

What is the Right Solution for Small Business Computer Problems?

While not too long ago desktop computers were an anomaly in the business world, these days few businesses could get by without a sophisticated network of computers, printers, PDAs, smart phones and other technological products. Keeping all that technology humming along can be a daunting task for even the largest company, but for small businesses the challenges can be even greater. Small business owners have a number of options at their disposal when it comes to computer and network support, and it is important for those firms to carefully consider each option before making a final decision.

Option #1 – Do the Support Yourself

If you are a technically savvy business owner you may feel that you can provide computer support to your workers, and you may be right. But the question you have to ask yourself is whether or not that is really the best use of your time. As a small business owner you are already wearing many hats, and adding the hat of computer repair technician may be a bit too much.

In addition taking time out of your busy day to download the latest critical patches from Microsoft or fix your secretary's computer takes away time you could be using to build your business and gain market share. There are only so many hours in the day, and it is already hard enough to get things done.

Option #2 – Hire One or More IT Professionals

Hiring a couple of IT staffers may seem like a good solution to your computer support dilemma. On the plus side you will gain access to their knowledge and their skills, and those professionals may be able to help your business grow and expand its network. However there are disadvantages as well and it is important to understand those drawbacks.

One of the biggest problems can be the cost. The salary of a computer technician can easily top \$40,000-\$50,000 to start, and then there are the benefits issues to consider. Chances are your new employee will identify weak spots in existing IT infrastructure, requiring sometimes significant capital expenses. By the time all is said and done your firm could easily be spending hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to keep those IT professionals on staff.

Option #3 – Hire a Computer Support Firm

This last solution is often the best option for small businesses. By hiring an outside firm to provide hardware and software support to its workers business owners can ensure that their networks will be efficient, secure, reliable, and that their systems will be available when they are needed. This option also relieves small business owners of the expense associated with hiring dedicated IT staff members. These costs can be quite significant, especially for startup companies. Furthermore, hiring a company to provide computer support frees up the business owner's time so that he or she can focus on making the company better and more profitable.