



Protecting Our Kids' Data Privacy is Paramount

The topic of protecting our children's online data is of utmost importance. The internet is full of learning opportunities and entertainment for our kids, but the web is replete with daunting challenges for parents, teachers, governments, and the rest of society.

Watch the recording below for a deep dive into the topic.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIAAn_7YgOJI

Why do we care so much about the next generation's privacy? The National Cybersecurity Alliance (NCA) is a nonprofit, and we're on a mission to create a more-secure interconnected world for this generation and the next. We advocate for the safe use of all technology and educate everyone on how best to protect ourselves, our families, and our organizations from cybercrime. We have hundreds of free resources available to the public, along with plenty of articles for kids!

Our society is responsible for ensuring our children can navigate the digital landscape safely without collecting their data before they are old enough to apply for a credit card. We can set them up for success in our connected world and raise them to be responsible digital citizens who will shape the future.

Kids' Data Privacy Statistics

In 2022, some 1.7 million children fell victim to a data breach, meaning 1 in every 43 kids had personal information exposed or compromised, according to a survey by Javelin Strategy and Research.

Almost 90% of Americans told the Pew Research Center they were concerned about social media platforms having children's personal information. Most of us think parents hold the primary responsibility for their kids' online safety, but about 60% say tech companies are also partially responsible, and almost half think the government shares a responsibility as well. Like other aspects of cybersecurity, everyone in society has a role to play.



How Can We Move Forward?

What can we all do to protect our kids' data? One key thing is staying positively engaged. If you're a parent, get in there with your kids, surf the web together, show interest in their online communities, and when they come across a game, website, or platform asking for their data, turn it into a learning moment. It's all about trust and open communication.

Supporting good choices is crucial. Give your kids a bit more online freedom as they prove they can

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From The Desk of David Snell

Welcome to the Month of Groundhogs and Valentine Hearts!

The grandkids were fascinated to know that Pam and I have been to Punxsutawney, PA, on the way home from a computer convention in Chicago *many* years ago!

It wasn't on February 2nd but on a hot summer day when Phil would absolutely have seen his shadow! I don't know what that might have meant!



We ate lunch at the hotel where "Groundhog Day" was filmed and also got a glimpse of Phil where he lived at the Groundhog Zoo. It was a fun side trip to break up a long ride home!



To start the month, we took them to the Cape Codder Resort in Hyannis. We found that it's being turned into a Margaritaville location, and the renovations have already started. They can't wait to see the results!

You'll be especially interested in Attorney Helene Horn Figman's article about terminating an employee. It's excellent information that will keep you out of trouble. Of course, we hope that you never have to use it!

Glenn Anderson of ViaMark's article on CTV and Digital Advertising is a must-read for anyone looking to up their advertising in a meaningful way!

We really liked Susan Rooks' article on "The Four-Letter Word I Want You To Use!" It's amazing how a simple four-letter word can make a HUGE difference in your communications!

Finally, we're rooting for Annette Bening and her Oscar nomination for "**Nyad.**"

In 2014, we had the honor of meeting Diana Nyad at a computer conference. Her motivational talk, less than a year after she swam from Cuba to Key West, was the highlight of the conference! What courage!



We hope that your February is filled with lots of good memories from the past and in the making!

David Snell

A Four-Letter Word I Want You to Use!

Years ago at a networking event, a man used a four-letter word I wasn't expecting.

No, not THAT one! Stay with me here.

We were discussing how his firm helped companies with customer satisfaction surveys, and he said something like "We help the companies do an even better job than they're currently doing."

Did you spot the word? Well, read on!

I realized the positive power of this word when I was helping a client create better employee reviews, those dreaded annual reviews we sit through, praying our boss actually likes us enough to keep us in our job.

We discussed how they could use language to help their employees really feel the praise that is intended.

For instance, a boss might say something like, "You had a great year. You did A, B, and C – but something you could do better is ..."

Sigh. He's not happy with me.

Maybe he'd say it this way: "You had a great year. You did A, B, and C – and something you could do better would be ..." Yes, he used "and" and not "but," but ...

Probably neither version of those words would make anyone really happy; while they were meant as praise, they fell a little flat.

Then someone asked, "What if we said, 'You did A, B, and C – and something you could do even better would be ...' "



There it was! A truly magical four-letter word that changed the tenor of the comment from so-so to really good.

