In August 2010, the City’s Development Committee recommended that staff initiate a Downtown Retail and Entertainment Strategy to identify opportunities for growth. The strategy recommended a number of measures including the expansion of eating, drinking and entertainment establishments; concentrating entertainment venues in a compact area; and increasing events and programming to activate the street scene. Since that time, the City has seen an increase in downtown businesses, pedestrian and visitor traffic, and entertainment venues. However, the City and other stakeholders wanted to be proactive and address downtown cleanliness and safety issues before they became a real problem as experienced in other downtowns.

The City’s Community and Economic Development department in partnership with RDP initiated an effort to hire a private company that could provide community-oriented security services used in other downtowns both in California and outside the state. A Request for Proposals was prepared with input from others including the Riverside Police Officers Association and the Chamber of Commerce and then put out for bid.

On August 18, 2016, the City’s Development Committee selected the proposal from Streetplus Company, LLC (Streetplus) of Los Angeles, California for a Downtown Safety Ambassador Program. On September 20, 2016, the City Council approved an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA), for a term of 1-year (with a six month option to extend), with Streetplus for the development of the Downtown Safety Ambassador Program. Since the execution of the ENA, City staff has worked extensively with Streetplus and downtown community partners to negotiate program geographical boundaries determination, contract term and funding source identification, and refining of scope of work.

On July 11th, City Council approved a Professional Consultant Services Agreement with Streetplus for the Downtown Safety Ambassador Program for a term of two years with two 1-year options to extend. The Streetplus Safety Patrol will start on Monday, August 14th. The Safety Patrol will spend the majority of their time circulating through the designated downtown area on foot, mountain bike, and Segway deterring unwanted behavior and activity. Patrols will be monitored and recorded using computerized programs and reports will be available for review daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually.

Safety Patrol duties will include offering assistance, information and directions; conducting business checks; providing personal safety escorts; and identifying and reporting conditions and incidents that impact safety. The Safety Patrol will also include security patrols through downtown City Parking Garages between 9 PM and 5 AM from Thursday through Sunday. Those patrols will be in addition to those provided by the RDP Downtown Ambassadors.

Funding for the Streetplus Safety Patrol is being provided by the City with amounts up to $250,000 for FY 16/17 and $250,000 for FY 17/18 from the Recognized Obligation Payment Schedule (ROPS) for the Successor Agency-owned

continued on next page
STREETPLUS SAFETY PATROL from page 1
California Tower Building: $77,010 for FY 17/18 from Public Works Account No. 4150000-421000; $11,161.98 for FY 17/18 from the City-owned Main Street Building Rent Revenue; and $4,166.66 per month for FY 17/18 from the Riverside Downtown Partnership. RDP’s Board of Directors approved a $50,000 financial contribution to Year 1 and subject to the renewal of the Business Improvement District (BID), a $50,000 financial contribution to Year 2 of the Streetplus Safety Patrol.

Contact information and other material on the Streetplus Safety Patrol program will be distributed to downtown businesses as it becomes available. If you have any questions in the interim, please contact Janice Penner at the RDP office.

The Riverside Art and Music Festival Returns
The Riverside Art and Music Festival will return for its second year on Saturday, September 9th. Due to RTA’s new grid system and University being a major bus route for downtown, the event is moving. The event will close Ninth Street from Lemon to the alley way before Market Street. The stage will be located at the intersection of Orange and Ninth with audience viewing area on Orange back to University. Cultural performances will be featured on the stage until 7 pm when local bands will play until 10 pm.

Interested in Being a Vendor for Festival of Lights?
Downtown businesses who would like to be considered as potential vendors can now find applications online at http://www.riversideca.gov/fol/pdf/2017/2017%20Festival%20of%20Lights%20Vendor%20Application%20&%20Instructions%20Agreement.pdf
All applications must be submitted electronically via email to SpecialEvents@riversideca.gov: Vendor applications are due by 4 pm on August 11th.

