Dental Managers Society Newsletter
We Welcome Medical Managers!
March 2023

# The Top 5 Ways To Protect Your Practice From Ransomware

There are concrete steps you can take to make it difficult for hackers to sneak their way into your computers and network.

How bad is the ransomware problem? According to the Verizon 2021 Data Breach Investigation Report ransomware has more than doubled year-over-year. And attackers are targeting companies of all sizes – no one is too small.

There are 4 kinds of Ransomware:
**1.Encryption –** the most common type of ransomware, which encrypts all of your data and makes it impossible to unlock without a decryption key.

**2. Lockers -** restrict the use of your computer, making it impossible to work or use essential functions until the ransom is paid. This form of ransomware is not used as much today.

**3. Scareware -** attempts to scare users into buying unnecessary software, giving control of your computer to the hackers, or having your money stolen.

**4. Dovware / Leakware -** threatens to leak personal or company information unless the ransom is paid.

These are not the only ways to get a ransomware infection running rampant in your network, but they are the most common.

You'll know when you've been hit by ransomware: The attack typically starts at one workstation (the geek speak term is an endpoint)

Once implanted, the ransomware runs silently in the background. It will often search your network for other targets to encrypt, including file servers, other workstations, and backups. The more files it can encrypt, the more likely you will pay the ransom, regardless of the price demanded. Once it's encrypted all the files it can, a message will pop up on your monitor telling you that your files are locked and demand that you pay a ransom, typically in some cryptocurrency like Bitcoin.

The hackers also give you a deadline to pay, or your files will be permanently locked. Some of these attacks are so sophisticated that the attackers have a support team that you can call or email for help on making the cryptocurrency payment.

If you get the ransomware message on your computer, it's essential to stay calm and not panic. The hackers want you to panic so you'll make rash decisions.

These tips can help prevent you from being a ransomware victim. These five protections are the minimums that every business should have to protect itself in today's threat landscape, no matter their size.

**1. Protect your email:** Whether it's downloading attachments, clicking on links that go to infected websites, or tricking users into giving up their usernames and passwords – email is the main door used to get in. Ensure you're using a spam filter/email protection that provides advanced multilayered protection and includes AI-enabled learning and real-time analytics. If you're using Microsoft O365 or Gmail, this would be in addition to the standard services.

*Continued on page 3*

# Letter from the Editor

Pam Snell,
DMS Advocate

Hello!

I hope you have read our front page article "The Top 5 Ways To Protect Your Practice From Ransomware.." If not, or if you'd like a more detailed presentation, including Bonus Tips, head over to ***ACTSmartIT.com/coffee*** for my Coffee Break Webinar. It takes less than 15 minutes and you'll get much more actionable information.

Deb Parent's article this month is the First of Four Employee Retention Strategies; Employee Satisfaction Surveys, And, this month's free seminar is "Recruiting 101," February's Seminar was on a Friday morning and we got feedback that Thursday at 1:00 might be a more convenient time when, hopefully, the week is winding down and more can attend during lunch. Deb answers your questions at the end of each live webinar so it behooves you to attend! Be sure to register at ***dentalmanagerssociety.com/recruit***

If you aren't able to make these extremely valuable sessions, you'll be able to find them on our YouTube Channel: ***youtube.com/@webinarsofwisdom*** *(You'll recognize another play on our "WOW" services for those of you that are clients..)* Be sure to subscribe so you don't miss any of Deb;'s webinars.

Mark Your Calendars for her upcoming topics (all starting at 1:00pm):

Thursday, March 9th – Recruiting 101

Thursday, April 13th – Recruiting Tactics

Thursday, May 11th – Interviewing Skills

Thursday, June 8th – Orientation

Thursday, July 13th – Handbook & Job Descriptions
Register at DentalManagersSociety.com/recruit

Is your website ready for a make-over? I think that all of mine are! I've been taking a few webinars and I'll be following Kevin McNally's advice on pages 6-7. I also want to say that he and his team have done some really nice website re-dos lately! Take a look at our friend Attorney Helene Horn Figman's new site: FigmanLaw.com.

In January's edition, I mentioned that 2023 will be our year for videos. I've been wanting to do this for YEARS and I'm finally seeing that dream come into reality! Growth happens out of your comfort zone and I know I'll become more comfortable with experience. If you have any suggestions, please send them along!

*Continued from front page...*

2. **Install Antivirus Software & a Firewall:** Please do not use the "free" versions of antivirus software. They are free because they don't keep up with all the latest threats. Antivirus software is essential in defending against ransomware as it can scan, detect, and respond (quarantine/ delete) to cyber threats.

