

NOVI

6 Tips for Effective IT Management

Technology for Business



6 Tips for Effective IT Management

Technology plays a more important role in businesses today than ever before. Having an effective and reliable information technology (IT) system is crucial to the performance and success of almost every organisation. What's more, a modern, flexible and scalable IT infrastructure enables your company to grow seamlessly and could be a decisive competitive advantage.

However, IT expertise is in high demand, and in many organisations the responsibility of managing systems and choosing an IT partner rests with the finance manager or someone with little IT experience. Often thrown in at the deep end with little or no direction, this can be a daunting position and a lot of time can be spent firefighting technology issues.

To help any IT manager who may find themselves in this familiar position, we have put together a number of basic principles that should underpin any IT strategy.

Check out these six tips for effective IT management.

- 1. Give your employees the best tools to make their job smoother and more efficient**
- 2. View IT as an investment and not a cost; be confident when seeking budget approval**
- 3. Focus on reducing cyber security risk**
- 4. Focus on reducing operational risk**
- 5. Ensure that all aspects of your IT have clear support mechanisms in place**
- 6. Choose an experienced IT partner suited to your needs**



6 Tips for Effective IT Management

1. Give your employees the best tools to make their job smoother and more efficient

“The wireless is slow” ; “The video conferencing never seems to work when I need it.”

How often have you heard phrases like these in the workplace? Far too many organisations still use outdated systems and applications across the business. This hampers productivity and is frustrating for staff. Perhaps it's time to fundamentally address these problems so that people can do their job with confidence.

As an IT manager you need to try and understand the business and how people interact with customers, suppliers and each other. Always ask if there is a better way to complete a task. Speak to people in your organisation and look for ways to make processes smoother and more reliable. This will improve both end-user satisfaction and overall business productivity.

2. View IT as an investment and not a cost

An important part of an IT manager's role is securing investment in technology from senior management. To do this, the IT manager need to be confident in their recommendations when seeking budget approval. This involves researching and presenting detailed options for IT infrastructure upgrades with costs well budgeted for.

Simply treating IT as a cost will mean that you are always firefighting issues and not experiencing the benefits of strategic investment. Convince decision makers to invest in IT by presenting a clear case for how it will enable business growth.

3. Focus on reducing cyber security risk

The growing prevalence and sophistication of modern cyberattacks means that organisations of every size now

face greater cyber security risk than ever before. Despite the risks, many organisations fail to implement adequate levels of security to protect their business and data. IT managers should focus on addressing areas such as: email protection; next-generation firewall, end-point protection, vulnerability patching, two-factor identification and mobile device security. It is also important to remember that security is an ongoing process that requires routine updates, maintenance and management, rather than one-off solutions.

4. Focus on reducing operational risk

IT managers should avoid exposing their business to operational risk through a dependency on unreliable systems or services. While using free or low-quality IT services may save costs in the short-term, it can also lead to long-term business and reputational damage if these systems fail and cause system outages. Investing in high-quality IT and security systems as well as regular infrastructure upgrades, will minimise the risk of system downtime and pay off for your business in the long-term.

5. Ensure that all aspects of your IT have clear support mechanisms in place

Staying on top of a well-functioning IT environment also requires managers to ensure they have formal support processes and agreements in place that meet the needs of the business. Take the time to examine every aspect of your IT and review the service level agreements that are in place with your outsourced partners.

For example, if you can't afford to be offline for longer than a few hours, does your disaster recovery service have a recovery time objective of two or twenty-four hours? Things go wrong when you least expect. Review supports and agreements in advance and plan for the worst to avoid unpleasant surprises when an issue inevitable does occur.

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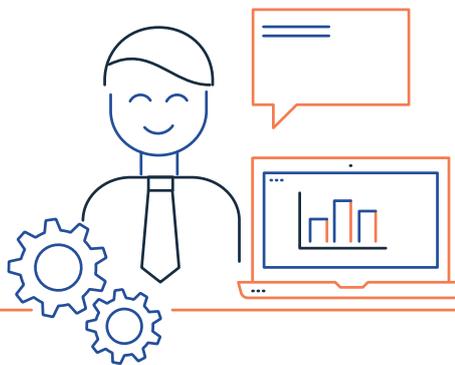
6. Choose an experienced IT partner suited to your needs

Even the most well-resourced and experienced IT manager will require some support from external partners. Choosing a managed service provider is a huge decision for a company, with the right partner capable of transforming your business for the better.

