WHY MOST BUSINESS TECH IMPROVEMENTS FAIL

AND WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS

Every business eventually hits that moment where someone says, "It's time to finally get our tech under control." And then real life shows up. A client emergency pops up. Someone can't access the file they needed five minutes ago. Good intentions slide quietly behind whatever fire needs putting out.

Here's the uncomfortable truth: Most tech improvement efforts fail because they rely on willpower instead of systems.

Why People Quit (In Business and Fitness)

The fitness world has studied this for decades. People don't give up on goals because they're lazy — they give up because the structure around the goal is weak. Failure points are almost always the same:

- **Vague goals:** "Get in shape" is as unhelpful as "fix our IT."
- **No accountability:** If no one tracks progress, skipping becomes normal.
- **No expertise:** When you don't know what works, you guess and guess wrong.
- **Going it alone:** Motivation fades, crisis mode takes over.

Sound familiar?

The Tech Version of the Same Problem

Most companies carry unresolved tech issues

for months or years:

- "We should improve our backups."
- "Our security probably needs attention."
- "Everything feels slow."
- "We'll get to it when things calm down."

(Spoiler: they rarely do.)

These problems linger because leaders lack time, structure and expertise to make meaningful improvements.

What Actually Works: The Personal Trainer Model

People who succeed in fitness often work with a personal trainer because the system does the heavy lifting.

A great IT partner works the same way, providing:

- Built-in expertise
- Accountability that isn't on your shoulders
- Consistency even when you're busy
- Proactive problem-solving that prevents emergencies

What This Looks Like in Real Life

Imagine a 25-person company where nothing is broken, but everything is mildly frustrating — slow laptops, random outages, constant "Does anyone know how this works?" moments.

Once they brought in an IT service provider, everything changed:

- Backups tested and fixed.
- Devices upgraded on a replacement cycle.
- Security gaps closed.
- Productivity soared because systems finally worked.

None of it required the owner to become a tech expert.

The One Decision That Changes Everything

If you choose one tech goal this year, make it this: Stop operating in firefighting mode.

When tech becomes predictable instead of chaotic:

- Your team works faster
- Customers get better service
- You stop losing hours to preventable issues
- Growth becomes easier

This isn't about doing more. It's about making tech reliable and not doing it alone.

TIGERHAWK *Technologies* *Est. 2005*

On Super Bowl Sunday, everything looks effortless. The timing. The execution. The calm under pressure. Watching from the couch, it can feel like you are seeing a mix of talent, luck, and a few big moments.

It is not luck. What looks like luck on TV is almost always the result of years of preparation, repetition, and discipline. Nobody wings their way into a championship.

Businesses should work the same way.

Businesses vs. Sports Teams

One thing Jack Daly talks about often is that sports teams are run better than most businesses. Jack is a nationally recognized business author and speaker who studies what high-performing organizations do differently.

When you look at championship teams, the pattern is clear. They consistently get three things right:

1. They have a playbook
2. They practice their plays
3. The coach is actively engaged in the game

Very few businesses get all three right at the same time.

The Power of a Playbook

Every successful team has a playbook. Everyone knows their role. Everyone knows what to do when something does not go exactly as planned. This concept is not limited to sport. Ray Kroc built McDonald's by documenting everything. How food is prepared. How long it takes.

How a store operates day to day. That is how a Big Mac tastes the same in Illinois and California.

In business, the playbook is your documented processes. How things are done. How decisions are made. How problems are handled. When there is no playbook, people rely on memory or tribal knowledge. That works until someone is out sick, leaves the company, or growth exposes the gaps.

A playbook creates consistency. Consistency creates confidence. And confidence allows people to execute under pressure.

When businesses lack consistency, chaos creeps in. That is when mistakes happen, shortcuts get taken, and scammers slip through.

Practice Beats Luck

Teams do not just have a playbook. They practice it. Do you think Peyton Manning ever stepped into the huddle and said, "We have practiced these plays all week, but let's throw them out and do something random"?

Of course not. That is how quarterbacks end up on their back getting sacked.

