



TALK NERDY TO ME

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We love technology and we love helping people.

Give me a call today for a quick (non-salesy) chat to find out whether my team and I can help you better secure your data and get more out of your existing technology!

- Jason Horne
CEO

IS YOUR SMART OFFICE A SECURITY RISK? WHAT SMALL BUSINESSES NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IOT

Your office thermostat, conference room speaker, and smart badge reader are convenient, but they're also doors into your network. With more devices than ever in play, keeping track can be tough, and it only takes one weak link to put your entire system at risk.

Here's a practical guide designed for small teams getting ready to work with connected tech.

Steps To Manage IoT Security Risks for Small Businesses

Know What You've Got

- Walk through the office and note each gadget.
- Record model names and who uses them

Change Default Passwords Immediately

- Change every password to something strong and unique
- Store passwords securely where your team can consistently access them

Segment Your Network

- Create separate Wi-Fi or VLAN sections for IoT gear
- Block IoT devices from accessing sensitive servers
- Use guest networks where possible

Keep Firmware and Software Updated

- Check for updates monthly
- Automate updates when possible

- Replace devices that are no longer supported

Monitor Traffic and Logs

- Use basic network tools to track how often and where devices connect
- Set alerts for strange activity, like a badge reader suddenly reaching the internet
- Review logs regularly for odd patterns

Set Up a Response Plan

- Who to contact when devices act weird
- How you'll isolate a problematic device
- Available standby tools or firmware

Limit What Each Device Can Do

- Turn off unused features and remote access
- Block internet access where not needed
- Restrict device functions to exact roles only

Watch for Devices That Creep In

- Have a simple approval step for new devices
- Ask questions: "Does it need office Wi-Fi? Does it store data?"
- Reject or block any gear that can't be secured

Encrypt Sensitive Data

- Check device settings for encryption options
- Use encrypted storage systems on your network

Reevaluate Regularly

- Reassess passwords, network segments, and firmware
- Replace devices that don't meet today's standards

Why This Actually Matters

Smart devices simplify work but can pose risks if not properly secured. More businesses are experiencing cyberattacks through their IoT devices than ever before, and these attacks are rising rapidly.

Protecting your systems isn't about

about expensive high-tech solutions; it's about taking simple, smart steps.

These simple steps can protect your business without getting in the way. Plus, with the right IT support, staying ahead of threats is simpler than you might expect.

Your Office Is Smart, Your Security Should Be Too

With the right IT partner who understands the unique challenges small businesses face, you can take steps to protect what matters.

Ready to get serious about IoT security? Contact us today and partner with a team that protects small offices, without the big business complexity.



ALTI PLAY DESK MAT

A dual-sided desk mat with a magnetic modular system, ALTI PLAY keeps your workspace organized and stylish.

Its reversible, water-resistant surface and anti-slip base offer flexibility for work or play.

Special features include magnetic accessory attachment, a built-in document hideaway, and a sleek, clutter-free design—ideal for creative professionals, gamers, and anyone seeking a premium desk upgrade.

PROJECT CHAOS TO CLARITY: HOW MICROSOFT PLANNER TRANSFORMS SMALL BUSINESSES

In the past, teams relied on sticky notes and endless email threads to manage tasks. But with today's hybrid work environments and fast-moving deadlines, that approach just doesn't cut it anymore. Effective project management is now essential to stay on track and ahead.

According to McKinsey, the average worker spends 28% of their week managing email and nearly 20% just hunting for information or colleagues to help.

Microsoft Planner is versatile tool that's just as effective for simple task management as it is for complex enterprise projects. It's easy to get started with, yet powerful enough to keep multiple projects organized and on track. With a bit of guidance from an IT partner experienced in supporting small teams, Planner can transform the way you organize,

collaborate, and deliver results.

A Simple Way to Manage Tasks

Microsoft Planner brings everything together in one place, making it simple and intuitive for small teams to jump in and start using right away. Here are a few ways that Planner helps you stay productive.

• Organized Task Boards. Think of Planner like a shared to-do board where your whole team can create tasks quickly, assign responsibilities, add due dates, checklists, files, and notes, and move tasks through stages like To Do > In Progress > Done.

This organized view allows everyone to stay on track without the need for long email threads or disappearing messages.

• Task Details That Keep Teams on Track.

Every task in Planner comes with all the details you need. Just click on a task to set start and end dates, assign priorities and include checklists, attach files and assign responsibility, set dependencies to ensure tasks are completed in the correct order, and linked to relevant Teams channels for context and collaboration. This makes sure nothing important falls through the cracks and keeps conversations right where they belong.

• Templates Save You Time.

Planner offers ready-made templates, some are available in the free version, while more are available in paid plans. Just pick a template, customize it, and you're ready to go. It's a quick way to launch projects without reinventing the wheel.

• Smooth Integration with Microsoft 365.

Planner isn't a standalone app; it's designed to work seamlessly with the tools you already use. With everything linked together, you gain clarity, reduce friction, and create real momentum.

• Built-In AI to Supercharge Efficiency.

Microsoft's new Project Management Agent goes further, analyzing goals, breaking work into tasks, and even suggesting who should handle them. These helpers free your team to focus on creative work.

Make Planning a Habit, Not a Hassle

From setup to confident use, we'll tailor Microsoft Planner to fit your team's unique needs. Let's simplify project management together, schedule your consultation today.

