Online Learning Tips For A Successful School Year, Even If It Is Virtual

Every kid is unique and it's important to find out what works best for your child.

As schools consider reopening, children face a future in which online courses will probably be part of the curriculum. To make the best of this situation, here are some tips to help your child adapt to learning from home.

Reduce distractions: Limit the use of the devices until the schoolwork is done. Some students may need an adult to check on them. The surrounding environment can be a big distraction, too. Having favorite toys around can make it harder for the kid to focus. Consider setting up a quiet, clutter-free workspace that is comfortable for your child.

Brain breaks: Allowing time for exercise before your child is expected to focus on learning might be a good idea. Repeated physical activity during school can improve children's attention. Exercise is one of the best ways to reduce stress and prevent anxiety.

Provide positive feedback: Putting a check mark, star or sticker on a work assignment can go a long way to encourage a kid. Other options that may work well with younger kids are giving a sweet treat, allowing playtime with a favorite toy or an extra 15 minutes to play before bedtime. For high schoolers, watching a movie or getting extra tablet time might be a good reward.

Help kids stay in touch with their friends: School is much more than a place to learn. It serves as a place for kids to socialize and hone their networking skills. Social ties that students have among each other have a positive effect on academic achievement. Implementing social interactions into the routine will help a kid stay connected. One example is organizing a daily video chat with a friend or a group of peers. School discussion boards, real-time classroom conversations and email communication are other ways your child can interact with peers.

Be flexible: You may need to adjust your schedule as you go. If some class activities or subjects are more difficult, consider setting aside another time to work on that assignment. Try working with your children on more challenging tasks during the times of the day when they are most alert and engaged. Encourage your child to continue working on the things that come more easily when you are not readily available.

Source: usatoday.com

Why Your IT Disaster Recovery Plan Should Be A Top Priority

We have all heard the horror stories of simple mistakes that lead to costly business disasters. It seems like every day on the news we hear about the next recall or outage that leads to the need for public relations to clean up the mess. More often than not, the damage is too great to overcome and the company that suffered the IT disaster can't recover. Having an IT disaster recovery plan is a critical business need.

Planning for the unknown can be difficult, but having enough funds to implement an IT disaster recovery plan can seem close to impossible. But how unlikely is it that an IT disaster will happen to your company? With the combination of natural disasters, hardware failures and human error, the reality is that data loss is only a matter of when, not if.

According to a NFIB National Small Business poll, man-made disasters affect 10 percent of all small businesses, and a staggering 30 percent have been impacted by natural disasters. A simple power outage could put your whole business at risk. In fact, research by the University of Texas has shown that only 6 percent of companies suffering from a catastrophic data loss survive, 43 percent never reopen and 51 percent close within two years.

Here are the top 5 reasons why your company should rethink its IT disaster recovery and prevention plans.

5. Machines and hardware fail.
While modern IT hardware is fairly resistant to failures, most devices fall far short of a perfect track record. No one is immune to hard disk or internet connection failures. While it can be costly for your company to eliminate any single point of failure in your IT infrastructure, having a disaster recovery plan that does this is the only way to insure that a hardware failure doesn't interrupt your service or cause data loss. The less expensive and more sensible option would be to have your data backed up regularly. Ideally, and more cost-effective than building your own top-of-the-line data center, would be to outsource your IT infrastructure to a leading Disaster Recovery as a Service managed data center operator. This eliminates any capital expenses while ensuring the strictest protection from service interruptions due to IT infrastructure failures.

4. Much like machines, humans are not perfect. They make mistakes.
Have you ever accidentally saved over a word document or had your computer crash before you could save an important file? It happens to the best of us. Even the most cautious can forget a step in an important process causing data loss or the wrong data to being entered. While very common, these mistakes can often be the hardest to prevent and correct. Having a disaster recovery plan that creates a series of incremental online data backups lets you easily restore your files to an error-free state. Having redundant firewalls, anti-virus, and anti-spyware software can ensure that security breaches are protected against if one were accidentally disabled or a port left open. Often times the most important way to prevent human error is in process improvements and quality assurance activities. A disaster recovery plan that incorporates checking and double checking is often the best remedy, along with

online backups is best.

3. Customers expect perfection.
The Internet and the Web 2.0 revolution have not only forced companies to be more transparent and accountable but competition in all in industries has greatly increased. With increased competition come lower prices, better service, and less forgiving customers. Most customers demand perfection because they know that if your company can't provide it, the next competitor in line is ready to give it their best shot to win the business. It's imperative not to give your customers a reason to leave because of something preventable like an outage in service.