In business, practice shows up as training, repetition, and refinement. It is reviewing what worked, what did not, and tightening the process before it breaks.

What people call lucky execution is usually just preparation colliding with the right moment.

Strong teams do not panic under pressure. They fall back on what they have practiced.

One of the biggest differences between strong teams and struggling ones is coaching. Effective coaches are engaged, reviewing performance, making adjustments, and relying on visibility through the right metrics.

At Tigerhawk, we review a broad set of key performance indicators on a weekly and monthly basis, tracking nearly twenty metrics that give us a clear view of how the business is operating. Ticket flow and call handling are just a few examples.

Those numbers tell a story. They show where things are working and where attention is needed. Without that visibility, coaching becomes guesswork.

Playbooks. Practice. Coaching.

When those are in place, execution becomes predictable instead of chaotic. That is why we encourage businesses to document their processes and keep them centralized using systems like My Glue, so critical knowledge is not tied to one person.

When it is game time, nobody wants to be figuring things out on the fly. Prepared teams execute.

If your business feels like it is always reacting instead of executing, it might be time to build a better playbook. Strong teams do not wing it. They prepare.

JR Bareis, CEO, Tigerhawk

6 TECH HABITS

YOUR BUSINESS SHOULD QUIT COLD TURKEY

Every business has a list of habits everyone knows aren't great. The risky shortcuts, the "we'll fix it later" processes, the workarounds that are just "how we do things."

They feel harmless until the day they aren't. If you want your systems to run smoother, safer and with fewer surprises, these are six tech habits worth quitting cold turkey and what to do instead.

Habit #1: Clicking "Remind Me Later" on Updates

That tiny button has caused more business damage than most cybercriminals. Updates patch known vulnerabilities that attackers actively exploit. "Later" becomes weeks or months, leaving your systems exposed. Massive ransomware outbreaks in the past spread because businesses skipped available patches.

Quit it: *Schedule updates after hours or let your IT partner push them automatically. No interruptions, no exposed systems.*

Habit #2: Using the Same Password Everywhere

Your favorite "strong" password isn't strong if it's used across multiple accounts.

When even a small website gets breached, your credentials get sold and attackers try them across banking, email and business systems. This is called credential stuffing, and it works shockingly well.

Quit it: *Use a password manager (e.g. My Glue,*

1Password, LastPass). One master password. Unique credentials for everything else. Done.

Habit #3: Sharing Passwords Over Email, Text or Slack

"Can you send me the login?" Sure. Now that password gets permanently stored in inboxes, backups, search histories and servers.

If anyone's account gets compromised, hackers can search for "password" and harvest everything.

Quit it: *Use the secure sharing features built into password managers. No passwords in writing, no permanent trail.*

Habit #4: Giving Everyone Admin Access Because It's Easier

One person needs to install something, so you just grant admin access and never take it back. Now, half the team can bypass security tools, delete folders or install risky software. If any of those accounts get compromised, attackers instantly gain full control.

Quit it: *Use the principle of least privilege. People get the exact access they need, nothing more.*

Habit #5: Workarounds That Became Permanent

A process broke, you found a workaround and now it's the "official" way. Workarounds cost time, create fragility and depend on employees remembering a trick instead of relying on a real system.

Quit it: *List every workaround your team uses. Then let an IT professional replace them with proper solutions that save hours and eliminate frustration.*

Habit #6: The One Spreadsheet Running Your Entire Business

One Excel file with 12 tabs and mystical formulas known only to a few people is not a business system: it's a single point of failure. If it becomes corrupt or the creator leaves, your operations grind to a halt.

Quit it: *Document what the spreadsheet actually does and then move those functions into real tools with backups, permissions, audit trails and scalability.*

Why These Habits Stick and How to Break Them

You don't keep these habits because you're careless. You keep them because you're busy. Bad tech habits feel fast in the moment, but the consequences stay invisible until they're catastrophic. The businesses that finally fix these issues don't rely on willpower; they change their environment.

