



A Message from Dennis

Want to improve and grow your business, your career and Improve your life? Then use the 5-second rule. (No, not the one that says you can eat the cookie that just fell on the ground.)

The 5-second rule I am talking about is this: As soon as you identify something that will have a positive impact on your business or your life, act on it within 5 seconds. This may mean calling on a prospective customer, calling a lost customer, walking up to someone and starting a conversation at a networking group, picking up the phone to hire that business/personal coach you know you need.

Whatever it is, doing it within 5-seconds keeps our brain from the time it needs to create fear. Fear enables us to come up with reasons why we shouldn't do something, take an action.

So count with me 1 Mississippi, 2 Mississippi, 3 Mississippi . . . Use the 5-second rule often and it will make a huge difference in your business and your life.

If you want to know more about the 5-Second Rule or other ways to improve your business, give me a call at 508-347-9343, or email me at dammccurdy@mccurdyinsurance.com.

~ Dennis

Business Interruption Insurance

Most people would never consider opening a business without buying insurance to cover damage due to fire and windstorms. Yet, business interruption insurance can be as vital to your survival as is fire insurance.

A business that has to close down completely while the premises are being repaired may lose out to competitors. A quick resumption of business after a disaster is essential.



Business interruption insurance compensates you for lost income if your company has to vacate the premises due to disaster-related damage that is covered under your property insurance policy, such as a fire. Business interruption insurance covers the revenue you would have earned, based on your financial records, had the disaster not occurred. The policy also covers operating expenses, like electricity, that continue even though business activities have come to a temporary halt.

Make sure the policy limits are sufficient to cover your company for more than a few days. After a major disaster, it can take more time to get the business back on track than anticipated. There is generally a 48-hour waiting period before business interruption coverage kicks in.

The price of the policy is related to the risk of a fire or other disaster damaging your premises. All other things being equal, the price would probably be higher for a restaurant than a real estate agency, for example, because of the greater risk of fire. Also, a real estate agency can more easily operate out of another location.

(Sources: <http://www.iii.org>; photo credit: Tamika Moore)

Protect Your Business from Ransomware

Earlier this year, Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center in Los Angeles was held hostage by crypto-ransomware. While patients weren't directly affected, staff had no access to the hospital's electronic medical records system and other computer systems. The hospital opted to pay a ransom of 40 bitcoins—the equivalent of \$17,000—to the hackers, 10 days after the hospital lost access to patient records.

Ransomware is a type of malware that gains access to your computer system and makes either the entire system or the data on the network inaccessible by encrypting the information. The attackers then attempt to extort payment from the business in return for receiving the encryption key.

Ransomware is not new. It first appeared when the Internet became more popular in the early 1990s. However, ransomware activity has increased significantly of late. And since acknowledging a ransomware attack involves exposing vulnerabilities or mistakes, it's believed that only a small fraction of them are reported.

The following are steps you can take to protect your business:

- Have a backup
- Test your backup to ensure the process is actually creating the backup files necessary to restore. Test often to ensure it is actually working. Simply pick a few files and restore them.
- Install a commercial grade virus protection program.
- Have a web filter to prevent your staff from going to malware sites. Malware sites account for ten times more problems than viruses attached to emails.
- Make sure everyone in your organization practices safe computing.
 - Do not open any email or attachment from any sender

you don't recognize. Most malware and ransomware viruses spread primarily through malicious PDFs, ZIP files, and other attachments that computer users unwittingly click on.

- If you don't know the sender and aren't expecting a file, don't click on it!
 - Don't connect to public Wi-Fi hotspots.
- Enlist a professional IT provider to perform a security assessment on your systems. The requirements for online security fluctuate from day to day, making the decision-making process about security complex for the typical business owners. Working with a trusted, reliable partner who delivers proven IT solutions that meet your needs and defend your systems can make a major difference.

Bob Wants You To Know . . .



Are your W-2's secured? Last year, the Internal Revenue Service reported a substantial increase in tax-related ID theft. Once armed with someone's W-2 information, criminals have most of the data needed to file a fraudulent tax return with the IRS and obtain large tax refunds. During the 2015 tax season, the IRS identified \$908.3 million in fraudulent refund claims, and successfully prevented issuing 86.6 percent of them.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) received over 490,000 identity theft complaints in 2015. Almost half of those complaints involved tax or wage identity theft, which FTC officials are calling "the largest and fastest growing ID theft category."

The security of W-2 information must always outweigh convenience.

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