Riverside Startup Week
Riverside Startup Week will be a week-long celebration of entrepreneurship, speakers, events, and demonstrations from September 25 through September 29 in Downtown Riverside. Riverside Startup Week is part of the Techstars accelerator program which is a global network of entrepreneurs and investors who help build startup communities around the world.

What: Riverside Startup Week
When: September 25 – September 29
Where: Downtown Riverside
How much: Free
Why: The Riverside startup ecosystem is alive and vibrant. Come see for yourself!
You can sign up to receive updates and check out the schedule of speakers and events at: http://riverside.startupweek.co

Security Tip from the Riverside Police Department
Businesses should consider emptying the register at night, leaving the drawer open and visible to the front door area, and leaving a light on. Why? So bad guys walking past can see the register is open and empty so there’s no reason to break in.

RDP Welcomes New Businesses to Downtown
Black Market Window Tint (Repair Service) • Cep America - Neurology, Pc
Las Office of Muriel Johnson • Liquid Vacation Marketing, LLC (Business Support)
Lyon Legal (Legal Services) • Mary’s and Maggie (Food) • Memory Edge Tech (Electronics)
Downtown Goings On

Metropolitan Museum: The City Council has voted to close the Metropolitan Museum building for a period of three years beginning right after Labor Day this fall. During the closure important activities including an inventory of the museum’s collections, cataloging and where appropriate digitizing the archives, redesign and construction of exhibit space and planning for, and possible construction of, major building renovation and expansion will take place. The Council has designated $15 Million for museum renovation and expansion over the next three years.

During the closure other museum activities including the Insect Fair, Heritage House and the Ameal Moore Nature Center will continue. The archives will be moved from the museum basement where they were at risk of water damage and not stored in proper temperature and humidity conditions. Some portions will be housed at the Main Library and some will go into storage at a remote facility. Requests for access to archive material will be honored as best as possible although it may take longer to retrieve things stored remotely.

This was a controversial decision and many people urged the Council to keep the Museum building open during all but major construction activities. I supported that idea, but the majority of the Council agreed with city staff that a temporary closure is more efficient. While I am disappointed we will have the temporary closure I am confident that in the long run our Museum will be just fine and that it will reopen as a better, more inviting and more exciting space.

The city is actively recruiting for a new Museum Director and that person should be on board before the end of this year. They will lead the planning effort for the renovated museum, what should be in it and how it should be laid out. I anticipate this will be a very active public process and invite your participation once it begins.

Council Vacancy: Ward 7 Councilmember John Burnard has resigned from the Council. Under the Charter the Council must appoint a replacement within 60 days or there will automatically be a special election to select the new councilmember. Although not yet determined as I write this, I anticipate that the Council will decide to appoint someone to fill the remainder of Mr. Burnard’s term which ends in June of 2019. The Council will need to determine whether it wants to ask only those who agree not to seek election to the post or will consider candidates that would seek to be elected to a full term. Stay tuned.

Mike Gardner

Ward Two Council Update

Contributed by Councilman Andy Melendrez

RTA Rapid Link: Get ready for a bus with faster service, a more modern look and a whole new attitude. The Riverside Transit Agency is launching a new limited-stop bus service on Route 1 between the University of California, Riverside and the Corona Transit Center along the University and Magnolia avenues corridor on August 28, 2017.

RapidLink’s weekday service will be frequent with buses departing Corona and UCR every 15 minutes during peak commuting hours and up to 30 percent faster than Route 1, which travels along the same corridor. The cost to ride will be the same as existing RTA local bus routes. For more information about the RapidLink Program and other routes visit www.riversidetransit.com/index.php/rapidlink-project.

Riverside Coras USA: Our local Semi-Pro Soccer team has ranked 3rd place in this year’s National Premier Soccer League 4th division of the U.S. Soccer Federation. After a 16 game battle from March through July our Riverside Coras USA team came out on top tying for 2nd place and finished the Western Regional Quarter Finals in 3rd place. For more information on ticket sales and game schedules visit www.dexportivocorasusa.com or call 951-826-5729.