You'll also need a firewall since antivirus software only works at the internal level and can only detect the attack once it is in the system. A firewall is often the first line of defense against any incoming external attacks. It can protect against both software and hardware-based attacks. A firewall is essential even if you're a small business or work from home.

3. **Backup Your Data:** Data is the engine that drives your business; without it, your business doesn't run. Besides not getting it at all, the easiest way to recover from ransomware is to have all your systems and data backed up with a current working copy stored OFF the network. This ensures that the hackers can't delete or encrypt your backups!

**4. Keep Systems & Software Patched & Updated:** Keep your operating system, web browser, antivirus, and any other software you use updated to the latest version. Malware, viruses, and ransomware are constantly evolving with new variants that can bypass your old security features.

5. **Security Awareness Training:** Humans need to be at the heart of any cybersecurity strategy. According to the 2022 Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report, 82% of data breaches involved human interaction. Your security training should include spotting and reporting suspicious emails, staying safe while surfing the web and social media, and securing personal devices and home networks if they work from home.

Security training for employees should be at minimum once a year – twice a year is better, and quarterly is best, so they stay current with the latest trends and security is top of mind.

Cyber Insurance is NOT on this list. While you absolutely should have cyber insurance, you should NOT use insurance alone as a protection method. Too many businesses owners have said, *"Yeah, I have insurance, so I don't have to worry about any other security protections,"* and have had their claims denied because they didn't have these basic protections in place.

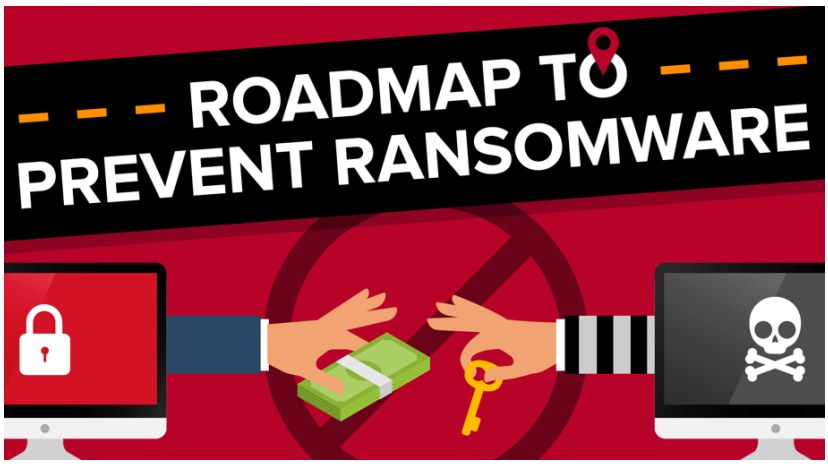
According to Bloomberg Law, Ransomware claims have skyrocketed, accounting for nearly 75% of all claims filed. This explains why there are more questions and more "exclusions" with your insurance renewal each year. Most companies will see an increase of 25-30% in their premiums this year.

There are additional security layers and tools you can put in place to protect your business. Of course, despite all the security measures you may have in place, it's still possible to become a victim of ransomware. Being cautious goes a long way!

Every business should have a written ransomware security plan that includes what to do immediately after becoming infected or attacked, and who to contact with their names and phone numbers.

Need help? Call us for a complimentary meeting to assess what you have in place now and how you can better protect yourself without breaking your budget.

**Call 855– WOW-SERVICE**
855-969-7378



# First of 4 Retention Programs to Launch

### *Knowing How Employees Feel About Working for Your Company Has Never Been More Important As a Retention Tool*

With many business owners concerned about retention, HR professionals are vigorously implementing programs to assess employee sentiment. This, in response to the "war on talent", and the fierce competition for employees today. At the same time, employees today are generally well informed. They know that jumping to a new employer, may be the only sure way to gain a significant pay increase.

I noted an article published in August 2022 by CNBC on average pay increases for the typical job switcher. Being a full-time recruiter and negotiator of salary weekly, and sometimes daily, this information is something I pay great attention to.

The article related that the typical job switcher netted a pay raise of nearly 10%, after accounting for inflation, according to the Pew Research Center.

Meanwhile, the typical worker who stayed saw wages fall 1.7% after inflation.

To combat this reality, naturally, companies must ensure they are conducting competitive compensation package assessments, developing their employee value proposition, company culture, and employer brand. But they also need to ***monitor employee sentiment systematically.***

Many clients of mine tell me that they talk to their employees every day so they don't need to implement any of these programs. However, talking to employees every day, on the fly, in general terms, is not enough. You need much more substantive and targeted information to assess employee sentiment. You are not going to get that in an impromptu brief meeting. They information you need to know is more about what employees actually think about their jobs, the company, the people they work with, the leaders, the mission, vision, and values and how it aligns with their interests, career plans and values.