5 SIMPLE WAYS TO KEEP YOUR BUSINESS DATA CLEAN

Data is everywhere, and if you are not utilizing it to your advantage, you are missing out. It is found in emails, customer profiles, inventory systems, or basically throughout your entire workflow. But relying on outdated or inaccurate information can lead to confusion, slow down your team, and ultimately cost you a lot of money.

With the right IT partner and these simple steps, you can keep everything clean and running smoothly.

1. Decide What Info Actually Matters

Identify the key data that keeps your business running smoothly, like customer contacts, order details, or payment terms. Then, create simple guidelines your team can easily follow.

2. Show Your Team the Right Way to Do It

Most data errors occur when people aren't sure what's expected of them. Rather than overwhelming your team with lengthy manuals, provide a simple, clear guide. It makes a big difference in maintaining consistency.

3. Tidy Things Up Often

Don't wait too long to clean up your data. A quick monthly review helps you spot duplicates, fix mistakes, and update old info before it creates bigger issues.

4. Use Smart Tools to Prevent Errors

Use form validations so emails, dates, and numbers follow the right format. Then make certain fields required, like phone numbers or email addresses. If your CRM allows it, set up automatic checks for common errors.

5. Keep Your Documentation Updated

Things change fast with new systems, tools, and teams. That's why it helps to keep a simple note on where your data comes from, who handles it, and how it should be used.

Don't Let Data Be the Thing Holding You Back

Better data means smoother work, clearer decisions, and happier customers. Ready to stop wasting time on messy info? Reach out today and let's get your data back on track.

7 SMART TIPS TO BOOST YOUR WIFI

- 1. Upgrade Your Hardware:** Invest in equipment that can handle today's demands and grow with you down the line.
- 2. Give Priority to What Matters**
Most: Prioritize important traffic like video and phone calls.
- 3. Divide Your Networks:** By dividing your network into segments, you reduce congestion and boost security.
- 4. Balance Server Load:** Shared workload across servers keeps systems running smoothly during busy times.
- 5. Adjust Your Setup for Efficiency:** Make sure to regularly check your router, switch, and firewall settings.
- 6. Watch for Threats Before They Slow You Down:** Keep an eye out for unusual activity that might be slowing down your network.
- 7. Build in a Backup Plan:** Having a backup internet connection means your team can keep working

STRATEGIC WAYS TO PLAN YOUR BUSINESS'S IT EXPENSES

Without realizing it, technology can drain your business budget. Here are 7 steps to help you better plan for IT expenses.

- 1. Take some time** to figure out what you are paying for and how it will benefit you.
- 2. Focus spending on investments** that improve security, productivity, and training.
- 3. Break down your expenses** into clear categories.
- 4. Trim what you don't need** like old subscriptions, redundant tools, and overpriced vendors.
- 5. Allow for flexibility.** Your budget should adapt to your needs.
- 6. Plan for the future.** If growth is part of your plan, your IT budget should reflect that too.
- 7. Partner with experts** who can help you stay organized, cut unnecessary costs, and keep everything running.

10 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES THAT WILL UNLOCK YOUR TEAM'S BRAINPOWER

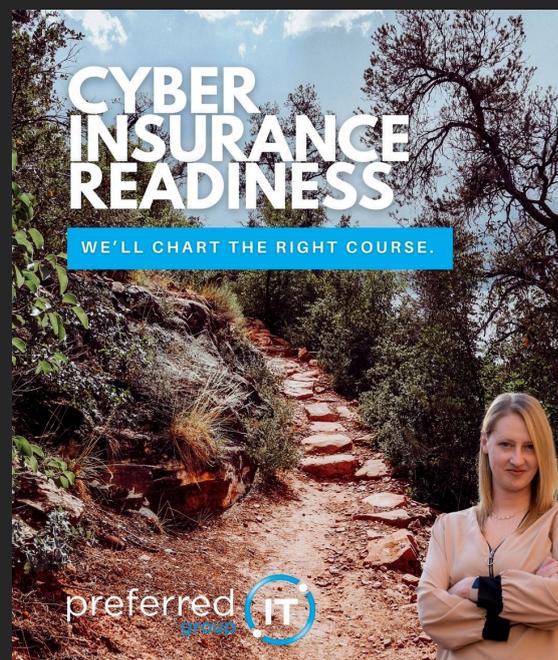
Is your team constantly reinventing the wheel? It might be time to build a smarter way to share what you already know. Smart knowledge management strategies (KMS) can help solve this problem. Here are 10 of our favorite tips:

- **Start with the Right Questions**
- **Choose the Right Tool and Not the Flashiest One**
- **Keep It Focused and Logical**
- **Make Content That's Actually Useful**
- **Split Internal and External Knowledge**
- **Assign Responsibility and Ownership**

- **Make It Easy to Contribute**
- **Tie It into Everyday Work**
- **Track What's Working Celebrate the Wins**

A knowledge hub doesn't just save time, but it also helps your team work smarter.

Turn your everyday know-how into something powerful. Let us help you build a smarter, stronger, and more connected business. Get in touch today and start building a knowledge hub that benefits your whole team.



Getting cyber coverage alone is like hiking the wilderness without a map.

Most businesses don't end up getting the coverage they need.

At Preferred IT, we'll chart the right course with IT controls, compliance, and documentation

So, call us, no trail mix required!