Outsourcing Your IT

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Tips to Outsourcing Your IT

Any person responsible for a company's Technology Environment has a lot to keep track of - managing vendors and equipment, planning for future upgrades and replacements, dealing with a barrage of potential services interruptions, problem solving and keeping abreast of constantly evolving technologies. That person has to manage what technology is supposed to do while, at the same time, making sure the systems deliver day in and day out. The right consulting firm can help bridge the gap between the end-users and your technology.

With hundreds of years of combined experience at Agility, we've developed a short, non-exhaustive list of tips to help you find the right IT provider to partner with.

It may be difficult to find a great partner simply due to your specific market size or location, but you can certainly find the help that is needed. Too often we hear from businesses that they were not aware of outsourcing firms that would be truly dedicated to their company. There are competent firms that are able and very willing to help your company with your technology needs. Continue reading for a short list of tips and check out our website for more information.

The 'Catch 22'. How can you properly determine your needs before hiring an IT firm without the expertise of an IT firm? Create a vetting process to help identify your needs. Do a local search for IT providers that might be a good match (location, availability, company culture) and give them a call. Once you've identified two or three experienced local firms, have them in for an interview. Did you gain any insight into your situation by talking to this company? Did the companies that you talked to have a solid plan for identifying and taking next steps? Finally, have a detailed assessment of your current IT environment performed to identify your current strengths and weaknesses.

Continued...

Good IT Services Firms Will;

- Do a lot of the thinking for you. The best ones will do it without asking.
- Start adding value immediately by helping define your goals, strengths and weaknesses.
- Ask a lot of questions and do a lot of listening.
- Bring knowledge specific to your industry or examples of companies that were once in a similar position.
- Always help you see things from a fresh perspective
- Never force technologies that you don't really need
- Place more value on the relationship (rather than "fixing issues") and focus on the long haul.
- Provide you with options, help increase your understanding of those options, give you recommendations and let you choose.
- Challenge your old assumptions (help you uncover false assumptions that you might have been working under).
- Always be responsive and reliable and have your best interest at heart. Remember everything you ever said (without notes).

The Silver Bullet Misconception. The misconception is that buying new computers and servers, sometimes referred to as "forklifting" or "refreshing," will solve your technology problems. This simply isn't the case. Many companies with modest hardware managed by the right person or IT firm can be very successful and competitive in their industry. Involved owners, managers and principals need to be involved and informed to make prudent decisions on what your IT really needs. A good place to start when considering a technology upgrade is identifying what processes are affecting your current systems. Being able to identify which technology is or isn't helping your business be more efficient is key. The issue can often time be the underlying processes in place and not the age of a server.

Stay Involved. Regardless of your position, regardless of your authority, regardless of your experience, stay involved! It's all too easy to remove yourself from decisions because you "don't know anything about computers". One should know the basic functions, risks, and priorities of the company's technology. It is OK to say "I don't know much about computers," but unfair to your company to remove yourself from the conversation.

Around Town...

Run in your underwear - Chicago
February 15, 2014

Cupid's Undie Run includes a half-naked run through the streets and a party at John Barleycorn on N. Clark Street to support charity.

Valentine's massage class - Northshore
February 15, 2014
Learn how to give and receive tension-easing massage at the Valentine's Couples' Massage Workshop at Hip Circle Studio in Evanston.

Ale festival - Naperville
February 22, 2014
If you are not in the mood to celebrate Valentine's this weekend, hold on tight and enjoy 120 craft beers and food-truck fare outdoors on the frozen tundra of Naperville's Frontier Park at Naperville Ale Festival.