



SUBLIME TECHNOLOGY TIMES

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



WHAT'S NEW

Crystal Ball View Into 2024

Compliance work will be getting in the way of actual work in 2024. Insurance companies, the payment card industry, and regulatory bodies are demanding proof of policies and procedures to continue doing business with them. In the past we have been able to answer questions in online forms and irrelevant firewall scans. The industries mentioned above finally figured out that they were asking for the wrong information. They are now asking the right questions that actually make businesses create policies and procedures that help keep them safe from fraud and hackers. This will generate work for IT, HR, and C-level, but this work is beneficial. Businesses that have policies and procedures are in a better posture to survive business interrupting events - or better yet - prevent them.

We have been working with our clients to improve their compliance posture. Contact me if your company needs assistance.



A "CULTURE OF APPRECIATION" IMPROVES WORK AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY:

Here's How To Make It Your Own

The desire to feel valued, recognized and appreciated is universal in Western culture, not only in our personal lives but also in the workplace. According to Great Place To Work's 2023 discretionary effort study, 37% of respondents said that more recognition at work "would encourage them to produce better work more often." Additionally, employees who feel consistently recognized are 2.2X more likely to innovate and bring up new ideas and 2X more likely to say people at work go above and beyond. Working harder, smarter and happier – that's a significant ROI.

Similarly, customer appreciation drives loyalty, engagement and company growth. A Forrester survey of 85,000 consumers found that the top three emotions that "inspire or discourage loyalty" among people are to feel valued, appreciated and respected. Appreciation isn't a one-and-done event.

We can all agree that appreciation is important, but how you show it matters. (Sorry, but your annual Christmas party or Facebook customer appreciation post doesn't cover it.) To reap the benefits of appreciation in your organization, you must weave it into company culture.

Tips To Create A Culture Of Appreciation

A culture of appreciation is about being consistent. While significant events like anniversaries, birthdays and holidays are great opportunities to recognize and appreciate employees and customers, you need to do it in small ways throughout the year.

Here are a few important tips to help you create your own meaningful culture of appreciation...

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This monthly publication is provided courtesy of Adam Bell, President of Sublime Computer Services



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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Tips for meaningful employee appreciation and recognition:

It's important to note that there is a difference between appreciation and recognition. Appreciating an employee is to acknowledge their value as a person to your organization. Recognition is related to performance and effort. Consider both when you are planning your acts of thanks:

- **Find out what's meaningful to them.** Everyone has preferences for how they want to be appreciated. So ask! Food, a note, a personalized gift – there are many simple ways to show appreciation.
- **Create more opportunities for recognition.** You can't see everything, so ask for submissions from your entire team and post the shout-outs on an office bulletin board or internal team e-mail.
- **Be specific.** Did they put in extra effort for the presentation? Are they always on time for team calls? Specific comments are more genuine.
- **Don't wait.** Don't recognize an employee for their work on a presentation a month

after the conference. The sooner you say it, the more impact it will have.

- **Align with the bigger vision.** Recognize how employees contribute to your organization's mission during team meetings. You could even offer to pay for a training course or industry conference to invest in their professional growth.

Appreciating Customers:

In a study by the Rockefeller Corporation, 82% of customers will stop doing business with you if they feel they're undervalued. Here are tips for creating a culture of customer appreciation in your organization:

- **Personalize their experience.** A handwritten thank-you note is meaningful to customers, but personalizing the customer experience can go even further. Figure out how they like to be reached (via e-mail or phone, for example) or set up marketing campaigns relevant to their unique preferences.
- **Follow up.** After a service or purchase, check in with your customer to ensure they're happy. Proactively showing up and addressing questions or problems before

customers get frustrated helps them feel valued and respected.

- **Create loyalty programs.** Programs (like Starbucks' Rewards or REI's co-op membership) where customers earn points for purchases or get discounts for loyalty milestones help express how important their business is to you, ensuring you keep getting it!
- **Offer perks or gifts (especially when something goes wrong).** Customers love getting perks on their birthdays, on holidays, as a surprise or to celebrate a significant purchase from you. But gifts like a free product, gift card or discounts are essential if there's a problem. Once solved, gifts provide a way to recognize and rectify the inconvenience.

Infusing appreciation and recognition into your organization isn't just a pleasant gesture – it's a strategic move that yields tangible results like improved employee effort and innovation, stronger relationships and loyalty.

Whether acknowledging an employee's hard work or sending a personalized note to a customer, let's make every interaction a testament to our appreciation and respect for them – not just this month, but all year-round.

FREE CYBER SECURITY AUDIT:

Free Cyber Security Audit Will Reveal Where Your Computer Network Is Exposed And How To Protect Your Company Now

At no cost or obligation, our highly skilled team of IT pros will come to your office and conduct a comprehensive cyber security audit to uncover loopholes in your company's IT security.

After the audit is done, we'll prepare a customized "Report Of Findings" that will reveal specific vulnerabilities and provide a Prioritized Action Plan for getting these security problems addressed fast. This report and action plan should be a real eye-opener for you, since almost all of the businesses we've done this for discover they are completely exposed to various threats in a number of areas.

