



## A Strong Password takes more than just a string of letter and symbols!

Hackers and businesses are in a never ending war and right now, the hackers are winning. In the past two years alone, at least four major companies have been victims of large-scale cyber-attacks: [Kmart](#) and [Home Depot](#) in September, [JPMorgan Chase](#) in mid-August and [Target](#) in December 2013. While these breaches have raised red flags for a lot of consumers, what do they signify to you, as a small business? Should you be concerned for the safety of your data?

**Absolutely.**

So how does a business owner keep their important files protected? How do they strengthen their passwords so that data breaches are less likely to occur? Here are a few tips!



### 1. Use a unique password for each of your important accounts:

Despite its ease, choosing the same password for all of your accounts is like using the same key to lock your home, car and office—if a criminal gets a hold of it, everything is compromised. Differentiate your passwords for all of your accounts: social, personal, email, financial, business, etc. so that if one account is breached, your others aren't affected. Choosing different passwords for everything will make your passwords harder to commit to memory but don't be afraid to use a program like [Last Pass](#).

### 2. Make your passwords personal:

Complicate your passwords with numbers, symbols and mixed-case letters but avoid using publicly available information like your phone number or name. It's not original nor very safe. Instead, try using a phrase that only you know and make it related to a particular website to help you remember it. For example, for your banking account, you could start with "I check my bank account once a day to see what my spouse is spending" and then use shorthand to recreate. So one variation could read like "lcmBA1adTswm\$!S."

### 3. Install an Anti-virus program:

It is often said that good offense is supported by an even better defense and in order to stay on the offensive in protecting your data from hackers, you need to have an anti-virus program installed. Keep it updated as well so that the technology can familiarize itself with the latest string of viruses and better recognize them when encountered. Unsure of what anti-virus software to buy? Confused on how to implement it across all of your workstations? Give the team here at TLC Tech a call and we'll get you all set.

### 4. Utilize two-step authentication:

When first creating an online account be sure to enroll in two-step authentication, if the company offers it, which as its name implies, requires two steps in order to authenticate or confirm that the person trying to login into your account is actually you. So when you would login into your account, you would not only need your password but you would also have to sign in a second way with a numeric code that would be sent to your phone, an alternative email address, or via phone call.

# Data Backup...Is it really as simple as just buying a piece of hardware?

If you've ever been told that just buying a backup and disaster recovery device will keep your critical business information protected, then I hate to say it, but you've been bamboozled. Backup hardware is not enough to keep your business safe and unfortunately, many companies are learning that the hard way. Gartner estimates that only 35% of small to medium sized businesses have a backup and disaster recovery plan and for the remaining 65% of businesses without a business continuity strategy, the chance of survival after a breach is less than 10%. Are you willing to take that chance when it comes to your business?

Properly backing up your business data takes more than just hardware: it takes a comprehensive approach. Learn how to start building your all-inclusive backup strategy with some of the key points below!



## 1. Know that data stores don't exist:

The most important thing to remember about your data is that it is irreplaceable. There's no Costco where you can bulk buy client information or mall shops

where you can pay to get your data back. The fact is, if you don't already have the systems in place to back up your data, and by systems we mean 2 distinct locations, you're not going to get your data back. Be proactive and secure your data BEFORE something happens.



## 2. Determine your business impact areas:

Every company has things that they cannot function without. For you, these might be a particular program, software or file, and when creating a disaster recovery plan, these are the first things that you have to identify. Your mission critical applications will be ones that you have to protect with the utmost vigor. Once those applications have been determined, you have to decide upon an acceptable recovery time because let's face it, downtime has a direct effect on your customer service and ultimately your revenue. When your systems are down, you're not able to work properly and serve your clients, which can negatively impact your bottom line.



## 3. Assess your Risks:

Now that you've found your critical software applications and decided upon an acceptable recovery time, it's time that you create the action steps that your team will be expected to take when disaster strikes. This will require you to take a look at your IT infrastructure from two viewpoints: technology that you directly control, and the ones that you don't. In regards to the infrastructure that you can control, identify single points of failure as these are the number one cause of disruption to your customers. For the technology that you don't control, meet with your different network providers and develop new ways to handle issues, should any occur. If you're storing your data at an onsite data center, be sure to also have it backed up to a second location, offsite or in the cloud, so that you have that extra safety net in case of failure.



