



T. Daniels Consulting

THE T. DANIELS TIMES



Microsoft
Partner

Silver Cloud Platform
Silver Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions

What's New

T. Daniels Consulting Achieves Microsoft's Silver Competencies

Recently, T. Daniels Consulting was once again awarded the Silver Cloud Platform and Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions competencies by Microsoft.

These competencies spotlight our expertise and experience with deploying and managing clients on the Microsoft Cloud (Azure) and 365 platforms. Both demonstrate our commitment to leveraging best in class technologies to help our dealership clients successfully transition to and be productive in the cloud.

T. Daniels Consulting ranks in the top 5% of Microsoft Partners in the world and specializes in delivering IT solutions to automotive dealerships. To learn more about how your business could benefit from Microsoft cloud solutions, **call 810-629-0131 or e-mail us at info@tdaniels.com**

January 2021



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Timothy D. Ricketts, President of T. Daniels Consulting.

"Thank you for the confidence you have given our entire team to manage and protect your valuable assets. We take great pride with our goal to exceed your expectations every day!"



Finally Shed The Old This Year It's Costing Your Dealership Much More Than You Think

When was the last time you updated your technology? Between your hardware and software, if you are still doing business on older technology, you could be putting yourself at risk, and it could end up costing you big. As we begin a new year, it's time to take a close look at the tech your dealership relies on every day.

While many dealerships tend to put off major technology purchases due to the perceived upfront costs, by doing so, you may be opening yourself up to major costs down the road. These are hidden costs that dealerships don't always consider when they decide to "hold off" on new technology.

Here are four ways outdated technology can take a toll on your dealership:

1. Loss in productivity. Old technology

has a habit of getting slow. This means your team has to waste time waiting for their PCs to turn on and their apps to load. Just think about your service technicians not being able to quickly access manufacturer specific repair information, add data to service records, or be able to print repair reports. Time is money for your dealership and every minute wasted is a lost revenue opportunity.

New technology also represents an opportunity to increase revenue. Automated sign-ins, (especially in these COVID times), mobile devices such as iPads for service record access, and contactless payment all speed up the time between customer drop off and pickup thereby increasing the number of vehicles which can be repaired in a day and an improved customer experience.

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2. Loss of Integration Older applications lose stable integration with companion applications. For example, your DMS software may work hand in hand with your accounting software. As developers focus on newer versions of their apps, they stop updating older versions. Think of the end-to-end slowdown you would have if your DMS system could no longer 'speak to' your accounting software and your business team has to manually enter payments into your accounting system. Not to mention you risk errors and even data loss.

3. Loss of vendor support. Over time, developers stop supporting their older products so they can focus on their new products. Imagine if there is a new version of available software, which will run on a customer's phone or an iPad, that allows for service lane checkout but you cannot use it because your hardware is not current or too old to utilize this new feature. This means the parts used for the repair need to be manually entered into the purchasing/ordering system. In turn, this slows down the order, leaves the customer unsatisfied and frustrated, and potential revenue is pushed to next month or accounting period.

4. Loss of security. As your tech ages, and as developers end support, this means you'll see fewer security patches. Eventually, there will be *zero* security patches, leaving you vulnerable. Developers may stop supporting older products, but hackers and cybercriminals will keep on trying to break into those products. They know dealerships tend to update their systems at a slower pace, and this gives criminals an advantage.

If you get caught using outdated software and a hacker is able to break into your network, the costs associated with this kind of a data breach can put your dealership under. Just as you

wouldn't ignore a manufacturer's safety recall because of the danger it poses for your customers, don't ignore security risks which come from using outdated technology.

When you factor in the costs associated with these losses, it can be staggering! It's enough to put some dealerships out of business (and it has). After a year that has left many dealerships more vulnerable than before, you should be taking steps to avoid these kinds of losses.

Here's what you can do: as we head into a new year, take stock of your technology. It's unlikely you have to replace everything but look at where you are most vulnerable. What issues are your employees experiencing? What hardware or software is no longer supported? Where are the gaps in your IT security?

The great news is that you don't have to answer these questions on your own. Even better, you don't have to drop a pretty penny to make it happen! You can work with a company like T. Daniels Consulting that specializes in supporting dealerships and get yours back up to speed. With the use of cloud technologies, hardware lease options, and the ability to scale up and down as you need it, we help minimize the costs that comes with upgrading your technology. To get you started, for a limited time only (limited to the 1st 5 respondents) we are offering a free, no obligation, equipment and network assessment including a PEN Test (which simulates a real-world cyber-attack to identify security issues). Visit <https://www.tdaniels.com/assessment/> to take advantage of this limited time offer (valued at \$1,945) and **GAIN** complete confidence in your business as you head into 2021!

Free Network Assessment And Penetration (PEN) Testing (A Value of \$1,945)



At **no cost or obligation**, our highly skilled team of IT pros will come to your dealership and conduct a network assessment and PEN Test (which simulates a real-world cyber-attack to identify security issues) to pinpoint any weak spots in your network.

After the assessment is done, we'll prepare a customized "Report Of Findings" that will reveal specific problems and provide a Prioritized Action Plan for getting these issues and vulnerabilities addressed fast. This report and action plan should be a real eye-opener for you, since almost all of the dealerships we've done this for discover they are completely exposed to various threats in a number of areas.

