FATAL
TECH ISSUES

FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

FLAG
Computer
Repair

Your small business is succeeding in its niche. Great. But there are so many other areas you need to monitor and manage too! Part of your success relies on mastering technology, yet your IT needs evolve so rapidly. It's a lot for a small business (even a large business) to handle. Still, don't underestimate the importance of tech issues.

Mistakes in the seven areas I identify here can kill your growing business.

#1 Underestimating the Importance of Data Protection/Privacy

You know to secure your data and protect the privacy of personal information. Certain industries (e.g. healthcare, insurance, financial services, and utilities) have compliance and industry standards to meet.

Only data protection takes valuable time away from product development, sales efforts, or customer relationship building. And your employees are already wearing many hats. Training them in online security best practices is just piling on more responsibilities. You put designing and developing a cybersecurity plan on the back burner.

Maybe your business thinks it doesn't have anything that needs protection: "We're a little company. Who would attack us?" Perhaps you worry that adding security will

hurt productivity by locking down systems and adding more passwords to remember.

Look at it this way: no business (no one really) is immune to cyberattack. Cybercriminals look for low-hanging fruit. If your business doesn't protect data and use privacy protocols, you're going to be on the first branches targeted.

Any business downtime is damaging. Data breaches can ruin your reputation with customers or clients and lead to costly fines. Don't let your small business be decimated by a preventable cyberattack.

#2 Not Doing Regular Maintenance

Most small businesses operate on a lean budget. Any revenue is being put right back into the effort to grow the business. Putting off IT-related maintenance, though, proves costly in the long-run.

Your employees rely on your technology to do their jobs. Yet many small business rely on systems that have not been maintained since installation (even if that was years ago).

Your physical IT infrastructure needs ongoing care. Even something as simple as dust in a desktop cooling fan can cause overheating that can lead to expensive repairs and require data recovery services. In a worst-case scenario, overheating could lead to a fire.

Loading all security patches and software upgrades is also essential, but this isn't just keeping your operating system and antivirus software up to date. Other devices, such as routers, will have regular updates, too. Staying current with maintenance helps avoid slow performance, random crashes, and unexpected downtime.

#3 Paying for the Wrong Solution

If IT is not your specialty, you can end up taking a punt on a solution that seems like the best answer for your business. You don't know what you don't know and end up:

- choosing the wrong technology;
- agreeing to a plan that doesn't do all that you need;
- getting all the bells and whistles on a service when a basic-level plan would do what you need;
- paying hidden fees;

- hiring in-house IT specialists who can't meet your business needs;
- sinking time and money into buying a solution that hampers your success.

Plus, since you don't know any better, you don't even know that there is a better solution available. Even once you see there may be another alternative, you're reluctant to make a switch. Upgrading only means more time spent researching options and learning a new technology!

#4 Failing to Prepare for Data Loss

The first fatal mistake we discussed was failing to prevent a cyberattack. A related, equally painful mistake is not preparing for data loss. Hackers attack. Disasters happen. But, data loss is also caused by hardware or software failure and human error. Your business needs do Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery planning.

Plan in advance to predict impact and lay out strategies to react in a crisis. You'll think more clearly and have the time to determine the best plan of attack. You don't want to be trying to make these kinds of decisions in the midst of a crisis.

The Ponemon Institute's 2018 Cost of a Data Breach study estimates that having an incident response plan can save an average of $340,000.

Even if your data loss isn't major, you can expect to lose hours of staff time to the effort of recreating the data.

#5 Not Testing Data Backup

Having an available data backup is one way to bounce back more quickly from a disaster, but many small businesses simply trust that their backup solution will work. They don't actually run tests! Among those that did test, 77% identified backup failures.

Better to find out there's a problem beforehand, right? A U.S. federal agency reported that "93% of companies that lost their datacenter for 10 days or more due to a disaster filed for bankruptcy within one year of the disaster."

#6 Focusing on Right Now

Your business isn't going to succeed if it thinks only about the present. A competitor will blindside you with a new innovation. You won't be able to adapt to new market trends or customer demands. You need to think ahead with your technology, too.

Focusing only on preventing a crisis is itself a tech failure. Your business needs to think ahead:

- Where do you want the business to grow?
- What technology will you need to support that growth?
- What hardware/software should you have now to prepare for the next level?

A comprehensive technology roadmap helps you make better decisions about IT needs today. It's part of future-proofing your business.

#7 Saddling Employees with Frustrating Technology

Your employees work hard. But are you making them work harder than they have to? If you're providing new technology that doesn't integrate well with existing tools, your people will be frustrated. Having to rely on older systems or applications can hinder productivity.

Your people spend a majority of their day interacting with technology. Don't stick them with slow or out-of-date technology. Happy employees are productive and more likely to be creative. They're also less likely to quit and leave you with the headache of recruiting and training someone new.

What to Do About These IT Issues

All of this can sound stressful. You already have so many issues on your plate! A managed services provider (MSP) can help. Partner with an IT expert to monitor these concerns, keep your IT current, and ensure all technology expenditure counts.

An MSP can offer you an all-encompassing service consolidating all your IT needs for a simple monthly fee.

Let your people focus on their strengths while enjoying the peace of mind of expert IT support. Contact me today at 07976151148!

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