There are a few effective ways to learn how employees feel about working for your company which are low-cost endeavors. Below are four highly effective retention programs, which I have successfully implemented in a variety of industries and organizations, both large and small. These programs will **help you retain good staff.**

## 1. Employee Satisfaction Surveys

You need data to make informed decisions about any aspect of business, to include decisions about your HR program. One effective way to obtain data about how employees are feeling about working for your company, is conducting regular employee surveys. Employee surveys generally fall into several categories to include satisfaction surveys, cultural, or engagement surveys, and the difference is in the type of questions asked. Some surveys focus on pay, benefits, workflow, schedule, etc. Others focus on what motivates employees, internal communication, leadership and the degree to which employees understand and are aligned with the mission, vision and values. The survey can be conducted by an outside third party or by HR staff. It can be done in person using a hard copy survey form (easier for on site or blue- collar workforces), or electronically.

### Why Conduct an Employee Survey?

It can reveal a great deal of information about employee perceptions. This information can then be used by leadership to make improvements to the workplace.

When companies are responsive to employee feedback, this can lead to higher retention rates, lower absenteeism, improved productivity, better customer service and higher employee morale.

The simple fact that the organization is conducting a survey can send a positive message to employees that their opinions are valued.

Managers can gain insights into issues affecting their departments that they may not be aware of.

# in 2023; Employee Satisfaction Surveys

## When to Conduct an Employee Survey?

When deciding when to conduct a survey, be thoughtful about the timing.

You don't want to conduct a survey during your busiest season as your response rate to the survey may be negatively impacted.
Avoid conducting the survey during times, or around events that could skew the results either positivity or negatively.
At least every three – four years. Some companies conduct surveys annually. That is fine to do, however, do so only if you have the deep HR infrastructure to be able to implement all of the changes that result from the survey, as changes that result from the survey often are large-scale, and in many cases, take months of planning, and then months to implement, measure, and refine.

## Why not survey your workforce more frequently?

You will risk credibility if you survey too often and don't address the issues raised in the last survey. Employees will quickly see that half of the things they said on the survey last year, still exist.
There is always a danger of survey fatigue as employees start to go through the motions with their responses if the surveys are conducted too frequently, particularly if they see no changes between one survey to the next.

## Key Points When Conducting the Survey

• Ensure you develop well thought-out communication materials to inform the workforce what the company hopes to learn and gain by conducting the survey. The lead up to the survey implementation should include frequent touch points with employees and repeated messaging reminding employees how important participating in the survey is. You want a high response rate.

• Some employees may question the confidentiality of online surveys, given the ability to track IP addresses, e-mail addresses and other information. That is why many companies use a third-party vendor to conduct the survey. This is particularly important with open ended questions, where each employee can write in their personal responses.

• The most critical point when conducting an employee survey, is to ensure that the company is fully committed to considering what employees are saying, and most importantly, be willing to response with substantive action, and share what changes will be made as a result of the survey. The sure way to lose all credibility as a leadership team, is to conduct a survey, and do nothing.

• Following the survey results communication, assemble a cross-functional or departmental team to work on the survey findings and actions to be taken. Team members should include senior and non-senior leaders and employees, with the senior leaders sponsoring the group. The team must be established no later than several weeks following the release of the survey results to signal to employees that senior management is serious about responding to the findings. Monthly progress reports to the CEO on the follow-up ideas and recommendations must occur.

Note: *Each month, Debra will cover one recruitment tactic you must be maximizing today to help support your recruitment needs, and to make your recruitment efforts both easier, and more successful. Next Month's Topic: Stay Interviews"*

Debra can be reached at rightfitrecruiting@comcast.net or 508-884-6798.

**FREE Webinar Thursday, March 9th at 1:00pm**

***"Recruiting 101"***

***For more information and to register:***

***DentalManagertsSociety.com/recruit***

# How To Optimize Your Website

When evaluating the success of your website, multiple factors can impact its success. Factors like page loading speed, website security, website design, SEO optimization, content quality, and analytics monitoring all measure website engagement. Let's discuss this in detail!

**Page Loading Speed**

A slow-loading website directly impacts the user experience and can lead to loss of customers, lower search engine rankings, and reduced conversion rates. As you can imagine, a slow site creates a poor experience for website visitors. On the other hand, fast-loading sites make a more enjoyable user experience, leading visitors to stay on the site or page longer, do further research, and ultimately convert to customers.