At Novi, we adopt a partnership approach with our customers - offering strategic advice on technology investment, always looking ahead to the next potential threat and constantly reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of systems. The significant benefits of this approach span the entire organisation - from enhanced

productivity and strengthened security to reduced costs and improved reputation.

There are many elements to effective IT management, but by focusing on these basic principles, IT managers can ensure that technology enables, rather than hinders business growth.



Provide employees with the right tools for the job

1

In today's working world, productivity and efficiency of staff are top concerns for business owners and managers. But often productivity is hampered by inefficient and unreliable IT systems. According to market research firm IDC, companies lose 20 to 30 percent in revenue every year due to inefficiencies in IT.

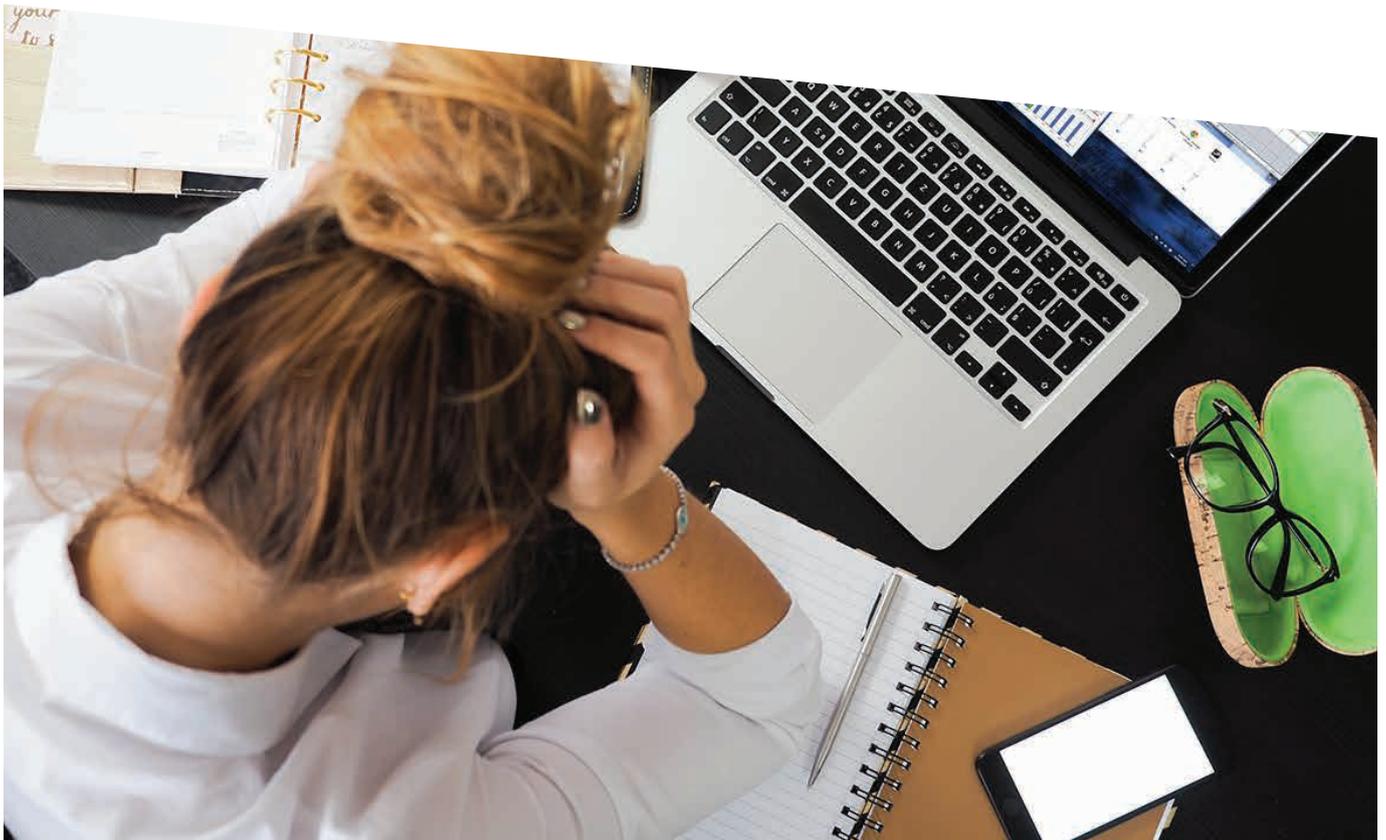
Furthermore, the IT manager or individual responsible for IT is often faced with the complaints and frustrations that come from staff dealing with slow or unavailable systems. By taking the time to understand your business and how

