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THE SBRA COMMUNITY BRANDING is KING



**By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business Resource Association**

In the game of chess, the most important chess piece is the King. Both players have one King, which the opponent has to checkmate in order to win. The King can move in any direction, including diagonally, to any adjacent square that is not attacked by an opponent's piece or pawn. The King therefore becomes the most important piece on the board. A King is also defined as a person or thing regarded as the finest or most important in its sphere or group.

Branding, like the King on the chess board, is incredibly important for any business, especially a small business owner because it helps establish credibility, builds trust, differentiates your business in a crowded market, and fosters customer loyalty, ultimately driving growth and revenue.

Big companies spend a lot of money building their Brand in order to keep their position as King. Brands are connected to "Top-of-Mind" recognition as the Golden Arches makes you think of McDonalds, the Swish, Nike, the Geico, automobile insurance and the Clydesdale horses, Budweiser Beer. When people are looking for something to do or buy, the top-of-mind Brand will pop up as where they should go.

Conversely, a bad brand, or no brand at all, can be why people do not buy from those businesses but search for something better. Building a good Brand is much easier

than turning a bad Brand around. Invest your time and money into building a company that people know, like and trust.

Branding is incredibly important for businesses because it establishes a unique identity, fosters customer loyalty, and builds trust, ultimately impacting recognition, sales, and overall business value.

Fifty years ago, I started a company, Elite Sportswear/GYM-KIN, a Gymnastic Apparel manufacturer in Sinking Spring, PA.

After a couple years in business, I decided to travel to New York City to meet with the hosiery buyer of Macy's. Our primary product was a leotard and

I knew Macy's had a complete department featuring Danskin and Capezio leotards. I believed that we had a much better product and we would be a good fit with Macy's.

When I arrived at Macy's I was directed to the basement where the buyer had her office. As I entered the room, I was met by a receptionist that kindly said "can I help you". I said I would like to see the buyer and she asked if I had an appointment. I said no and she kindly told me you cannot see the buyer without an appointment. I told her I just made a 3-hour trip from Reading PA and she once again kindly responded—"you need an appointment".

In desperation, I reached into my garment bag and pulled out several leotard samples. She asked me where I bought them, I told her I made them. She asked me again,

where did I buy them? I responded the same. She then took the samples and went into another room. Minutes later another older woman returned with the secretary and asked the same question: "Where did you buy these leotards"? I again responded, "I made them". She then called in 3 other girls and asked if I had samples that would fit them. I did and they left the room to put them on. Five minutes later they returned and were dancing around the room saying these leotards are the best fitting and feeling leotards they had ever worn. They stretch and move with every bend of our body, they were awesome. At this point I was sure I was going to make a sale, I just didn't know how big.

Then the buyer looked at me and said, "Young man, in the 35 years of being a buyer for Macy's I have never seen a garment this well made and performs the way your leotard does. You have an excellent product and a brilliant future ahead of you. Come back and see me in 3 years".

I was totally lost for words but finally responded, "But you said this was the best leotard you have ever seen. Why don't you want to purchase some now"? She replied, "Because you have no Brand Recognition. Danskin and Capezio is what people ask for when they come in our store because they have been around for years. If I put Gym-Kin on the shelves and racks I will lose money because they will not sell like the well-known brands do. Build a Brand and I will buy".

From that moment on I got a whole new respect for the word BRAND. Even with a superior product or service, you need to build your brand in order to gain consumer acceptance and loyalty. Next month I will tell you the rest of the story and how we built Gym-Kin into the "King" of leotards company.