Remember, page loading speed is vital for SEO rankings, as Google considers page loading speed when ranking websites. So if your site could be faster, consider making changes to improve its performance. Depending on the underlying cause, there are multiple ways to get it running quicker, including:

- Optimizing Website Code
- Minifying CSS And JavaScript Files
- Compressing Image Files
- Caching Your Website
- Using A Content Delivery Network
- Having A Dedicated Web Host Provider

All work together to increase website engagement by improving the website's loading speed and performance.
A faster-loading website will keep visitors engaged and bring more favorable results.

**Website Security**

When users encounter broken code or an insecure website, it contributes to a poor user experience. For example, broken code can result in slow page loading times, unexpected errors, and a lack of functionality.

Website security vulnerabilities may contribute to data theft, malicious code injection, or other security risks.

All these issues create a negative experience. On the most basic level, negligence creates a poor user experience but can damage reputation and credibility, negatively impacting the underlying business or organization.

**Website Design**

Website design is essential for maximum online engagement as it is the foundation for how users interact with a website.

# For Maximum Engagement

Ideally, it should be visually appealing, easy to use and navigate, and responsive to all browsers. Remember, a professional site design ensures that users can find what they need quickly and easily.

Depending on the nature of the business, features that encourage user interaction and engagement, such as comment sections, reviews, user accounts or profiles, and clear calls to action, help direct visitors to take decisive action.

Whether visiting from a desktop computer, a tablet, or a Smartphone, responsive design ensures the site is optimized for visitors so all guests enjoy a good experience.

**Search Engine Optimization**

Search engine optimization plays an essential role in maximizing website engagement. This process includes a variety of tactics, like using relevant keywords in content, optimizing meta tags and headers, and citations from other online resources.

When people search for related topics, websites optimized for these terms benefit from more visitors and higher engagement. Additionally, optimizing the website's content and structure can streamline the information search, resulting in more time spent on the website and, ultimately, increased engagement.

**Content Quality**

Content quality helps maximize online engagement. Quality content, whether in the form of blog posts, videos, or regular social media updates, help to attract more readers, keep them coming back, and encourage them to share it with others.

Another benefit of creating high-quality content is it increases the chances of higher rankings in search engine results, further expanding its visibility and reach.

Ideally, all content should be well-written, informative, and engaging. It should be relevant to the topic, easy to read and provide value to the reader. By building on a foundation of quality content, businesses can maximize their online engagement and optimize their reach. Remember - content is the key to increasing online activity and should get prioritized when developing an online presence.

**Analytics Monitoring**

Website analytics monitoring is essential for measuring website engagement and success. It empowers website owners to track site metrics and engagement to help make more informed decisions on optimizing the user experience.

Analytics provides valuable insights into website performance metrics, including page views, time on site, bounce rate, and conversion rate. This data can identify areas of improvement, measure overall success, and guide new or updated existing strategies to increase engagement.

## Professionals Can Help Increase Engagement Times

When you need to maximize engagement times, the professionals at Interactive Palette are available to help. By leveraging our expertise in the latest design trends and technologies, our clients reap the benefits of having visually appealing and user-friendly websites that draw users in and keep them engaged. Don't hesitate to contact us to start the conversation if you want to learn more.

***Don't hesitate to get in touch with an expert from Interactive Palette today! (781) 930-3199***
sales@interactivepalette.com
**www.InteractivePalette.com**

**Kevin McNally**

Dental Managers Society—Sponsored by ACTSmart IT
332 Main Street
Wareham, MA 02571

## In This Issue: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- **Employee Satisfaction Surveys**
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- **And MORE!**


## *FREE Webinar*

## *Recruiting 101*

***Thursday, March 9th at 1:00pm***

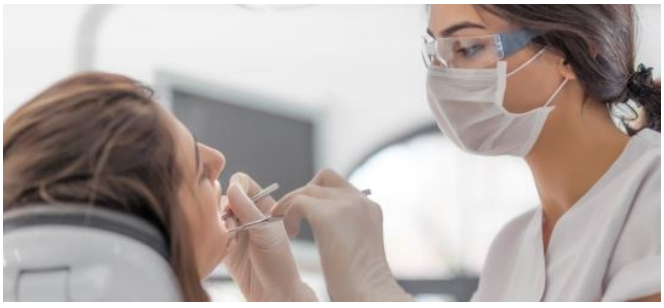
**Register at**

**DentalManagersSociety.com/recruit**

weave

## Alleviate strain on your dental staff

Tedious daily tasks can put unnecessary stress on your staff and negatively impact your office. Check out the features below to see how Weave can streamline office communication and reduce staff headaches.



**1 Enhanced Screen Pops:** Save time on every call with detailed information about each client as soon as they call in.

**2 Mobile App:** Call, text, and access Weave's other features when you're out of the office or working from home.

**3 Team Chat:** No more lost messages or buried email threads. Consolidate all your team communication in one place.

***For more info, visit: ACTSmartIT.com/weave***