

**BRIEF:**

## Be Done with Downtime:

### How TeamLogic IT Can Help Increase Security, Improve Productivity and Boost Your Bottom Line

Most small- to medium-size businesses don't have large IT departments to combat computer problems and the accompanying downtime, which can be costly. This Brief discusses the merits of having a trained TeamLogic IT professional conduct a comprehensive assessment of your computer systems to determine the most appropriate solution to meet your current and future business needs. A smart technology investment can pay for itself within a short time by optimizing operational efficiency, enhancing employee productivity and diminishing downtime.

Monday morning. It's a day like any other. You wake up, shut off the alarm and get out of bed. Maybe you exercise. (Maybe you don't.) You shower, grab a quick breakfast, kiss your spouse goodbye and head off to work. You unlock the door, go into your office, turn on the lights and flip on the computer. Just like any other day.

But unlike any other day, on this particular Monday morning, your computer doesn't boot up. In fact, none of the computers in your office boot up.

You try to remain calm, but the realization of how this is going to impact your day — and possibly your entire week — begins to dawn on you. You think about how much you rely on computers to run your business. You wonder how long it will take to get your less-than-reliable information technology (IT) system up and running again... and how much it will cost you this time.

As a small- to medium-size business (SMB) owner or manager, you don't have a big IT department, complete with a 24/7 help desk, to deal with any computer issues that may disrupt your operations. Instead, you have a single staff member (possibly you) dedicated part time to IT matters and/or an outside resource you're able to call in a pinch. In other words, this latest issue will probably not be resolved very quickly.

## Panic Sets In

Though some SMB owners/managers think of their IT system as a utility much like electricity or heat, the truth is, for most businesses IT is a vital part of the operation. If you don't think that's true for you, imagine what your business would be like with no access to the Internet or your own internal electronic documents. Consider what would happen if you weren't able to send or receive email for an entire day. How many customer service messages would go unanswered? How many appointments would go unscheduled? How many opportunities would be lost?

Let's say you had client meetings set up for this particular day. Lack of access to your electronic calendar means you won't know who you were supposed to meet with when. What's worse, you won't be able to call those clients to reschedule the meetings if your only record of their contact information is on your office computer. If you're a medical office, lack of access to electronic patient records and scheduling software means the entire day is probably a write-off. If you're a training facility, any computer-based education you had scheduled will need to be cancelled. No matter what kind of business you operate, the inability to perform billing, payroll, scheduling and other daily activities means a big hit to your bottom line.

## The True Cost of Downtime

According to a survey commissioned by CA Technologies (and conducted by Coleman Parkes Research, Ltd.)<sup>1</sup>, when business-critical systems are unavailable, the average SMB's ability to generate revenue is reduced by 29 percent. Post-downtime, i.e., when IT systems are back up and running, SMBs often experience an additional

1. Research Report "The Avoidable Cost of Downtime" Summary of Findings December 9, 2010. Research carried out by Coleman Parkes Research Ltd.

delay during which time data is being recovered and operations are still severely hampered.

Downtime is not just about your employees being unproductive. According to Gartner Research, the true cost of downtime includes:

- Revenue loss
- Impaired financial performance
- Late delivery surcharges
- Overtime pay to make up for lost productivity
- Damaged reputation/loss of customer goodwill.

*“North American businesses are collectively losing \$26.5 billion in revenue each year through IT downtime and data recovery. The average annual loss for an SMB is \$55,000.”*

**– Findings from the study “The Avoidable Cost of Downtime”<sup>1</sup>**

When computer problems occur, many SMB owners/managers spend the least amount of money possible to get their system back up and running. The problem is, these quick, cheap fixes often cost more money in the long run because they never really address the root issue of the business’ IT issues.

## The Tools the Big Guys Have

According to Robert Benson, a professor of information management at Washington University in St. Louis, “Technology by itself doesn’t do anything...the purpose of IT is to change the behavior of its users to better achieve their business objectives.” In other words, IT is a means to increase employee productivity and overall business efficiency, which can translate into higher profitability.

Savvy business owners of all sizes view IT as they do such areas as marketing and advertising — expenses that help grow the business and contribute to the bottom line. The fact is, a smart investment in IT can pay for itself in a very short time. But before any such investment is made, a comprehensive assessment should be conducted, preferably by an experienced computer consultant. This assessment is necessary for:

- Uncovering potential problems before they become more costly issues
- Establishing whether or not you have the right level of security in place
- Making sure your computer network aligns with your business objectives
- Determining the most appropriate investments/upgrades

Ultimately, the goal of such an assessment is to arm your organization with the same kinds of tools big corporations rely on to safely, securely and efficiently run their operations. These tools include:

- **High-level security software.** If your system was hacked into and sensitive customer, client or patient information got out, the least that can happen is you might lose a few customers. However, there are also

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serious legal implications inherent in security breaches. Security protection can also keep out viruses, spam and malware that curtail your employees' productivity and can cause computer outages.

- **A reliable backup system.** The survival rate for companies without a disaster recovery plan is less than twenty percent. Just as you protect your building with property insurance and your employees and family with health insurance, you need to protect your information and data against outages and natural disasters.
- **Cutting-edge technology and software.** Upgrading your systems to newer, faster devices and installing productivity-boosting software can result in significant improvements to your bottom line. A professional computer consultant can help you make sense of new technology like cloud computing as well as determine what makes the most sense for your business.

## Hope Is Not a Sound Business Strategy

When all the computers in your business are working, you probably don't think about IT much. But when even one of your computers ceases to function, it can turn your entire business upside down. What if you can't run your operation for an extended period of time? How will you serve your customers? Pay your employees? Compete in the marketplace?

Rather than continuing to put Band-aids on your IT issues and hoping they'll go away, consider talking with a trained IT professional at your local TeamLogic IT establishment. A highly skilled TeamLogic IT technician can quickly and efficiently diagnose and repair desktop computers, laptops, servers, networks and other technology challenges you may be experiencing.

In addition, TeamLogic IT consultants can evaluate your current and future business needs and recommend the appropriate hardware and software to optimize your operational efficiency. Whether you're establishing a new office, expanding your present one or simply upgrading your IT systems, our relationships with vendors such as Microsoft, Dell and others, combined with our nationwide buying power, allow us to acquire equipment for you often at lower cost than if you bought it on your own.

A solid investment in IT can give you the confidence and peace of mind that comes from knowing that your systems are secure, reliable and protected, and your employees are maximizing their time. With the right IT system in place, downtime can be a thing of the past.

*For help with downtime, contact your local TeamLogic IT office.*

*TeamLogic IT is a national provider of advanced IT management services for businesses. With locations across the U.S., TeamLogic IT provides managed services, computer consulting and support services focused on helping companies minimize downtime and improve productivity. TeamLogic IT helps businesses compete better through the effective use of information technology.*