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IT SOLUTIONS GROUP

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How To Determine The TRUE Cost Of Any IT Upgrade, Transition Or Addition

We are often asked about the ROI (return on investment) for technology. Truth is, we don't believe you "invest" in technology. Investments are things that provide a measurable, quantifiable return for your money.

Of course it can easily be argued that technology *does* provide a return for your money. If you don't think so, try communicating with your clients and market without e-mail or tracking inventory with pen and paper. And the right technology applied with a smart strategy can certainly give any business owner a strategic advantage in faster delivery of goods and services to customers, greater productivity, lowered production costs and the like. In fact, there aren't too many businesses that can operate without a few core IT applications. But the reality is that your bank account is going to be a bit lighter after you install that new upgrade or technology, so how do you know if that IT upgrade or project is worth the money?

The right way to look at the true price of any IT project or upgrade is to look at TCO or "total cost of ownership" and not just the PRICE of the project or upgrade. For example, if you buy a car, the price of the car is only one cost of owning it. You also have to consider insurance, gas and routine maintenance like new tires and oil changes to get an accurate look at what you'll pay. Therefore, the total COST of owning a car is far more than just the price tag - and a cheaper car up front can end up costing more in the long-haul if frequent repairs are needed.

In IT, the same principle applies. You have to look at the TOTAL cost of a particular IT decision, not just the price tag, when comparing options. For example, the real cost of not upgrading a network may actually be higher than spending several thousand dollars on new equipment and upgrades when you accurately assess the total cost of maintenance, service fees and poor performance.

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These days, many business owners are looking at "going to the cloud" because they want to save money. And in many cases, it will do just that, but the cost savings will often come in the form of cheaper devices, less maintenance and low (or no) upgrade costs over a 3 year period - not in a month to month service fee. So before you say "No" or "Yes" to that next IT project, make sure you are taking into consideration the TOTAL cost of your decision, and make sure you are talking to a true pro who understands the difference between the price of something and the total cost.

Are Your Employees Using Their Personal Devices To Work? Be Careful!

It's only natural that employees will want to check e-mail and do other work-related activities from home or on the road, often using their own personal devices. But be careful! You could be opening up a serious security loophole by allowing this.

Since these personal devices aren't company owned and regulated, you have limited access and control over how they are used. Employees can easily download malware and viruses and infect your network when they connect, send e-mails or transfer files. Another risk is the security of the device. If an employee loses or misplaces a device with confidential client information on it, it puts a responsibility on YOU to notify clients and can lead to a costly PR nightmare or security breach.

That's not to say you shouldn't allow employees to use personal devices - but if you do, then you need to make sure these devices are being secured and backed up like every other device in your network. The type of remote security monitoring you need will depend on the device, the information being stored or accessed and the laws regarding the information you store for patients or clients.

What Is Google+ And How Will It Affect Your Company's SEO?

Not too long ago Google introduced Google+ in an effort to take on Facebook and Twitter in the social networking war - and given the fact that over 20 million people have already started using this feature since it was introduced last June, there's a good chance it will continue to gain ground and popularity among web users. But what is Google+ and how will it affect the ranking of your company's web site - if at all?

Google is attempting to combine the most popular features of Facebook and Twitter into a centralized social hub where users have the ability to share content with specific groups of people called "circles." As users build these circles, they'll be able to see web sites that members of their circles have +1'd (is that a verb?). There's also a group video chat feature called "Hangouts," and a user-defined topical news feed similar

MARCH PET OF THE MONTH

We are not sure if we rescued dogs or ponies! Hagrid is 5 years old, 195 lbs. His biological mom gave him up when she and her husband were expecting their first child. In order to keep him company, we rescued a Great Dane. We worked on many options for a name, but Sirius Black seemed to fit, he is a slim 136 lbs. (So we became a Harry Potter household). 120 lbs of food a month, everyone usually asks. It is like having a couple of 2-year olds again!

**Laura Mack
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to Twitter's hashtag called "Sparks." While positive (or even negative) reviews from users online have always been viewed through the lens of skepticism, Google+ will add a level of validation to those reviews since you only see the +1's from people in your circles.

While it's still too early to tell how Google+ will affect your company's SEO, it's safe to assume that Google will reward web sites that get lots of +1s because of the web's evolution to become more "social" and user driven.

The bottom line to all of this (and a key ingredient to any company's success online OR offline) is good old fashioned customer service. These days it's easy for any disgruntled customer to post a negative comment online. And once it's posted, it's practically written in indelible ink. Get enough negative reviews and your reputation will definitely take a hit. Additionally, it's important that you monitor your company's reputation online and encourage happy clients to post positive comments about you.

COMPUTRACE LOJACK FOR LAPTOPS

Need a good device tracking system for laptops? The company that provides LoJack for Laptops, Absolute Software, is NOT the same company that provides the vehicle recovery service you're most likely familiar with (they license the name). But they do provide a similar service in the sense that they help businesses and consumers track, manage, secure and recover mobile computers and devices. Once installed, LoJack for Laptops will allow you to geographically locate your lost or stolen laptop. It also allows you to issue a remote command to freeze your lost or stolen computer and/or create a customized message to display on your computer's screen to help someone who finds it return it to you. If you feel like it's fallen into the wrong hands, you can remotely erase files on your computer. You can opt to delete all of your files, or just certain file types. The next time your laptop contacts the Monitoring Center, it receives the "delete" command and erases the files you selected.

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