people interact with customers, suppliers and each other, IT managers can find better ways to complete tasks - improving end-user satisfaction and overall business productivity.

Siloed systems

Far too many organisations still use siloed systems and applications across the business. This complicates processes and hampers operations and yet many companies continue to 'make do' with what they have.

Siloed systems eat up a huge amount of resources - both time and money - and negatively impact on employees' ability to operate efficiently.



Provide employees with the right tools for the job

1

Outdated infrastructure

Some businesses rely on the same set of hardware, software and networking applications for years without any upgrade. An outdated IT system will slow down a company's applications and even cause them to crash. Slow processing speed has a major impact on employee productivity.

Avoiding investment in updating old IT systems is very costly to a business in the long term. Outdated and siloed systems not only reduce operational performance, but they constantly cause problems that require time and money to fix.

The modern office

Navigating away from legacy systems may seem like a complex and costly process but the benefits greatly outweigh the risks. Integrated systems, collaboration and file sharing tools improve process flow, reduce duplication of effort, speed up approvals, reduce customer delays and eliminate non-value add activity.

As more businesses embrace flexible working, fast and reliable remote access enables staff offsite to operate with the same level of efficiency as if they were in the office.

A smooth and reliable IT system that empowers employees with the best tools to complete their work is the bedrock for growing and successful companies today.



View IT as an investment and not a cost

2

When it comes to IT resources, businesses can often view investment as a way of simply plugging the gap of existing problems. However, by planning for the future through clever IT investment, organisations can actually prevent these problems from ever occurring and safeguard their continued success.

For managers who have the responsibility of implementing the right technology systems, it's important to view IT as a strategic investment in the future of the business. In doing so, organisations can enjoy a wide array of benefits.

A motivated team

When companies fail to invest long-term in their IT infrastructure, it's inevitable that unreliable or outdated systems will lead to a dip in staff motivation. As an IT manager, it's important to invest in technology like collaboration and file sharing tools that will enable employees to carry out their daily tasks efficiently, rather than hinder and frustrate them.

Businesses that listen to the needs of their employees and invest in IT systems accordingly will benefit in the long run - reduced IT downtime can, on average, increase productivity by 20%. Empowering employees through better technology means businesses will quickly see a return on their investment.



View IT as an investment and not a cost

2

Safeguard your company's future

A key enabler of business growth is a stellar reputation. Outdated systems and a reliance on quick-fix solutions put a business at much greater risk of a cyberattack or breach.

Mitigating the risk of outages or cyberattacks is a key element of effective IT management. IT investment not only protects your data but safeguards your reputation and overall business success.

Enable business growth

When businesses fail to place IT requirements at the core of a business strategy, customer demand can often overtake the capabilities of an IT system - stunting

company growth. Outages, breaches and the need to regularly patch and update old systems all inhibit the ability of a company to scale.

As an IT manager, a pivotal part of your role is designing and implementing solutions that can facilitate growth. This has to be done at a strategic level to be really effective.

Just like the overall strategy of a business, IT systems cannot be short-sighted. That's why identifying and investing in the right IT for your business will save costs and mitigate the risk of reputational damage. Similarly, happy employees unhindered by poorly performing applications will become more productive - improving the company's bottom line.



