



Creative Resources Technology Group

"Insider Tech Tips and Strategies at Your Fingertips"



Section 179 Limit Increased!



2 Places You Should Never Cut Corners With IT

If you're unfamiliar with Section 179, Section 179 is an attractive tax deduction for small and medium-sized businesses. This deduction is good on new and used equipment, off-the-shelf software, machinery, computers, office furniture, vehicles, or other tangible goods up to \$1 million thereby reducing your taxable income on your current year's tax return. To take the deduction for tax year 2018, the equipment must be financed or purchased and put into service between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018.

If you are going to need a new computer(s), network or infrastructure upgrade in the near future, now is the time to take advantage of the generous tax savings the Federal Government is offering.

See page 4 for more information on how we'll help you save even MORE money in addition to Section 179.

December 2018



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Russell Poucher, President of Creative Resources Technology Group.

Our Mission: To make technology work seamlessly with your business and to work for you, not against you. As the leading Apple Consultant in Orange, Riverside, and San Diego County, we pledge to always provide innovative solutions that meets your specific business needs, superior customer service, and expert strategies on how to leverage IT to build your business. *Don't worry, we got IT.*

Today's technology empowers business owners in ways that would have seemed incredible even 10 years ago. With a humming network connecting your team to the rest of the world, and with just a few simple keystrokes, your organization can complete tasks that used to take days.

However, the endless possibility that accompanies technological advancement your business is better established. But comes with a catch: to be truly effective, IT requires investment – not just of capital, but of time and attention, resources all too dear to the harried entrepreneurs of the modern age. Perhaps this is why, everywhere you look, small to midsize business owners are not only failing to realize the full potential of their technology, but are unknowingly leaving massive gaps in their systems and processes for malicious entities to exploit. And so, budding companies that would otherwise dominate the market are

prematurely stamped out by competitors with more tech savvy or are hamstrung by costly data breaches.

Even in the midst of this trend, we understand how easy it is to ignore your company's glaring technological gaps. You imagine that you don't have the time or money to address the issue, or that you'll do it down the road once no matter how big or small your business may be, there are two foundational tech concerns that you should *never* cut corners on.

1. SECURITY

Pretty much every successful company today is intimately intertwined with the technology on which it depends. So it makes sense that your primary worry should be protecting what's yours from those who want to snatch it. Think of it this way: would you hire a \$5 locksmith

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to secure your office? Of course not. Then why do so many business owners put their livelihood behind a flimsy, \$5 firewall – or, even worse, a free antivirus? In 2018, it is more likely that your business will fall victim to a cyber-attack than it is that thieves will arrive at your office in the dead of night, according to a 2017 report from Kroll.

In 2015, SEC Commissioner Luis A. Aguilar wrote, “Cyber security is clearly a concern that the entire business community shares, but it represents an especially pernicious threat to smaller businesses. The reason is simple: small and midsize businesses are not just targets of cybercrime; they are the principal targets.” With this in mind, cyber security should always be one of your top priorities.

2. TECH SUPPORT THAT GOES BEYOND THE “BREAK-FIX” APPROACH

It’s difficult to overestimate the money, time and stress it can cost you when your technology breaks down. Between server downtime, haywire software, connectivity issues and myriad other potential problems, when your stuff breaks, it can cause more than a massive headache– it can put you out of business.

Most business owners realize this, but many still opt for the classic “break-fix” strategy. Unfortunately, “If it ain’t

“...you’re inviting a crisis into the equation that could easily have been avoided with a keen, proactive eye.”



broke...” is a dangerous maxim by which to steer a ship. If you wait to address a problem until after it becomes an issue, you’re inviting a crisis into the equation that could easily have been avoided with a keen, proactive eye. And when your server fails, or your network experiences hiccups, or some other unforeseen issue rears its ugly head, an unfamiliar break -fix technician will take longer to fix the issue than an expert who’s been working with your specific network from start to finish and already knows it inside out. It’s just not worth it.

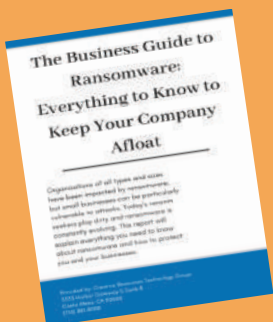
In addition, proactively managed service providers will consistently make recommendations to keep your company competitive. Whether it be a small upgrade to software here, a patch there or an overhaul of your server system, these moves can be invaluable in the breakneck marketplace. And, of course, since they’re keeping tabs on your tech at all times, any potential problems get addressed long before they hit your bottom line.

By leveraging technology, you and your business can do amazing things. Partner with a team of IT professionals who are actively invested in your success and confidently push your company into 2019.

**Free Report Download:
The Business Guide to Ransomware: Be Prepared**

More and more, ransomware has emerged as a major threat to individuals and businesses alike. Ransomware, a type of malware that encrypts data on infected systems, has become a lucrative option for cyber extortionists. When the malware is run, it locks victims’ files and allows criminals to demand payment to release them.

There are ways to protect your business against ransomware attacks. In this e-book, you’ll learn how the malware is spread, the different types of ransomware proliferating today, and what you can do to avoid or recover from an attack. Hiding your head in the sand won’t work, because today’s ransom seekers play dirty. Make sure your organization is prepared by downloading this free e-book today.