Yes, the word is **EVEN**. With just four letters, it packs a strong and positive emotional punch. Suddenly the employee goes from "she hates me" to "I think she likes me!" without really knowing why.

And isn't that a great outcome?

Why does it work? Well, it allows the employee to believe they are already doing a good job, and with that one little word being used, they could go from good to great.

And isn't that what we all hope our boss thinks?

Are there situations where you could use this word in a conversation and see how it helps?



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Avoiding Knee-Jerk Reactions

I commonly receive calls from employers seeking to terminate an employee *immediately*, meaning that same day or the next day. Why? Some say that they just can't take a particular employee situation anymore, and they just want it over.

I am asked, "Can I do that?" My answer is, "It depends." Let's consider the nature of the problem.

Is it truly an immediate or urgent situation? Has something happened that particular day that dictates the employee shouldn't be in your workforce (or on your premises)? If there was conduct of an extremely serious nature that could harm your business, then immediate action is most likely in order.

However, consider the more common scenarios: An employee is annoying and getting under their supervisor's skin, an employee has made a minor mistake, or the new team leader doesn't think an employee is a good fit and wants to put in "their own people." Do any of these situations truly warrant a termination that same day or the next day?

When told to think about the matter of termination and advised to review their documentation, employers will refer to "at-will" employment and their belief that no documentation is required. While it is true that documentation is not legally required in order to terminate in most situations, it is also true that for every rule there are exceptions when it comes to protecting your business.

For example, if an employer is proposing to terminate a pregnant employee on the spot

because of one mistake, a more careful analysis of the situation is warranted. That termination could certainly be misinterpreted by an outside entity (including a state agency) as being related to the employee's pregnancy, despite the good faith non-discriminatory reason of the employer.



Was any other employee terminated on the spot for the same or similar mistake? It would be prudent to have some documentation.

Or, another common situation: Employee "A" is a longtime employee and stellar performer under a prior supervisor, but a new supervisor wants him out ASAP after just a week of working with him. Take a breath. Cooler heads should prevail. Thorough consideration of the employee's performance reviews and what he continues to bring to the table would be appropriate in lieu of a rash termination.

One might consider having the new supervisor engage in an initial meeting with those on the team. Informing employees of his expectations

and any new procedures that will be implemented is only fair. Then, if the new supervisor finds that Employee "A" is still not meeting expectations or following the changed procedures, termination is certainly an option.

For all decision making relating to the employment status of your staff, think about the fact that these employees will be completely blindsided if there hasn't been any discussion of expectations or even a simple conversation where a review of the job description takes place.

To avoid knee-jerk decisions, maintaining best practices is in order. More effective communication is a start. Have you told an employee that what they are doing is not meeting your expectations? If you've "mentioned" it verbally, did you follow up with a brief e-mail to ensure that the discussion was understood?

Business owners and managers are busy and they complain, with good reason, that they do not have the time to go through various steps of discipline. The good news is that there isn't a requirement of particular steps. Progressive discipline, in a particular order of verbal warning, written warning, final warning, suspension, etc., is not required by any state or federal law for the small or mid-sized private business owner. (This

type of progressive discipline is usually set forth in union contracts).

Employers do not need to have elaborate page-long documentation regarding every employee mistake or misstep. Any format will do. A few lines explaining the nature of your dissatisfaction is sufficient IF it is properly communicated to the employee. Communication is the key, and it shouldn't feel punitive to the recipient. You'll have better results if the matter is briefly explained and offered as a way to assist and correct, rather than punish.

If you need some pointers, obtain professional advice. Wrongful discharge and discrimination complaints can be costly, so exercise caution when taking personnel actions.

Finally, getting back to "I need to terminate this employee tomorrow": If that is indeed warranted, remember that Massachusetts law requires an employer to provide the employee with their last paycheck (including accrued unused vacation) on the date of termination. Also, issuing a properly worded termination letter is usually a good practice, as it provides the employer and the employee with documentation regarding the date of separation and other termination factors.

