

Small Business Mobility

Enabling your team to work anywhere, anytime



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Mobile technology is becoming increasingly vital to your small business as the number of employees working from home or away from office is growing significantly. More than 50 million US workers are considered mobile, spending at least 20% of the time away from their primary workspace¹. Some of your employees, such as your salespeople or representatives, may be constantly on the move.

Today, productivity in and out of the office is imperative to keeping your small business running efficiently and gaining a competitive edge. For example, when you or your team are away from the office without connectivity and need important information, that time often proves to be unproductive and wasteful. However, if you connect your mobile workers to your company network through mobile devices such as mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs), you can enable them to maintain a continuous workflow on the road or from home. Investing in mobility solutions will maximize the productivity of your employees. Mobility is essential for your business since your employees and your customers require anytime/anywhere access to each other and vital information.

What is Mobility?

Mobility is the ability to access your office information and data remotely, and to conduct business anywhere, anytime. Mobility solutions provide mobile and remote access to your company data and e-mail.

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WorkSmart was founded in 2000 by MBA students at the UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School on the belief that superior IT services need not be expensive or difficult to implement. We view ourselves as an extension of your business, providing the benefits of a fully staffed IT department at a fraction of the cost.

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technology problems. As smaller companies are increasingly becoming more dependent on IT systems, it has become very crucial to find cost effective ways to manage technology. Growth-oriented companies need a well-organized IT infrastructure so that they can focus on the business instead of trying to solve IT failures. However, having a complete IT department is not a viable solution for most small businesses, and very few small companies can afford to deploy even one permanent IT employee. Fortunately, there is an emerging and quickly growing service known as “Managed IT Services” that is proving to be quite helpful in managing small business technology.

What are Managed IT Services?

Managed IT services are provided by an outside firm or IT consulting company. These days, a growing number of IT vendors, resellers, and telecom carriers are providing managed services based on remote, proactive monitoring of company networks on an ongoing basis – with minimal involvement of the small business owners. Managed Service Providers (MSPs) employ consultants who specialize in small business networks, computer support, and security. Generally, managed IT services are delivered from a remote location via the Internet, but on-site proactive and emergency services are also provided when necessary. Services range from basic monitoring to fully managed services. Overall support for day-to-day operations and on-demand support for any other major need is also provided by these IT consulting groups. Managed services are usually provided on flat monthly fee or per device basis.

Types of services

There is growing variety of services that are provided by IT consultants or Managed Service Providers. Broad categories include:

- Computer & Server Support
- Data Backup & Disaster Recovery
- Network Security
- Custom Software Solutions
- Remote Network Monitoring
- Technology Evaluation & Planning

How Can Your Small Business “Go Mobile”?

Today’s technology offers a broad array of solutions to the various mobility needs of your small business. One of the areas your employees can greatly benefit from is wireless technology solutions. There are three main wireless technologies in use today: Wi-Fi (Wireless Fidelity), Cellular Internet, and Bluetooth technology. Audio conferences • Wi-Fi: Wireless Fidelity is the most widely used wireless technology. • Cellular Technology: Includes technologies such as

Remote Network Monitoring

Remote monitoring of the critical components of a network such as servers and firewalls is also provided by managed service providers. Consultants troubleshoot problems remotely to minimize network downtime. With automatic alerting systems, issues are resolved before they can significantly impact network performance.

Data Backup & Disaster Recovery

Backing up data is essential and should not be ignored, yet many small businesses do not perform backups. In a remote backup facility, a backup of files is made regularly over the Internet, and files are stored in a secure, off-site data storage facility, requiring no tape or hardware. Remote Backup and Online Backup Services help small businesses avert data loss in case of any disaster.

Network Security

Small businesses need computer and network security even more than large businesses. This is because small businesses are often the primary target of hackers who can more easily attack the smaller networks. IT consulting companies provide tools and practices such as spam management and firewall management to help protect the small businesses from hackers, viruses, and spam.

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Custom Software Solutions

IT consultants recommend and provide custom designed software solutions according to the unique needs of each small business. Depending on the project needs and requirements, IT consultants help small businesses determine the technology best suited to their business needs.

Technology Evaluation & Planning

Most small business owners employ an “ad-hoc” approach to dealing with technology, with no long term plan for future technology needs. IT consulting companies provide a comprehensive computer and network assessment, and evaluate the current IT setup to suggest possible changes to maximize technology effectiveness for the small business.

Break/Fix model vs. Managed Services: Key Benefits of Managed Services

Most small companies use the “break/fix model” of technology management: when technology fails, a consultant is called in to fix the problem and the company pays a fee for the service. This method results in repeated downtime and lost productivity. The problem with this model is that consultants are not motivated to keep the client’s network and systems running efficiently because the consultant makes more money when the technology breaks down.

Small business owners should consider the managed IT services solution for several reasons. Managed services provide affordable solutions to the complex technology problems of small businesses for a fixed monthly fee. Technology experts are fully focused on keeping the systems of the company up and running because repeated technology failures means higher costs to them. Therefore, the managed services model is beneficial to both the client and the technology expert because small businesses have the advantage of lower rates and better services while technology experts get the fixed monthly fee from multiple customers.

With managed services, small business owners have access to external technology experts who are constantly available to monitor and fix company networks. Managed IT services also provide small businesses with access to a wide array of tools that are normally assets of larger companies only. By letting IT consultants manage their technology, small businesses can keep the network protected against the latest security breaches, as well as reap the benefits of a larger IT team working for their company at very little cost.

With remote monitoring and maintenance of the network, technology problems are resolved before they can disrupt the business, and network and hardware performance is greatly improved, with a significant decrease in network downtime. This increased efficiency leads to increased employee productivity and optimized return on investment (ROI).

Managed IT Services help small business owners by simplifying IT operations and improving the reliability of networks. Instead of spending time worrying about technology, small business owners can stay focused on growing their businesses.

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