

## Core Infrastructure Improvement #1 – Basic Data Access and Security

Improving your company's core infrastructure will help your IT staff maintain your systems more effectively and provide you with better control on who can access your information. Building a more secure, well managed and dynamic core IT infrastructure can help reduce overall IT costs and make better use of IT resources while providing the flexibility to meet future needs. The benefits of optimizing your company's core IT infrastructure are:

- Information Security improves
- IT infrastructure management becomes more proactive and efficient
- Business processes that are non-existent, manual or fragmented transform to formalized, repeatable and, in many cases, automated processes

The result is transforming your technology platform from a cost centered necessity to a strategic growth asset for your business.

You can gauge how well optimized your company's core IT infrastructure (primary network hardware and software) by what it can or cannot do for you:

- 1. User Names, Passwords and Data Access Privileges.** Have you consolidated to a single directory to enable role-based operating system deployment and automation of common IT processes? Do your employees have to login into multiple systems or servers to get the information they need? Does your IT staff have to maintain multiple logins for your employees or two upgrade and maintain your systems?
- 2. Different Operating Systems used Company-wide.** Have you minimized the number of operating system versions deployed and managed in your organization?
- 3. Multiple software applications and process to keep your information safe.** Does your organization efficiently address security threats with a unified virus and malicious software (malware) solution for your server and desktop environments? Or does it use multiple software packages and services to manage virus protection, spam filtering and other security related activities?
- 4. Data backup and recovery.** Are your employees able to automatically back up and easily restore data themselves?

Many businesses are still running older, legacy technology, employ manual processes rather than automated management techniques, and typically have not maintained their infrastructure using available software and technology upgrades. The overall result of this trend is the loss of business opportunities due to time taken to support older systems, to manually collect and analyze information across different systems and to share it effectively with others.

## Your company's key technical capabilities to improve data access and security

Optimizing your company's core IT infrastructure focuses on improving the following capabilities of your company:

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1. **Ability to Effectively Manage User Identity and Access.** Most businesses rarely store their identity information in one place. Multiple departments, locations, and software choices can result in a proliferation of databases and user login names and passwords. Optimizing the methods you use to manage these databases ensure consistent user information and access rights company-wide.
  2. **Improving Efficiencies for Managing your Desktop, Devices, and Servers.** You can reduce the overhead in managing your systems by:
    - automated software patch management across desktops to keep software versions current
    - implementing server monitoring and disk mirroring
    - establishing standards company-wide for a primary desktop operating system
    - use server virtualization to leverage existing server disk space
    - automate asset management and tracking
    - use certificate provisioning and authorization for mobile devices to keep data safe

All of these steps help you manage your company's core IT infrastructure more efficiently and cost effective while keeping your data safe and easily accessible.

3. **Proactively Managing IT Security and Networking.** Businesses with a basic core infrastructure typically lack antivirus software on all their desktops, do not have a centralized firewall, and do not have an internal server for basic network services. This limits your ability to proactively keep your systems, data and user access secure.

As organizations optimize their ability to keep their systems secure, they begin adding features to make their systems not only more secure and more efficient. Examples of this improvement are:

- Implementing standardized wireless networking and remote access with encryption
- Setting up or optimizing a wide area network (WAN) with encryption
- Using data replication for branch offices and remote systems

Having the right software tools and physical hardware infrastructure can keep your system and data secure and easily accessible from anywhere.

4. **Data Protection and Recovery.** Having a strong data protection and recovery capability provides a solid structure and process for the disciplined backup, storage, and restoration of your company's data. As information and data stores proliferate, businesses are under increasing pressure to protect that information and provide cost-effective and time-efficient recovery when required.

When an organization begins advancing its data protection and recovery capability, it will typically progress through three stages:

- first, adding backup and restore functionality to critical servers;
- next, adding backup and restore functionality to all servers and implementing service level agreements (SLAs); and
- finally, extending the backup and restore functionality to help protect desktop data as well.

Companies that do not have a consistent and reliable backup and restore capability for their critical servers run the risk of losing data or spending additional resources to recover what was lost.

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Focusing on the optimization of these core IT infrastructure and capabilities will give your company a computing environment that is manageable, accessible and secure.

