

# BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

## Teamwork is Essential to Business Success





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*Business Connections* is a publication of Home Telecom, 579 Stoney Landing Road, Moncks Corner, SC 29461.

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**Editorial and Circulation** - Contact: Dewey Ford, 579 Stoney Landing Road, Moncks Corner, SC 29461, 843-761-9174.

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**"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself."**

This quote from Henry Ford is a fitting way to introduce our Winter '18 issue of *Business Connections*, which looks at what can be accomplished with teamwork.

The theme begins on page 3 with a reminder that **Tradition is Not a Business Model**. As a business leader, make sure you inspire your team to look for innovative ways to improve customer service and efficiency.

On pages 4 and 5, you'll find a **Business Spotlight on Cantey Tech Consulting**. Headquartered in Charleston, this business takes a team approach to IT support. As a result, its clients get fast resolutions to their issues and benefit from a broad range of expertise. Home Telecom is proud to meet the demanding speed and reliability requirements of Cantey Tech Consulting with our Business Class Internet.

**Strong Teams Make Strong Businesses**, as we explore on page 6 by sharing five keys to building a better team. Elsewhere in this issue, we feature one of the members of Home Telecom's team, **Sales Engineer Howie Baumer**.

Let's see what kind of success we can build in 2018 when we combine the strong team at your business with the strong team at Home Telecom. Contact us anytime to start moving forward together.

Sincerely,

William S. Helmly  
President & COO  
Home Telecom



# Tradition Is Not a Business Model



## *Sticking to traditions from the past may be hurting your business in the present*

**T**raditions are beloved parts of family life—the first-day-of-school photo, a recurring Thanksgiving menu, when and where you open holiday gifts. Doing the same thing year after year is comforting. But what works well at home doesn't work as well in the business world. Why? Because blindly following tradition causes us to turn off our brains and can get in the way of critical thinking, imagination, and innovation.

Unless your business is brand new, it has traditions. To identify them, think about these questions: Do you handle tasks a certain way simply because that's the way you've always done them? Do you hold regular meetings more out of habit than necessity? Do you still have the same marketing materials, merchandising displays, or products that you had five years ago?

The problem with holding on too tightly to traditions is that it prevents your business from moving forward. Instead, stay open to fresh ideas and encourage your employees to look for better, faster, and more efficient ways to do their jobs and serve your customers.

**Many resources are available to help your business develop fresh approaches to replace those tired traditions. For example, consider the following:**

- Join a business or community group to hear inspiring speakers and network with new people.
- Expand your knowledge by studying the success stories of businesses outside your community or field of business.
- Stay updated on trends by reading books, taking classes, and traveling.
- Check out Pinterest for images that may spark a more creative tactic for items such as your office interior, product packaging, or advertising.

While the past should be respected, great business leaders are advocates for change. Make sure you stay curious and have the courage to challenge the status quo.

## BRANDING BASICS

Branding is a word you hear often. But what exactly is it? Branding is commonly defined as the symbolic embodiment of all the information connected to a company, product, or service. It often includes the name, logo, tagline, fonts, color schemes, and graphic elements that are developed to represent the values, ideas, and personality of the brand.

Strong branding offers a variety of benefits that can positively impact your bottom line, such as:

- **Clear communications.** Branding makes it easier to tell potential customers who you are and what you do.
- **Reduced costs.** With consistent design elements, you won't need to "reinvent the wheel" with every ad or brochure you create.
- **Efficient marketing.** The process of developing your brand will also help you develop an efficient strategy for reaching your target audience.

Consistency is the key. The more awareness you can build around your brand, the more your potential customers will begin to identify with it—and the more likely they may be to choose you over your competitor.

# Cantey Tech Consulting

*Clients benefit from a team approach without all the “geek speak”*



Willis Cantey, President and Co-Founder of Cantey Tech Consulting, wants to set the record straight on common misconceptions about IT support. Topping that list is the mistaken belief that IT people are all a bunch of weirdos. Cantey says, “We look for people who are good with computers but can also communicate with humans.”

