BIZ TIP OF THE WEEK
Biz tip of the week: Cyber security is for small businesses, too

By Bill Nordbrock Special to the Arizona Daily Star   Oct 16, 2016

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Have you heard about recent data breaches involving large organizations like Target, Home Depot and Yahoo? Have you ever thought "it will never happen to me, it only happens to the big guys"?

Think again.

SCORE attended a cybersecurity presentation and interviewed a panel expert. Kathy Winger is a Tucson business and banking attorney, who also focuses on cybersecurity. Here is some of what we learned.

The losses from data breaches are so astronomical they are being spread to everyone involved, including small- and medium-sized businesses. Did you know you could be financially liable if your vendors cause data breaches? Did you know there does not need to be an actual data breach for businesses to be penalized?

Nearly half of smaller businesses that suffer a data breach close their doors within six months because the costs are so high. They include financial reimbursement, legal fees to defend a variety of lawsuits and to ensure compliance with various state breach notification statutes. Additional costs are incurred to identify the cause and to develop solutions to prevent future breaches. Did you know your general liability insurance policy likely has a data breach exclusion, and may not pay these costs?

According to Winger, every business is different when it comes to their cyberrisks. The more steps businesses take to prevent cyberbreaches and loss, the better off they will be when it happens. Here are a few recommendations:

1. Consult professionals (I.T., legal, insurance…) to determine and address your specific risks.

2. Comply with PCI (payment card industry) data security standards.

3. Install a good antivirus software and update it regularly.

4. Hire someone to train your employees on the best cybersecurity practices.

5. Insist that your vendors' data protection systems are reliable.

6. Make sure that you and your vendors have cyberinsurance.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. For more information on cybersecurity, email Winger at Kathy@kdwinger.com or call her at 391-4475.

Bill Nordbrock is vice president of community relations for SCORE Southern Arizona, a nonprofit group that offers free small-business counseling and mentoring by appointment at several locations. For information, go to

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