Technology choices for business managers are complex, whether you’re choosing cloud computing, software or the best security measures and backup procedures. In an effort to simplify matters, here are the Top 10 things business managers need to know when considering new technology:

1. **Strategy is as important as execution:** Selecting and implementing technology requires research, planning and testing. That is followed by execution and training. First, identify the issues to solve and then find the software or processes that solve them. It’s important to think holistically and map out how the solution works with your existing technology. Avoid “shiny object” syndrome. Buy only what you need. Test and tweak the new technology before you deploy it company-wide, and train your staff thoroughly (provide reference material).

2. **Less is more:** Keep it simple. The more solutions you have, the more tech support you will need. Over time, this can become challenging and pricey. It could also hamper productivity. It’s best to choose software and hardware that addresses multiple issues whenever possible, and add only what you need when you need it. In fact, see if a software upgrade will do the trick first.

3. **Make sure everyone on your team is using the same information:** With multiple employees accessing the same data saved in multiple locations (locally, network, Dropbox, SkyDrive, etc.), they could be working on different versions of the same file. This can lead to confusion, misinformation, duplicate work and incompatibilities.

4. **Know your workforce:** Base your decisions on how and where your employees work. Assess if they are office based, home based, or in the field. Do they work in different environments at different times? What type of devices do they use?

5. **Back it up:** Data is your company’s lifeblood, so back up all business computers daily, whether they are at the office, employees’ homes for tele-commuters, or in the field. Back up locally and/or in the loud, and make sure you have control over the backup and the information.

6. **Keep your information secure:** From health records to financial statements, make sure your system keeps data private and protected. You can use software that blocks strangers or certain employees from removing what they should not, and software that alerts you when someone attempts to access company data. Questions to ask include: Who’s logging onto the company network from a home computer to access company information? Is someone able to copy that company information from the network to the home computer?

7. **Learn about and adapt virtualization:** The use of remote data centers, off-premise servers, cloud computing, and virtual desktops are strategic business move in today’s business environment. And such “virtualization” is surprisingly cost-effective.

8. **Work-from-anywhere is here to stay:** Mobile and remote offices are not just for disaster-related situations. It is the emerging workplace model, and virtualization makes it possible.

9. **Control external messaging:** Take control of external company messaging and protect your brand with email templates, signature control and mobile device controls.

10. **Don’t let technology wag the dog:** Understand your tech needs first and allow your internal processes to drive your decisions. You choose – not the other way around.

A professional information technology service provider will take a holistic look at your operation and suggest the technology that suits your needs. They will show you what’s new on the market; explain how to integrate software; and implement tech solutions that make sense for your business.

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