

Technology Today

Insider Tips To Make
Your Business Run
Faster, Easier And More
Profitably

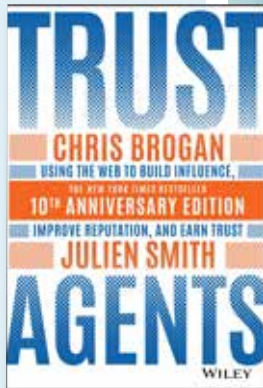
Trust Agents: Using The Web To Build Influence, Improve Reputation, And Earn Trust

By Chris Brogan & Julien Smith

For over 10 years, *Trust Agents: Using The Web To Build Influence, Improve Reputation, And Earn*

Trust has been teaching its readers how to build a greater online presence. It's a must-read for any author or business owner who is trying to create a likable brand and expand their online platform. It not only explains why trust is important but also demonstrates how to cultivate it. If you're

looking to gain traction online, Julien Smith and Chris Brogan's book is for you.



Hackers Are Stepping Up Their Game This Holiday Season

December 2021



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Jeremy Valverde, CEO of Affinity Tech Solutions.

Our Mission:

To build a community of success-minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.

The holiday season has almost arrived, and more Americans are expected to turn to online shopping this year than ever before. The ongoing pandemic, combined with convenience, makes online shopping an obvious choice for most consumers.

Unfortunately, online shopping has been muddied with hackers and cyberthieves since its debut. There are still safe places on the Internet where we should feel comfortable to shop, though. If you are careful about where you spend your money or share your personal information, online shopping can feel just as safe as entering a store.

Here are our five best tips to ensure that your online holiday shopping is safe and secure.

Stick To Secure Websites

When shopping online, you want to ensure that every site you visit is secure. Look at the browser bar when entering a new site. If there is a small padlock icon to the left of the web address, the site is secure and you should feel safe to continue. Google Chrome goes an extra step and will label unsecure sites as "not secure" so you know to stay away. Another quick way to tell if a site is secure is by looking at the web address. If it begins in "https," you're good to go. If the "s" is missing at the end and it starts with "http," the site is not secure, and you should find somewhere else to shop.

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Don't Be Afraid To Use Your Phone

You can shop on your phone just as easily as you do on your computer, and the portable aspect should not worry you. Major corporations like Amazon and Walmart have secure apps with seemingly unlimited items to purchase. Making purchases directly on apps avoids the hassle of going to the company's website, where your connection might not be as secure. It also helps to set up an Apple or Google Pay account, as businesses will not be able to get your bank account information from these sources.

If you do decide to shop on your mobile device, make sure that you are not on public

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WiFi. Public WiFi is rarely secure, and using it could make you an easy target for hackers. They could get any personal information you enter while on the WiFi. It's better to bookmark the products and purchase them when you are on a private connection.

Use A Password Manager

To keep your information secure, it's imperative to utilize strong and complex passwords that are difficult to crack. Avoid using personal information and using the same password across accounts. To make things easier for yourself, utilize a password manager to keep track of all of your different passwords. This way, you can create complex passwords that even the best of hackers can't figure out. Make sure to use a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and special punctuation to make the most secure password possible.

Take A Pass On Amazing Deals

If you come across a price that just seems too good to be true, chances are it probably is. If you search for an item on a search engine, you may see prices way lower than those of major retailers. These options could be on unsecured sites as a front to try to steal your information, or it could be someone who doesn't actually have the item trying to make a quick dollar.



While the deal might seem like something you can't pass up, it may cost you more in the long run, and you might not even get the product.

Pay Attention To Bank Statements

You won't always know when someone gets access to your personal information or bank accounts. By paying attention to your bank statements, you can catch overcharges or purchases that you did not make. Always use a credit card when shopping online because hackers will not be able to access any of your actual money. Most credit cards come with fraud protection that prevents you from being liable for charges you never actually made.

As long as you take the necessary precautions, shopping online is a safe and financially responsible practice. If you follow these tips, your holiday shopping will go as smoothly as possible.

Free Cyber Security Audit Will Reveal Where Your Computer Network Is Exposed And How To Protect Your Company Now



At no cost or obligation, our highly skilled team of IT pros will come to your office and conduct a comprehensive cyber security audit to uncover loopholes in your company's IT security.

After the audit is done, we'll prepare a customized "Report Of Findings" that will reveal specific vulnerabilities and provide a Prioritized Action Plan for getting these security problems addressed fast. This report and action plan should be a real eye-opener for you, since almost all of the businesses we've done this for discover they are completely exposed to various threats in a number of areas.

To get started and claim your free assessment now, call our office at (352) 233-4031.

