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Say Congratulations

WITH THESE TECH GIFTS FOR GRADS

Spring is all about new beginnings, and for many, graduation is just the start of something big. Whether your favorite graduate is heading off to college, serve in our nation's military, or join the workforce, there's a gadget out there that will give them a great start — or at least make you their favorite relative. Check out this guide to find the perfect tech gift.

For the Audio Lover

From wireless headphones that surround you with sound to Bluetooth speakers that offer crystal-clear quality, the options are endless when it comes to choosing an audio device. But before purchasing the "next best thing," consider the person who will use it. If your graduate exercises frequently, they may want wireless headphones like Apple's AirPods or one of the many Samsung varieties. On the flip side, if they enjoy action movies, a great sound bar for their entertainment system just might do the trick.

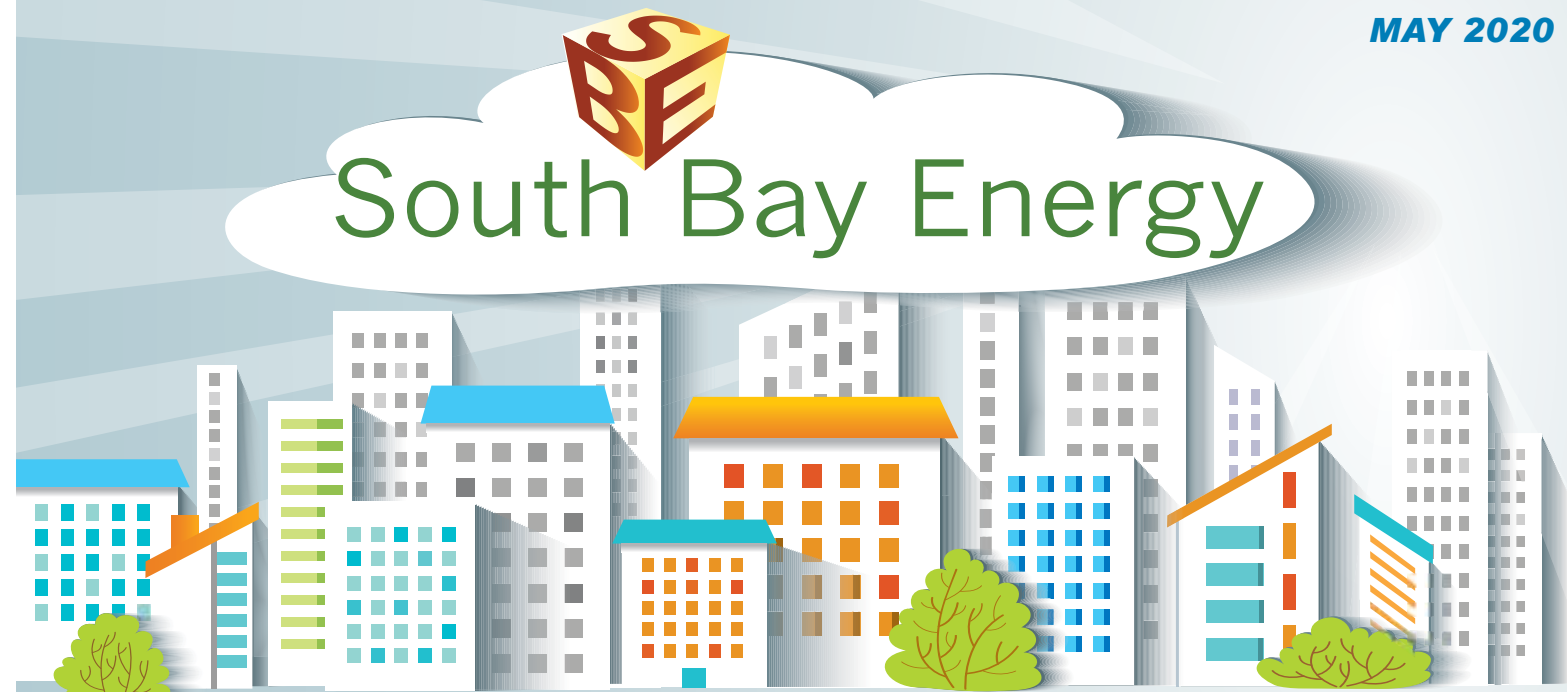
For the Streamer

There's no shortage of streaming services, and depending on what your graduate enjoys watching, you may consider gifting

them a subscription. Nostalgic Disney lovers looking for some stress relief would certainly love a Disney+ subscription, but if you know someone who has an affinity for the dramatic sagas, a subscription to HBO Now could satisfy their cravings. Hulu + Live TV can also be a great alternative for a grad who is out of the house! The best part is that this gift keeps on giving with every movie or show they stream.

For the Academic

This May will mark the start of a new academic adventure for many. AI systems like the Amazon Alexa and Google Home can make staying in touch and studying easier, while an e-reader could house all their textbooks in one handy place. Laptop cases, screen covers, and other protective gear can keep their technology safe from wear and tear. (After all, what college kid can afford a new laptop on a whim?) Charging stations and cord organizers can also protect their tech and keep their space clean.