Claim your FREE copy today at

<http://www.creativeresources.net/the-business-guide-to-ransomware-be-prepared/>

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What Our Clients Have to Say:



**"Consistent, Personalized,
Reliable, IT Firm at Your
Fingertips"**

The single biggest benefit to our company in using Creative Resources Technology Group is the ability to have a virtual on-call support service that works rapidly and efficiently. Russell and his team provide consistent, personalized service alongside routine on-site visits and calls providing guidance and updates about our IT infrastructure. Take the leap and you'll find comfort in knowing that you have a reliable IT firm at your fingertips.

Kash Nair, MD.
CEO & Medical Director
Nair Urgent Care
Long Beach, CA

We don't like to brag but check out what our clients have to say about us at

www.creativeresources.net/our-clients

The Importance Of Pride

The Key To Better Serving Your Customers

The famous business guru Peter Drucker wrote more than 10,000 pages on the subject of management. Across 39 books translated into 36 languages, you can bet he learned a bit along the way. It's the reason he's widely considered the "founder of modern management." In his book *The Practice Of Management*, Drucker states, "There is only one valid definition of business purpose: to create a customer. The customer is the foundation of a business and keeps it in existence. He [the customer] alone gives employment."

Recently, I had the opportunity to work with Farm Credit Services of America, a customer-owned financial cooperative that finances and protects farmers and ranchers in Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming. Everywhere I turned and with every person I interviewed, it was obvious Mr. Drucker would be thrilled with their business philosophy. Their customer is truly their No. 1 priority. All policies, procedures, products and services are in place for the sole purpose of helping their customers.

Maybe we should all consider ourselves "customer-owned cooperatives." After all, every part of our existence is based upon our customers. They may not directly own our companies, as they do at Farm Credit Services, but, as Mr. Drucker wrote, they alone give us employment.



Farm Credit Services was having an Executive Summit with 70 senior directors to discuss what more they could do to better serve their customers. They allowed me the opportunity to interview 15 people, from senior management to sales and field personnel, so I could dig down to find what really makes them tick. They didn't inquire as to what I would be asking their employees, nor did they give me any directions, concerns or restrictions as to what I could discuss. It doesn't get any more transparent than that.

Did I uncover any complaints, concerns or frustrations? Sure I did – every company has them. But more importantly, I discovered how proud they were to be serving their customers. Their heartfelt dedication to doing everything they could to ensure their customers succeed in a competitive and volatile market was a pleasure to witness. If someone were to ask me how I would sum up Farm Credit Services, I would choose one word: proud.

Tech Tip of the Month

A good password should be at least 8 characters long (or longer!) and have a combination of uppercase and lower case letters, numbers, and symbols that are hard to crack for hackers using sophisticated password-hacking softwares that can run 24/7/365.

Want to be kept up-to-date with the latest tech tips? Sign up for our Security Tip of the Day at

www.creativeresources.net/tech-tip-sign-up/

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■ 4 Ways Your Employees Will Invite Hackers Into Your Network

Cyber security is a complicated issue, no matter how you slice it, but one of the surest ways to reduce your risk and strengthen your defenses against hackers is to educate your team. Forewarned is forearmed, so make sure they fully understand the risks associated with the most common social engineering strategies. **Phishing**, the most prevalent, uses e-mails, chats or web ads impersonating trusted entities to trick employees into clicking

malicious links. **Baiting** is similar, but purports to offer something enticing, such as a music or movie download, to deliver malware onto your system. **Quid pro quo** hackers offer a "service" in exchange for access to private data, such as an employee's login credentials. **Tailgating** is when an unauthorized person physically follows one of your employees into a restricted area or asks to "borrow" their device for a bit and steals all the info they need directly.

Make sure your team is on the lookout for these malicious techniques, and

you'll be that much more secure. *SmallBizTrends.com, 9/20/2018*

■ Use These 3 Strategies To Break Your Bad Tech Habits

If you're trying to kick an addiction to your smartphone and other addictive tech, and you're tempted to turn to them whenever you feel uncomfortable or anxious, don't give up. Instead of seeking a distraction whenever you feel bored – for example, checking your e-mail for the 10th time or logging in to Facebook – learn to embrace silence, and yes, even boredom. If you find yourself checking your phone too much at work, set physical boundaries to restrict yourself. Put it in your desk or another place that adds an extra step to accessing it. The next time you have downtime, instead of whipping out your device right away, mull over a specific problem or idea on your own – you might be surprised what you discover. *Inc.com, 7/20/2018*

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How To Save Thousands Before 2019

We're feeling very merry and in the spirit of saving you money, we're making the following offer to anyone who hires us to upgrade their network before **December 27, 2018**:

1. We will give away 2 FULL MONTHS of our Professional Service Plan - a \$6,000 value - absolutely FREE to anyone who upgrades their network with us. All computer networks need regular ongoing maintenance to keep them running problem-free, and with our Professional Service Plan, you'll not only enjoy faster and more reliable service from your computer network, but you'll gain incredible piece of mind knowing that your network and the data it holds is safe from loss, corruption, downtime, viruses, hackers, spyware, and a host of other problems.

2. We'll allow you to continue the Professional Service Plan at a special discounted rate that will easily save you THOUSANDS in IT support. After the 2 months are up, you can continue to receive regular maintenance, critical updates and security patches, fast, remote support, and 24/7 watchover your network and data at a special discounted rate. Of course, you are under no obligation to continue with this maintenance, but we're certain you are going to want to continue after you see how we keep things running.

Give us a call at (714) 551-6772 to find out how we can help you save before years-end or visit us at www.crtechgroup.net/section179