To Get Started And Claim Your Free Assessment Now, Call Our Office At 615-942-0850 Or Visit www.sublimecomp.com/contact



CARTOON OF THE MONTH





START JANUARY WITH A CHAMPION'S VISION:

Emmitt Smith's Humble Advice For Success

When former NFL running back Emmitt Smith was six years old, he told his dad that one day he wanted to play for the Dallas Cowboys. "He said, 'Son, life is gonna do some things, and you're going to have to learn how to overcome,'" Smith recalls. He did overcome challenges, setbacks and mistakes in his career, lessons he took to heart. By embracing humility, accountability and passion for the process, he didn't simply succeed – he became legendary.

After 15 seasons in the NFL, and holding the record for leading rusher, Smith won season three of the hit show *Dancing With The Stars* and is today a successful real-estate entrepreneur. Though his accomplishments may feel like the stuff of dreams to us, his advice remains remarkably grounded.

January is often when we contemplate our goals and visions, whether in business or personal endeavors. By embracing Smith's advice, we can realize our own meaningful aspirations.

Hold Yourself Accountable

Smith has had many coaches, teammates and other entrepreneurs challenge him in his career, and they've played a critical role in holding him accountable both as an individual and as part of a team. "Who made the most mistakes and who did not? What marketing plan is working, which one is not, who's not communicating upstream or downstream? All these things are important to the level of success you're trying to get to," Smith explains.

Accountability helps you improve, especially if you surround yourself with people who are more experienced. "It's a beautiful thing to have wisdom... Some of your accountability partners have a little bit more experience than you do, so never be afraid to ask and seek guidance and help."

You Do Not Become Successful By Yourself

"I could not have become the all-time leading rusher without the Great Wall of Dallas in front of me," Smith says. It takes everybody to succeed in every organization; nobody can shoulder all the weight by themselves. The people who are not the most recognizable in the organization are often the ones who are doing a lot of the grunt work behind the scenes to make you look good. "Success is there to be shared. Not reserved for just you. It's enjoyable when you have others to share it with," Smith says.

Be In It For The Process

People often ask Smith how he became an all-time leading rusher. "Well, you got to be consistent. So, you can't be missing work. There aren't any shortcuts in life," he says. Fulfilling a vision is about taking small steps consistently so actions become habits and habits become sustainable routines.

"At the end of the day, when you get done, you will look up and you will look back on your journey. And you will see the process. And the things you put in to become successful work out for your good."

SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH

Theralite Aura Bright Light Therapy Lamp



Proven by science to help boost your mood in the winter months or decrease the side effects of jet lag, light therapy lamps – also called SAD lamps – use LED lights to mimic natural sunlight to help regulate your mood and sleep-wake cycle.

Featured in the Strategist's "9 Very Best SAD Lamps," the Theralite Aura Bright Light Therapy Lamp is a standout choice. With 10,000 lux LED lights, it delivers the ideal light intensity for therapy. Plus, it's compact and versatile, fitting perfectly on your desktop, table or nightstand. It's affordable too – only \$52 on Amazon. Brighten any winter day with the Theralite Aura Bright Light Therapy Lamp.

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT:

Krebs Kubota

"As a certified Elite Kubota dealer, Krebs Kubota offers an extensive selection of Kubota tractors, construction equipment, utility vehicles and turf equipment."

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Sublime Computer Services
315 W. Main St Suite 20
Hendersonville, TN 37075

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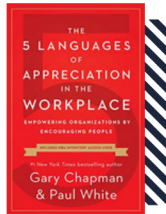
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THE 5 LANGUAGES OF APPRECIATION IN THE WORKPLACE

If you loved Gary Chapman's New York Times #1 bestseller, *The 5 Love Languages*®, you'll love its sister book written for the workplace, *The 5 Languages Of Appreciation In The Workplace: Empowering Organizations By Encouraging People*, co-authored with Paul White.



By teaching the art of authentic appreciation, the book tackles the core issue: Do employees feel valued? When you learn your team members' languages of appreciation, you can work to improve workplace relationships. Plus, the book includes a valuable MBA Inventory assessment to tailor your approach. Though some readers note that it repeats concepts from *The 5 Love Languages*, this new take is an excellent read for leaders aiming to improve relationships and elevate team performance.

THE DIGITAL ART OF SAYING "THANK YOU"



In today's digitalized world, showing gratitude goes beyond a simple e-mail. Video messages, personalized with tools like Cameo or Loom, offer heartfelt thank-yous that resonate. E-gift cards tailored to recipients' interests or even digital badges or writing endorsements for employees on platforms like LinkedIn can make appreciation tangible.

Gamified employee recognition systems, like Secchi, and gamified customer reward programs where customers earn points or badges for milestones, foster engagement and gratitude simultaneously. In our modern hybrid workforces, sometimes we can't say "thank you" in person, but by embracing the power of digital tools, we can reimagine our expressions of thanks in 2024, blending warmth with technology.