3 FATAL ERRORS YOU'RE MAKING BY HIRING THE CHEAPEST COMPUTER SUPPORT COMPANY

While looking at your budget this year, check whether you're making one of these three deadly mistakes with your IT investment. It might just save your company.

Find someone invested in your success.

Don't fold under the weight of a cyber-attack.

Somehow, 2019 is already upon us. In preparation for the New Year, business owners across the country are taking a close look at their finances, scratching their heads as they inspect their budgets, line by line, to cut everything that isn't absolutely necessary and searching for new investments that will boost their bottom line. In the midst of all this, it's vital that leaders take a long, hard look at their technology budgets. Chances are those budgets are a far cry from where they should be.

Many business owners – especially those running smaller organizations with tighter resources – assume that IT is the ideal spot to cut costs. But they forget that, today, technology is the foundation upon which their business is built. We can almost guarantee that if you partner with a cut-rate IT support company, you will sorely regret it down the line. You'll end up spending thousands more on broken equipment and systems, you'll lose customers to server downtime and you may even fold completely under the weight of a cyber-attack.

The minuscule amount you'll save by hiring a cheap support company will be vastly outweighed by the long-term cost of your decision. It is just not worth it. While looking at your budget this January, check whether you're making one of these three potentially deadly

mistakes with your IT investment. It might just save your company.

1 YOU'RE INVESTING IN A "BREAK-FIX" APPROACH.

This is the primary place where bargain-barrel IT support companies cut costs. Instead of proactively managing your network, your technicians hardly touch your network until something breaks and it's time to fix it. Sure, this way is cheaper in the short term, but when you consider the enormous crises that can arise when something shuts down and the fact that they could easily be avoided with the foresight of a managed services provider, the true expense quickly becomes obvious. Not only will

Are you really doing all you can with the technology at your disposal?

your business suffer many more tech catastrophes than they would if you partnered with a more reputable company, but those catastrophes will take significantly longer to fix. A technician who shows up only when something's wrong simply doesn't know your network as well as somebody who works with it all the time.

2 YOU'RE INVESTING IN A COMPANY THAT DOESN'T BOTHER BEING PROACTIVE.

Technology shifts rapidly day by day. The arms race between hackers and security software designers is constantly happening behind the scenes, as is the hurtling pace at which hardware and software become supplanted by newer, better options. Without a managed services provider keeping you abreast of the latest tech trends, you're both incredibly vulnerable to cyber-attacks and at risk of falling behind your competitors. Technology shouldn't just be something you set up and hope it doesn't break; it should be something you and your team are actively leveraging to maximize your impact. A managed services provider is genuinely invested in your success and will do everything they can to help you do exactly that.

3 LET'S FACE IT: YOU'RE JUST UNDERINVESTING.

In order to keep your company at the top of its game, you need to invest in your technology in accordance with how vital it is to your day-to-day operations. We're guessing that it's pretty much essential for your success, so why are you so quick to cut corners in tech? Allocating your resources to support your technology is more than a baseline cost to stay alive in the business world – it's an investment that can substantially increase your bottom line and amplify the reach, scope and efficacy of your operation. So, this year, as you comb through document after financial document, ask yourself: are you really doing all you can with the technology at your disposal?

Does Your Business Have a Disaster Recovery Plan?

What is your strategy for the aftermath of a terrible storm or aggressive ransomware attack? Likely, you have insurance on your building and your physical belongings like desks and computers and the coffee maker. But what about your data? What about the information stored on your server? Believe it or not, while the server itself may be covered by your insurance policy, everything it contains within its drives is not. For that, you need cyber insurance, which we do recommend, but even that won't help you recover lost data that you need to run your business. While a cyber insurance policy may provide a much-needed payout, it won't magically bring back all of those vital files, information, and software you need to run to your business every day.

For help crafting a disaster recovery plan within your business continuity plan, head over to preferreditgroup.com/thank-you-get-a-free-ebook/ and we'll give you our **Simplified Business Continuity Guide**.

90 Ways To Be Better

Would you believe that there is an organization in America today that lists 90 traits, characteristics and soft skills they want their employees to have? Well, there is. My first thought when I saw the list was, "These folks are nuts!" But, after actually reviewing the list, I changed my tune. All of them are doable and warrant our attention. Success is always all about constantly becoming a better version of ourselves. The question is: What do we have to go by? How do we grade ourselves?