Focus on Reducing Cyber Security Risk

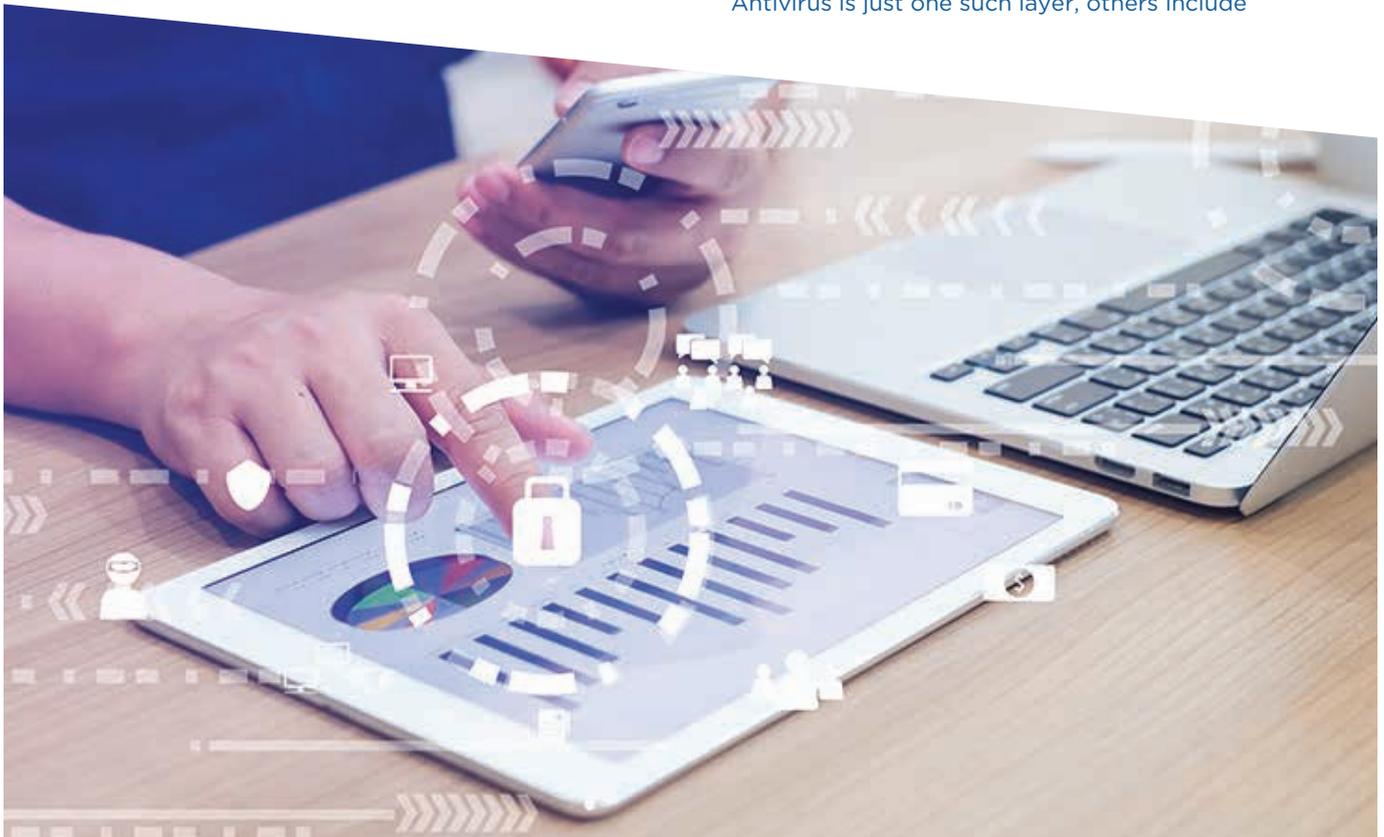
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As cyber threats grow in both volume and sophistication, businesses need to become more agile and proactive in their defence against cyber-attacks. No business or organisation is immune, regardless of size or industry. Despite the risks they now commonly face, many businesses fail to implement adequate levels of security to protect their systems and data.

Cybercriminals are increasingly targeting their attacks on SMEs, as they attempt to exploit a lack of awareness around cyber security and limited budgets. According to Verizon's Enterprise 2018 Data Breach Investigation Report, 58% of malware attack victims are categorised as small businesses.

What does an IT manager or business owner need to do to protect their business from cyber risk?

