

To upgrade or not to upgrade, that is the question

Plan for a more efficient future. Avoid haphazardly upgrading IT systems and services and develop a plan that introduces efficiencies into the upgrade process and identifies quantifiable needs. Start this process by conducting some research. For instance, CDS Office Technologies offers valuable insight into the trends impacting which technology SMBs may choose to deploy. However, trends are just trends, and they may not represent actionable or necessary upgrades.

For example, a financial services business might not need any Internet of Things technology, choosing to focus on security instead. The same idea applies to a business using efficient CRM. If a new product doesn't offer measurable value or create additional opportunity, then it's best to stick with your existing platform and tools.

Identify the right time. Technology tools aim to alleviate pain points for enhanced operations. To diagnose the areas that need the most attention, start by assessing the efficiency of your current operations. Where do you frequently run into slowdown or trouble? According to Business News Daily, the following signs may indicate it's time to upgrade your current tech tools:

Missed payments, bills, and audits: Is your organization hampered with piles of paper invoices, bills, receipts, and the disorganization coming with this mess? Do your employees spend too much time going through the motions of manual administrative tasks when their time could be better used elsewhere?

Overwhelming social media notifications: Social media is a key component for many businesses; however, too many notifications can overwhelm employees and cloud the pool of insight offered by social media.

Rapid growth: Many companies set business objectives and miss the mark, leaving them burdened with over-provisioned IT. Sometimes, the opposite occurs, and a company hits unexpected or accelerated growth exceeding their estimations.

Performance: The components comprising your business network offer tools, like network routers, switches, and firewalls, which inform on critical performance elements. Check these tools to address bandwidth usage, latency, saturation, and so forth.

Luckily, your business's infrastructure can inform you about these potential problems. For example, file servers and their related network operating systems offer metrics related to performance, such as central processing unit (CPU) utilization, memory utilization, and overall responsiveness. Businesses leveraging cloud services can also gather this type of critical information from their service providers and use the data to figure out if your environment needs to scale up or down, or add other services.

Look at the tools themselves. Evaluating these metrics will help you determine if it's time to upgrade. When you reach this point, you can dive into the tools available in the market to decide which is right for your company.