Riverside Arts Academy: Riverside Arts Academy began the summer of 2017 with the highest number of registrations, soaring past 400 participants enrolled into the program! The Academy hosts a variety of classes such as structured music, dance, and visual arts at the Cesar Chavez Community Center. To donate your instruments, become a member or to volunteer visit www.riversideartsacademy.com or call 951-826-2441. About 270 children are taking classes, and about 2,000 have participated since the program began. For more information on schedules or to enroll please go to the website: http://www.riversideca.gov/park_rec/ or call 951-826-5746.

Riverside National Night Out: Come out and join us in The Annual National Night Out community-wide crime prevention program sponsored locally by the Riverside Police Department and local businesses. These events are designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for and participation in local anti-crime programs, strengthen neighborhood spirit and police community partnerships, and send a message to criminals letting them know that Riverside neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

There will be a series of Neighborhood social events held throughout the City from 6:00-9:00 P.M. Police & Fire personnel will be out in force and visiting events that are registered with the department. The Kick Off event will be held on July 29th from 8 am to 11 am at the Target located at 3333 Arlington Avenue.

For more information on dates and times of National Night Out events see http://www.riversideca.gov/rpd/community/ nno/nnopage1.asp.

Andy Melendrez
SEO Basics: How to Make Your Website Google-Friendly
by Brian Edmondson

Whether you have a website already or have one in the works, your online business won’t achieve its full profit potential or perhaps not even survive these days without search engine optimization (SEO). So I’d like to share some SEO basics that anybody can implement and see real results, no major technical experience or expertise needed.

Yes, you can do SEO yourself — no need to hire an expensive expert that cannot guarantee results anyway.

Why Search Engine Optimization Is Vital for Your Online Business

The general idea is that the more SEO centered your site is, the more attention it gets from Google, and the higher it appears in the search engine rankings. This is important because when people search for keywords related to your business, they’ll see your website. And they’ll be more likely to click on the link that sends them to your landing page, main website, and/or e-commerce drop shipping website.

That’s free traffic from people primed to buy your products or services. They’re actively searching for this information, which makes them more likely to take action, whether it’s to sign up for your email list or actually buy a product.

This traffic is much more powerful and valuable than paid advertising like pay-per-click or banner ads. Consider that according to industry watch Conductor, 64 percent or more of the traffic to your website will come from SEO efforts, referred as “organic” traffic.

Jupiter Research says it’s 81 percent. Also important to note is that people who come to your site as organic traffic that comes in through SEO efforts tend to have a higher lifetime value (they spend more money) than those that came in through paid advertising.

And this is important. Consider that most people don’t go beyond the first page of the Google search. And less than 5 percent of searchers go on to the second page of results. According to a study from Advanced Web Ranking 67 percent of the clicks go to the first five results, with the #1 Spot taking in just over 30 percent of clicks.

How to get Google’s attention and get all these benefits? Luckily there are some easy to do tasks you can do yourself to make your website Google-friendly. Follow these simple SEO basics and you’ll see improvement in your Google page rank.

(Now before you say anything, yes, I know there are other search engines out there like Bing and Yahoo. But with
Google commanding around 90 percent web searches, you really want to concentrate your efforts on making Google happy.)

**SEO Basics — Making Google Happy — and Web Surfers Too**

Something I want to clear up right here at the top. Google is very savvy.

You can’t just pack a bunch of keywords on your webpages. Remember back in the early days of the web, when folks would simply include a long list of words related to their niche at the bottom of their home page? That doesn’t work these days, not by a long shot.

First thing to realize is that you have to include your keywords naturally in your content. It can’t seem forced.

You’ll include these keywords in the actual written material on your site. You should also have short, attention-grabbing headlines that include a keyword. Also, the keyword should be included at least once near the top of your webpage in the content and then sprinkled throughout the rest of the page, including variations.

