10 TECHNOLOGY STEPS
TO IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS

Optimizing your technology is a critical part of any company's overall efficiency.

You can achieve a measure of success by following industry standard "best practices" with technology. However, to maximize the impact and give your company a competitive edge, you will need to follow a "tailor made" plan that suits your business and its unique goals.

STEP #1

UNDERSTAND THE AGILE PHILOSOPHY

How you think about business optimization is going to determine how well the efforts pan out in your company. Many business owners are tied to today: today's challenges and today's opportunities. While living in the moment is a good thing, if you simply optimize for today, you are missing the boat.

The most important part of business optimization is agility.

Preparing your business to be at peak efficiency now and constantly going back to evaluate and reconfigure for the future keeps you ahead of the curve.

For example: perhaps you have used Office 365 for months or even years. But have you kept up to date with the new features as they are released? It is quite possible there are capabilities you are missing out on that could have a large impact on how your business operates (in a good way!).

STEP #2

DETERMINING YOUR OBJECTIVES

To be successful, business owners must understand the difference between strategy and tactics. In other words, knowing the difference between where you want to go and what roads you will take to get there.

Optimizing your business technology is not just the implementation of a new idea or two. Instead, the successful leader uses all the levers, buttons, knobs, and switches at their disposal and continuously adjusts the sails, as it were, as they navigate forward.

Knowing your organizational objectives saves you from a scattered and disjointed approach to business technology and process optimization.

STEP #3

CHOOSING AN IT CONSULTING FIRM

There are three types of IT consultants in the market today.

- **The Break/Fix Guy –** This guy works on an "Time & Materials" basis to fix the problem youare having with your computer or network and then moves on to the next client.

- **The Block Hours Firm –** These firms are usually the next step for businesses that are moving in their operational maturity from a startup to a flourishing small business. Block hours are sold to your business at a lower rate, and IT professionals are on call to address issues as they arise.

- **The Managed Services Firm –** Once a company gets to the point in operational maturity where they are critically dependent upon their technology and downtime cannot be tolerated, they move to a firm offering the Managed Services model of IT support. Managed IT Services is a subscription-based delivery model in which an IT consulting firmproactively supports, maintains, secures, monitors, and manages the client's technology inreturn for a fixed monthly fee.

Because business process and technology optimization require a deep understanding of your

business, your goals, and the internal workings of your business, the ongoing relationship of a Managed IT Services firm is the best place in which to start a business optimization strategy.

STEP #4

ASSESSING YOUR IT ENVIRONMENT

The initial assessment of a company's technology-supported processes is done by an IT professional in collaboration with some of the organization's key leaders and **must include:**