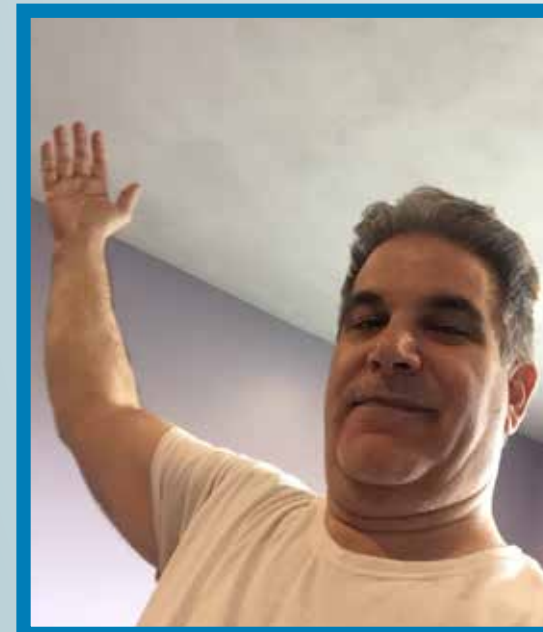
Steve's Update

My Health and Roof Are Back on Track

These are certainly tough times for all of us. A lot has happened since I wrote the last newsletter. This virus has most of us sitting at home under the new social distancing requests of the government. Thank goodness my wife is a little bit of a hoarder. We are probably good for a few months on supplies and food!

I hope this newsletter finds you guys healthy and not too crazy with cabin fever. As part of the quarantine, we had to order our reps to stay at home and stop working. We have our administrators working from home. Once a week, I make the trek up to the office to look at mail and to check on the fish in the aquarium. I am hoping, as I am sure all of you are, that this will be over soon and we can all get back to work.

When this all started, I was dealing with a leaky roof. Well, the solar panel people came and removed the panels from the roof. John Goess Roofing came the next day and finished my roof in less than a day. They came at 7:00 a.m. and were done by around 2:30 in the afternoon. They did a great job, stayed in constant contact, and returned every phone call the same day. I couldn't be happier with the job they did. Within a week or so, the solar panel guys came back and got my panels back on the roof. I also hired a guy to fix the sheetrock and paint my daughter's bedroom where the leak was. You can see the new ceiling and paint in the photo here. The



paint color is called "enchanted gem." My project this week is to put everything back into my daughter's bedroom. I have to fix some of the furniture that didn't take kindly to being moved.

I did get some great news about my health. I have been telling you guys about my triglyceride levels. I was tested back at the end of September and my triglycerides were at OVER 500! That is considered "extremely high." The doctor wanted to put me on medication, and I asked him to give me a couple of months to lose some weight and eat right. He gave me that time. So, I knocked off the fast food, ate a bunch of salmon, and started taking fish oil supplements. I went back to the doctor last month after another blood test and it came back ... NORMAL! I believe it was 148. I

was actually shocked that it dropped so much. The doctor told me to keep doing what I am doing.

At this point, the president has us quarantined till the end of April. I imagine that it is going to be tough on all of us to sit tight for 30 days. I hope that all of us can hang on and make it through the next 30 days financially and health-wise too. Please stay safe and keep your families safe. Hopefully by the time you are reading this, we are all back to work!

- Steve Mellis

Are You Using This 'Secret' Recruitment Tool?

How Paid Family Leave Attracts Top Talent

In the United States, new mothers aren't entitled to any paid family leave. This makes the U.S. the only major economy in the world without a federal family leave program. Despite this, a 2016 study by Pew Research Center showed that 82% of Americans say mothers should receive paid parental leave and 69% say fathers should receive paid leave as well.

According to Time magazine, paid family leave is gaining bipartisan support, and large human resources consulting firms, like Mercer, argue that offering this benefit will

actually help companies attract and retain desirable employees. Paid family leave encourages parents, usually mothers, to return to work after a brief absence instead of completely exiting the workforce. With the average cost of hiring and training a new employee being \$4,000, offering paid family leave may be as cost-effective for your business as bringing on a new hire.

Indeed, many companies are already rolling out generous family leave policies. At Microsoft, new mothers enjoy a whopping five months of paid leave, and new fathers,

adoptive parents, and foster parents get three months of paid leave. Furthermore, Microsoft only works with suppliers and vendors who offer a minimum of 12 weeks of parental leave.

Microsoft is not the only technology giant using their leave policies as an employee recruitment tool. At Netflix, workers get an *entire year* of paid time off with full benefits. Plus, other companies in myriad industries now offer plentiful family leave as part of their employee recruitment strategies. Professional services conglomerate Deloitte doesn't stop there. According to its website, "It's not just having programs in place that is important. There needs to be a workplace culture to support it, too."