## 4. Develop Objectives to Mitigate and Manage Risks:

This is one of the most important steps as it is here where you put your plan into action. Purchase whatever extra equipment, servers, power supply sources, etc, that you will need in order to get back up and running in the quickest amount of time. Since this step is the most challenging, don't be afraid to reach out to a technology service provider to go over your objectives with you to ensure that you're covering all bases and to help you build your backup environment in such a way that you are equipped to handle the most common failure scenarios.

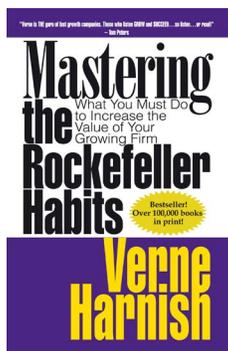


## 5. Test your strategy:

The last step in your backup and disaster plan is to test your failure scenarios under controlled circumstances. This is where having a network provider is crucial because they can test the safety of your network for you, without disrupting your normal workflow. By discovering shortcomings during the test period, you can save yourself valuable time and money by replacing the failing technology proactively.

# Business Book of the Month

There are an endless amount of leadership and business books out there and trying to keep up with them all can be a bit tedious. Our Business Book of the Month column highlights our favorite executive read of the moment so that you can stay on top of the latest trends in leadership and business without having to spending hours flipping through book after book. Each month we'll give you a summary and practical ways to put the ideas mentioned to work in your business.



In the same league as *Good to Great* by acclaimed writer Jim Collins, *Mastering the Rockefeller Habits* by Verne Harnish is designed for the business owner who wants to take their company to the next level and needs some guiding principles to go by. Based on the leadership and management rules used by John D. Rockefeller, founder of Standard Oil and often regarded as the richest person in history, *Rockefeller Habits* is filled with helpful habits and tips for improving the performance of your company.

## Harnish grounds the habits mentioned in the book to three main principles:

**Priorities:** Stemming from the notion that “team work makes the dream work,” this principle argues that your staff’s goals should directly align with the goals that you have for your company, that way you’re all working for the same thing. Do you have specific goals that you want your company to achieve within the next quarter, the next year? Does everyone else’s priorities align with yours? If everyone’s energies are focused on one main area, you’ll make progress at a much faster rate.

**Data:** How do you measure your

success? Does your company have data to support your efforts in order to gain insight into how the company is performing? Data is what should ultimately drive all of your business decisions and what Rockefeller had back then, still holds true now. The numbers don’t lie and if you include them as an anchor for your business decisions, you’ll find yourself in good shape more often than not.

**Rhythm:** People like repetition. It helps them know what to expect and how to perform. That being said, does your company have a predictable pattern of organized daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual meetings to ensure that all departments are aligned and efficient? A steady rhythm of communication will let your employees know that you value them and consider them an important part of your daily operations.

A great way to start implementing these pillars into your business is to have daily or weekly meetings with department heads and their teams to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Here at TLC Tech, I have multiple meetings with my team to catch everyone up on the goals for the week and any other announcements. Constant communication is essential to any relationship and your staff is no different. Holding a daily morning huddle with the focus on making sure that the day stays stress free and productive is an effective way to get your employees engaged while at the same time building a renewed sense of community. If daily or weekly meetings are a bit too time consuming for you, engage your staff with a weekly email or video conference basically giving a lay of the land and other updates.

# Client Spotlight

For this month’s client spotlight feature, we chose the law offices of [Simas & Associates](#). With over 99 years of combined experience working in administrative, health care and employment law, the attorneys here are seasoned, allowing them to offer a wide spectrum of service options. Since their inception in 2009, Simas & Associates has partnered with TLC Tech to grow their practice intelligently with a plan that focused not only on their service delivery but also on the growth of their technology systems.

Even though there were reservations at first about working with a remote tech company as they were used to having on-site technicians to assist with computer/equipment/software problems, the staff here quickly learned the value of TLC Tech because of their timely and prompt remediation services. These values aren’t the only benefits that Simas & Associates have come to know and love as they are now able to evaluate the status of their IT without headaches.

One specific instance where TLC Tech came in handy was when an Attorney at the firm had to work on a project over the weekend and the firm’s client management software, Amicus, did not load properly because of server updates. The Attorney made TLC Tech aware of the problem and a technician was put immediately on the issue. Supported directly by the technician, the Attorney was able to reboot the server in the office while TLC tech kept things running smoothly on the back end. The software was fixed and the Attorney was able to get back to her task in record time.

“We would absolutely recommend TLC Tech to any business. The team there is organized and makes the user-experience very friendly and adaptable. We are always updated on the progress of each ticket and at the end of each year, we can evaluate the tickets that were sent in and taken care of. TLC Tech makes IT easy!”