



# 10 POINT TECHNOLOGY REVIEW CHECKLIST

# 1- DO YOU HAVE AN IT STRATEGY OR IT PLAN THAT IS ALIGNED WITH YOUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVES?



Have you ever experienced that moment when google maps won't work on your phone because there is no mobile phone coverage? No-one likes flying blind and it's the same with IT in your organization if you don't set a course then you could end up anywhere.

Planning is essential in IT and your IT plan needs to line up to your strategic plan or business plan. If you don't have an IT plan then start with something simple, any plan is better than no plan at all.

Make allowance in your plan for operational expenditure like warranty renewals and software subscriptions as well as capital items like refreshing equipment and new infrastructure. You should also consider how technology can drive your business forward, what similar businesses in your industry are doing and how technology can make you more efficient and productive and budget accordingly.



## 2- WHERE IS YOUR DATA BEING BACKED UP TO ?



Many businesses only find out whether or not their backup system is working when they have a major incident. It's an easy mistake to make and one just as easily avoided by building test restores into your backup routine. And while it's often handy to have data backed up locally for fast restores, it's equally important to ensure that your data is being backed up offsite.

It's also really important to know where 'offsite' is. It could be in an old rack in your IT provider's back office or it could be in a state-of-the-art datacenter across the globe. Always ask how quickly you can get your data back and in what format.

Backup replication should be consistent, automated and reportable so that you can be confident this critical service is being handled professionally. In addition, testing should be performed regularly, with a defined outcome and you need to determine the recovery time from a completely system failure.



## 3- DO YOU HAVE A CURRENT BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN?

A backup system is not a Business Continuity Plan (BCP), it is only one small component. A BCP is comprehensive plan on how to remain operational following a significant disruptive event and includes a technical plan on how to recover your IT systems (Disaster Recovery Plan).

The plan should include a carefully thought out, timetabled response appropriate to the level of disruption including internal and external communication.

All employees should be aware of their roles in the event of a disaster and specific scenarios would be simulated and tested to determine whether the recovery objectives can be met.

## 4- DO YOU HAVE DOCUMENTED IT POLICIES?



All businesses are vulnerable to the threat of data loss, either through negligence or deliberate acts initiated from inside or outside the organization. In addition, intellectual capital is becoming increasingly difficult to protect as social media blurs the lines between what belongs to the employer and what belongs to the employee.



Is it essential in the modern age that businesses provide clear internal use policies and security standards that are agreed to and accepted by all employees? From a governance perspective, compliance with the relevant privacy legislation is imperative specially if the business retains personal or financial client information.

## 5- IS YOUR IT ENVIRONMENT FULLY DOCUMENTED?



Documentation can take on many different forms but we would suggest the following as minimum guideline:

- Password list
- Fixed asset register for IT equipment with warranty renewal dates
- Network diagram
- List of applications in use and the contact details of any vendors or IT providers supporting them
- Software license register with relevant license keys.



## 6- DO YOU HAVE A SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT?

Best practice suggests that IT providers should have a contract with clear areas of responsibility and accountability so the services can be measured and reported on. The following should always be included as part of the support offering:

- Managing and reporting on system backups
- Maintaining and monitoring security
- Ensuring optimal performance of the IT environment through proactive monitoring and alerting
- Monitoring and updating the anti-virus system and software
- Monitoring and effective management of the infrastructure servers and essential services
- Maintenance of policies and remote access lists
- Maintenance of system and network documentation and password lists
- SLA backed response times for support incidents
- Reporting on agreed KPI's

## 7- ARE YOU EFFECTIVELY MANAGING EMAIL?



Email has now become the default standard for business communication. It is a legal document and can be called into evidence if legal action is taken against your company. Although it has become the default method of communications it has also become the most dangerous. Most employees now have access to email on their mobile phone or tablets, these are rapidly becoming the device where most email is accessed.

It is therefore really important that incoming email is not only filtered to reduce spam but also backed up and archived to comply with industry legislation. It is also important to help your team identify malicious emails and to publish a company email policy.

Finally email disclaimer software is essential in order to comply with privacy legislation.



## 8- ARE YOU **ACTIVELY MONITORING** YOUR INTERNET CONNECTIONS?



Although the internet can be a productive tool for your business it can also be a huge distraction and time waster for your team.

While one needs to be careful around creating an environment that builds trust, most firewalls have the ability to report on traffic going through them and bandwidth abusers can easily be identified.

Internet abuse is not always deliberate, very often it's just a lack of education. For example, leaving websites running in the background, emailing large files to distribution lists and music streaming services all make the internet run a little slower for everyone else.

And it's not only speed that important. Many businesses have moved their line of business applications to the cloud which makes the internet connection a critical point of failure necessitating redundant connections with automated failover systems.

## 9- ARE YOU USING TECHNOLOGY TO DRIVE YOUR BUSINESS FORWARD?



While historically many businesses have considered technology a grudge purchase, industry disruptions have driven business owners to consider ways to use technology to gain a strategic advantage. Businesses like Uber, Netflix and Airbnb have leveraged technology and the cloud in particular to re-write the rules in entire industries and many business owners are now accepting of the fact that every business is a technology business, irrespective of the industry vertical.

Document management systems, Business Intelligence, business mobile apps and the 'internet of things' all present opportunities to drive down costs and increase productivity and business that are not exploring these areas are failing behind.



# 10- ARE YOU GETTING THE RIGHT ADVICE?



In years gone by your business adviser or banker was the most important adviser to your business but things are changing. Technology has become so complex and the possibilities so vast that getting the right technology advice for your business is not only critical but extremely difficult. In the United States, there are no barriers to entry to IT or mandatory certification requirements like you get with trade professions. Someone can be a car salesman today and open an IT business the next day and just by looking at their website you wouldn't be able to tell them apart from an industry veteran.

So how do you find a good technology adviser? Here are few things to look for:

- Are they thought leaders, presenting at industry events and contributing to technology forums?
- How much experience do they have and do they embrace ongoing learning?
- What is their industry reputation? Very often respect from industry peers and vendors is the best indicator of someone that knows what they are talking about.
- Do they have a structured consulting offering with measurable results or do they just 'shoot the breeze'?
- Will they sell you something before they understand your business?

This is perhaps the greatest test of an IT adviser's intent. A wealth manager wouldn't get you to purchase shares before they understand your risk profile and in the same way a good IT adviser won't sell you anything until they know where you are going and how you plan to get there.



# ABOUT inrsITe

inrsITe understands that downtime means lost revenue and opportunities, that's why we aim to provide the most reliable and agile solutions that give your business groundbreaking results. We help business owners navigate the complexities of technology and wield it for an affordable and predictable cost.

