



FEATURE



Top Tips on Communicating the Importance of IT with Clients

[By Vishal Wadher]

Many companies view IT services as an overhead, and if you are an IT service provider you have probably heard a good number of excuses for not hiring support. Reactions heard during business pitches vary from claims that clients sort out any issues they have on their own to that they see no immediate need to incur an additional cost to that they know a relative or family friend who can get them out of computer jams for a lower cost.

So, why the resistance? All of the hang-ups we have heard from prospective clients for not signing up on the spot stem from their lack of knowledge. As an industry, we have failed businesses. It is our responsibility to educate our clients about the importance of IT and the vital role it plays in their businesses. Typically, IT companies tell their clients they need to sign up for their tiered “packages” that include data backup, virus scans, and a whole lot of other technical jargon. We cannot expect our clients to understand the “tech speak” that is second nature in the IT world.

So the big question arises: how do we communicate the importance of IT to our clients’ business?

1 Use a holistic approach

- Understand their business, what they do, how they do it, what is their overall business model and processes.
- Listen attentively to the client. What are they saying to you about their business and the problems they are experiencing?
- Talk to all levels of the hierarchy. Get feedback from not only management, but also from the

employees that face IT issues on a daily basis. Their business can only be successful if the entire team is efficient and productive.

2 Build trust with your clients

- Be honest and sincere.
- You cannot fake sincerity and a genuine desire to help.
- Be courteous and patient.
- Address their questions, objections, and concerns clearly.

3 Provide unbiased consultation

- Explain clearly if they are optimizing their business with their current IT infrastructure.
- Take the time to have the business owners visualize how it will affect their business to optimize their IT.

4 Relate your explanations to them or their unique business plan

- Paint a picture. When you run into objections like “We have never had a problem of losing data or computers crashing...,” paint a realistic picture/possibility of mishaps. For example,

ask what is their recourse if the office building catches on fire, a disgruntled employee deletes critical data, hard drives fail, infected files appear, and so on. If there is no data backup strategy in place, they may have lost all their files, business contacts, emails, critical documents and financial records. What position would that leave their business and their clients in?

- Help create an IT crisis plan.
- Maintain balance between scare tactics and real-life scenarios. On the same note, do not offer or suggest a solution you know they will never need and is the most expensive one. Suggest only what they need—nothing more, nothing less. This further builds trust.

5 Provide sound analogies that they can easily relate to

- **Routine Preventive Measures:** For most companies, IT is the heartbeat of their company. If they do not take care of their health, they cannot expect to live without heart problems. In the same manner, if they do not implement a routine preventive strategy, they cannot



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expect to have their computers run efficiently and without any challenges.

- **Fighting Time:** Years of an unhealthy lifestyle cannot be undone in one week. The same is the case with technology. It takes time to get older and non-traditional network and PC setups to get up to date with proper security, windows updates, virus scans and auto-protection, server backups, auto-reporting, and implementation of other standard IT policies and procedures. Like your heart, IT demands attention and investment by business owners. A healthy and sound IT infrastructure leads to healthy businesses.

6 Bottom line

- Demonstrate how your knowledge and expertise can contribute to your client's bottom line.
- Show passion for your work and how you can genuinely help them.

As IT consultants, it is our responsibility to transfer knowledge effectively and educate our clients about how IT impacts their business. If we succeed in this quest, we can

then help businesses *invest* and leverage technology to increase their efficiency, productivity and ROI.

About the Author:

Vishal Wadher brings more than 10 years of experience in technical support, software development, and web design to Atmosphere Solutions, a company he helped found in 2005. Dedicated to finding solutions for clients' IT issues, Wadher has been instrumental in keeping the company's focus on customer service and support.

Today, in his role as chief technology officer, Wadher is responsible for consultations, new business development and managing network administration, software development, website design and hosting and internet security camera departments.

Prior to founding Atmosphere Solutions, Wadher was instrumental in driving the success and expansion of Gatesix, Inc., a Phoenix technology provider. During his tenure at Gatesix, the company grew from eight employees to more than 20. While at Gatesix, Wadher fulfilled several roles, including software developer, IT technician, web design project manager and internet

marketing director.

Wadher is an A+ Certified Technician from The Computing Technology Industry Association. He earned his bachelor's degree in supply chain management from Arizona State University, and he also studied information systems management and computer sciences at Northern Arizona University. While at Arizona State University, Wadher built a large-scale web application used to track student dormitories, which is still in use today.

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