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**Reliable Information Technology**  
Computer, Network, VOIP, and Backup that Works!

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## Win-Win Solutions

### Grow Your Business And Keep Your Employees Happy

Business owners are well aware of the ever-evolving nature of the workplace. As time passes and new generations enter the workplace, priorities shift, causing business owners and managers to adapt to fit the needs of their teams. Two decades ago, most employees focused primarily on improving productivity, making as much money as possible and helping their businesses find success. But now we've entered a time where work-life balance and personal time are top priorities.

This has left many business leaders wondering how to keep their employees happy while maintaining a profitable business. It starts by developing flexibility tactics to benefit you and your employees.

- Set baselines for yourself. It's great that you want to be flexible and help your employees, but don't compromise your standards



for their sake. You know your business and what is necessary for it to thrive.

- Listen to what your employees say about you, the workplace and the business. Hold one-on-one meetings with your employees to see what they need in order to do their jobs better.
- Offer paid time off or unpaid time off to your employees so they don't feel burnout and frustration. Sometimes all your employees need is a little break from work to perform at their best.

#### QUICK AND EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

You face a lot of different stressors as a business owner. You have to worry about the well-being of your business and team, find ways to stay relevant and profitable and, of course, make time for your family and friends. Dealing with all this stress

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## The Creator's Code

By Amy Wilkinson

Have you ever wondered how entrepreneurs can build incredible multimillion-dollar businesses? You might think they received a head start on the competition, thanks to funding or birthright, but many of these entrepreneurs came from humble beginnings. *The Creator's Code* by Amy Wilkinson gives us insight into the inner workings of the minds of these fascinating businesspeople. Through extensive research and interviews with over 200 entrepreneurs, Wilkinson identifies six essential skills that most well-known entrepreneurs possess. She uses these skills to help readers realize what they need to do with their own businesses to find success.



*Get The IT Help You Deserve*

**5 Questions You Should Hear 'Yes' To**

## July 2023



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#### We have a simple mission:

To provide the most appropriate, reliable and durable technology solutions to meet our customers' needs and exceed their expectations. We listen closely to our clients and never use a one-size-fits-all approach or recommend unnecessary or flashy upgrades.

As a business owner, you likely carefully vet every employee you hire to work for your business. You inspect their résumé and ask detailed questions during their interview to ensure they are the best fit. This is critical to growing your business and making it as successful as possible, but you shouldn't solely reserve this practice for potential new hires. You also need to carefully assess any third parties you work with, especially when it comes to your IT needs.

When most business owners attempt to hire an in-house IT team or an MSP, they let the third party's representative or salesperson do most of the talking since they're the experts in the field. In some cases, the owner wants the representative to convince them to do business with their organization. In others, the owner is

too afraid to ask questions for fear of sounding uninformed. Failing to ask any questions when hiring an IT expert can put your business in a bad position and make you and your business vulnerable to cybercriminals. An excellent salesperson can sell milk to a cow, so asking relevant questions is crucial to ensuring you get the best IT services for your business needs.

If you're wondering what questions you should ask when deciding which IT expert to hire, don't worry! We're here to help. Here are some simple yes-or-no questions you can ask any IT expert to determine if they offer the best possible support. If they answer no to any of these questions, it might be best

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to look elsewhere. It's not worth the risk of experiencing a devastating and expensive network disaster.

**Do They Answer Their Phones “Live” And Respond To Support Issues Within An Hour?**

One of the most frustrating situations you can experience is needing your IT expert's help and being unable to reach them promptly. If you are concerned about your network security or another IT need, you should get the assistance you need as soon as possible. It is a huge red flag if the IT expert answers no to this question because that means they work at their own pace instead of being readily available and responsive to your needs.

**Do They Insist On Doing Regular Test Restores Of Your Backups To Ensure Data Is Not Corrupt And You're Covered If Disaster Strikes?**

Imagine that severe weather knocks out your network and your data appears corrupted when it comes back up. Ideally, you call your IT team, or they already know about the issue. They'll restore your corrupt or lost data, and everything will proceed as usual. But what happens if the backup fails or your IT team isn't regularly backing up your data? Some experts may be able to recover your data, but

**“Failing to ask any questions when hiring an IT expert can put your business in a bad position or make you and your business vulnerable to cybercriminals.”**

in many cases, you'll be out of luck, and your business might be in trouble because of it.

**Will They Give You Written Documentation Detailing Your Software Licenses, Network Passwords And Hardware Information?**

This is vital information, and there's a reason the IT expert might not want to hand over this information willingly. It keeps them in control of your network and, in many ways, makes them irreplaceable. If they possess all the information and you want to go in a different direction, you'll likely have to reset everything, which will take time and could cost additional money.

**Do They Tell You What They Are Doing In An Easy-To-Understand Manner?**

There's no question about it: cyber security and IT services can get incredibly complicated, and

some experts prefer to talk using industry jargon, which is difficult for many business owners to understand. It's essential to know and fully understand everything the experts are doing to help your business and keep it protected.

