Small Business Health Check:

4 Signs Your Business Needs Managed IT Services

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Introduction

Even the healthiest of operations needs the occasional check up.

In the competitive world of small business, running at less than optimal efficiency can spell the difference between success, or watching opportunities fall into the hands of your competitors.

Below are four warning signs your business' IT systems are in need of some TLC, and the questions you need to ask in order to improve their overall health.

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1 Your Business Is Foggy, Not Cloudy

- **Have you forgotten the last time you backed up your data?**
- **Is your IT budget out of control?**
- **Is your business stuck in a singular location in order to operate?**

We all know that taking advantage of the cloud can help cut costs and save businesses valuable time, but that doesn't automatically mean we know what to do with it. About half of SMBs are yet to embrace the cloud while only around 20 per cent are still just dipping their toes into this technology, according to RightScale's 2017 State of the Cloud Report.

Cloud services are more than a way to backup your data. Cloud computing offers a number of benefits to small business via security improvements, cost savings, improved reliability, and access to services and data from multiple devices, according to the Department of Communications. Combined, cloud services provide much needed flexibility and resilience for SMBs by letting them carry out operations whenever and wherever they're most needed.

> Cloud services are more than a way to backup your data

2 You're Sharing IT Responsibilities

- **Are you sharing IT responsibilities across multiple staff members?**
- **Does your IT future plans involve a magic 8-ball?**
- **Does your current IT documentation read like a foreign language?**

Small businesses are defined by the number of staff (literally). Having few employees is by no means a sign of weakness or profitability, but there are limitations in certain areas. There's only so much one person can do, and while a small team has the advantage of sharing and shifting responsibility in an agile way, this strategy doesn't work so well for IT.

Your business might not have the personnel it needs to successfully run your IT requirements. The dangers of sharing responsibility is that it opens the door for urgent IT issues to be overlooked, ignored or not caught at all. If it's no one person's job to look to the future, small businesses run the risk of missing the boat when the next wave of digital disruption comes along.

3 Your IT is Slow and Out of Date

- **Is your tech over three years old?**
- **Has your software not been updated in several years?**
- **Is your network security asleep at its post?**

New tech and software is expensive and represents a massive outlay to small to medium businesses and franchises. That being said, without regularly updating your software, or relying on tech that is too old, you run the risk of a crisis should things go belly-up. From a data security perspective, the risks of being behind the times are even greater. Security software company Symantec discovered over 430 million new pieces of malware in 2015 alone, up 36 per cent from the previous year. In order to stay ahead of cyber criminals, it's essential that your company stays vigilant in ensuring security is top-notch.

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4 Your data stream has gone stagnant

- **Does business stop if a key person isn't in the office?**
- **Does sharing files mean actually sharing files (out of a filing cabinet)?**
- **Do you believe Microsoft Office is just Word and Excel?**

Every business is a technology business. Unless you send letters instead of emails, use the phone book instead of a website, and keep your client information in ledgers rather than computers, your company is a technology company. That's not a bad thing by any means, but it does mean that small businesses need to know the basics about using data management technology to their advantage.

A staggering 90 per cent of SMBs are not currently making the most of the digital tools available to them, according to Deloitte's 2016 Connected Small Business report. These SMBs cite inadequate skill as the most persistent barrier, with only 9 per cent of small businesses in Australia having an "advanced" level of digital mastership.

According to the report, the businesses that can successfully navigate the web are 1.5 times more likely to be growing, and are more than 14 times more likely to be innovating.

Cloud solutions technologies, such as Microsoft Office 365 help workers collaborate and pool resources together so that information flows freely, not blocked up by a person or rusty computer.

The flexibility to share data, sync files and communicate directly with colleagues and remote workers puts the power of a fully-fledged office in the back pockets of employees.

The Benefits of a Managed IT System

If you found yourself saying 'Yes' to the above questions more than 'No', perhaps it's time to look at how you manage your IT?

The reality is that for small businesses, there simply may not be the time or resources needed to dedicate towards IT. You're in the business of running your business, not running your IT - but it's an essential part of any successful operation. Rather than the expensive and time costly solutions of in-house services, have you considered outsourcing your IT?

This is where the team at **LOOKUP.COM** step in. A company's IT is more than just its phone systems, digital communications or data security, which is why we do the lot. No job is too big or too small, and with our dedicated team of staff, it's our mission to improve the confidence you have in your IT. By outsourcing your IT, you business can reap all the rewards of having a dedicated, secure system in-house, and with our fixed pricing, you'll know exactly how much your IT budget will cost.

To find out more, get in touch with the team at **LOOKUP.COM** today.

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