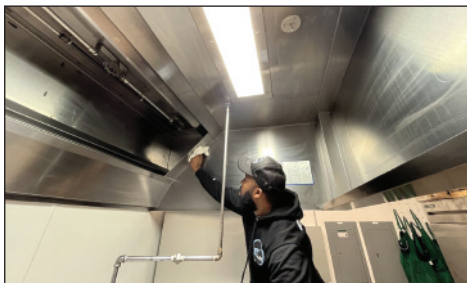
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2025 CYBERSECURITY LANDSCAPE



By Keith Barbour, MCSA, President & CEO, KDA Tech Solutions

Due to technological advancements and increasingly sophisticated threats, the cybersecurity landscape continues to evolve rapidly. For businesses, this requires a proactive approach to safeguard digital assets, protect customer data, and maintain business continuity.

1. AI and Machine Learning: The Double-Edged Sword

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) have become indispensable tools in cybersecurity. To our benefit, AI-powered systems can detect anomalies in real time, automate threat responses, and predict potential vulnerabilities before they are exploited. ML can analyze vast amounts of data at speeds exceeding human capabilities, significantly improving detection and response.

However, these technologies present new risks as cybercriminals increasingly use AI and ML to enhance their attacks, allowing the creation of sophisticated phishing schemes, deepfake scams, and autonomous malware capable of adapting to security measures. Thus, businesses must stay ahead of the curve by utilizing these technologies wisely.

2. Zero-Trust Architecture: A Paradigm Shift

One of the most significant shifts in cybersecurity stratagem is the widespread adoption of Zero-Trust. Traditionally, the assumption was that everything inside the network was trustworthy. With the rise of remote work and cloud-based systems, this assumption has become obsolete. Zero-Trust, the principle of "never trust, always verify," ensures that every user, device, or application requesting access is authenticated, regardless of its location.

Businesses relying on third-party vendors and remote teams make Zero-Trust a needed layer of protection. If one part of the network (i.e. the supply chain) is compromised, the entire system remains secure.

3. Cloud Security: A Growing Priority

As more businesses migrate to the cloud, the security of cloud-based infrastructures is vital. In 2025, we are

seeing a rise in cloud-native security tools designed to protect data across multi-cloud and hybrid environments.

Cloud providers are enhancing security offerings, providing more control over data encryption, identity/access management, and threat detection; however, cloud computing requires businesses to actively participate in securing their cloud environments. Cybercriminals increasingly automate the targeting of weaknesses in cloud configurations and third-party applications.

4. Ransomware: A Persistent Threat

Ransomware persists as one of the most prevalent and dangerous cybersecurity threats. Cybercriminal attacks are more targeted and sophisticated, threatening to release stolen data in addition to encrypting it, adding more pressure to pay up.

In response, businesses are investing in stronger backup systems, incident response planning, and employee training to prevent attacks. Although cyber insurance reflects the growing financial risks, prevention is still the most cost-effective strategy.

5. Privacy Regulations and Compliance: The New Normal

Data privacy requires that businesses navigate an increasingly complex landscape of regulations, laws, and statutes. Non-compliance can lead to hefty fines, legal repercussions, and damaged reputations.

As consumers become more aware of privacy risks, businesses that prioritize strong cybersecurity and transparent data policies will gain trust and loyalty from customers.

Conclusion

Cybersecurity in 2025 is defined by emerging technologies, evolving threats, and increasingly stringent regulations. For businesses, the key will be to adopt advanced technologies like AI and Zero-Trust, focusing on cloud security, and preparing for threats like ransomware. Staying informed will not only help protect you from cyberattacks but may also turn cybersecurity into a competitive advantage and cyber insurance savings.

For more information about KDA Tech Solutions - IT and CyberSecurity Specialists, please call (717) 912-4796, email help@kdatechsolutions.com or visit www.kdatechsolutions.com

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SBRA EVENTS

Events: Register at <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>

- Breakfast Referral Club – Friday, May 2nd B2 Bistro 7:30-9:00 am
- Wednesday Workshop – Wednesday, May 14th Riverfront Federal Credit Union Building
 - Tune Up Tuesday – Tuesday, May 20th on Zoom
 - SBRA Mingle – Wednesday, May 28th