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## IT Management in Small Business

The IT scenario in many small businesses today is they find themselves with 5 to 10 computers and a selection of printers and other peripherals. These computers have accumulated over time, some being purchased due to growth in the business and often half to two thirds of them have been purchased all at once about 4 years ago.

The company has paid little attention to the maintenance of the systems over the years, just calling someone in when a PC fails. There is usually one member of staff who knows a little bit more about PCs than the rest and they spend some of their working day trying to solve IT problems or help other staff.

The main difference between the smaller business and the big corporates is simply planning! Planning a maintenance routine, Planning and budgeting for a PC replacement policy and so on.

The bigger companies will have a maintenance policy and checks in place to ensure that regular preventative maintenance and security maintenance is performed. Most smaller companies already have all the software



required to do this, they just need to know what to do, how and how often to do it. Another consideration is the productivity from the older systems, probably Win98 or Win 95, not much hard disk space, little memory and really struggling with the up to date software recently purchased. These older systems may be plodding along, but is it false economy to keep them running? If you have 8 members of staff each wasting one hour per week due to their slow PC, or the PC crashing and having to reboot – you could be losing a week per month in productivity. How much is this costing the company in staff salary or productivity compared with updating some of the hardware?

So what do you do?  
Complete a full audit and create the IT system file for all PCs. Review each piece

of equipment from a productivity point of view and a disaster recovery point of view and put in place a replacement policy and timetable with an appropriate budget to cover the expense.

Develop a check list for all the daily, weekly, monthly maintenance activities and ensure the staff carries them out.

Take good advice from an experienced IT support person and do not rely on your staff member with a little knowledge or your next door neighbour who ‘knows a bit about IT’.

Good planning and good advice is a great combination to have your systems running the way the large corporate s are set up. This can not only be done very cost effectively but could actually save you money avoiding lost productivity or additional staffing costs.



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