With the right IT partner:
- Password managers get deployed company-wide
- Updates happen automatically
- Permissions get managed correctly
- Workarounds disappear
- Critical spreadsheets become real systems

The right way becomes the easy way.

YOUR BUSINESS TECH

IS OVERDUE FOR AN ANNUAL PHYSICAL

Most people avoid medical appointments until something hurts. Businesses do the same with their technology. Systems are "fine," nothing seems broken and everyone is busy. But just like your health, the absence of pain doesn't mean everything is healthy. Problems that take businesses down are usually invisible until they explode.

So, here's the uncomfortable question: When was the last time your business technology had a real checkup?

Not a printer fix. Not a new laptop. A holistic, preventative exam that looks for issues you don't even realize are there. Because "working" and "healthy" are two very different things.

The "I Feel Fine" Trap

Tech problems rarely announce themselves. Systems can run day after day while hiding critical risks, including:

- Backups that exist but don't restore
- Aging hardware long past safe use
- User access no one has audited in years
- Security gaps nobody realized were there
- Compliance requirements silently going unmet

Your technology can look functional right up until one bad day becomes the worst day your business ever has.

What a Real Tech Physical Examines

A proper technology assessment works the way a medical physical does: systematic, thorough and designed to surface issues early.

Backup and Recovery

This is the heartbeat of your technology environment.

- If everything else fails, can you recover?
- Are backups completing successfully, not just scheduled?
- When was the last time you tested them?
- If your server died Monday morning, how long would it take to be operational?

Most businesses only discover backups are broken during an emergency. That's the worst moment to find out.

Hardware and Infrastructure

Equipment ages quietly… until it doesn't.

- How old are your servers, firewalls, switches and workstations?
- Is anything past manufacturer support, meaning no patches or security updates?
- Are you replacing devices proactively or waiting until they fail?

Downtime from aging hardware is a top hidden cost. Things run slowly for months, then suddenly stop.

Access and Credentials

If you're unsure who has access to what, you're not alone, but you are at risk.

- Can you produce a current list of users?
- Are any former employees still active?
- Are shared accounts hiding who did what?

FREE REPORT

12 Little-Known Facts Every Business Owner Must Know About Data Backup And Disaster Recovery
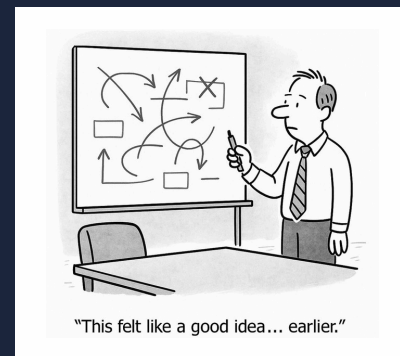
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- The only way to know for SURE your data can be recovered if lost, corrupted or deleted – yet fewer than 10% of businesses have this in place.

- Seven things you should absolutely demand from any off-site backup service.

- Where many backups fail and give you a false sense of security.

- The #1 cause of data loss that businesses don't even think about until their data is erased.

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PROTECT YOUR DATA

"12 Little-Known Facts Every Business Owner Must Know About Data Backup, Security And Disaster Recovery"

Discover What Most IT Consultants Don't Know Or Won't Tell You About Backing Up Your Data And Recovering It After A Disaster

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

"This felt like a good idea… earlier."

Access creep happens silently over time. It's one of the most common and preventable causes of breaches.

Disaster Readiness

Nobody wants to think about the worst-case scenario, but ignoring it makes it dangerous.

- If ransomware hit, what's the real recovery plan?
- Is it written? Tested? Known by more than one person?
- How long could operations function without systems?

If your disaster plan amounts to "we'll figure it out," that's not a plan.

Compliance and Industry Requirements

Depending on your industry, "healthy" has a very specific definition.

- Healthcare businesses must meet HIPAA requirements.
- Anyone handling credit cards must pass PCI compliance.

- Many client contracts now include explicit cybersecurity requirements.

Compliance isn't about paperwork. It protects you from fines, lost contracts and legal exposure.

