probably heard about this in the news; in July 2019, Capital One had a security breach. According to an August 9th article by Spencer Israel for Benzinga, this was one of the largest data breaches in US history; 106 million accounts over 14 years; 140,000 Social Security numbers; 80,000 bank account numbers. The next largest was Equifax back in 2017, which was 143 million customers.

Was it hackers breaking through the billions of dollars of cloud security that's in place in the banking industry? Nope, it was the human factor. The person, who was arrested, accessed the data through a misconfigured web application firewall, copied and then downloaded almost 30GB of data that was on an AWS server. All of this happened in March and April, but Capital One didn't know about it until July 17th when someone told them about a public GitHub page that looked an awful lot like Capital One data, according to an article by Russell Bandom in *The Verge*.

The cloud is big business—just think about these banks, AWS, the

government; that's a LOT of data to protect. Bottom line, and the wild card each time, is human error, in this case, a misconfiguration that was exploited. Back in 2017, a mistake by an Amazon employee created a huge outage, too.

Even with so much money invested, and still being invested, cyber security is considered the biggest risk to the banking industry. **Are you at least doing the basics?** A firewall; strong passwords; disaster recovery backups (not just a copy!); changing passwords often; using two-factor authentication. Are you taking this seriously? Are you 'saving money' by setting up your own anti-virus, firewall, your own backups? Are you SURE they're right?

You are excellent at what you do; you've honed your craft and you do it well. As one of our newsletter readers, I'm pretty sure your 'craft' is not IT! Companies hire you because you're outstanding at what you do. Let us handle the IT so you can stay focused and fulfill those contracts!

Microsoft as your IT Company?

We were visiting a prospect, performing a Network Review, and the

owner said he had been using Microsoft as his outside IT support. He'd found a good guy who was willing to help, although not always available. Call wait-times can be incredibly long, and not all IT-related problems have anything to do with the Microsoft products, so he's looking for an IT company but wants to keep costs down, too.

We got back to the office and found out that our 4-week long 'issue' with Microsoft to fix a duplicate account number was finally moving ahead. What a frustrating experience!

Watching costs is so important, but I have a question: How much does it cost for you or someone on your staff to sit on hold? How much lost work time, tasks not done, employee frustration? I'd like to suggest that if you let a qualified IT person do it—and they billed you—you'd still come out ahead; think about it! —CMW



Collecting Time From the Field Just Got Exciting!

Sick of spending hours entering time from the field? Need better accountability from the field?

You won't find a better, fully integrated, field time collection solution than ours because we wrote it to do what our clients told us they needed!

Interested? Join us **Friday, September 20th, 10:00am Central Time** to hear all about it!

Who Wants To Win a \$25 Amazon Gift Card?

This month's trivia question:

These keys were originally programmed to always send the same signal/code. Which of these keys can now have a different instruction set for every operating system and/or application?

- a) Number keys b) Lock keys c) Direction Keys d) Function keys

To enter: Go to www.Syscon-inc.com/Trivia and type in your answer. All correct answers will be put into a fishbowl and we'll randomly draw the winner. The Winner will be contacted shortly after the deadline and will be announced in next month's newsletter.

Deadline: September 20, 2019

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner, Caleb Huftalain with **Catalyst Wealth Management** in AZ! Caleb's name was drawn from the fishbowl for last month's correctly answered Question (he is donating the \$25 to Phoenix Rescue Mission!):

Which of the following is a 'text-only' web browser?

- d) Lynx