

Why Small Businesses Need Professional IT Support to Compete

How to leverage on good IT support to grow your business

OPUS IT Services Pte Ltd



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Ever wonder what does the blue chip multinational corporation have in common with the smallest home-run enterprises? They both rely on the speed, security and reliability of their IT systems! Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are finding themselves increasingly reliant on the most up-to-date information technology as they strive to compete in the world of e-commerce and internet today.

Many small businesses face challenges with managing their IT infrastructure effectively and often lack the IT skills and expert advice to make the best and efficient use of the latest technology to optimize their core business. Unlike larger firms, the small SMEs can seldom afford to employ a dedicated IT department or a professional IT team. Without a finely tuned IT systems humming along, small SMEs sometimes incur unnecessary costs to compete effectively in their marketplace.

Fortunately, there is a solution to this that does not cost the small SMEs a bundle.

Operational issues

Have you ever had to face computer problems that suddenly cripple your business operations? If this is a familiar picture, then you will be keen to know that this is quite common with SMEs or small businesses in their computer networks.

More often than not, small business owners usually find themselves in a situation where they need to do everything. They are their own IT person, troubleshooter and problem-solver. In the absence of a professional IT person, friends or private contacts are roped in to setup a peer-to-peer network.

What all this adds up to is having a computer network with many security problems, leaks and poor performance with strange issues cropping up.

Unless productivity and efficiency can be sacrificed, no small business should live with these IT shortcomings that may be counter-productive or even hinder their core business in the first place.

Delivering the fastest yet financially sound proposal for your customers can give you the edge over your competitors. However, this is usually possible only with proper IT systems in place.

Working out a detailed project plan can add value to your customers when delivering a project. With a proper project plan and tracking, businesses can save on cost wastage and keep to a tight budget thereby increasing profitability. Again, all these calculations and meticulous planning is only possible with the right IT systems finely tuned for this. Even with back-office functions like accounts, human-resource and procurement, it is important to have the right IT systems to manage and run these functions smoothly and effectively.

Managing IT

It is obvious no matter how small any company may be, IT has become an integral part of business in everyday operations. And having a smooth, well-oiled IT system and infrastructure can mean considerable competitive edge for any small business as it forms a strong leverage and foundation.

Hence, how can small companies and businesses enhance on this leverage to ensure their IT system is in tip-top condition? Either by outsourcing or specially-tailored resource outsourcing.

More and more small businesses are outsourcing their IT needs to professionals who can offer communications and information technology that is fast, reliable, secure and, above all, value for money.

With constant innovations in networks, security, connectivity, hardware, software and storage, the problem facing many SMEs is keeping pace with the rapid advancement of technology. At the same time they need to acquire systems that are both modern and tailored to the company's specific needs.

Tailored technology

As a business expands, it is important that its IT systems are scalable for growth. Small businesses need to work with their service providers to analyze their current and potential software, hosting, connectivity, and security needs. Specialist IT skill is not the core function of most businesses, and many enterprises find that the new systems and software they require to grow are complex and expensive to run.

Secure networks

Small businesses are now even more susceptible to attack from hackers and fraudsters than large companies. Criminals are increasingly targeting SMEs because they present easier targets. It is easy to see why. Whereas large enterprises employ IT professionals to prevent and combat security breaches, small enterprises with limited resources and knowledge often fail to address network security issues appropriately.

The temptation for small companies is to believe that firewalls and anti-virus software alone will safeguard their network. These basic precautions are often insufficient. Experienced network providers will work with their clients to perform security audits, seek out possible vulnerabilities in the system and detect unauthorised intrusion into the network.

Businesses need a range of constantly updated security systems – from the latest firewall and anti-virus software to virtual private networks (VPNs), which allow staff to access data from different locations. With today's form of cyber attacks, it is wise to have in place Intrusion Prevention Systems (IPS) and Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) that complement the small company's perimeter defence that can safeguard its networks and critical data.

Storage

It is important for all businesses - large or small - to keep their data safe and secure. Having a computer connected to the Internet leaves it vulnerable to outside threats. Unplanned downtime can have serious effects on computer systems, and can result in significant business costs. When IT systems crash, businesses often come to a standstill. Research has found that more than half of businesses that suffer just one instance of major data loss end up closing.

Greater dependence on technology means that there is an increasingly large volume of data that needs to be processed and protected. Less than 50 percent of data protection and recovery tasks are automated and so it is one of IT's most labour-intensive tasks. In spite of this, it is not surprising that most small businesses gamble by taking a chance on their storage systems, erroneously hoping that the dreaded system-crash will never happen.

Small and medium businesses often have tight budgets for IT. They do not stretch to numerous staff to undertake time consuming and complex processes. Increasingly, small businesses are outsourcing their IT support to service-provider experts for less money than they could do it by themselves.

Expert support

Above all, small enterprises will need professional, helpful and accessible IT support for their business. Like it or not, small businesses today harness and leverage on the efficiency of IT systems as part of their daily operations. When a business has problems with their IT, they lose revenue.

Being mindful of costs, can small businesses then have full-time IT personnel on their payroll? The smarter small businesses today leverage on their IT service providers that can offer a compelling model that can provide excellent, professional IT services but yet at a fraction of the cost of the full-time IT personnel on-board.

The solution for small businesses is obvious; leverage on a professional outsource IT services provider to optimize business efficiencies while maximizing cost-efficiencies to gain the competitive edge.

[Flexi-IT Support Services](#) is a specially designed professional service that is flexible enough for SMEs to depend upon yet without the restrictive costs that is associated with it.

For more information on [Flexi-IT](#) Support Services, please visit <http://www.opusit.com.sg>

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About OPUS IT Services Pte Ltd

OPUS IT Services Pte Ltd is a full-service IT company providing solutions for help-desk, outsourcing and computer network systems-integration and set up.

[Flexi-IT Support Services](#) is a specially designed service plan by OPUS that enables SMEs to tap on professional IT support *without* having to support one on their payroll. There is even a guarantee so that SMEs can be assured of reliable and quality service with reduced costs.

To find out more, please click on this link: [Flexi-IT](#) or visit <http://www.opusit.com.sg>.