

INTRODUCTION:

Properly managed technology is essential for businesses looking to increase their profitability. Technology such as a computer networks and cloud solutions help businesses to stay competitive by increasing productivity and by reducing costs. Unfortunately, growth for many businesses is often slowed by mismanaged technology.

This guide is intended to educate business decision makers on the critical technology management factors that have the greatest impact on their people and their business and will serve to assist with future technology decisions.

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT VS. COMPUTER SUPPORT:

While technology has changed dramatically over the past ten years, the ways in which businesses manage their technology has changed very little. Today, technology management must go far beyond the routine computer support which many small and mid-sized businesses have grown accustomed to.

To realize the business improving potential of advancements in technology, and to minimize the myriad of risks associated with these advancements, businesses of all sizes must properly address the following critical technology management factors.

PRODUCTIVITY:

The fastest path to improving profitability is to improve efficiency. This is why it is vital that every business closely monitor all mission critical systems and applications for subpar performance and quickly adjust as necessary to improve the results.

Employees can realize a boost in productivity simply by performing routine maintenance and scheduled updates to IT systems. Because these items can be very time consuming they are often overlooked due to costs, causing systems to degrade by the day. One way to avoid the high costs of performing such tasks is to partner with a third party technology management company so you can leverage their investments in people and technology to dramatically reduce your costs and your risks.

Ask yourself:

- Are we monitoring all mission critical systems?
- Do we have software license keys readily available?
- Do we perform audits of systems and software?
- Do our systems receive scheduled updates?

RISK & COMPLIANCE:

Every promise of increased profitability presents new risks to your organization. Understanding your risks is the first step to minimizing or eliminating them altogether. Risks and security threats come in many forms. There are the obvious risks like malware, hackers, natural disasters, fires or system failures, to name a few. Then there are the other risks that are not so obvious like, data theft via employees, litigation due to employee computer activity or compliance violations.

While these can be managed effectively it does take more than off the shelf security software to properly protect your business.

Ask yourself:

- Do our employees use personal file sharing software?
- Do we routinely inspect our entire network for threats?
- Do we have a properly managed firewall?
- Do employees have access to too much data?

PERFORMANCE:

These days, every second counts, so putting up with anything less than maximum performance is inefficient. To improve performance your business components demand precise configuration and ongoing optimization to ward off costly bottlenecks or disruptions of service.

Businesses should always invest in business class network components that are properly configured by certified experts. It is all too common for a mismanaged network device or over burdened disk drive to dramatically slow down a network. An incorrect diagnosis of the slow down can also lead to increased costs for services as well as unnecessary additional costs related to upgrades in bandwidth and/or server capacity.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Today's business environment knows no boundaries. Employees work from home, client sites, satellite offices and in the field. Maintaining productivity in and out of the office is imperative to maintaining efficiency and gaining a competitive advantage.

Employees and customers may need access to vital information from anywhere at any time so businesses must consider adequate data backup solutions as well as redundant servers hosted in secure data centers to be certain data and systems are there when they're needed. This increases the need for a technology partner that can assist with creating, implementing and meeting your recovery time objectives (RTO).

SUPPORT:

At some point in time every business will experience a need for technical expertise to assist with any of a multitude of IT system issues. When that time comes, having various support options can keep costs down while speeding time to resolution. Businesses that partner with management firms that offer services ranging from one on one support to always available instructional databases report fewer disruptions to their business due to ease of access and depth of knowledge.

CONCLUSION:

By replacing traditional computer support with a complete technology management program, businesses of all sizes can reduce overall operating costs, improve employee efficiency, become more responsive to client needs and react quicker to changing market conditions.

Companies which do not employ technology executives capable of analyzing, planning and overseeing management of information systems benefit greatly from partnering with a firm focused on the above technology management factors.

Ask yourself:

- Do we use business class network devices?
- Are our devices configured by certified experts?
- Do we pay for unnecessary bandwidth upgrades?
- Is our network performance optimized?

Ask yourself:

- Do our employees and customers expect 24/7 access?
- Is our remote access secure or are we at risk?
- How long can we operate if we lose access to data?
- Is our RTO realistic and attainable?

Ask yourself:

- How do our employees access support today?
- Can we provide immediate support to remote users?
- Do employees let systems fail before seeking assistance?
- How do we know our true

Ask yourself:

- How could this impact our people?
- How will this impact our process and procedures?
- How does this impact our IT systems?
- How does the impact our budget?