Content marketing can be a great strategy for your SEO, but it has to be done right. As far as SEO basics, this is called on-site optimization. Google’s focus is now on useful content, added consistently, that is relevant to what people are searching for, like blog posts, articles, videos. Before they recommend your website to their users, they want to make sure you have something to offer as far as advice, important information, and more to people interested in your niche.

Important: don’t duplicate content, whether it’s from other pages on your website or from other websites you own.

One thing to keep in mind is that while you are working on making your website Google-friendly, you can’t forget that real people will be reading your content too. And if they can’t understand what you’re saying — they won’t be back which impacts your business and search ranking too. So make sure your content is people-friendly and Google-friendly too.

All these strategies should help you build authority in your niche market and compel other sites to link to you — the more links to you — the better your SEO.

Aside from quality content, your SEO efforts should also include work done in your “back office.” Internal linking, for example, is important. Basically your site should have plenty of useful content on related topics… and you should link among these different pages. This will keep visitors on your site longer, which shows Google your site is useful. And, crucially, this also allows Google to crawl all through your website.

Your keyword should also be in your title tag, which is the very short — just one line — bit of text that appears as the highlighted blue clickable link on the Google results page. You should also take care to fill out the meta description for your webpages. This is a very short description of what’s on the page — it appears under the link in the search results and could help convince the reader to click to find out more. It should also have your keyword at least once. It’s not a big SEO influence but could increase clicks.

If you have photos or images on your site (and you definitely should), don’t forget to include “alt text” that describes the content of that image. Google can’t “see” photos but it does read the alt text. And that increases the changes your images will appear in Google’s image search results.

All of these things can help to positively affect your SEO rankings, but again, the most important factor will be you publishing good quality, original content, on a regular basis.

**SEO Basics — Figuring Out the Right Keywords**

We’ve talked about keywords being important. But you can’t just come up with them out of the blue. If you optimize for the wrong keywords, even if they are related to your niche, all your efforts will be for nothing. You need to figure out how exactly people are searching for information and tailor your keywords for your website to that… this should also influence the topics of blog posts and other content.

It’s important to use a keyword planner tool to do some serious research of the right keywords to optimize for. Of all the SEO basics, this is where you should start. As having the right keywords will guide all your other optimization efforts. Google itself has an effective tool at https://adwords.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner/

Let’s look at an example. Say your niche is yoga. The keyword “yoga beginners” results in just 1,000 to 10,000 searches per month in the U.S, but “yoga for beginners” has 10,000 to 100,000. Can you see what keyword you should be optimizing for?

Another example. If you’re providing a treatment for back pain, the search term “lower back pain relief” has 10,000 to 100,000 searches per month, but “back pain treatment” only has 1,000 to 10,000.

These two examples show how people search for information and products in each niche. And the keywords you pick for your SEO efforts should reflect that. Remember that this research should also guide the content you provide.

**The Only SEO Constant Is Change**

Another thing to keep in mind is that making your website Google-friendly is not a one-time task. You must create and post useful content consistently. Google is always crawling through the web updating its results pages. Need some blogging ideas? See this article on 40 Great Blogging Ideas for Your Blog.

But if you stick to these SEO basics shared in this article, you’ll have a solid foundation for an optimized site that makes Google happy — and your prospects and customers too. And with a website that comes in higher in the Google results page, you’ll have more of those website visitors too… which is good for business.

And, by the way, you may have heard that Google is always tweaking the algorithm that determines page rank. “Tricks” to get high page rank now may not work a few months from now. That’s definitely true and for more intense SEO tasks you’ll have to stay on top of changes. But that’s nothing to worry about right now. Stick to the basics for now and you’ll be utilizing SEO best practices that will pay off for years to come.

Source: http://www.thebalance.com
SECURITY CORNER

Office Building Security

It seems certain kinds of buildings are just magnets for vandalism, thefts and burglaries. Gated communities, shopping centers, and large department stores have traditionally been plagued with these crimes. More recently, however, office buildings and small businesses seem to be increasingly targeted for break-ins. This may be because the assumption is made that a smaller office building or any smaller business would not be secure or protected, and criminals may believe it will be easier to “hit and run” without tripping alarms or encountering guards.

