

Article – IT Management Redefined

February 24, 2006

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Information Technology Management Services Redefined

New Information Technology (IT) Solutions for Small Businesses, now there is another way of doing business

If you have been constantly asking yourself about soaring IT costs, demands to do more with less, for IT products, services and solutions, for both offline and online, media and marketing purposes, look no further. We propose a new, slightly different, and more proactive approach.

As small business owners, you need to be asking yourselves some serious questions regarding whether you are receiving value for your IT spend and investment dollar in your technology products and services. Ask yourself, am I getting true value for my dollars spent?

Take for example, the scenario where you are paying an IT company, say vendor A, an amount of \$85/per hour to provide just barely the basic IT services: repair, maintenance, replacement, fire-fighting etc.; you get one particular level of service.

On the other hand, for vendor B, imagine for a flat monthly fee, getting more and comprehensive services, back-up, support, monitoring services, in-depth knowledge and proven expertise, from a reputable company with your best interest at heart, at a price that is more affordable than you thought?

To clarify, with vendor A, you get an IT company, providing standard, one issue at a time, random, costly services and repair, with a huge price tag. On the other hand, with vendor B you are dealing with often a more professional and typically larger company (with more resources at your disposal), who chooses to partner with you. They are actively troubleshooting, addressing and solving problems, from both sides of the fence. They believe in providing alternatives and solutions that work for both parties, based on their knowledge, expert resources and highly skilled, current, up to date technical experts.

Which one would you prefer to have on your team, working for/with your business?

In addition, it is a known fact that every IT company and every one technician, repair individual or contracted source, has their own preferred protocol and method, or way of doing things. What we are proposing, is a new way of thinking about your IT needs. Paying an acceptable flat fee to a uniquely different and distinct IT solutions-oriented, pro-active company, that collaborates with you, to provide you with the best the market has to offer and what your budget can comfortably afford, the clear choice and another option to vendor A. Imagine getting a whole different level of service from someone who earns trust and reputation one client at a time, and doing so at their risk, not yours.

There is a direct correlation between what vendor A and vendor B can provide you, based on each IT company's resources, knowledge and personnel. This is what could make the difference between a high school kid, family member, friend, student, or college graduate doing the job to the best of his/her ability with limited skills, resources and at a costly price, or dealing with another choice vendor. One who can draw from past experiences, best practices, a larger team and the like, to provide you with a higher level of service and effectiveness, someone who gets it right the first time, every time, with peace of mind and confidence, within reach, accessible and affordable.

One of the most commonly made mistakes and oversights for small business, is exactly this next point. Very typically, they are asking, *"What am I getting for all my IT budget dollars spent? What are these rising and constant, costly repairs for? It seems to be money down the drain, for just fixing problems all the time. Where is it going to end?"*

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This phenomenon can best summarized with the following observations:

- **Most small business IT is characterized by chaotic or random spending.** We suggest a slightly different approach. Be smart about the money spent and avoid the constant stream of apparent, new and/or recurring problems. The choice is all yours: being smart on how you are and will be spending your precious IT dollars and investment, or being trapped in on-going, worsening chaos – in short, take control and be proactive. Team up with the best and spend dollars with a company that works and partners with you to solve problems at a flat fee no matter what the problem.
- When there is a problem, it affects both parties – including the IT vendor (providing flat fee managed technology services) versus a company where you end up paying for everything. Do you choose to invest with a vendor that is reactive, with the problems, even of their own making or oversight, which still means you as the customer pay (in an hourly relationship) for their costly mistakes. We propose you rather spend your money on up time versus down time. **Thinking ahead and thinking solutions.**
- **Avoid the commonly made mistakes** – paying out precious dollars - fixing problems all the time – finding that your IT budget is going to fixing problems and fighting fires, rather than investing and taking a more pro-active approach, getting ahead of the curve, so you are actually not having these constant problems.
- **Know where you stand.** As an illustration, imagine a picture of a hill, with different levels of water: the bottom-where the water is the deepest, the middle-slippery wet slope and the top of the hill, safely above the water level. This symbolizes the different scenarios companies can find themselves in, when it comes to IT management strategies. Where would you rather be?
- **Is your business drowning in IT costs or problems?** Most small businesses start at the bottom, totally swamped and under-water, in danger of drowning in IT spend and problems, with a haphazard or no IT strategy at all, constantly dumping money, drowning in IT issues, problems and costs. This could be because of their own business practices and/or a vendor simply not taking them in the right direction, leading them deeper into the water, or even leaving them to fend for themselves, swim for shore or drown.
- **Are you caught in the middle?** The second phase for businesses would be those who are trying desperately to move forward, and attempting to improve, yet, keeps slipping back, and making mistakes, as they go along – again at a huge cost to their IT budget and victim to inefficient, uncoordinated firefighting and no real pro-active troubleshooting.
- **Stay above water.** At the very top, we have the bigger companies, where there are no surprises, the comfortable, been there done that organizations that have an excellent strategy, systems and partners that fit, work, at an affordable price, reliable and reputable. Most small businesses typically, never fall into this latter category, sitting on top of the hill. They are mostly in the slowly slipping, downhill or drowning at the bottom somewhere, – **so what is the solution? How do you turn the tide?**

Our advice is simple - spend your dollars in a way that matters. We admit, it might seem like a slightly different way to deal with things to make the change to partner with a very different type of technology solution provider. We are the type of company that has experience and the appropriate expertise in being proactive, where we opt for basing our business relationship on more of a partnership, where everything that happens in your life and world of IT, also happens in ours and to us! It will not just affect you, when there is a problem. We take serious issue with the fact that so many small businesses are left holding little more than the aftermath and the bill. Problems and issues should affect both the vendor and the customer and qualitative positive, involved and engaged action and problem solving is required and paramount.

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We feel your pain.

If there is no shared vested interest and accountability, it is quite lopsided and the customer bears the brunt of the aftermath, pays for all costs – even when it is the vendor’s fault! This will simply not do. We choose to be proactive, and avoid not being detailed enough, and refuse to merely be putting out fires. We do believe this is how most IT vendors and service providers make money, but we choose to be slightly different. We are the type of vendor that is and deliberately chooses to be **proactive**.

The ultimate choice goal for us is not being merely responsive and reactive at that, constantly fixing problems and putting out fires. We work and strive to be the best type of vendor, you prefer, aboard 100%; involved, knowledgeable, making the recommendations and changes that matter, ensuring the fires and problems do not happen again. We provide options and choices for spending your money wisely, a little more if required and applicable, or potentially even close to the same amount on uptime, not downtime. Getting value for your IT dollar that is being spent already is what is in question here.

To spend or not to spend (on IT) ... and then also how and where to spend it, that is the question!

For more information on Concerto Networks and our solutions for your business, visit www.concertonetworks.com today.