



A roadmap to improving your Information Technology

Standardize

Standardization is typically the first step in solving 'big picture' Information Technology (IT) problems. By standardizing your hardware, software and configurations, you greatly simplify the support of that technology. Simplifying the support will reduce the level of knowledge required, and thus reduce the overall cost of the environment. Additionally, technology tends to fit within a particular "framework", examples being Microsoft .net, Novell and Linux. As part of the standardization phase, you should determine which framework is best suited to your organization. Decisions of what standards will be implemented should be based on Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), not Acquisition Cost. Decisions of which framework is chosen should be based on future integration needs, availability of compatible applications and business goals.

Stabilize

A stable infrastructure allows you more time focused on the future, and less on constant 'fire-fighting'. You will find once you standardize your infrastructure, by default you are now in a more stable environment. As part of the stabilization effort, you should look at ways to improve efficiencies. Often this includes correcting past mistakes, such as implementing software from a framework other than the one chosen in the standardization phase (i.e., implementing a Microsoft-based accounting system in a Novell environment). Keep in mind that even when it works, it may still have negative ramifications elsewhere in your infrastructure. Understand that having a stable network is more about having good policies and procedures, than about the latest virus or glitch.

Simplify

Phase three on the roadmap to improving your IT situation is the process of simplification. You will find again, by default, that by taking the first two steps, you have already simplified things. Presumably, you no longer have multiple hardware types, different versions of the same software, nor are you making decisions based on Acquisition Cost. Instead, you consider Total Cost of Ownership. You also can leverage your decision of deploying a single framework. When working within one framework, you may tie systems together in a cost-effective manner. By integrating systems, you will reduce double entry, data mismatches and multiple versions of the same information being passed by email or file.

Ultimately, by implementing S₃ in your organization, you will improve efficiencies, increase productivity and profit, and change the future of your organization for the better.

For more information on S₃, understanding Total Cost of Ownership vs. Acquisition Cost or for any of your technology needs, please contact:

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