

WHY THE AD-HOC APPROACH EVENTUALLY LEADS TO IT ISSUES

THE CHALLENGE

All organisations rely on information technology systems, applications, and communications [IT] to a lesser or greater extent. As IT has become increasingly embedded in how organisations operate, much of this IT has become regarded as being akin to a utility. This is a very reasonable approach with a small business or charity with perhaps just a couple of employees. Computers can generally be made to connect to and work with a limited number of other computers and peripheral devices like routers and printers. This apparent ease of limited networked machines tends to lull the organisation into a false sense of security and, in any event, running the business and making those early sales always get priority over support requirements.

Unfortunately there comes a point where, without the users being able to see the problem, something

fails. All too often this happens at just the wrong moment when somebody is trying to create, share and dispatch a vital document. With luck there will be probably informal help at hand and a fix is found for the immediate problem with a quick Google search. Unfortunately, a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing.

Time spent trying to 'fix' the IT begins to escalate to the point where the drop in effectiveness or productivity of parts, or in extreme cases, the whole of the business threatens overall operations. Research released in late 2017 by Samsung [part of their 'More Good Days at Work' initiative] revealed that, on average, **SMEs spend close to 3 hours every week dealing with IT issues**, and suggested this was a major issue undermining overall productivity. Especially if this falls to the MD of the company.

THE PROBLEM

The vast majority of IT users have little if any real idea as to how their systems work, rather as most drivers of modern cars have little idea as to how an internal combustion engine works and how dependent it is on '000s of lines of software code. They expect to be able to turn a key and drive off. As cars have become increasingly reliable so they have become rather like a utility, there to be used whenever needed with the sole requirement to have fuel in the tank and arrange a visit to garage every 12 months.

Whilst standalone computers and tablets have reached a similarly reliable state in their development, so that we can expect them to work wherever and whenever needed, networks of machines tend to be much less reliable. This is mainly because organisations will have acquired IT hardware, systems and software over a period of many years. Not surprisingly this piecemeal acquisition process will have brought problems along the way relating to compatibility between the various applications and associated hardware.

A very simple example is that of a network attached printer that is set up to scan directly to a folder on your computer, which would seem logical. The technology allows you to do it, and there are instructions readily available. Unfortunately this is how the NHS got hacked. What is needed is a scan to email service that is secured with the correct protocols.

Generally solutions will be put in place, in the form of a temporary fix that papers over the cracks but quite often simply stores up more problems for the future.

Those organisations without an in house IT support function have to rely on external help to fix the issue so they can get back to doing what they do as quickly as possible. At this point the easiest approach is to ask around to see what support others have managed to find and hope the support person/business recommended is competent.

A solution is (apparently) put in place and the business moves on. Too often unfortunately they are likely to be confused as to what is actually being done by this (generally) invisible support team and wonder, when of course things are not going wrong, what they are paying for and is it good value for money?

With this approach the organisation never gets the chance to understand the real underlying issues.

Furthermore, the IT support team is perceived as a necessary cost, rather like the annual audit, and so they are never encouraged to really get to know the core issues to be addressed - apart from anything else, the clock is always ticking and this support tends to be expensive.

THE VISION

As more and more organisations worldwide migrate towards a relatively small number of core software applications, such as Microsoft Office 365, and hardware become increasingly generic, we believe that IT should be seen as a simple utility like water and electricity - Inherently reliable and always ON.

We also believe that all IT systems and solutions should be inherently flexible, so they can grow and be adapted as the organisation changes over time.

Not only this, but we believe in active intervention and rationalisation. Too many times we see clients with different versions of the same software, or running programs with known bugs. This needs to be stopped ASAP, and a path forward discussed during the onboarding process. Everyone needs to be brought up to the same level of IT. This standardisation procedure means we will eradicate some of the bugs in the process, and that future bugs are more readily fixable.

THE SOLUTION

We believe the vast majority of problems relating to IT issues are a clear result of poor/incorrect setup from the beginning, and a break-fix attitude towards inherent issues. As additional staff and software systems are added to an organisation the applications become increasingly unreliable as conflicts between them multiply - typically because different people are using different versions of an application such as Office 365 that become incompatible with other aspects of the overall operations.

The first step is to carry out an audit of current requirements and issues, to establish where the most

important pain points lie. This needs to be followed closely by a clear setting out of the likely future requirements over the next 12-18 months. We achieve both of these aims through our comprehensive IT Strategy Review.

We then take the time to configure all machines and related devices so as to create a robust, scaleable framework within which the organisation can operate and grow with confidence. For customers wishing to have the comfort of continuing protection and support we offer our 24/7/365 monitoring service.

MAKING IT SIMPLE

OUR APPROACH

At Bongo IT, we believe that the creation of any long term solution lies in offering a set of core services; principally broadband, email, telephony, hardware supply, website maintenance and general IT Support - all through a simple menu based approach.

This has the major advantage of being immediately **understandable** to all customers. It has the added advantage of allowing us to be **flexible** in providing the services only as and when they are required.