Assessing Your Business' IT Needs

Information technology (IT) has become essential to conducting business throughout the United Kingdom. It is at the centre of everyday life and found in almost all businesses and industries. It encompasses the use of computers, telecommunication systems and other devices for storing, retrieving, transmitting and manipulating information.

Such a broad definition can understandably bewilder novice and even seasoned business owners. How do you identify what your IT needs are, or implement and maintain constantly changing technology? The following is an overview of how to assess your business' IT needs. Both new and established businesses can benefit from a habitual review of their IT systems and needs.

Understanding Your Business' IT Needs

Before exploring specific IT systems, you need to examine the aims of your business to find out how IT can help you achieve your goals. An IT system will be successful only if it is aligned with your business' aims.

The right IT system will efficiently capture, process, store and use information. Using this information will improve communications, cut costs, simplify business processes and help businesses grow and find new opportunities—but only if the system is tailored to your business.

IT is Here to Stay

IT is thoroughly ingrained into daily life and business operations around the world. One in every 20 people working in the United Kingdom is employed in the IT industry, according to a 2011 report. The report also found that 22 million people, or 77 per cent of the UK workforce, use IT in their jobs. This proportion will continue to rise.

Rather than bucking the trend, smart businesses should assess and upgrade their IT systems to stay ahead of the curve.

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Choosing the Right IT System

Choosing a system to fit your business' IT needs involves asking a series of questions about your computer use and connectivity issues. The answers to these questions will help you determine what type of hardware and software will benefit your business.

Computer Use

- How do you use computers at your business?
- What key jobs do you need to perform?
- For each job, what data is required?

Connectivity Issues

- Is your business based mainly in one place?
- Do you need to be mobile?
- Will you need computers to connect to other equipment?
- How many computers will you need?
- Does your business require several computers linked in a network?

Top Tips

Keeping the following tips in mind as you choose and set up your IT system will help you make an informed decision and ultimately benefit your business.

- Plan for inexpensive, easy upgrades as your business grows. IT is indispensable but is also constantly changing. Make sure you allow room to accommodate the newest technological advances or business growth.
- Seek professional advice from local computer shops. They can provide you with information on specific systems and help you compare the costs and benefits of buying rather than leasing hardware. Some also offer ongoing technological support.
- Keep your system and data secure with strong passwords and effective guards against external threats such as computer viruses.
- Make sure you have a resource available to help maintain your system.

Contact the insurance professionals at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd** for more information about assessing your IT needs and setting up your small business for success.