- 1. Focus on the basics** - too often they are ignored. Regular patching, cyber awareness training for staff, password management, two factor authentication and secure network configurations should all be given due consideration.
- 2. Conduct an IT security review** - engage with an IT security company to assess where your IT systems currently are in terms of delivering adequate protection.
- 3. Multi-layered approach** - The key to safely securing your business from cyber-attacks is layering. The more layers you have securing your network the better. Antivirus is just one such layer, others include



Focus on Reducing Cyber Security Risk

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next-generation firewalls, ongoing patch management, secure offsite repository and disaster recovery plan.

4. Mobile device management - The use of smartphones, tablets, handhelds and other mobile devices in the workplace has now become prolific. Implementing a mobile device management solution can block unsupported and potentially harmful devices from accessing the network and easily enable businesses to create and manage organisation-wide device security policies.

5. Ongoing proactive monitoring - The importance of ongoing monitoring of cyber activity in a business network cannot be over emphasised. Identifying threats before they do damage is more effective than addressing the threat after a problem has occurred and involves less

cost and disruption. Some forms of malware can bypass firewalls or gain access via an unpatched vulnerability, and then lie dormant in a network, evolving over time. Ongoing and continual monitoring identifies threats that could potentially activate at any time.

Cyber breaches can and do happen. Don't make the mistake of thinking it will never be you. The biggest risk to a company's IT security is complacency. For hackers, every company - no matter what industry they are in, what their turnover may be or how many staff they have - is a target.

It is also important to remember that security is an ongoing process that requires routine updates, maintenance and management, rather than one-off solutions.



Reducing operational risk

4

Nowadays, no business is immune to operational risk. Whether it's in the form of human error or IT outages caused by poorly performing systems, managers need to be aware of all the possible threats that can take their business offline. By assessing the likelihood of IT risks and putting precautionary measures in place, you can greatly mitigate damage and safeguard the future of your organisation.

Taking a proactive approach to avoiding operational risks will not only protect your business, but also give you a competitive edge in a market that demands almost always-on services.

Thinking long term

IT systems are central to the everyday running of an organisation. Yet, decision makers in businesses can often be tempted to opt for short term fixes to IT problems. However, when short-sighted solutions fail - causing serious IT outages - companies put themselves at risk of reputational damage. Failing to meet customer deadlines and falling short of partner expectations will negatively impact the long term growth of the organisation.

Avoid firefighting

Just like operating machinery, IT systems need to have safety measures in place to mitigate the risk of hazards. In many cases however, IT outages are dealt with in a reactive manner, with IT teams only dealing with issues as they arise.



Reducing operational risk

4

Organisations that handle large volumes of data need well supported and regularly updated infrastructure to reduce the chance of IT outages. Rather than constant firefighting, IT managers need to be aware of possible weaknesses in their system and put corresponding preventative measures in place to nip potential issues in the bud. Proactive IT services, such as detailed performance reports, predictive analytics and automated patching, can reduce unplanned system outages by 87%.

Competitive Advantage

As technology evolves, so too do the complexities of protecting data and ensuring IT uptime. As an IT manager, you need to give your customers peace of mind that you and your team are up-to-date with the latest in cyber threats.

Cyber risk awareness for team members will ensure that they can recognise and avoid risks to the network and in doing so, protect business and customer data. High levels of data security will aid high levels of trust and satisfaction with customers, enhancing client retention and supporting overall business growth.

Operational risk should be at the forefront of any manager's agenda. However, IT managers in particular risk causing serious reputational and financial damage if they don't have a proactive strategy in place.