Of course, not everyone agrees about the best way to provide paid family leave, but one thing is certain: As competition in the labor market grows, paid family leave will continue to be an increasingly valuable recruitment tool.



Health Benefits of Family Gardening

GIVE YOUR KID THE GIFT OF A GREEN THUMB

Yes, there will always be football season, basketball season, and soccer season, but right now, it's gardening season. That means it's time to roll up your sleeves and play in the dirt. If you've been searching for a way to get the kids away from technology and engaged with the real world, gardening is the perfect activity for the whole family to enjoy. Not only is it fun, but it's also beneficial for your kids' development.

For example, gardening can improve your children's analytical abilities. As Dr. Wendy Matthews says, "Gardening exercises important reasoning, initiation, planning, and organization skills." Furthermore, several studies, including one at Texas A&M University, suggest that gardening improves a child's attitude toward fruits and vegetables and may make them more likely to choose them as snacks. Gardening

helps kids identify with where their food is coming from, and nothing tastes better than a freshly picked strawberry or pea pod they grew themselves.

Jack Gilbert, a scientist at the University of Chicago and a parent himself, and his co-author, Rob Knight, emphasize the health benefits of garden time in their book, "Dirt Is Good: The Advantage of Germs for Your Child's Developing Immune System." The two found that exposure to different microbes, like those found in a garden, strengthens a child's immune system and makes them less likely to develop allergies.

If this is your first time gardening, you don't need much to get started. Grab a few shovels, a pair of gloves for each family member, and fresh potting soil, and you'll be set. Then, you can decide together which



plants you'd like to grow! Carrots are fun because of the surprise factor — just imagine your child discovering that the part they eat grows below the ground! Peas are tasty and fairly easy to grow, as are strawberries. The options really are endless. Depending on the growing season in your area, you can choose to buy seeds or opt for rooted plants.

Last but certainly not least, the best part of gardening as a family is the healthy, fresh produce you'll get to enjoy all summer long!



Growing Your Business? Change the Lightbulbs

How Small Savings Can Make a Huge Difference

Sometimes, a little change can go a long way. Walmart illustrated this perfectly when the megachain decided to switch to using more energy-efficient lightbulbs and cheaper floor wax. Those two simple substitutions have cut the company's annual costs by \$220 million. Of course, with thousands of stores nationwide, even the smallest savings will have a multiplying effect for a corporation like Walmart, but this lesson can still be applied by small-business owners looking to grow.

As a business owner, it can be tempting to lose yourself in the big picture. Milestones like helping more clients, launching new marketing campaigns, and opening another location are the exciting investments that really get a CEO's blood pumping. But beneath each of these major decisions, there are many minute changes that could save your company time and money. What

standard operating procedure (SOP) needs to be made more efficient before you bring on a larger client load? Which social media site will give you the most bang for your marketing buck? How much more will you be spending on toilet paper with two locations? It's tempting to overlook the minor details, but tackling these inefficiencies could save you more than you expect.

If you aren't one to pore over every expense report and crunch the numbers, you're not alone. The good news is that most likely, there are members of your team with the perspective and knowledge to help you out. This is especially true when it comes to day-to-day operations. Employees are great at noticing redundancies in SOP, underutilized spaces in the office, and other areas where money may be wasted. Empowering your team to



speak up when they notice these money-saving opportunities can do wonders for your bottom line.

Saving a few hundred dollars per year on things like lighting and floor wax may not sound impressive, but that's money you can put toward improving your employee retention, customer experiences, and marketing effectiveness. In today's competitive market, even the smallest changes can give you a vital edge.

Word Search

W A S U R U A T Q M N Y
 F L O W E R S G P O E X
 Y L F R E T T U B T L I
 S X A U N M O E L H L J
 B R X D A B N B A E O Q
 O N O Y Y I I I R P A
 N C F O H B D J R S F J
 A L I S D E U V O K K E
 Y R N X J T G G M S T O
 V U U O E K U Z E L M J
 S D D K X M U O M S B Y
 U L B T J C I M T L V K

BUTTERFLY	MAYFLY	OUTDOORS
FLOWERS	MEMORIAL	POLLEN
JEDI	MEXICO	SUNSHINE
LADYBUG	MOTHERS	TAURUS

Grilled Prime Rib

Who says the cookout has to ruin your diet? Try this paleo-friendly recipe for a main dish that's worthy of your next barbecue.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lbs beef rib roast
- 1 tsp Himalayan salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper

Directions

1. Take rib roast out of the refrigerator 30 minutes prior to grilling.
2. Season roast with salt and pepper and allow it to rest for 10 minutes while you heat a gas grill to 600 F.
3. Sear roast for 3–4 minutes on each side.
4. Turn off the grill but continue cooking the steak, flipping every 4–5 minutes, until it reaches an internal temperature of 125 F. Remove from grill.
5. Allow the roast to rest — its internal temperature will continue to climb — for 5–10 minutes. Slice and serve.

Inspired by Primal Palate