Cantey Tech Consulting, headquartered in Charleston, has 30 employees in four locations. “We take a team approach to IT support, so our clients get fast resolutions to their issues. Our clients also don’t have to worry about their IT person being on vacation when they need something quickly, which is a problem with the ‘two people running around with cell phones’ type of IT businesses out there,” notes Cantey.

He continues, “Another common misconception among businesses is that they have to move everything to the cloud by tomorrow. That’s not the case. Some things can be stored locally and others can be stored in the cloud. I also have people ask me, ‘Do I need to take security seriously? My answer is always, ‘Absolutely!’ The bad guys will find out if you don’t have proper security measures in place, and you’ll get in trouble sooner or later.”

## Comprehensive IT Solutions

Since its founding in 2007, Cantey Tech Consulting has provided IT solutions and consulting in Charleston, the Southeast, and beyond.

### Some of its most utilized Managed IT Services include:

- Business IT Consulting
- Cloud Servers & Backup
- 24/7 Help Desk Support
- Data Security Solutions
- Application & Infrastructure Hosting
- Networking
- Disaster Recovery
- Email Encryption & Security
- Office 365 Migrations
- Remote & Virtual Desktops
- Antivirus Implementation
- Video Conferencing Solutions

The company also offers Tech Consulting Services with the goals of providing real-world solutions tailored to a client’s needs,



enhancing technology flexibility and security, optimizing cost effectiveness, and seeing solutions all the way through. As noted on Cantey Tech Consulting's website (canteytech.com), "We can be your virtual Chief Information Officer and your Technology team."

### Relying on Home Telecom

Home Telecom provides Business Class Internet to Cantey Tech Consulting through our fiber-based internet backbone network. Cantey says, "We became a customer as soon as Home Telecom moved into our market, which was about a year ago. We're pleased with our internet service. The speed is consistently as fast as we signed up for, which we know because we check our speed regularly. We're also getting top-notch internet reliability. We haven't had a single issue with our internet service from Home Telecom, which is invaluable to us. As a tech support and consulting business, we can never be down. It would make us look ill prepared in the eyes of our clients."

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— WILLIS CANTEY, PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER, CANTEY TECH CONSULTING

What does Cantey appreciate most about the customer service from Home Telecom? He replies, "I appreciate how responsive Home Telecom is to all of our communications with them. It's always a positive personal interaction when I contact someone there. Home Telecom was also excellent to work with during the setup of our internet service and made sure everything worked correctly."

Cantey Tech Consulting frequently refers its clients to Home Telecom when they ask about communications providers. According to Cantey, the reasons include Home Telecom's competitive internet speeds and prices as well as the local factor. He explains, "We like working with people we know, so it makes sense for our clients to also use services from Home Telecom. Plus, Home Telecom has been a business leader in our community for a long time—since way before I was born. Let me check on the year. Yes, Home Telecom has been around since 1904. That longevity matters to me."



## WHO'S MINDING YOUR BUSINESS?

**HOWIE BAUMER**  
Sales Engineer

Howie Baumer joined Home Telecom as a Sales Engineer in December 2013. He previously worked at two businesses in Buffalo, New York— as a Sales Engineer with EarthLink and a Telecommunications Analyst with Rich Products.

**Baumer's primary responsibilities as a Sales Engineer are twofold:**

1. He assists our Sales Representatives in identifying the technical needs of area businesses.
2. He makes sure our customers have a great experience throughout the process, from pre-sale meetings to implementation to post-sales support.

What does Baumer enjoy most about his job? He replies, "What I like most is being out in the field working to identify customer needs. With the booming development in the Charleston area, we get to work with many types of companies throughout our footprint."

When not working, Baumer keeps busy with his children. He notes, "In my free time, I'm usually taking our kids to their sporting events. We have a daughter who is a sophomore at USC, two sons in high school, and one son in fourth grade."

