“Insider Tips To Make Your Non-Profit or Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably”

Annual I.T. Budget Planning

At this time of year many ask, “How should I properly budget for IT expenses?” There are a lot of variables that determine the answer, so we can’t provide a “one-size-fits-all,” simple answer. Here are some general guidelines that should be helpful.

1. **Hardware Refresh.** No one likes the cost of a network upgrade, but it is necessary every 3 to 4 years. PCs and servers older than that aren’t reliable and generally become more expensive to support than to replace. Therefore, your budget should include equipment replacement every 3 years to be on the safe side.

2. **Maintenance.** There is no “set it and forget it” when it comes to network maintenance. With increased dependence on automation and cyber criminals becoming more sophisticated, it is CRITICAL to constantly monitor and update your network.

3. **Data Backup.** Another expense you must account for is backing up your data to a local computer and to an offsite location. Since we all generate MORE data year after year, the backup will grow. Start by assessing the growth of your data over the last couple of years to uncover a trend. From there, forecast those additional expenses going forward at the same rate.

4. **Expansion.** Another factor for your IT budget is upgrading software, line of business applications, CRM systems and accounting packages needed to support your growth. As your organization grows, systems, processes and data become more complex requiring more sophisticated software and systems. Make sure you are looking ahead 2-3 years to properly budget for it. There’s no “magic” formula for this because the timing and cost of your upgrade is unique to your organization and its situation.

**Call to action!** Many clients have enjoyed BeckITSystems’ Total Care Services as an easy way to budget for IT. This program allows you to pay a fixed, monthly fee for ALL IT support expenses including Cloud Computing, Data Backup, Telephone Systems, Faxing, Voice Conferencing, Video Security, Remote Monitoring & Management, Help Desk, Network Security, Data Backup, and more. *Contact BeckITSystems at 703.433.0730 Extension 103 for a 2014-2016 I.T. budget template.*
What Should You Do If YOUR Network Is Compromised?

In June of 2012, 6.3 million passwords were reported stolen when a hacker accessed LinkedIn’s servers. The news made headlines instantly and everyone is still talking about it. Clearly this was a public-relations nightmare that will have a ripple effect for years to come.

What’s scary about this type of attack—or any major security breach to a big company—is that if it can happen to them, it can certainly happen to ANYONE—Even YOU! Although I’m not privy to LinkedIn’s security procedures, I’m sure they don’t take it lightly and have most likely invested a BIG chunk of change to keep their data secure, money that the “average” non-profit or small business could never afford. So IF this happened to you, what should you do? How do you avoid a massive PR mess, and the loss of both sales and trust?

The first step would be to notify your chief executive—CEO or Executive Director. They should immediately consult with a professional I.T. organization like BeckITSystems, Inc. to make contain the problem as quickly as possible. Once that is done, you will want to contact your insurance company with your I.T. management and CEO.

After that, you’ll want to notify all parties affected as fast as possible. In the LinkedIn attack, they immediately notified the subscribers affected by forcing a password reset. The faster you react to something like this, the better your chances are of limiting the damage done. We are not legal experts, but we would also encourage you to talk to your attorney about the breach and about what you need to do—particularly if a security breach exposed your employees, subscribers or clients to a cyber-criminal. In cases where medical or financial information is involved, you may have additional requirements.

Of course you cannot un-do a security attack. Beefing up security AFTER the fact is good, but a better strategy is to avoid one in the first place. If a security attack happens and it is due to a simple security measure you could easily have put in place, it looks really bad.

If you are served by BeckITSystems’ Total Care Managed Technology Services, you can rest easy knowing we are monitoring your network against such attacks to limit your risks and prevent you from being low-hanging fruit for hackers. If you’re not a Total Care Managed Technology Services client, contact us TODAY for a FREE Network Security Audit to see just how secure your network REALLY is, and to find out how we can help.

Help Us Out And We’ll Give You A Brand New iPod For Your Trouble

We love our customers and, quite honestly, we wish we had more like you! So instead of just wishing, we’ve decided hold a special “refer a friend” event during the month of October.

