



this issue

The Strategic Edge **P.1**

Tech Tips **P.2**

## Upcoming Events

### CT Thanksgiving

Join us for a Thanksgiving Lunch  
Open House.

Date: Friday, November 19th  
Time: 11:00pm -1:00pm

RSVP to 262-789-8210 or  
register@ctaccess.com

We are collecting donations for a  
local food pantry. Please help us  
by bringing non-perishable food  
items or a cash donation.



Computer Technologies of WI, Inc.  
740 Pilgrim Parkway L3  
Elm Grove, WI 53122  
262-789-8210 ph  
262-789-7356 fax  
www.ctaccess.com

## The Strategic Edge



**Scott  
Hirschfeld**

Where is your business on the technology spectrum? How do you line up compared to your nearest competitor? Does it matter?

The easy assumption and maybe even the first thought that comes to mind might be something like “We are in pretty good shape. We replace our PCs when necessary, and we use a good line of business software package to run our business. We upgrade fairly often. Our employees seem to be fairly content with the tools we provide them.”

What happens if instead of looking at technology as a cost to be maintained and minimized, we take a different approach? Technology, when applied correctly should produce some significant advantages and maybe even a few “silver bullets”. You know, one of those things you look back at, shake your head, and are amazed at the improvement.

Often we spend so much time trying to minimize our costs as they relate to technology, that our perspective turns upside down. When this happens the real advantages that come through proactive, progressive technology elude us, and sometimes we fall far behind. This is when technology truly becomes

costly! Instead of fueling growth, poorly managed technology fuels discontent among our employees (trust me, they know). It also fuels a lack of confidence, inefficient work practices, and lots of lost time. Unfortunately all of this is not immediately evident until one takes a step back and looks at things strategically.

Once in the reactive mode, it is difficult to see things strategically. So, what steps can we take to begin to change our approach?

1. **Evaluate your equipment.** This is not a glamorous step, but it is the first step to catching up. If the basic tools that your employees use on a day to day basis are not up-to par, you really will have a hard time doing anything more strategic, or implementing a silver-bullet. If you need help with best practice as far as refresh cycles on equipment, please feel free to contact me.
2. **Evaluate your software.** Again, not glamorous, but important. If you are using that 15 year old piece of DOS based software, if your software still involves a “green screen”, or if you can no longer get support for your software, it is time to look at getting





something new. And, even if you meet these prerequisites, it may be time to at least see what else is out there.

3. **Listen to your team.** Survey them to find out where you stand as far as technology goes. Often they have the answers. Ask them what challenges them or frustrates them on a daily basis. It just might be solved with a technology improvement, or even some training. Sometimes they even have valuable insight into what the competition is doing. Email me if you are interested in my free employee survey. ([scotth@ctaccess.com](mailto:scotth@ctaccess.com))
4. **Identify functional bottlenecks.** Often our staff works around these and thinks that it is “no big deal”. However, if we take a look at it from an efficiency perspective, the work-around may take an extra 10-15 minutes each time and ultimately is a very expensive and a very big deal. Often these bottlenecks start when something does not work as expected. In an effort to get the job done, a team member comes up with a creative way to work through it, which is great. Unfortunately, the right solution gets set aside because the work around has been found.
5. **Get outside perspective.** Technology moves extremely quickly. If you don't have any on-staff IT people, the only way to gain perspective on your situation is to bring in someone from the outside. Even if you have technology people on staff, their view is often limited to what they see on a daily basis in your company. Gather information from peer groups, line of business software vendors, and from an IT organization who is actively involved in helping companies like yours on a daily basis.

6. **Prioritize and create a system.** Often you can't do it all at once. Particularly if you are starting out behind. Create a plan and begin to execute it. Make sure you know where you are going, so that as steps become possible, you know where you are headed. And, don't underestimate the cost of being in reactive mode, and think that you can get by. This will put you right back where you started. Make sure that along with the plan you have a built-in system of review that has action at least twice per year. It is easy to ignore technology and fall far behind.
7. **Don't overlook security, redundancy, and disaster recovery.** Too often these items get pushed to the back and the assumption is that what was put in place months or years ago is still working or adequate. Review these items at least yearly. Make sure you have a plan in place to test them more frequently. A backup plan is only good if you monitor and test it regularly. Security is ever changing, so what worked last year or last month may not be enough in today's world.

I can guarantee that if you aren't thinking about technology strategically, it is costing you far too much. This is usually most evident in lost employee time working around things, being down, or playing Chinese fire drill whenever something goes down. If your technology support people spend most of their time putting out fires, you are likely in reactive mode.

---

*To discuss implementing a formal proactive technology solution please contact Scott Hirschfeld at 262-789-8210 or [scotth@ctaccess.com](mailto:scotth@ctaccess.com).*

## TECH TIPS

### Windows XP Phased Out

Microsoft is no longer shipping Windows XP through the OEM channel. This means new workstations and laptops are shipping with Windows 7. We recommend mapping out a path to move to the Windows 7 platform, starting with the purchase of any new workstations. First check with your software vendors to be sure your software will run on Windows 7. Make sure your older printers and scanners are compatible with Windows 7. Install a single Windows 7 workstation to test and verify compatibility. If you absolutely must have Windows XP, you can purchase software assurance. This allows for the downgrade of your new system to Windows XP. It must be purchased in minimum quantities of 5, unless you have an open contract with Microsoft. If you have any questions about moving to Windows 7, contact [scotth@ctaccess.com](mailto:scotth@ctaccess.com).