## Core Infrastructure Improvement #2 - Communicating and Sharing Information

Companies are looking for ways to improve their IT systems so their employees can:

- leverage and act on the right information amidst information overload
- work across boundaries with people both inside and outside organizations
- manage and control sensitive business information
- streamline business processes

Improving their IT systems to meet these goals enable a company to collect and share information within the company and their customers. The overall result is better communications and quicker response to the marketplace.

You can gauge how well optimized your company's business productivity infrastructure by how well your employees can communicate and share information among themselves and others:

1. Have you unified your communications channels to enable your employees to be quickly contacted by telephone, email, or instant messaging?
2. Are you currently using a standardized platform that enables all of your employees to find, use, and share content with their colleagues?
3. Are you able to quickly build targeted solutions that enable your employees to gain insight from large amounts of data?

## Your company's key technical capabilities to communicate and share information

You can increase the competitiveness of your business by improving your IT infrastructure to give your employees the following capabilities:

1. **A greater ability to communicate and collaborate with anyone, anywhere.** Today's IT solutions shatter the geographical boundaries that used to restrict how and when people could communicate and collaborate with each other. Your customers expect to have the ability to access to your business at anytime from anywhere. Your employees should have the ability to search and access information from locations around the world and share it with others in a quick, easy and consistent way.

As our customers advance their communication and collaboration capabilities, they:

- are better able to connect their dispersed teams
- streamline people-driven processes
- simplifying how people work together and helping build customer connections

For optimum competitiveness and efficiency, organizations are implementing pervasive, contextual communication and collaboration capabilities that users can access from wherever they are working—

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within traditional productivity and line of-business (LOB) applications, from desktops, laptops and mobile devices, and from either inside or outside the firewall.

Optimizing your communication and collaboration systems can help your company achieve end-to-end integration, extended teaming across all LOB applications, and search and offline file access capabilities. This optimization can apply to your messaging, instant messaging/voice, Web conferencing, and web workspaces and portals.

All of these benefits give your employees the ability to maximize his or her efficiency and communicate effectively among themselves and your customers.

2. **Effectively managing your information with content management.** Across industries, companies are faced with exponential growth in information as well as ever-increasing regulations about how that information is stored and managed.

Many organizations with rudimentary Content Management (CM) systems face issues with compliance regulations and litigation, risk management, content chaos, multiple publishing channels, and manual processes.

Organizations with more optimized CM systems can better streamline business processes and increase the control and security of their enterprise content.

Some of the key benefits of optimizing the way you handle your content management include:

- being able to extend content management to every information worker
- facilitating compliance-based content retention
- enabling access to business processes across business and geographical boundaries

Advancing your organization's CM capabilities—through document and records management, Web content management, electronic forms, and search capabilities—enables better decision making by helping you to better control and manage information, ensure better risk management and content protection, lower implementation and management costs, and achieve better visibility across your organization.

Improving these key capabilities will help your employees to manage and share information effectively while maintaining compliance.

## Core Infrastructure Improvement #3 - Transforming Data into Ideas

**Improve your company's business intelligence capabilities.** Your company's business intelligence capability is related to your business productivity capability and your company's IT infrastructure.

Business intelligence is now becoming a strategic initiative that appeals to business users, executives, developers, IT professionals, and LOB workers alike—in fact, to every employee in your organization.



## Core Infrastructure Improvements

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SOHO Solutions shares Microsoft's goal to help you improve your company's performance by giving you the ability to:

- provide business insights to all employees, leading to better, faster, more relevant decisions
- implement a single business intelligence framework that ties information together across your organization
- integrate disparate business systems
- deliver business intelligence using familiar and easy-to-use software

All of these capabilities can make it easier for your employees to analyze complex business information and empower them to make timely, accurate decisions at all levels.

Businesses with advanced IT capabilities experience faster growth and higher revenue per employee when they focus on four key areas:

- customer relationships and support
- product and service development
- operations and financial control, and
- partner and supplier management

The IT systems within these firms allow their employees to do more, and do it more effectively, through better knowledge of and control over their business.

Call us at (718) 261-1353 to learn more on how SOHO Solutions can help you optimize your IT infrastructure to improve the access and availability of your corporate information and how to transform it into new business opportunities.

This whitepaper was developed from Extracted portions from Microsoft Corporation's document - *"January 2007 - Enterprise Resource Guide for Customers"*. SOHO Solutions Inc. is a Microsoft Certified Partner and Small Business Specialist.