



**10 Things You Need to Know About Your IT**

1. **Inventory** - You should have an inventory of all your hardware and software. Your IT person is the best person to put this together and make sure you have this information. It should include all your networking devices, operating systems and software programs. If you don't have a copy arrange for your IT contact to complete this.
2. **Service Providers** - You should have a list of all your providers including; telephone, data access, security, web site and email hosts and any managed services. You should also have and know where your service agreements are and what level of service they provide. Someone in your organisation should be responsible for keeping this up-to-date.
3. **Back-up** - Who is responsible? Do you ever check your back-ups to make sure your information is being back-up properly? It's important to have your back-ups independently checked to ensure your information is being backed up correctly. Also do you have a disaster recovery plan in place should your business suffer an unforeseen problem?
4. **Passwords** - Who knows the passwords? What happens if the person who has access is on holiday, off sick or have left the company? It's important to know every password for both hardware and software. This should be securely documented along with who has access to this information.
5. **Disks and Documents** - All documentation, configuration and installation disks need to be catalogued and put in a specific place. You should also have the product license keys, and purchase information for every copy of software you have running on your system.
6. **Maintenance Schedules** - Your IT systems should be no different. Don't wait for your systems to break before you have someone fix them. You should have someone carrying out regular maintenance checks and you should be fully aware of what they entail.
7. **Expert Inspections** - It's easy to say that your IT systems are ok and that they are looked after, but how do you know? You have probably spent a lot of money on your IT systems so it is important they are being looked after correctly. Have an independent survey carried out to make sure you are getting the best possible service. It will also equip you with the necessary knowledge to speak to your current IT support.
8. **Security** - Having anti-virus protection is a **must** with all IT systems and will protect you from external threats, but your IT systems are much more likely to be breached internally. Your company should have a written record of security products and procedures including rules of use for employees.
9. **Compliance** - It is important to stay informed of current industry regulations to make sure you avoid any unforeseen issues.
10. **Important Information** - Your financial, customer, legal and product information is key to your business. Do you know where this data is stored and who can access it?