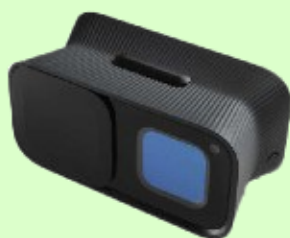
NOTE: Limited to the 1st 5 respondents. This is a 1st come, 1st serve offer

Claim Your FREE Assessment And PEN Test Today At:

<https://www.tdaniels.com/assessment>

Or Call Our Office At: 810-629-0131.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



NexOptic DoubleTake Binoculars

You might not realize, but binocular technology has come a long way in the past 10 years. It's all thanks to advances in other areas of technology, including high-resolution cameras and high-resolution displays. Bring these technologies together along with some serious image processing, and you are left with NexOptic's DoubleTake Binoculars!

This pair of binocs is slightly smaller than a good pair of traditional lenses, but it comes with so much more, including a 12-megapixel sensor capable of shooting 4K video. It's GPS and WiFi enabled and has a Micro SD card port so you can easily save your photos and video. It's like a supercharged camera, but it has something your average phone camera does not: 10X digital zoom. It's great for travel or hobbies like birdwatching. Learn more at NexOptic.com/doubletake

Security Threats And Your Dealership- What To Expect In 2021

It goes without saying that the massive movement to remote working made for a very disruptive 2020 for most industries. Existing security challenges were compounded by those brought along due to COVID-19. As we close the door on 2020, here are four key security challenges facing automotive dealerships like yours in 2021:

Increase In Business Email Compromise Attacks

2020 was a very profitable year for criminals engaged in Business Email Compromise (BEC) fraud. BEC invoice and payment fraud involves using email to pose as a trusted entity and luring a business into submitting payments to fraudulent bank accounts.

BEC fraud is showing no signs of slowing down and is expected to continue having a substantial impact on dealerships like yours in 2021.

Lack of Dedicated Resources

COVID-19 has put a squeeze on the budgets of many businesses and many dealerships simply don't have the budget to hire in-house staff for dedicated security roles. This leaves them at a disadvantage and a ripe target for cyber criminals, who are well aware of the shortcomings they typically face.

Device Administration Shortcomings

The rise of bring your own device (BYOD) combined with COVID-related shutdowns and the resulting migration to personal devices for remote workers has caused chaos for device administration. With personal or home based devices, operating systems vary which means the tools utilized

to monitor and manage on premises devices (which have the same operating systems) don't work as seamlessly for BYOD devices. The end result is more time and configuration to have these tools be able to manage BYOD devices.

Inadequate Staff Training and Awareness

Staff are one of your business' greatest assets, but they can also be the weakest link in your defenses. Promoting security training and awareness continues to be a challenge for small and mid-sized businesses with only 34% reporting that they provide data safety and best practices training.

This isn't surprising since most businesses have long faced issues implementing effective security training. The chaos that COVID shutdowns and restrictions brought to dealerships and the corresponding opportunity for cyber security criminals to take advantage of the situation highlights the dire need for dealerships like yours to educate staff in security awareness practices. After all, the majority of successful attacks are by means of social engineering.

T. Daniels Consulting can help your dealership overcome these challenges and secure your most valuable asset- your data. To get you started, for a limited time only, we are offering a free, no obligation, equipment and network assessment including a PEN Test (which simulates a real-world cyber-attack to identify security issues). Visit <https://www.tdaniels.com/assessment/> to take advantage of this limited time offer (valued at \$1,945).

The T. Daniels Difference



For over 25 years, T. Daniels Consulting has provided our customers with excellent customer service. Our Microsoft Certified Professionals and Engineers have an average of OVER 10 years' experience benefiting you by fixing problems quickly and correctly the first time. No other competitor comes close to our level of knowledge, experience and professionalism. We are continuously adding new and improved services to meet your ongoing needs. We never stop improving. That is the **T. Daniels Difference**. Thanks to all of our customers for making us one of Michigan's fastest growing IT consulting and service companies.

■ 4 Ways To Make Sure Your Business Is Ready For What 2021 May Bring

As you prep for the coming year, here are four things you need to give your business a serious edge.

1) Head To The Cloud. Back up your data to secure cloud storage. This makes it a breeze for you and your team to access. Should anything be disrupted on-site, you have a backup you can turn to.

2) Update, Update, Update! Patch all of your security solutions, apps, programs — you name it. You don't want to accidentally leave yourself open to security exploits because you're four months behind on the latest security patch.

3) Dive Into Software-As-A-Service (SaaS). One great way to stay ahead of the curve on software is to pair with a SaaS for your various needs, such as marketing, project management or billing. It's easier to keep updated and integrated with the latest and most reliable software on the market.

4) Call An IT Expert. Call an outside technology expert and get an assessment so you know what you need to plan for. Just like a car in for service, you can't fix it if you don't know what is wrong.

■ The "Human Firewall" — What is it and why you should be freaked out by it

Social engineering is a scary thing, and we're **all** vulnerable. It starts when scammers try to

build trust with their victims. They trick their victims into handing over e-mail addresses, physical addresses, phone numbers and passwords.

Scammers often use e-mails (phishing) and phone calls posing as legitimate sources to get this information. They might tell you they're a representative at your bank or your favorite online store. They may even pose as one of your colleagues. They prey on your desire to help or fix a problem.

Social engineering works because scammers know how to break through the "human firewall," or the people in your dealership. You can have all the malware protection in the world, but hackers can still break in by **exploiting your employees.**

How can you protect yourself and ensure your human firewall isn't breached? While no method can stop social engineering completely, talk to a technology expert about the inexpensive, automated programs available that send fake emails to employees and when they click on it (and chances are they will), they are forced to watch a training video about not clicking on suspect emails.

Good intentions last a month on average

