

Introducing New Team Member:

Kevin is originally from Boston but lived in CA for 17 years. A father to four beautiful children, he is a major sports fanatic. The minute you whisper game, Kevin magically appears! He also played and coached Ice Hockey. He loves football, the outdoors, and the beach so much he gets outside every single chance he gets.

He moved to the Islands in 2017 with his Fiancé and has an April wedding in the works! They now call Hawai'i home and have no desire to leave this beautiful Island. Kevin has been in IT since 1990 and has worked with MSPs the entire time for two reasons: the technology and the people you meet. He is now part of the HI Tech Hui Ohana!



Traveling Ohana: Team members Loren & Ally had some adventurous spring breaks!



Big Island & Kilauea



Santa Rosa, FL



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HI TECH HUI NEWSLETTER



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OUR MESSAGE



Success is the sum of small efforts - repeated day in and day out. - ROBERT COLLIER

Spring is in the air! Now's a good time to work on growth strategies and focus on our next steps for the spring, especially after a year of COVID. Essentially, I'm starting from scratch and looking at all our systems, processes, technology and marketing - and doing some internal business spring cleaning, so to speak. I want to bring you on this journey with me in case you want to do some business spring cleaning of your own. Being in technology my whole life, I leverage technology in all areas to help grow my business, and I'm so passionate about this topic that I wanted to create a series to help Hawaii businesses thrive in this new economy (with Covid). This month's topic: Websites.

Years and years ago when I first started my own business, I began with building websites. For a multitude of reasons, I didn't like that line of work and started to pivot towards consulting and managed services. The experience from that first business, and the ones following, helped me to develop many opinions about websites that I want to share.

When you're first starting out your company, I do NOT recommend blowing your whole budget on a website. There are many inexpensive templates that you can use or that your website company can provide

you. You will need to design and add your own images and you will need to write the content yourself. Work with a company that can provide you a Wordpress template and a company that knows how to keep your site safe from hackers.

As you grow and rely more heavily on online marketing and have larger budgets, you will need another strategy to attract and convert more customers. This is the stage that we're at. We have a website that we threw together (the bare minimum) to have an online presence. Now we have to refine our message, add all of our services, add and update our content for SEO, update our branding and work on better conversion rates. Do we have the talent to do this in house? Yes, probably. Should we do this in house? Our answer is no. It takes time to get up to speed on best practices and strategies for online marketing. You do what you do best, and choose to work with people that do this best.

I have so much more to share, so continue on to page 3 for a more in-depth guide to websites. I look forward to sharing new insights to a new topic next month!

- Anne-Marie Lerch



SHINY NEW GADGET OF THE MONTH



Temperature Control Smart Mug

Meet the Ember Temperature Control Smart Mug – a mug that gives you more options than any mug ever. The Ember keeps your drink – coffee, cocoa, tea, milk, etc. – at the exact temperature you want, between 120–145 degrees Fahrenheit. You can also control the mug from your smartphone – adjust the temperature, set notifications and more. The mug itself includes a 1-hour battery to keep your beverage hot on the go, or you can use the included charging coaster to keep your beverage hot all day long. Find the Ember mug on Amazon or learn more at Ember.com.

What Are Managed Services, And Why You Should Demand This From Your IT Company

We all want to protect our businesses. They're a part of who we are, and it would be devastating if anything bad happened – including an unexpected cyber-attack. But it happens. Businesses are attacked every single day. Some businesses are left in ruin. Some can pick up the pieces, but at a great cost. Then there are businesses that are back up and running in a matter of hours, almost as if nothing happened at all.

These are businesses that said “yes” to managed IT services and made the commitment to protect their business, employees and customers. If your business lacks managed IT services and you haven't yet embraced total IT security, it's time to say “YES!” and give your business the top-notch IT support it needs to protect it from the countless IT threats that exist in the world today.

Managed services essentially offer complete IT support without the need to hire dedicated in-house IT support staff. You get full-time access to network and technology experts without having to pay a full-time team. In other words, you save money and you have someone keeping a close eye on your network. The good news is that the IT company you already work with may already offer managed services – you just have to ask for it! (If you don't work with an IT support company or managed services provider, it's highly recommended that you do!)

Here Are A Few Reasons Why Managed Services Should Not Be Ignored:

It's A Proactive Service You Can't Find Anywhere Else. Proactive IT support is HUGE. You have to be proactive because, guess what? Hackers and cybercriminals are proactive. They're smart people and they're relentless. Managed services will give you access to your own outside team of exceptionally smart people and systems that can identify IT problems before they actually become problems.