There are many responsibilities to running a business or managing an office building, and the increasing crime rate adds another responsibility: providing security to employees, their belongings, and the equipment and supplies of the business.

Basic Office Building Security

There are basically two ways to provide protection for any business or building, and that is with technology, as in alarm systems, cameras, etc., or with personnel who literally “stand guard” over the premises. Within those two ideas, there are many different ways to accomplish the desired security. The decision will largely depend on the type of building, size and budget of the business, and whether employees’ safety needs to be safeguarded.

Do you have employees who work late in the evening and must cross a dark parking lot to go home? If so, hiring security personnel may be necessary, at least for the hours after dark and until the last employee is safely in their vehicle. Depending on the area and location of the building, the employees’ vehicles may also need to be guarded, or kept in a secured parking lot to prevent vandalism.

You may be held responsible if employees suffer loss by theft while they are on the job. Worse yet, you would not want an employee to be mugged or injured in an attack in the parking lot.

At the very least, if a small business cannot afford to hire personnel for building security, steps should be taken to ensure no-one works alone at night, especially female employees, buildings and parking lots are well lighted, and shrubs and trees kept to a minimum, as you do not want to provide hiding places for people with mischief in mind.

There is so much technology available now, that almost any business can provide building security for employees and equipment. Perhaps in the case of a small business, equipment such as turnstiles, metal detectors and X-ray machines would not be practical, but there are many less expensive options. Most people, when building security is mentioned, would think of video cameras, and that is certainly one of the prime uses of technology, and the very least one can do to help prevent crime, no matter how small or large the business.

Inexpensive Building Security Systems for the Small Business

• A monitored alarm system will contact a call center if the alarm is triggered, and the call center will then contact the police. There is a drawback to this system since it depends on outside phone lines which can be cut before the perpetrator breaks into the building. Even if that does not happen, and the call center contacts police quickly, there will be time for items to be removed, or damage done before the police arrive.

• An unmonitored system sets off an alarm inside and outside when it is triggered, and can come complete with flashing or steady floodlights to call even more attention to the situation. This usually would have the advantage of scaring off the burglars before much damage could be done, or loss could occur. This system has the added advantage of not incurring fees for monitoring. An unmonitored system can be purchased at a hardware store, and is easy to install. It operates with cameras, sensors and motion detectors, and can also have an alarm and flashing lights included. This system is relatively inexpensive, does not require professional installation, and may be perfect for the small business, at least as a starter system.

• There is a system designed for the outside of buildings, incorporating motion detection with lights that come on and a loud alarm that sounds when a particular motion is detected. For instance, if someone just walks down the sidewalk, the system will not be triggered, but if a different path is taken, such as someone approaching a window or door, this will trigger the alarm. The security element it provides depends on the would-be thief or vandal being startled into leaving the area before doing any outside damage, getting inside, or removing any property.

Choose What is Best for Your Business

Whether you decide on a combination of hiring security personnel for a few evening hours and supplement this protection by using an inexpensive alarm system, or choose a top-of-the-line system, the important thing is to secure the building and the equipment, and maintain protection for employees and their property.

Talk to professionals who sell or install the alarm systems, as they will have all the facts you need, including the various prices. You can talk to security personnel, who are often familiar with alarm systems. Police officers may also be another source of information, and may even be able to tell you the response time of monitored systems.

The internet is a valuable resource tool and can provide almost anything you would want to know about the different systems and technology available. The more information you have, the better decision you can make in providing building security for your business or office building.

Source: http://www.businesssecurity.net/office-building-security/
Ten Things You Can Do to Secure Your Business

by William Deutsch

Think about the records, legal documents, marketing data, cash, and people found inside the walls of your business. Are you doing your best to protect them?

