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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT *IT OVERHAUL*

There are television shows, even entire channels, devoted to wardrobe makeovers and home remodeling. Somehow, an IT overhaul doesn't get people excited. Yet taking out business technology to build something even better can be beneficial.

This ebook covers signs you need an IT overhaul, the advantages, and how to successfully implement the revamp.

Business technology is always evolving. You may be taking an "if it ain't broke" approach to your IT infrastructure. You know your software. Your hardware functions fine. Why would you invest time and money finding new tech? Your business is busy enough as it is!

Yet holding on to outdated software and legacy hardware can cause real problems. Plus, your business could be missing out on advantages from having the latest technology available.

This ebook examines the necessity of an IT overhaul from three different perspectives:
·   signs your business needs an IT overhaul;
·   benefits of the IT transition;
·   how to implement a successful IT overhaul.

With the rapid pace of change in IT, your loyalty to legacy systems could be misplaced. Keep reading to see if you're due a change, and learn about the benefits and how to make the most of IT infrastructure investment.

Signs Your Business Needs an IT Overhaul

There's a not-so-funny joke that your new computer technology is out of date by the time you get it configured. The pace of change isn't quite that rapid, but it's safe to say that a business that hasn't reviewed IT infrastructure in years is working with dated tech.

Ideally, your business is growing. It may be doing so slowly and steadily. Even so, the business IT needs will have shifted. The technology you started with may have got you through past projects with few hiccups, and you can meet current deadlines with one or two work arounds, but reliability and accessibility suffer after a few years of band-aid fixes.

Perhaps you've tried to push your existing systems to do things they weren't meant to do as a stop-gap solution. But slow and unoptimized technology can mean hours or days of lost productivity.
If any of this sounds familiar, check your current situation against these signs you may be due an IT update.

Your operating system is outdated
The software is still working fine, so you think this doesn't matter. Yet using legacy tools negatively impacts productivity, which costs time and money.

If you're using an operating system past its end-of-life date (e.g. Windows 7), you also risk security. Once the manufacturer moves on to its new software, you don't get any updates, security patches, or support.

Your hardware can't support the new software
You invested in new software to meet your business needs, but your legacy equipment can't handle it. It may not have the processing power or can't run the full gamut of features the new software offers. That's inefficient and not a good return on your tech investment.

You get negative feedback from stakeholders
Employees are tired of systems crashing and software taking too long, or of waiting forever for a printout. They expect to work remotely and collaborate online, but your systems can't keep up.

Perhaps your customers complain about issues with your website being down or malfunctions. Your bounce rate could show prospects are abandoning your site. They're likely switching to a more responsive and reliable site.

None of these are good for your business reputation. It hurts brand loyalty and can make retention of talented people even more difficult.

IT is overworked trying to keep tech up and running.

Constant issues with your IT infrastructure are a bad sign. Downtime is costly, no matter what causes it. Risk of a data breach looms when IT is constantly looking for short-term fixes to security issues.

Any of these can say your business is due to upgrade its IT. While doing a quick upgrade or adding another piece of hardware is appealing because it's easy and lower cost, this may not address the core problems. That's when you'll need to overhaul your technology to ensure your systems are performing the way you want them to.

Benefits of Transitioning Your IT

Yes, it can be worth it to go back to scratch and rebuild your IT infrastructure up again from zero. Taking a piecemeal approach may be more budget and time friendly in the short term, yet it may still end up affecting productivity and revenue generation in the long term.

Gain efficiency
You pride yourself on being loyal to your technology. Look at all you and your employees can get done with what you've always had! Yet your processes may be slower than they need be. Your people could be wasting time on unnecessary tasks, and your system configurations could be overly complicated.

By upgrading IT infrastructure, you can take advantage of the latest technology. Advances in cloud services, robotic process automation, digital intelligence, and more can help.
People at a small business often take on many different responsibilities. But the latest technology can help employees to focus their time more effectively.

Improve security
Cybersecurity risks are everywhere, and they impact every business, no matter its size or industry. When using an outdated computer system, you're at greater risk of cyberattack. Bad actors trying to steal information and make money will leverage every weakness.
By not upgrading your IT infrastructure, you could be leaving your business open to attack. That could lead to costly downtime, legal complications, compliance concerns, and brand damage.

Keep stakeholders happy
Employees will appreciate having the latest technology at their disposal. The power of artificial intelligence and machine learning can make jobs easier. You can automate routine, mundane tasks, too. Doing more critical thinking and creative tasks can improve employee morale and engagement.

At the same time, customers enjoy streamlined business processes. Many want to interact with chat bots or a mobile-responsive website. Improved customer service from happier employees with better tech won't hurt either. Plus, customers can have confidence their personal data is secure with your business.

Cut costs
If you focus on what you spend to overhaul IT, you may roll your eyes at the suggestion you could cut costs. Yet you'll gain efficiency, reduce downtime, and encourage employee morale and customer satisfaction. All these can positively impact your bottom line.

Plus, the newer technology is often more energy efficient and takes up less room. That can mean savings in utility and real estate costs. Additionally, when you rebuild your IT from the ground up, you take a customized approach. You can make sure all hardware and software is necessary. Further, you might avoid paying extra licensing fees or maintaining an obsolete piece of tech.

How to Do an IT Overhaul

To be successful, you can't just buy a new server and expect everything to magically get better. An effective IT overhaul reflects an actual IT strategy. Before making investments or retiring tech, figure out what you want to achieve.

Inventory current IT infrastructure, survey users, and review business goals (short and long term). Identify priorities and potential areas for process improvements. Then research what is out there to meet or exceed your objectives.

The IT strategy will reflect the big picture of all that technology can accomplish. With this in mind, design a network that incorporates all individual parts. Consider factors such as application and server requirements or network speeds, all to ensure that the connected pieces play well together.

Technology stack consistency makes troubleshooting and repair easier. At the same time, learning the full capabilities of your new tech can help improve workflows.

You'll also need to train your people on the new technology. You'll want to demonstrate how routine tasks can be done more efficiently. Show them new collaboration and communication tools. Educate them about remote access best practices. Plus, emphasize the importance of always updating technology when prompted to do so.

The IT overhaul can avoid downtime and keep your IT team from being slammed with problems. Yet there will always be minor issues with technology, especially as people learn the systems and the best tools for their needs. Providing reliable access to IT support is part of successful change management. People who feel they can ask for help are more likely to experiment and embrace the new technology.

As part of the IT overhaul, you'll also need to do business-continuity and disaster-recovery planning. You hope to avoid a disaster, of course, but be proactive in anticipating what could go wrong and how you'll handle it.

Conclusion

Business technology is always evolving. While you might be comfortable with your familiar IT tools, the time will come for an overhaul. You may be reluctant to foot the bill for revamping your infrastructure, but think of all you gain with a customized IT setup geared to what you do now and where your business plans to go.

An IT overhaul is an investment worth making. Make it with the support of IT experts who get to know your business needs and make customize the plan. Partner with us today to put a personalized IT overhaul for your business in place.

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