

10 Signs Why Your Business Needs IT Support & Security Services



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Your business has more than 10 staff

Keeping control of your IT systems is a relatively easy task as a sole trader, but as your business grows and you employ more staff, it becomes harder to deal with everything in-house.

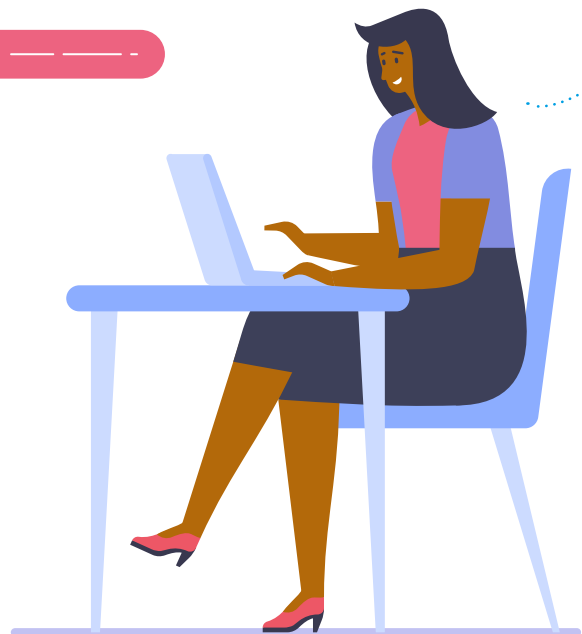
As revenues increase, you need to ensure that operational capacity increases too. You'll likely need additional hardware, cloud services and software subscriptions (Microsoft or vendor specific) to provide your business with the breathing space it requires to cater for an expanding client base.

All of this has a flipside - you should not have to focus on solving software and hardware issues that are a drain on time and resources, not just for you as a business owner, but your employees too.



Whilst it seems a simple task in principle to administer licensing, logins and technical issues, the reality is a lot different. If you have employees that aren't working due to IT issues and nobody you can contact to resolve them, you need to stop whatever you're doing and rectify the problem.

Keeping hold of good staff is challenging enough in a modern economy, especially in London. It's doubly hard to do so with outdated, glitchy systems that cause frustration, reduce productivity and lead staff to question the tools they've been provided to carry out their duties.



Onboarding & off-boarding of staff is problematic

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Onboarding

Inducting a new member of staff into your organisation is a straightforward task from a HR perspective, but when it comes to IT, there's quite a lot to consider:

- File sharing permissions and AD profile configuration
- Home drive access
- VPN setup
- Anti-virus installation
- Mapped printers
- Mailbox permissions
- Monitor configuration
- Mobile device configuration
- Software access

Any IT Support provider worth its salt should operate a strict set of onboarding guidelines to ensure that when you make a support request to add hardware for a new user onto your network, no stone is left unturned. Unless the end-to-end process is managed correctly by professionals who complete these tasks day-in and day-out, errors can end up costing time and money to resolve.



