

The Voice of Business

by Claudiu Popa



Protect your customers and grow your business

Achieving large calibre data protection on a small business budget is a matter of process and priority.

If you've ever heard the phrase "you can't get fired for buying Big Blue" and rolled your eyes, you probably know how it feels to be a small fish in a big pond. Big busi-

nesses like to do business with large companies but not for the reasons you might think. Large companies are no longer known for superior technology nor world-class expertise. But paying their high fees guarantees your audience a high level of assurance that you're cutting no costs and offering them the red carpet treatment, especially when it comes to security and privacy.

That kind of attention to quality and 'no expense spared' approach impresses your clients and serves to differentiate your business from the competition. But what if you don't have the budgets to pay the kinds of inflated rates Bay Street banks are accustomed to approving? You're in luck, because today's discerning customers and business partners are sharp, savvy and discerning. They know that big brands come with high price tags and those costs are typically passed on to them. Instead, they look for very specific things that help them arrive at the least risky decision and that may just translate into a loyal customer for life. So let's be clear: knowing what your audience expects to see will give you an advantage not only over your competition, but also over big businesses and their plus-sized budgets. And those wants are simple:

1. They want to be able to trust

you. You're the expert. You need to know what you're talking about. You need to show that you've got all your bases covered, from having the certified IT personnel in place, to being in compliance with privacy laws. Just know what you need to know and describe what you're doing. That makes a difference. That wins contracts. That boosts trust in you in a way that showing disregard for their data simply doesn't. So don't do the latter, focus on the former.

2. They want you to make them look good. Naturally. They've done their best to make their business as appealing as possible. Now they want to show that their chosen supplier is not just up to their standards but also raises their profile. Let them flaunt the quality of your work. Outline the rigor with which you do your work. If you're an accountant, wow them with your ability to follow the key principles of privacy, especially as you exchange information over the Net. If you're a restaurant, ensure that your staff doesn't disappear with customer credit cards or use beat up old card readers. If you're a web design company, show clients that your digital certificates and voluntary monthly check-ups make them more secure. Show a higher standard and let your customers benefit

from your service quality.

In short, clients want you to care about them as much as you do about your own business. And you do. I know you do, or you wouldn't be passionate about being in business – but how do you show it? Simple. Process. Look at the way you do business today and find the areas that could hurt or embarrass clients. For example:

Are your customer service reps collecting information?

Have staff read out scripted privacy policies and build the sensitive parts of the data collection process – such as when you have to speak passwords into the phone to get support – into an inexpensive voice mail system (like ING Canada does).

Does your website protect the security of an online transaction?

Draw visitors' attention to your digital certificates and reputable processing company.

Do you use surveillance cameras? Post a clear notice in plain English that complies with privacy law.

Simple practices clearly explained are guaranteed to delight your customers and make them proud of their decision to choose you over your competition.

Claudiu Popa is a corporate security and privacy-risk advisor with Informatica Corporation and founder of KnowledgeFlow.ca. Claudiu is a sponsor of Uxbridge Chamber of Commerce (uxcc.ca or info@uxcc.ca).

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VIEWPOINTS

How well do you know the highways and byways of Uxbridge Township? The first person each week to call into our office number, 905-852-1900, and correctly identify the location of our photo, will receive a prize; this week, it's two tickets for an Uxbridge Bruins playoff game. Last week's viewpoint (lower photo) was on Davis Drive - it was guessed by Brenda Yule of Sandford. We'll have the answer to the upper photo next week.



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