**Do They Proactively Offer Upgrades And Improvements To Your Services?**

The IT landscape is ever-evolving. New technologies and developments are introduced daily, and dependable IT experts stay up-to-date with changes in the industry so they can offer improved services to their clients. You shouldn't have to wait until disaster strikes to see these improvements implemented in your business.

These are just a few questions you should ask any IT expert you're considering hiring for your business. If they answer no to any of the above questions, you'll likely pay for substandard support and open your business up to additional risk.

## Help Us Out And We'll Give You A Brand-New Kindle Fire For Your Trouble



We love having you as a customer and, quite honestly, wish we had more like you! So instead of just wishing, we've decided to hold a special “refer a friend” event during the month of July.

Simply refer any company with 10 or more computers to our office to receive a FREE computer network assessment (a \$397 value). Once we've completed our initial appointment with your referral, we'll rush YOU a free Kindle Fire of your choice as a thank-you (or donate \$100 to your favorite charity ... your choice!).

Simply call us at **847-348-3381** with your referral's name and contact information today!

## Cartoon Of The Month



“Hold it! That's not what they mean by 'reboot.'”

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after a few weeks or months is enough to put you at your wit's end, but how can you maintain your mental health while attempting to grow and run a successful business?

Make sure you're not overworking yourself on a regular basis. Stick to a schedule that gives you plenty of time to complete your work while also leaving time for other activities outside of the workplace. Your business will survive without you dedicating 80 hours a week to it. When you do get free time, participate in your favorite activities, exercise regularly and spend plenty of time outdoors. Don't be afraid to schedule time on your calendar for personal reasons so that you can take time away from work. Schedule your nightly meals with your family or a weekly round of golf with a good friend. Making these changes will help you feel like you're getting your life back while still maintaining a profitable business. Remember that you have to make these changes – they will not occur on their own or without any effort on your part.

**Don't Develop These Detrimental Habits!**

As a business owner, you're likely developing new habits that you hope will improve your business or productivity. Unfortunately, many of these habits may actually be taking away from your success instead of driving you toward it. Here are a few negative habits to avoid if you want your business to grow and succeed.

- You're more focused on what your competitors are doing rather than on your own business.
- Instead of encouraging and giving your customers a reason to buy, you simply hope they will choose your business over others.
- You give up as soon as failure becomes a possibility and set your sights on a different project.
- You spend your time planning instead of performing necessary tasks.

# 3 Questions Every Leader Should Ask On Monday Morning

What is the first thing you do on a Monday morning? Do you dive straight into responding to e-mails or use your first minutes of the week more strategically?

My colleagues and I at ghSMART have collected data on 3,052 leaders and their teams over a decade. We reached a surprising conclusion about what predicts team success with the statistical help of professors and research team collaborators at the University of Chicago, UCLA and Columbia University.

In that study, we isolated three things that matter most. Leaders with teams rated as “strong” at these three things (by professional evaluators using structured in-depth interviews with high inter-rater reliability) were 20 times more likely to report successful outcomes than teams that were not strong at all three things. Think of this pattern like a triathlon – you must be great at swimming, biking and running to win.

Following the research implications, consider reflecting on these three questions every Monday morning.

**Do We Have The Right Priorities?**

Only 24% of leaders are strong at prioritizing, and 90% of the time, when they struggle with this leadership skill, it's because they lack the analytical skills and decisiveness to narrow their team's priorities down from a long list to a short list. When you have too many priorities, you don't really have any priorities, and energy gets wasted.

**Do We Have The Right People?**

Only 14% of leaders are skilled at hiring and developing talented teams. This is the most common weakness we observe in leaders



and their teams. Flawed hiring methods yield a 50% hiring mistake rate vs. research-based methods that produce a 90% hiring success rate (e.g., having a consistent set of criteria to rate candidates; unbiased, structured, past-oriented interviews; reference validation; etc.).

**Do We Have The Right Relationships?**

About 47% of leaders achieve good relationships with people within and outside their teams. “Trust” typically gets a lot of attention as a variable that predicts or even defines relationship quality, but our database suggests that 91% of leaders behave in a trustworthy fashion. Therefore, while important, it is not rare for a leader to build trust. Instead, the “special sauce” in building successful relationships in a professional context is to create relationships that are focused on achieving win-win results. Mutually beneficial results matter when forming and maintaining productive professional relationships, not just feelings of trust or empathy.

If you want to build a team that runs at full power for the good of your teammates and the constituents you serve, consider spending a few moments on Monday morning asking these three essential questions.



*Dr. Geoff Smart is chairman & founder of ghSMART, a leadership consulting firm that exists to help leaders amplify their positive impact on the world. Dr. Smart and his firm have published multiple New York Times best sellers. He stays active in his community and has advised many government officials.*