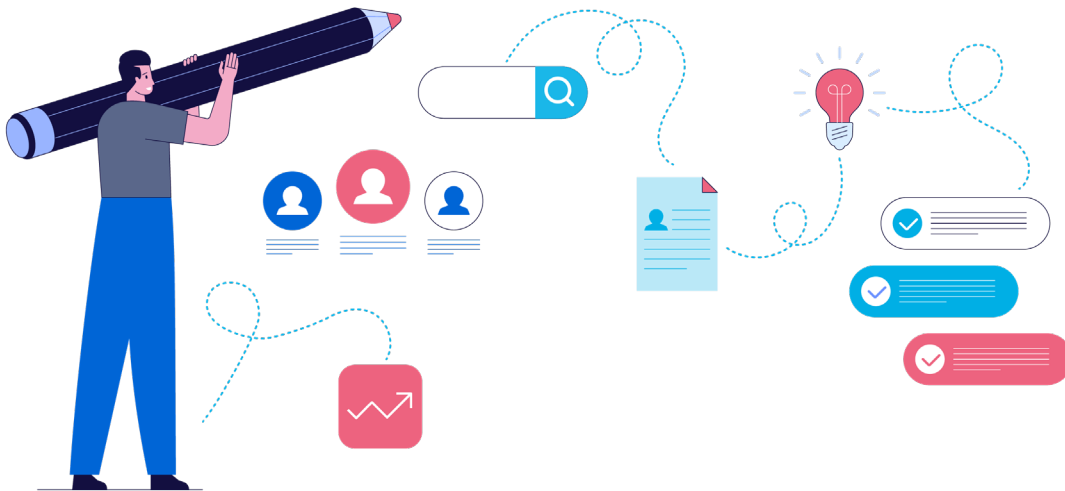
Offboarding

Properly - and sometimes urgently - decommissioning accounts and licenses for leavers is an important consideration that brings with it many potential security risks if not done correctly. As a business owner, you need to ensure that former employees are not able to view sensitive information or use software platforms they formerly had access to. As with onboarding new staff, there are a series of industry-standard workflows that need to be actioned to guarantee the integrity of your network.

If not properly administered and planned, an SME's IT network can take on a life of its own. Like any other critical business function, it requires continual evaluation.

As your business grows and you add physical and virtual assets to your network, unless they are implemented alongside a robust and dynamic IT strategy, things can quickly get out of hand:

- Non-specific hardware from different manufacturers
- Fragmented file sharing permissions
- Arbitrary user access levels
- Unlicensed or unsupported vendor software
- Inadequate broadband provisioning
- Poorly managed firewall rules
- Unsupported/End of Life server and workstation Operating System versions



There are accepted standard and practices throughout the IT support industry that dictate how a business should administer and expand its network. An IT roadmap should take into account everything from budget to security requirements, sector specific guidelines, futureproofing, additional sites and the overriding culture of your organisation.

Almost all IT support providers also offer consultancy services alongside day-to-day technical support, the cost of which is usually inclusive. A dedicated Account Manager will meet with you regularly to reevaluate your network and ensure that IT is an ongoing help, not a hindrance, as you try to grow your company.

Cyber crime

Around 65,000 attacks are launched on UK SMEs every single day. Among the biggest challenges facing CEOs and CTOs in the digital era are without a doubt data security, and the integrity of a network at any given time.

If you're beginning to worry about unauthorised access to your data/intellectual property, and you're not sure how best to protect your organisation from criminal activity in the form of data theft, ransomware or social engineering, then you should consider contracting professionals to do it for you.

Regular security reviews play a huge part in providing you with peace of mind and ensuring no back door to your network is left open for cyber criminals to exploit.

An IT support provider should incorporate a security assessment into your review meetings that should contain any or all of the following agenda items:

- Penetration testing
- Anti-virus software audits
- Inbound and outbound rules on firewalls and routers
- VPN activity reports
- New security solutions which may be of benefit (e.g. for home working)

Compliance and certification

Navigating the UK's various cyber security certifications and compliance protocols can be a headache. It's often difficult to ascertain what security credentials the UK Government and your customers expect you to possess.

As with security auditing, compliance work should be allocated to professionals with an innate understanding of concepts such as ISO, GDPR, Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus.



Your staff aren't aware of security best practices



The weakest link in any corporate IT network isn't a particular piece of hardware or software - it's the users themselves. Almost half (46%) of UK businesses reported experiencing security breaches in 2020.

Business owners simply do not have time to keep abreast of every single industry development relating to security and cybercrime. This is where outsourcing support to an IT support provider starts to pay dividends in terms of added contractual value.

Contracting a dedicated IT support company to keep your staff up to speed on what threats to watch out for, and how criminals are adapting to countermeasures, provides SME's with an end-to-end security service that delivers software, licensing and user education all in one package.