Simply refer any company with 10 or more computers to our office to receive a FREE Computer Network Assessment (a $397 value). Once we’ve completed our initial appointment with your referral, we’ll rush YOU a free iPod Nano of your choice as a thank you (or donate $100 to your favorite charity... your choice!). Simply call us at 703.433.0730 or e-mail us at Tech@BeckITSystems.com with your referral’s name and contact information today!
The Window Socket offers a neat way to harness solar energy and use it as a plug socket. So far we have seen solutions that act as a solar battery backup, but none as a direct plug-in. Simple in design, the plug just attaches to any window and does its job. Designers Kyuho Song & Boa Oh have developed the brilliant Window Socket, a portable device intended to enable you to use electricity freely and conveniently in a space restricted in the use of electricity, such as a plane, a car, and outdoors. The Window Socket attaches easily to any window and is charged with solar energy that is then converted into electric energy through a converter. The clever product is currently in concept stage.

The Woman On The Other End of the Phone Wept…

“The world is against me and I can't take it anymore!” cried the distraught woman. She had just called a crisis hotline desperate for someone to help her. “Last week I was in a car accident, my house was broken into, and now my computer has crashed and erased all of my business files!” This poor woman was already having a bad week, but it was that stupid computer that finally made her snap.

A New and Growing Anxiety Disorder Affecting Americans

According to a Washington Post report, there is a fast-growing disorder that is affecting millions of Americans called “computer rage” – and psychologists and crisis hotlines are starting to see more people and more computer rage cases cropping up. Kent Norman, a University of Maryland psychology professor, studies computer rage and its effects. According to Norman, "In the workplace and at home, we're smashing computer screens, beating on keyboards, and throwing equipment out the window." What's interesting about this phenomenon is that most people do not destroy, smash, or beat on non-electronic items like cars and furniture; it seems completely directed towards electronics, and more specifically computers.

Don’t Be A Victim!

Since most people spend their entire day working at a computer, problematic PCs are certainly a huge contributor to stress and anxiety. If you already have enough to worry about and want to make sure your computer isn't adding to your stress and anxiety levels, then call us today about our TOTAL CARE TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT plan. For a fixed-rate, we'll monitor and maintain your technology, all of it, to make sure you never want to throw your keyboard through your monitor!

Call BeckITSystems today!

(703) 433-0730 or email Tech@BeckITSystems.com

BeckITSystems, Inc.: Great People + World-Class Processes=Exceptional Technology
How To Prevent ATM Skimming

Over a billion dollars are lost each year in the United States through “ATM Skimming” – far more than any losses from bank robberies – and it’s growing at a rate of more than 10% every year.

ATM Skimming is a cybercrime where the criminals steal (or “skim”) your ATM/debit card data when you’re using a typical ATM machine. They do this by fitting a small card reader over the typical ATM card slot, thus capturing your information. Additionally, the criminals install mini cameras above or near the ATM to capture your PIN number. The data is then transmitted via Bluetooth to the cybercriminals somewhere nearby. The average skimming attack usually lasts only an hour or two during peak ATM usage times (i.e. lunch hour or after work). Meanwhile, you have no idea that you’ve just been had and are at risk. These cyber-criminals will then sell the data on the cards to others so that they can either clone your debit card or wipe out your bank account.

5 Tips To Prevent ATM Skimming

1. **Cover your hand as you type.** Obstructing the view of your pin from any cameras will render your data useless.
2. **Pay attention to the area around the ATM card slot.** If anything looks loose or out of place, pull to see if you can remove it.
3. **Be aware of surroundings.** Be extra careful of ATMs in dark or isolated places.
4. **Does the machine look different?** If anything looks out of place (extra signage, mirrors, etc.) then avoid the machine.
5. **Notify the bank.** If you find or suspect an ATM has been compromised, notify your bank and law enforcement immediately.

Who Else Wants To Win A $25 Gift Card?

The Grand Prize Winner of last month’s Trivia Challenge Quiz is Mandy Thomas of Stockman Title & Escrow! They were the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month: **Which of these American historical events took place during the month of September?** The correct answer was d) All of the above.

Now, here’s this month’s trivia question.

The winner will receive a gift card.

**What is the most expensive object ever constructed?**

- a) The Empire State Building
- b) The International Space Station
- c) The Panama Canal
- d) Mount Rushmore

E-mail Us Right Now With Your Answer!

Tech@BeckITSystems.Com