Ensure that all aspects of your IT have clear support mechanisms in place

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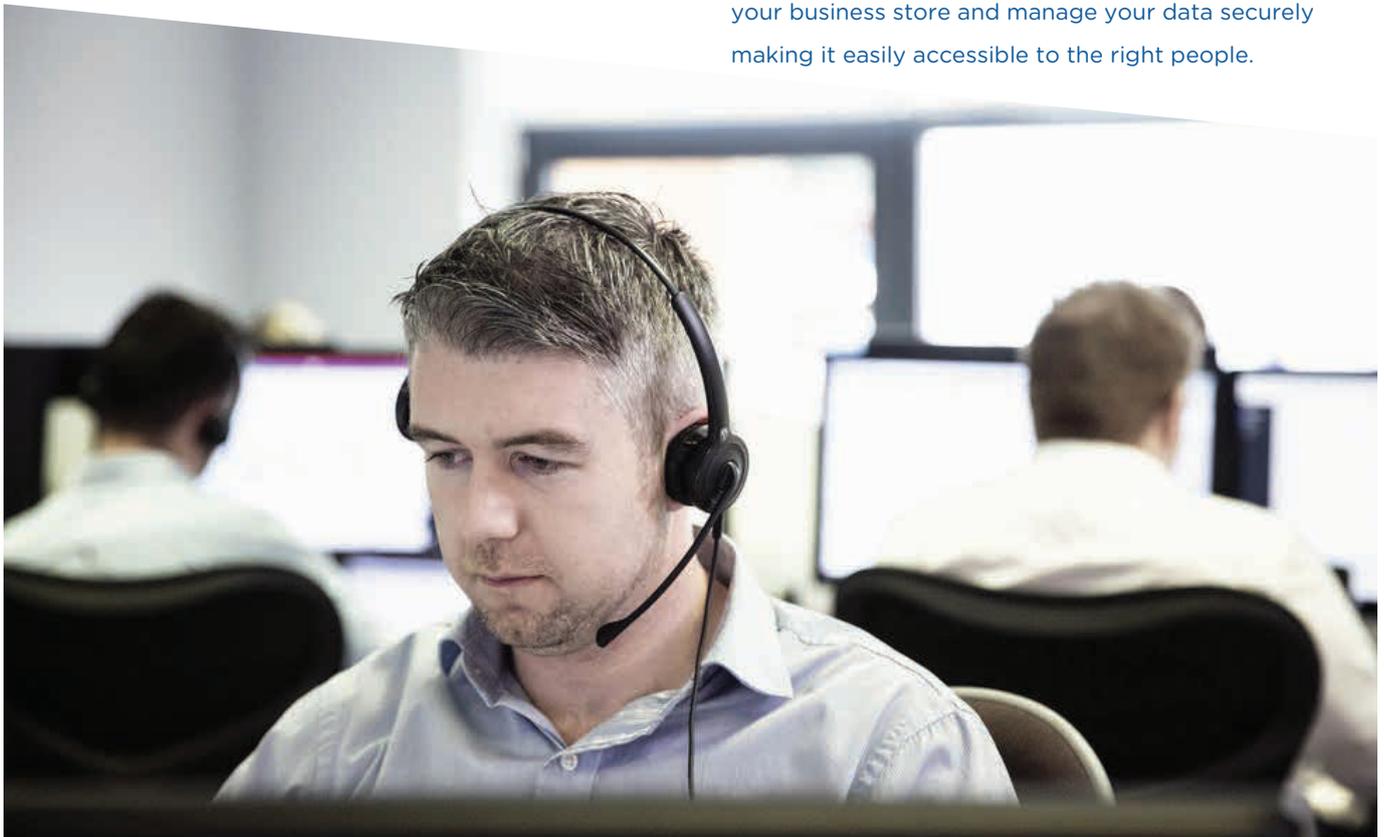
Businesses nowadays depend more and more on technology to run their operations and implement their growth plans for the future. Technology is not a once off purchase. All systems need ongoing support and maintenance to ensure they are working at their optimal rate and not leaving a business open to risk. Downtime and cyber security threats hamper the normal workings of a business daily and if not mitigated from the outset can lead to financial and reputational losses.

Every aspect of IT needs ongoing review and management. Staying on top of a well-functioning IT environment, encompassing all aspects from cyber

security to high availability to user support requires formal support processes and agreements. Outsourcing IT Support takes the burden off internal staff freeing them to focus on IT projects that can drive the business forward. Take the time to examine every aspect of your IT and review the service level agreements that are in place with your outsourced partners.

Here are some of the main reasons why having professional IT support is essential

1. Data storage and management - Every business holds data, some more sensitive than others such as personal financial or medical records. With the recent GDPR legislation having data protection measures in place is more pertinent than ever before and businesses risk hefty fines if they ignore them. A professional IT team will help your business store and manage your data securely making it easily accessible to the right people.



