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GETTING STARTED WITH MANAGED IT SERVICES

There are basic aspects of I.T. that true managed service providers should be taking into consideration when providing services to companies. Our checklist should cover many aspects that a true partner will be concerned with when developing an I.T. solution for your company.

IT BUSINESS PROCESSES

Having set process of how various I.T. business tasks interact with your company will help identify ways in which your I.T. solution can strategically help your business.

ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE (EDI)

Put simply, EDI is the process of transferring standard business documents between trading partners. EDI and other similar technologies save a company money by providing an alternative to, or replacing, information flows that require a great deal of human interaction and paper documents.

BUSINESS PROCESSES

Business process mapping, also known as process charts, has become much more prevalent and understood in the business world in recent years. Once created by a bricklayer to increase efficiency, process mapping is now being used by companies worldwide and humans alike. Process maps can be used in every section of life or business.

I.T. FOR SALES AND MARKETING

Companies that fully utilize effective sales management tools find they have strategic value to the business. They draw upon technologies that support the analysis of customer and competitor information in order to improve the strategic focus of sales activities.

AUGMENTATION OF STAFF

Companies should delegate or automate as many recurring tasks as possible in order to focus on more strategic initiatives. Companies should have partners who already know their business, their IT organization, their business infrastructure and their systems in order to quickly expand their workforce as required.

BUDGETING FOR I.T.

When companies employ a strategic approach for IT budgeting, they create a planning and decision-making process that can help maximize the benefits of their IT investments. A good IT budget not only gives the organization the ability to manage IT costs in both the short and long term, but it also provides the agility needed to adjust IT spending in response to changes in the business environment.

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FACILITY ASSESSMENT

Hardware organization and cleanliness. Our technicians visit your site and physically inspect your infrastructure. Our technicians are looking for organizational standards, cooling, airflow, power conditioning, and general cleanliness and overall organization.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Facilities management is the coordination of space, infrastructure, people, and organization. It can include communication; emergency preparedness and business continuity; environmental stewardship and sustainability; finance and business; human factors; leadership and strategy; operations and maintenance; project management; quality; real estate and property management; and technology.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Often overlooked until it poses a problem are the environmental considerations to maintain humidity, air flow and temperature within standards to allow equipment to perform optimally. Overheating of data center equipment can result in reduced server performance or equipment damage due to hot exhaust air re-circulating into an air inlet. Mixing the cooled air and exhausted air increases refrigeration costs

POWER

IT departments usually create vast amounts of carbon waste and fail to effectively manage their power consumption. Improvements in IT can both help the environment and save your company money. Corporations are increasingly realizing their responsibility to environmental sustainability and looking for ways to build more sustainable desktop and server infrastructures.

SECURITY

Vulnerabilities from equipment to facility. Security and vulnerabilities can range from outdated patches to open ports, firmware upgrades, and physical location.

SECURITY

Security in today's IT infrastructure is more about layers then about single points of defense. Protecting the outer layer of your network, your endpoints, can be absolutely critical. Endpoint protection starts with a strong Endpoint Security and Mal-Ware detection and prevention engine.

COMPLIANCE AND REGULATORY ISSUES

Regulatory compliance describes the goal that organizations aspire to achieve in their efforts to ensure that they are aware of and take steps to comply with relevant laws and regulations.

There are a number of regulations which apply in different fields, such as PCI-DSS, GLBA, FISMA, Sarbanes Oxley (SOX) and HIPPAA.

REMOTE AND MOBILITY ACCESS

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PASSWORD INFORMATOIN

The most basic information that companies need to have access and control of is sometimes the easiest to lose track of. Having proper password repositories and policies help maintain secure I.T. infrastructure.

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BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

Collaboration and communication is key. While assessing your current capabilities, I.T. providers should also look at ways to streamline your business's communication and collaboration with employees.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is absolutely critical to the success of an organization. This is accomplished in a myriad of ways in the marketplace today. To name a few, we communicate perhaps daily through phone, email, instant messaging, webinars, teleconferences.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Voice and data communications are critical to a business. It is extremely important to architect a communications plan that provides the highest levels of availability and resiliency for the business.

PRINTING

Add up the costs of "printing" and it accounts for a large chunk – as much as 15% of a business's annual spending. Through managed print services, you can outsource print management and cut costs by as much as 30%.

FILE SHARING

Business leaders (and also end-users) are looking to tackle issues like data sharing, portability, and access from multiple intelligent endpoint devices, creating a conundrum for IT as it needs to balance business enablement, ease of access, and collaborative capacity with the need to maintain control and security of information.

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BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Business continuity encompasses a loosely-defined set of planning, preparatory and related activities which are intended to ensure that an organization's critical business functions will either continue to operate despite serious incidents or disasters that might otherwise have interrupted them, or will be recovered to an operational state within a reasonably short period of time

RESILIENCY

Any systems that are put into place for resiliency should be continuously monitored for normal/error state, and also notify the customer in the event the system transitions to an unknown or failed state.

These systems should be regularly tested and the results documented. Any deficiencies found should drive continual improvement for the system.

BACKUP OPERATIONS

Conducting regular and recurring data backups are very important for any business. Ensuring that these back- ups can be restored from an expected Recovery Time Objective (RTO) within a proper Recovery Point Objective (RPO) is absolutely critical.

RTO, is a calculation of the maximum allowable downtime after which the consequences to the business are unacceptable. RPO, is the maximum length of time for which data might be lost.

DISASTER RECOVERY

Organizations cannot always avoid disasters, but with careful planning the effects of a disaster can be minimized. The objective of a disaster recovery plan is to minimize downtime and data loss. The primary objective is to protect the organization in the event that all or parts of its operations and/or computer services are rendered unusable. The plan minimizes the disruption of operations and ensures that some level of organizational stability and an orderly recovery after a disaster will prevail. Minimizing downtime and data loss is measured in terms of two concepts: the recovery time objective (RTO) and the recovery pint objective (RPO).

HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE

Get healthy and optimize performance. Assessing the current health and performance of your servers and end- points is important to develop plans to optimize your active directory, set patching schedules for systems, and ensure proper OS levels.

NETWORK MANAGEMENT/MONITORING

It is necessary to have a real-time, comprehensive view of all business infrastructure and services from a single pane of glass. As an incident or problem occurs it can immediately be recognized along with the impacted services - Allowing for more informed business decisions.

SERVER (HARDWARE)

All technology has a set life cycle. Manufacturers call this life cycle Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF). Said clearly, all hardware will fail at some point. The goal is to mitigate the risk of these failures while the server is in productive use for the business.

SERVER (SOFTWARE)

Software management on a server is crucial to optimize server usage with minimal downtime. This includes fixing security vulnerabilities and other bugs, and improving the usability or performance.

ENDPOINTS (HARDWARE)

Endpoints are absolutely critical to the success of the organization in a decentralized environment. These are the devices that actually provide the hardware and software resources to end users to be productive.

ENDPOINTS (SOFTWARE)

Maintaining endpoint software is crucial to ensure security, productivity, along with reliability. Service providers should be maintaining supported OS with updates along with providing the endpoint "owner" the appropriate level of administrative rights.

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