IT support companies publish blog articles, provide e-learning material, deliver in-house training to ground level employees and brief company executives on how to secure their network and keep it secure. IT support providers can advise on best practice guidelines and provide HR documentation for dissemination within an organisation, relating to employees' obligations when using company IT assets.

If appropriate, your support company can even simulate an external cyber attack to measure your staff's awareness of such issues - e.g. sending out a fake company-wide phishing email and providing you with reports showing what actions each staff member took.

You feel productivity could be increased

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Your business isn't getting value from its IT assets



For most businesses, their bottom line is the biggest consideration. Inefficiencies in an IT network that has not been afforded the due care and attention it requires can eat away at a company's net profit, and in some cases contribute towards a set of underwhelming financial results.

There is no need for SMEs to pay RRP for high-end assets like servers, firewalls and workstations. IT support companies rely on a trusted network of national suppliers to deliver projects and hardware with cost savings that are simply unobtainable outside the trade.

There's also the unquantifiable variable of money lost on productivity. It is impossible to measure the cost to a business of non-technical staff being tasked with resolving their own IT issues or sat at a malfunctioning computer that nobody in the company knows how to fix.

HMRC Super Deduction Scheme

Please be aware that UK businesses can take advantage of HMRC's Super Deduction scheme. From 1st April 2021 until 31st March 2023, companies investing in qualifying new computers and servers will be able to claim a 130% super-deduction in capital allowance investments. Contact HMRC or your accountant for more information.

Your business lacks a scalable IT model

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It's not enough to have an IT roadmap that sets out how your systems will play a part in fulfilling your business plan. Unless your company has a scalable, sustainable operational model that takes into account operational expenditure (OPEX), user additions and multi-site scenarios, you're going to find yourself burdened with excess implementation costs and expensive, inflexible licensing models.



If you're not sure how much it costs for a single user to operate on your network (taking into account security, support, vendor software and external access), then costs are going to start to get away from you.

A dedicated IT support provider can easily identify the correct pricing models, the most cost-effective ways of implementing core platforms such as Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace, the appropriate levels of licensing and advise you on migrating on-site services (and servers) to the Cloud, where applicable.

It's not just the here and now that needs to be considered. You also need to be guided on how much subscription-based services may cost in the future, as security add-ons are usually required.

You don't conduct proactive IT reviews

When it comes to running a cost-effective and efficient IT network, business owners need direction, advice and expert analysis. They may be experts in their own field, but they're hardly ever fully conversant with the intricacies of a modern LAN or WAN. They need to be told in a professional capacity precisely where vulnerabilities and inefficiencies reside, and how to combat them.

Regular IT reviews are where Service Delivery Managers hold monthly meetings with stakeholders and Line Managers to offer a holistic view of their clients' IT operation, and suggest improvements or highlight marginal gains wherever they may be:

- Helpdesk usage reports
- Financial breakdowns
- Ongoing project updates
- Ticket trend analysis (including type and sub-type reports)
- Important industry developments
- Security updates
- BUDR (back-up & disaster recovery) test reports



You want peace of mind

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If at the end of the working day, as a business owner, you worry about the security and efficiency of your IT network on the drive home, then chances are you need to start thinking about outsourcing to the experts.

The value inherent in establishing a relationship with a trusted IT support provider extends far beyond relying on them to resolve day-to-day problems. MSPs are consultants who take the security and efficiency of their clients' IT networks extremely seriously.

Businesses have been brought to their knees after failing to maintain a compliant and secure IT network, whether it's an inadequate backup system or a complete lack of security.

You simply cannot put a price on knowing that your organisation's physical and virtual assets are safe in the hands of certified, knowledgeable professionals who you are able to lean upon for technical advice and operational guidance as and when required.



Next steps

To find out how totality services can help your business increase productivity and security with our IT support services, please visit totalityservices.co.uk

References

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² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2020/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2020>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/super-deduction>



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with your query.

We're ready to make a difference.