It Helps You Save Money – And You Know How Much You'll Be Spending Month To Month. Hiring in-house IT experts is expensive. It's one of the most common reasons why many small- to medium-sized businesses don't invest in good IT support. The sticker shock is

too much. But managed services take away the sticker shock.

It Protects You In Many Different Ways. You can count on your MSP to minimize malware, spyware, ransomware, phishing scams and other exploitative hacks. You're protected by advanced software, hardware and old-fashioned human knowledge and experience. But the protection doesn't stop there – far from it! Managed services providers can also protect you against potential natural disasters, such as fire or flood, or hardware failures – things that are impossible to predict yet possible to prepare for.

They can also protect you when it comes to compliance. There are many industries where compliance is a big deal, from banking to health care. If you operate in one of these industries, you know how important this is. Having managed IT services means your network is up-to-date with all the fine print. You don't have to worry about anything slipping through the cracks or breaking compliance, which can lead to all kinds of costly headaches.

It Gives You TIME. This is the most precious commodity of all. If you're running around dealing with network issues yourself – or trying to – you're spending a lot of time doing everything you DIDN'T want to be doing when you started your business. Wouldn't you rather be focused on taking care of the things you intended to focus on, like growing your business and taking care of customers?

When you bring managed IT into the fold, you have so much less to worry about. No, it's not set-it-and-forget-it, but it's close. Your MSP handles your IT, while you handle your business – and you collaborate when you need to. You can rest assured that someone is keeping a close eye on your network and that your MSP is a quick phone call or e-mail away (should you have any questions or concerns).

These few points only scratch the surface of why managed services are so important. Stop putting it off and make the phone call. Tell your IT company you want managed services and you're ready to protect the future of your business!

Anne's Website 101:

IF YOU'RE IN BUSINESS YOU NEED A WEBSITE. - I'm shocked as to how many businesses in Hawaii do not have a website. For me, it's almost a deal breaker. If there's an accountant that has a website vs one that does not, I will choose the one that has one. Why? Because it tells me that they know and understand business and the importance of an online presence. It shows me they are progressive. It builds trust.

YOU DON'T NEED TO SPEND A TON OF MONEY ON A WEBSITE. - *The more money you spend on a site does not mean you'll make more money from your site.* I remember when I started my first business. I spent a few thousand dollars on a website. And since it was my earlier years, that was pretty much my WHOLE budget. I had a really pretty site and I was sooo excited I couldn't wait for all the calls to roll in. Then the day came when my site went live and nothing happened. Days went by and no calls no emails. Months went by and NOTHING. *Websites alone (even really pretty ones), won't bring you business.* It just keeps you credible so people can better make decisions to do business with you.

SECURITY IS IMPORTANT. - Websites can easily get hacked. Make sure you're working with a company that stays on top of patching and takes security seriously.

Website Components

1. There is the actual design - the look and feel
2. The Content – The words and information about your business.
3. URL - you can purchase your URL, your domain name from places like GoDaddy and Moniker.
4. The Platform - We prefer to use Wordpress sites for the ease of use. There are many different templates that can easily be used to get your website started.
5. The Hosting - Hosting is where the website lives. The hosting company should be able to manage and maintain websites. Wordpress sites are known to get hacked easily. Ensure you're working with a company that patches often and understands cybersecurity.

Things to consider:

- Do not put your company email addresses on your website. Use a generic info@
- Make sure you own your own URLs. Don't have someone else purchase it, make sure you have the logins for your domains and that you're paying them on time so they don't expire.
- Don't host your website yourself. Outsource hosting to reputable companies that know and understand cybersecurity

IT'S TIME TO UNINSTALL ADOBE FLASH PLAYER



On Dec. 31, 2020, Adobe dropped support for their Adobe Flash Player platform. For 25 years, Flash Player had been an integral part of the internet. It gave webpages an extra oomph in the form of interactivity. It came in the form of video, audio, games, buttons and much more. It laid the foundation of what much of the internet is today.

But Flash Player had a dark side. It was a security nightmare. Hackers and cybercriminals routinely exploited Flash and put countless users and websites at risk. Over the years, security experts tried to get people to uninstall Flash, but the platform persisted. Until now. If you still have Adobe Flash on your computer, take a minute to uninstall it.

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