# Is Your Website Mobile Friendly?

If the answer is, “No” or “I’m not sure,” this article is for you



Grab your smartphone right now and go to your company’s website. Is there a lot of text? Do you have to pinch or zoom in to read it? If so, your users may get frustrated and go elsewhere.

The desktop version of a website is often difficult to view and use on the small screen of a smartphone or tablet. Given the fact that many users will visit your website on a mobile device, it’s important for them to have a positive experience when they get there.

Keep in mind that mobile usage in the U.S. is growing. StatCounter reports mobile usage was 42 percent in June 2017, up from 31 percent in June 2016. By contrast, desktop usage fell from 61 percent to 48 percent during the same period.<sup>1</sup>

## Mobile-Friendly Features

**What makes a website a mobile-friendly one? Generally speaking, it’s designed with features including:**

- Larger text of an easily readable size on a small screen
- Mobile-friendly navigation which quickly displays the most relevant content
- Touch-friendly buttons and page elements, placed far enough apart to be easily tapped
- Faster download speed
- Avoidance of software (like Flash) not typically available on mobile devices

## Benefits for Your Company

In addition to improving the user experience, having a mobile-friendly website can provide your company with other valuable benefits. Topping this list is improved search visibility, meaning your company may appear higher up on the list when prospects search for the products/services you offer. This is because Google uses mobile-friendliness as a ranking signal and favors these types of websites in its search rankings.

Having a mobile-friendly website can also help your company stand out from the competition. There are still many businesses, particularly small ones, which are not yet optimized for mobile.

## Check Out Home Telecom’s Website

Home Telecom is “practicing what we preach.” Our website at [www.homesc.com](http://www.homesc.com) has a mobile-friendly design that makes it easy to navigate and find the information you need.

*To find out if your website has a mobile-friendly design and get recommendations from Google, visit [www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly](http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly).*

<sup>1</sup><http://gs.statcounter.com/platform-market-share/desktop-mobile-tablet/united-states-of-america>

# STRONG Teams Make STRONG Businesses

*Five tips for building a high-performance team*



**S**uccessful businesses recognize the importance of strong teamwork, which can lead to improved morale, an enhanced sense of shared purpose, and greater accountability. Your team could be your department, a smaller group within the department, or an interdepartmental group devoted to a special project.

Techniques for team building have included everything from completing obstacle courses together to paintball competitions. Yet, many question whether these tactics translate into positive teamwork back at the office. So what really works? Here are five keys to building a better team:

## 1. Take the Lead

As a team leader, it's important for you to be familiar with your own strengths and weaknesses, as well as your leadership style. If you're in a position to choose your team members, pick people who complement your skills and knowledge. Remember to include people who may disagree with you sometimes. Once your team is established, model the behavior you'd like them to exhibit.

## 2. Set Clear Goals

It's important that team members understand the expectations for the group as a whole and themselves as individuals. A collective vision helps team members stay motivated and allows them to know when they've succeeded. Team members should also understand how the team furthers the goals of the company. Encourage team members to help set targets and determine the best methods for accomplishing them.

## 3. Build Trust

Great teams allow members to voice opinions and ideas without fear of retribution. But this doesn't happen overnight; trust is built over time. Establish formal methods for communicating issues and concerns. This may include a daily check-in meeting, weekly reports, or quarterly reviews. Also, make room in the team's workflow for spontaneous discussions. Always support thoughtful ideas, even those that don't end up being used.

## 4. Empower Team Members

Give team members assignments that stretch their capabilities, and let them know you're there if they need guidance. Give them the tools and resources they need to meet the team's goals, and allow them to make decisions on their own and do what's needed to fulfill their roles.

## 5. Reward Great Teamwork

Teams are like individuals in that they're motivated to do good work when it's rewarded. Rewards encourage continued team efforts and make employees feel valued. You can use bonuses, gifts, parties, public acknowledgement, or other means to show appreciation to your team. Do it when they accomplish a goal, exceed expectations, or help the company in a significant way.

*By creating a work environment with a positive team approach, you'll have happier employees—and, very likely, a healthier bottom line.*



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