Cartoon Of The Month



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HOW TO ATTRACT CLIENTS WITH A CONNECTED CULTURE

When it comes to creating a successful business, hiring a dedicated and engaged team makes all the difference. If you have unhappy employees, chances are you also have unhappy customers.

Building an engaged team starts with setting core values for the company. If all employees believe in the company's core values, they will have a better work experience. Once you have a team in place that believes in the values, work on creating positive connections. Positive connections help make the workplace enjoyable. Consumers are more likely to buy based on emotion, and a happier employee will create a better encounter for the customer. Creating a culture that everyone buys into goes a long way toward growing your business.

3 Ways To Protect YOUR Digital Identity Today

In today's day and age, there are few things more important than our digital identities. Thankfully, there are a few extra steps that we can take to ensure that our digital identity remains protected.

First, if the little padlock symbol is absent beside the web address's name, it's best to avoid that website altogether, as it is unencrypted. Second, pay attention while you search so that you do not end up on these sites. Third, creating different and difficult passwords for your accounts will also help protect you.

A Winning Strategy To The Game Of Building A Business

Life isn't always easy. Sometimes we sit back and expect things to happen for us, or we simply do as we're told and expect great things, but it's not always that easy. While defensive mindsets can be beneficial in some areas, if you want your business to grow, then you need to play aggressive offense.

I first got into real estate not long after Black Monday and the recession that hit in the early '90s. At the time, many other realtors relied on defensive tactics. They waited by the phone for prospective buyers to contact them, or they waited at an open house for potential buyers to walk in. But that's not how you get business.

I had no prior training in real estate when I entered, but that didn't stop me from becoming a dominant force in the field. We didn't have millions of dollars to buy subscribers or begin a widespread advertising campaign. Instead, we went after highly targeted strategic partners, and I keynoted at large conferences to build our subscriber base. We came out of the recession with more than 5 million subscribers because of our aggressive actions.

During various recessions, companies that have made a point of being aggressive in their campaigns have seen great growth. During the Great Depression in the 1920s, Post was the dominant leader in the breakfast market. They decided to cut their advertising while one of their competitors, Kellogg's, decided to double theirs. Kellogg's profits grew by 30% during the recession, and they became

the top dog in the market, where they have remained ever since.

During the energy crisis of the 1970s, Volkswagen, the car import leader of the time, cut growth spending. Toyota decided to double its spending focused on marketing and growth and became the #1 car import company. Volkswagen was bumped down to fifth. Toyota is still the leader of car imports and is three times larger than Volkswagen.



Elon Musk is one of the greatest offensive businessmen of the last century. In 2016, South Australia's electrical grid was knocked out due to a devastating storm. Elon tweeted that he could provide 100 megawatts of storage in 100 days or less. This would have been the largest battery in the entire world at that point, and Elon won the bid. He produced the battery within 60 days.

The greatest way to grow your business into an empire is by taking an offensive approach. It's been proven time and time again by some of the greatest names in business.



While Darren Hardy was growing up, his father always told him to be the exception. He has taken this philosophy and applied it to his many pursuits in the world of business. Darren has remained at the forefront of success media for over 25 years and is not stopping anytime soon.

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Tesla Took This Lesson From Ford's 112-Year-Old Playbook

Ford has been a dominant first in the auto industry since the very beginning. Henry Ford once said, "Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants, so long as it is black." It now looks like Tesla is following Ford's direction.

While other auto companies are focusing on providing more options to their customers,



Tesla has scaled back. Tesla offers a third of the color and model choices when compared to its competitors, but their stock value is much higher than most. Tesla has improved their stock value by doing what it does best instead of attempting to appease every customer.

This same thought process can be applied to business. Businesses that try to do everything to win all customers instead of focusing on their true base usually lose out to the competition. The most successful companies limit their options and make the choice for the consumer easy.

YOU'RE NOT GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CRM IF YOU'RE NOT USING THIS TOOL

Businesses use CRMs to provide better service to their customers by organizing and automating certain aspects of the business.

There's a vital tool in many of the major CRMs that is unutilized in many businesses. The ticket/case function can be used to address and keep a record of issues reported by clients.

When this function is used in CRMs, it can ensure that the problem is sent to the right person who is capable of addressing the issue. It can catch these problems early and will inform other users of this error so it can be fixed quickly. This helps meet the customers' needs while seeing if there are hidden faults lying beneath the surface of the product or service. A knowledge base can even be created to keep a record of all these problems so that customer service representatives can provide fast service to resolve any consumer issues. Regardless of the size of your business, the ticket/case tool is a valuable resource.

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