Attorney Helene Horn Figman combines specialized legal knowledge in employment law with the skills and perspectives uniquely suited to Human Resources Consulting. www.figmanlaw.com

Information about her anti-harassment and anti-discrimination education programs can be found at www.workplaceawarenesstraining.com

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CTV and Digital Advertising: A Dynamic

In today's advertising landscape, reaching potential customers at various stages of the buying cycle is essential for a successful advertising strategy. Connected TV (CTV) and digital advertising have emerged as a dynamic duo, allowing marketers to engage audiences throughout their buyers' journey, from awareness to conversion. Here's how this powerful combination works.

Consideration Stage: Targeting with Precision

As potential customers move into the consideration phase, they seek more information. This is where digital advertising shines. Utilizing data-driven insights, you can target specific demographics, interests, and behaviors, ensuring your message reaches those most likely to be interested in your product or service.



Awareness Stage: Captivating the Audience

At the initial stage of the buying cycle, the goal is to create brand awareness. CTV leverages targeted reach & frequency with video content to engage your target audience. By delivering ads on streaming platforms and smart TVs, you can introduce your brand to potential customers in an immersive way, leaving a lasting impression. This sets the foundation for later engagement.

Decision Stage: Encouraging Conversion

The decision stage is where prospects are ready to make a purchase. Here, CTV and digital advertising combine their strengths. CTV continues to reinforce your brand with engaging, memorable video content. Meanwhile, digital advertising delivers specific, action-oriented messages.



At Viamark Boston, we call this Bridgital. Our goal is to help our clients Bridge the Branding Digital gap. To learn more about Bridgital and how we can help your business, visit www.ViamarkDigital.com

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Duo for Navigating the Customer Journey

Retargeting strategies can remind potential customers of your product and offer incentives, such as discounts or limited-time promotions, to encourage conversion and driving people to your website or physical locations.

Post-Purchase Stage: Nurturing Loyalty

The customer journey doesn't end at conversion; it continues into the post-purchase phase.

CTV can play a role here as well. By delivering content that emphasizes the benefits and features of your product, CTV helps maintain brand loyalty. Digital advertising can complement this by providing ongoing customer support, gathering feedback, and offering recommendations for related products or services.

To summarize, the synergy between CTV and digital advertising offers a comprehensive approach to reaching potential customers at multiple stages of the buying cycle. CTV creates brand awareness and engagement, while digital advertising provides the precision and action needed to guide prospects toward conversion.

This powerful combination can nurture long-term relationships and even turn satisfied customers into passionate advocates. By integrating these two advertising strategies, your business can navigate the buying cycle effectively and achieve lasting success.

Protecting Our Kids is Paramount!

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handle it responsibly. And let's not forget about cybersecurity – keep those computers protected with the latest software updates, because, let's face it: The online world is like a constantly changing game.

Review privacy settings together. Make it a family decision. Teach your kids to think critically about what they see online, and remind them that what goes on the internet can stick around forever.

A Goal for Society

Protecting children's data privacy is a collective imperative. By reaching for this goal, we work to safeguard our kids' innocence, foster digital citizenship, and cultivate a future generation capable of responsible online engagement. We can work together to build a society where trust, integrity, and ethical behavior prevail.

By shielding children from potential harm, we fortify the foundation of a safer internet for all. By prioritizing kids' privacy, we champion a

shared commitment to nurturing a culture where every child can explore, learn, and connect online without compromise.



When we have a goal to protect children's data privacy, we make an investment in a better, more responsible digital society for everyone. By reading this, you show that you share that goal, and we're ecstatic to see how much you all care. Let's get to work!

Source: <https://staysafeonline.org/resources/protecting-our-kids-data-privacy-is-paramount/>

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This newsletter thoughtfully edited by Susan Rooks, the Grammar Goddess, so we can look and sound as smart as we are.



From our Cybersecurity Awareness Training Episode "Suspicious Events."

Triassic Park Jr. is a new type of zoo that features real dinosaurs. They are under attack from an elite hacker group! Here's what you need to do:

- Report suspicious cybersecurity events to reduce risks and protect against future attacks.
- Be Aware: Consistent and recurring security awareness training is important.
- Information to report: Provide as much information as possible like:
- Method of Attack: Email? Phone? Browser, etc?
- Time: Report time to your IT team in case of other security-related incidents.
- Scope: How far did you get before you realized it was malicious?

*Did you open an email? Did you download an attachment? Did you click on a link?
Did you enter credentials? Are you aware of anyone else being impacted?*

For more info — ACTSmartIT.com/training