- · **Organizational Objectives** Consultation

- · **Network Security** Assessment

- · **Workflow** Assessment

- · **Hardware Life-Cycle** Assessment

- · **Application** Assessment

- · **Cloud** Assessment

When the assessments are done, you will be provided with a complete picture of your IT environment. It will explain how your technology supports today's workflow as wellas tomorrow's objectives. Lastly, your IT consultants can provide a tailored strategy with specific recommendations.
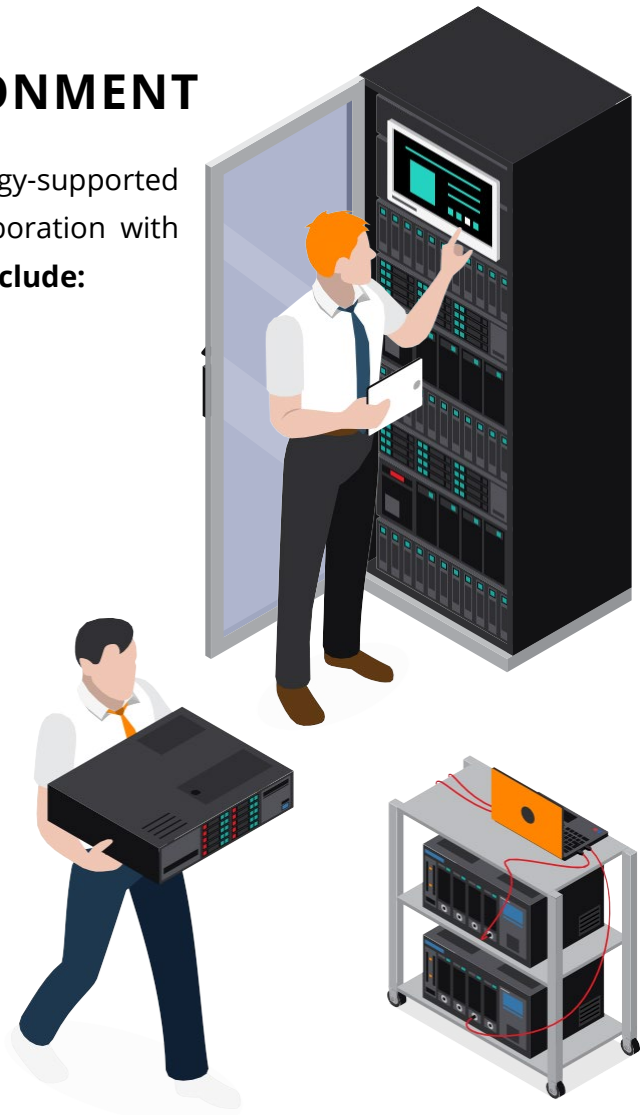
STEP #5

BUILDING A ROADMAP

Once the assessment has been conducted and recommendations made, it is time to put those recommendations into action. This requires a well-considered plan of attack. By laying out a step-by-step roadmap to align IT function with desired workflow efficiency, your technology team can ensure that nothing is missed and that organizational objectives are kept in view throughout the process.

STEP #6

SECURING THE IT ASSETS

Almost without exception, the first step of the journey (outlined by the roadmap) is dealing with cybersecurity gaps and vulnerabilities. This usually includes but is not limited to:

· **OS and Application Updates**, Upgrades, and Patches

· **Firewall Configuration** and Monitoring

· **Secure Acces**s Credentials

· **Role-based Access** Protocols

· **Email** Security

· **Network** Security

· **Wireless** Security

· **Mobile Device** Management and Security

· **Data** Backup

STEP #7

INTEGRATIONS AND AUTOMATIONS

If you are going to utilize the best solutions for each aspect of your business, you're very likely going to have software and hardware solutions built by a variety of developers. The challenge with this "best in breed" hardware and software selection is that these disparate elements of your IT environment may not "talk" to each other the way you would like.

To make things work more efficiently and to save untold hours of tedious manual input, IT consultants can develop and use small programs to integrate those assets and to automate processes.

STEP #8

REPLACEMENT OF OUT-OF-DATE HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

While there are times when keeping legacy hardware or software is an operational necessity, **it's usually most effective to look to new hardware and software** that can help you accomplish work ina faster and more cost-effective manner. Your IT consultants will create and manage an inventory replacement program that suits your budget and minimizes surprise expenses.

STEP #9

TESTING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

As each task outlined by the roadmap has been completed, **it's time to flip the switch to "ON"** and see what happens. This testing phase is an essential part of the process asit allows your IT consultants to tweak as necessary, adjusting to the requirements of today's workflow.

STEP #10

REPETITION

The operational agility we spoke about in Step #1 requires a constant re-evaluation and adjustment of IT assets based upon:

- **Changes** in internal processes

- **Movement** in the market

- **Introduction** of new products or services

- **Advancements** made by competitors

- **New ideas** introduced internally

- **Unanticipated negative events** (fire, flood, pandemic)

- **Desire to scale** and company growth

Are you ready to take your business the next level?

Contact The AME Group to arrange a free consultation. We will learn more about your company and discuss ways that we, as your technology success partner, can help your business thrive.

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