Warning Signs You're Overdue

If any of this is familiar, it's time for an exam:

- "I think our backups are working."
- "The server is old, but it still runs."
- "We probably have ex-employee accounts still active."
- "We have a disaster plan… somewhere."
- "If this person left, we'd be in trouble."
- "We'd probably fail an audit, but nobody has asked yet."

These aren't small issues. They're symptoms of risk.

The Cost of Skipping the Checkup

A preventative review costs hours. A failure costs days or weeks.

- **Data loss:** Losing client records, financials or projects can be fatal for a small business.

- **Downtime:** Every hour of downtime means lost productivity, missed deadlines and strained client trust.
- **Compliance failures:** Penalties are steep and increasingly enforced.
- **Ransomware:** The average small-business recovery cost is now deep into six figures.

Prevention is quiet and inexpensive. Recovery is loud and expensive

Why You Can't Perform Your Own Tech Physical

You wouldn't diagnose yourself with a guess and a stethoscope. You go to a professional who knows what healthy looks like.

Technology is no different. You need someone who:

- Knows the standards for your size and industry
- Recognizes patterns and warning signs
- Can see issues you've normalized simply by living with them daily

That's what transforms tech management from firefighting into prevention.

WHY 1 MILLION CUPS MATTERS TO TIGERHAWK

Being a small business owner can feel like being on an island. You're responsible for the decisions, the risks, and the outcomes, and most of the time, you're making those decisions without knowing what all your options really are.

That's where 1 Million Cups comes in.
1 Million Cups exists to surround entrepreneurs and business leaders with people who get it, people who have been through similar challenges or are actively working through them right now. The goal isn't networking for the sake of business cards. It's building a real entrepreneurial ecosystem where ideas, experience, and perspective are shared openly.

What Is 1 Million Cups?
1 Million Cups is a weekly gathering designed to support entrepreneurs by connecting them with their local community. Each meeting features a presenter who has six to eight minutes to explain their business and the challenges they're facing. The rest of the time is spent hearing ideas, feedback, and perspectives from the room.

Not everyone speaks and that's perfectly fine. The value comes from listening as much as talking.

Meetings start at 9:00 AM and wrap up before 10:00 AM. The format is efficient, focused, and respectful of everyone's time.

Why I Got Involved
I first attended a 1 Million Cups meeting in Columbia, Missouri and I was hooked. The format moved quickly, the conversation mattered, and there was no wasted time.

As a business owner, being able to bounce ideas off other entrepreneurs and business leaders is incredibly valuable. It's hard to make the right decision when you don't even know what choices exist. 1 Million Cups helps solve that problem.

The Impact We're Seeing
The impact locally has already been real:
- Organizations like the YMCA have incorporated ideas from their presentation into their long-term strategy.
- Small business owners have gained clarity on structure, priorities, and growth decisions.
- Our 2025 recap highlighted small changes that made meaningful differences in how businesses operate.

Nearly 50% of employers are small businesses, and they account for over 60% of job growth each year. If we want to strengthen the region we live and work in, strengthening small businesses is one of the most effective ways to do it.

Why Tigerhawk Supports 1 Million Cups
Selfishly? More strong businesses mean more potential Tigerhawk clients.

But realistically, it's bigger than that. Technology rarely comes up during presentations. What does come up are lessons learned from running real businesses, things that nearly everyone in the room can benefit from.

For example, at Tigerhawk we have hundreds of documents we call Standard Operating Procedures, or SOPs. These outline how we do everything. We even have a documented process for how to create documentation in our system. That kind of structure doesn't happen overnight, but hearing how other businesses approach problems like this sparks ideas you can take back and apply immediately.

When business owners are better informed, everyone benefits.

Thinking About Attending?

If you've never been, my advice is simple: come, sit back, and don't feel pressure to participate. Listen. Learn. You'll walk away with a new perspective every time.

Everyone's opinion is welcome. Everyone is heard.

☕ Free coffee included.

Learn more or attend the next meeting:
👉 https://www.1millioncups.com/tri-state