Here are 10 things you can do right now to secure everything from smartphones to doors. While all of these suggestions won’t apply to every company, if you work your way through this list, you’re sure to find some practical steps that you can take to protect your people and assets.

1. Secure Your Smartphone
What’s on your phone? Every time you slip that device out of its holster - even if it’s just for a quick game of Candy Crush - you’re holding a storehouse of personal information, and most likely, an access point into your company network. We’ve gotten so addicted to those handheld devices, but, along with the added convenience and productivity, they’ve also blessed us with some heightened security risks.

2. Use Strong Passwords
A strong password policy may be inconvenient, but it’s nowhere near as inconvenient as a data breach or a network crash. Here is a simple, three-step method for creating passwords. Once you create that killer password, you’ll also find three rules for keeping it safe.

3. Control Your Keys
Do you have enforceable and up-to-date key control policies? With so much attention paid to high-tech threats, it’s easy to forget that those little metal keys can make you pretty vulnerable, too. Think about how many doors in your facility are accessed via mechanical keys. Do your entry doors require only a key to open? What about file or server rooms? Do you have expensive inventory or supplies protected by lock and key? Mechanical keys tell no tales. If inventory or supplies go missing, you may have no way to determine who unlocked the door.

4. Erase Your Hard Drives
Before you toss out that old computer or copy machine, make sure that you erase the drive completely. A trashed computer is a gold mine for identity and data thieves. And many users still do not realize that their office copier stores documents on a hard drive until the files are overwritten. So unless you take the proper steps to ensure that all data has been erased from a computer or copier before it leaves your office, you may be opening the door to a security breach.

5. Develop a Social Media Policy
Email and social networking have created their own category of security concerns. These technologies make it very simple to disseminate information. And once that information leaves your building, it can rarely, if ever, be recalled. Your email policy should address appropriate content for company emails and social media pages. Assume that nothing will stay private on the Internet.

6. Install High Security Deadbolts
A deadbolt is a physical security standard for protecting exterior doors. Properly installed, a deadbolt will guard your doors against attack by even the most determined intruder.

7. Install an Alarm System
A modern security system, with its array of electronic components, is designed to sense, decide, and act. The security system senses events (such as motion in a room), decides if the event poses a threat, and then acts on that decision. While a security system for your business isn’t a do-it-yourself affair, you should understand the language of security in order to communicate your needs to a security professional, understand any proposals you may receive, and make the most of your security system after it is installed.

8. Use Security Cameras
Security cameras are used for two basic purposes: investigation and deterrence. The images that you collect with your security cameras will most often be used to review a crime or accident so that you can understand what really happened. But the cameras themselves also have a deterrent value since people who know they are being watched are usually on their best behavior.

In order to realize maximum investigative and deterrent value from your cameras, you need to carefully choose where you place them. The 4 best locations to install your security cameras are:

- Entrances and exits to capture facial images for ID purposes.
- Customer Transaction Points such as cash registers, teller stations, and kiosks.
- Targets that a thief may target such as cash drawers or jewelry cabinets.
- Secluded areas to deter vandalism or violence.

9. Write a Visitor Management Policy
An unauthorized or unescorted visitor can be a physical threat and can also steal sensitive information. If possible, steer all visitors into a controlled entry point (a gate or receptionist’s desk, for example). When writing your policy, decide whether visitors should be escorted at all times, or only in certain areas. Requiring visitors to wear a badge and sign in and out should also be considered. If your visitor management policy is communicated clearly, employees can more easily serve as your eyes and ears as they will feel more comfortable approaching or reporting a suspicious individual.

10. Select a Floor Marshal
In a large company, it’s nearly impossible to recognize every vendor, contractor, and new employee. Not only that, but most folks will not take the initiative to question someone they do not recognize. Intruders know this, and exploiting a lax or non-existent Visitor Management Policy is one way that they can gain access to a facility, steal information or property, or cause physical harm. Assigning a Floor Marshal is a simple and effective way to help protect your business against such intruders.

Source: http://www.thebalance.com