2. Customer retention is costly, but customer re-acquisition is devastatingly expensive.
While on average it is much cheaper to retain a customer then to acquire a new customer, re-acquiring an old customer after an IT disaster can be next to impossible. It takes a lot to earn customers' trust, but after an IT disaster like loss of data or an extended outage in service, trust quickly evaporates. This is especially true when your customers are losing up to thousands of dollars per minute of downtime, which is not uncommon in some industries. Most IT disasters are deemed absolutely unacceptable to end users. Get a disaster recovery plan–it is far less expensive to prevent a disaster than try to re-acquire lost customers after one has occurred.

1. You're only as strong as your weakest link.
The age-old saying is as true today as it was when first uttered. You can have one of the most well-crafted ships ever made, but if your crew can't see the iceberg just beyond your line of sight, then it doesn't matter upon impact. No business is immune to IT disasters, but there are many things you can do to prevent them or quickly recover. There is no excuse not to have an IT disaster recovery plan in place – today. An ideal disaster recovery plan would place your production servers in a top tier data center with no single point of failure on the power and network connections. Your disaster recovery backup servers would be at another data center at least 45 miles away in case of a severe natural disaster. This would ensure that you're virtually protected from any downtime, and you have put your business in position to survive the most brutal IT disasters.

Conclusion: Save money, save your customers, save your business. Develop a solid IT disaster recovery plan.
No business is invulnerable to IT disasters, but speedy recovery due to a well-crafted IT disaster recovery plan is expected by today's ever-demanding customers. Too many businesses fail because they were ill prepared for an IT disaster, even when a simple solution like online backup could have easily saved them. If you haven't thought about developing an IT disaster recovery plan yet, it should be at the top of your priority list. Your business and customers demand it.

If you're looking to develop your IT disaster recovery plan, we can help! Contact us to learn more.

Source: otava.com

BEFORE THE BREACH

HACKERS ARE HERE!

NEW SKILLS FOR A NEW FIGHT

- 1 in 5 businesses will suffer a cyber breach
- this year
- 81% of all breaches happen to small/medium sized businesses
- 66% of companies do NOT test their backups
- 60% of companies that lose their data will go out of business within 6 months
- 92% of malware is delivered via email
- 97% of breaches could have been prevented with today's technology

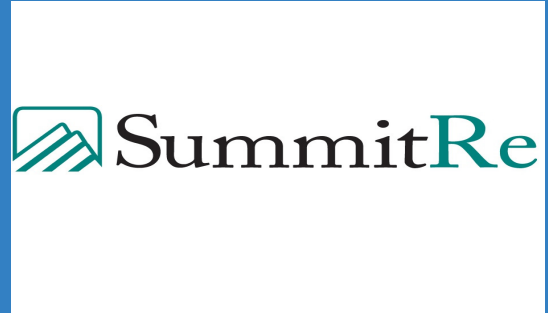Want to learn more about how to protect your business?

Stay tuned for our next lunch and learn date!

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CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

We want to shine the spotlight on our client Summit Re. Summit Re is a managing general underwriter that specializes in catastrophic healthcare coverage for a wide range of organizations across the US, including health insurers, managed care organizations, provider groups, self-funded employers, and more. We think the staff is pretty awesome too!

When COVID-19 hit in full force, Summit Re was well prepared for everyone to work remotely from home, as a large portion of employees were already working that way. The office employees had to get used to working a little differently but were able to pick it up very quickly. Adding Microsoft Teams to the equation increased their connectivity to each other and helped maintain the continuity of their relationships with customers.

If you are in the healthcare industry and want a partner to help identify your risks and protect your resources, then contact Summit Re today!

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BENEFITS OF 5G

5G is next generation wireless network technology that's expected to change the way people live and work. It will be faster and able to handle more connected devices than the existing 4G LTE network, improvements that will enable a wave of new kinds of tech products. 5G networks began rolling out in the United States and around the world in 2018 and are still in their early days, but experts say the potential is huge.

Companies are racing to have the fastest or largest 5G networks. And countries are competing to be the first to deploy fully functional, nationwide 5G. That's because the benefits of the new technology are expected to fuel transformative new technologies, not just for consumers but also for businesses, infrastructure and defense applications. Much of the hype around 5G has to do with speed. But there are other perks, too. 5G will have greater bandwidth, meaning it can handle many more connected devices than previous networks. That means no more spotty service when you're in a crowded area. And it will enable even more connected devices like smart toothbrushes and self-driving cars.

5G will also reduce latency — the time it takes for a cell phone (or other connected device) to make a request from a server and get a response — to virtually zero. And it will make communication with cloud platforms (think Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure) faster and easier. In order to connect to and get the benefits of a 5G network, consumers have to have 5G-enabled devices. Samsung, Motorola, Huawei, LG, OnePlus and several other device makers have released 5G phones. Apple is widely expected to release a 5G iPhone later in fall 2020. Some companies — including manufacturers and the NFL — are also working with carriers to install personal 5G networks so they can reap the benefits without waiting for the nationwide rollout.

Source: CNN.com

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A 15-year old once hacked NASA

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