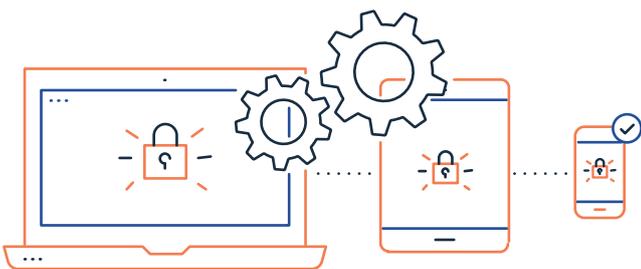
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2. Cyber security protection - Unfortunately there is no one magic solution when it comes to protecting your business from cyber attack. Adequate cyber security requires several layers and solutions configured to your business's requirements. As new risks emerge IT Managers can struggle to keep pace and often lack the specialist knowledge that is needed to mitigate cyber risk. An outsourced IT support company will help defend your IT infrastructure against recurring and emerging threats.

3. Expert technical know-how - Technology moves at an alarming pace. IT Support technicians are constantly upgrading their knowledge to stay ahead of the market. You might know how to work your company's systems, but do you know what to do if something goes horribly wrong? A professional IT support team can analyse most technical troubles and deliver highly-skilled solutions.

4. Reduced IT running costs - IT is an investment and to get the most out of that investment it is wise to have a skilled support team to maintain the systems in place. Overall a well maintained IT environment can reduce ongoing IT costs.



Choose an experienced IT partner suited to your needs

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Whether it's safeguarding your business' reputation by securing critical data or ensuring that your infrastructure supports employee productivity, managing an entire IT system can be complex and time-consuming.

In saying that, when functioning correctly, IT systems can be completely transformative for an organisation. Investing in IT infrastructure can lower the risk of breaches, streamline operations, reduce costs and drive business growth.

Choosing a partner to manage your IT needs is a big step for any company but it's one that can pay off massively in

the long run. So, what should an IT partner do for your business? Here are some things you should consider when choosing an IT partner:

Supporting growth

Technology is central to the performance of businesses today. However, if IT systems are not built to scale, they can quickly hamper business growth - outdated systems can leave your organisation vulnerable to attack while operational issues can lead to a dip in employee motivation.

As an IT manager, it's important to manage all aspects of the IT function, including facilitating business growth. An expert IT partner will take a future-oriented approach to your infrastructure and ensure that your IT strategy is in line with overall business objectives, whatever they may be.



Choose an experienced IT partner suited to your needs

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Rather than relying on siloed systems or outdated infrastructure, the team at Novi identifies and combines the world's best cloud services to equip clients with the tools they need to grow the business and achieve their objectives.

Proactively preventing risk

IT downtime can be a major issue for companies and has the potential to impact the organisation's reputation as well as customer service delivery. Downtime occurs for a number of reasons including server outages, outdated systems and cyber-attacks.

This is why it's vital for IT managers to mitigate operational risk; as technology advances, so too does the sophistication of attack. Unless you're constantly monitoring for threats, you're putting your organisation at risk of cyber-attack. This can lead to long-term reputational damage and huge costs. Experienced IT partners will ensure that your reputation is safe by pre-empting threats before they turn into bigger problems and impact on output.

At Novi, we actively reduce the chance of IT downtime by monitoring for the latest threats and implementing preventative maintenance. This ensures that your systems are performing at their best and are safeguarded effectively.

Domain expertise and knowledge

Effective IT management involves filling knowledge gaps in your organisation and keeping your team educated about the latest developments in IT security. However, acquiring in-house staff to do this can be costly and a drain on resources.

By engaging with a trusted and experienced IT partner, you can quickly get up to speed on the IT security landscape. It also means that you get access to the latest insights and domain expertise on a regular basis.

At Novi, we work with our clients to ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of potential cyber threats. Our cyber risk awareness training reduces risks of breach or downtime by training client employees to recognise and avoid online threats.

IT management is a complex job nowadays. However, by partnering with an experienced and expert IT provider, you can ensure the security of your business, reduce costs and enable employees to work efficiently.