If I gave you a list of things that would help make you more successful, would you do them all? Well, here is an excellent list to start with. Now all you have to do is be really honest with yourself and decide if you live by
each of the listed traits.

After reviewing the list several times, you may decide you want to add to it. There's nothing wrong with that! Personally, I would add "Be nice" to the list. In fact, I would start with that one. But maybe they think   compassionate," "respectful" and "empathic" cover that. I like it stated in simpler terms: be nice!

Good luck with grading yourself. The list sure does make you think. I am working on several of them right now!

Ability to compromise for the greater good • Accepts criticism constructively • Accountable • Adaptable • Analytical • Applies current best practices • Approachable • Assertive • Attentive to detail • Belief in the dignity of others • Calming • Candid • Community-oriented • Compassionate • Confident • Consistent • Constant learner • Courageous • Customer-focused • Decisive • Dependable • Detail oriented • Disciplined • Discreet • Effective communication skills • Embraces change • Emotionally healthy • Emotionally intelligent • Emotionally resilient • Empathetic • Energetic and enthusiastic • Ethical • Flexible • Focused • Frustration-tolerant • Honest • Humble • Informed • Shows initiative • Innovative • Inquisitive • Displays • Integrity • Intelligent • Excellent interpersonal skills • Judicious • Knowledgeable • Leadership • Learns from mistakes • Level-headed • Logical • Loyal • Good memory • Moral fortitude • Motivational • Good at multitasking • Non-impulsive • Open-minded • Organized • Patient • Perceptive • Perseverant • Has perspective • Is physically fit • Is prepared • Preserves confidentiality • Proactive • Problem solver • Professional • Protective • Reasoning ability • Resilient • Resourceful • Respect for diversity • Respect for the individual • Respectful • Responsible • Self-motivated • Self-restraint • Good sense of humor • Sense of service to others • Skeptical • Exhibits sound judgment • Strong work ethic • Tact • Teamwork • Tolerance • Trustworthiness • Verbal communication skills • Written communication skills

PREFERRED IT SECURITY SPOTLIGHT

Staying secure against ransomware doesn't have to be hard.   Here are a few tips to get you started right away!

Backup regularly and keep a recent backup copy off-line and off-site. There are dozens of ways other than ransomware that files can suddenly vanish, such as fire, flood, theft, a dropped laptop or even an accidental delete. Encrypt your backup and you won't have to worry about the backup device falling into the wrong hands.

Enable file extensions. The default Windows setting is to have file extensions disabled, meaning you have to rely on the file thumbnail to identify it. Enabling extensions makes it much easier to spot file types that wouldn't commonly be sent to you and your users, such as JavaScript.

Don't enable macros in document attachments received via email. Microsoft deliberately turned off auto-execution of macros by default many years ago as a security measure. A lot of infections rely on persuading you to turn macros back on, so don't do it!

Be cautious about unsolicited attachments. The crooks are relying on the dilemma that you shouldn't open a document until you are sure it's one you want, but you can't tell if it's one you want until you open it.

Don't give yourself more login power than you need. Don't stay logged in as an administrator any longer than is strictly necessary and avoid browsing, opening documents or other regular work activities while you have administrator rights.

Patch early, patch often. Malware that doesn't come in via a document often relies on security bugs in popular applications, including Microsoft Office, your browser, Flash and more. The sooner you patch, the fewer holes there are to be exploited.

Want To Know For Sure If Your Data Is Safe?

Thanks to our Done-For-You Disaster Recovery you can rest assured that your data is being backed up in a format that is not only secure, but also easily recovered when you need it.

Your files are automatically backed up every hour locally and over the Internet.

Your data is safe from fire, floods, storms, viruses, hackers, hardware malfunctions, and human error! With image-based and file level backups, your data is immediately accessible even during a disaster.

Should a disaster occur, you can be back up and running the very same day…we **GUARANTEE** it.

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OUR COMMUNITY

Help out a neighbor, and get put in our giveaway contest!

If you know of a business owner who have 10 or more employees in northeast Indiana in need of IT services, let us know!

Anyone you refer will receive a free Network Health Check (a $1,675 value), plus you'll get an Amazon gift card.

We'll also enter you to win our quarterly referral contest - this quarter the prize is an Rtic Cooler (filled with your favorite beverage)!

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