

10 Best Practices for Developing an IT Strategic Plan



You'll need an IT strategic plan in order to transform your company's technology investment from a cost center into a revenue center. Essentially, your plan will create a business case for your IT initiatives. Here are some tips to guide you through the process.

- 1 List business objectives first.**
Defining your most important short- and long-term business goals will help you determine what technology initiatives are most aligned with your business strategy.
- 2 Assess weaknesses in your current IT infrastructure.**
Are some applications outdated or inefficient? Do you lack integration between important systems? Can your team access enough information at job sites?
- 3 Get feedback from your employees.**
What technology do they need to do their jobs more effectively? If you're getting requests from employees, consider adding these new technologies to your strategic plan.
- 4 Define the expected benefits.**
What positive impact do you expect each new technology to achieve? Benefits may include increased productivity, reduced costs, better communication, or more satisfied customers.
- 5 Calculate a clear ROI and include a payback timetable.**
Determine both hard savings (for example, eliminating an in-house server) and soft benefits (for example, greater efficiency or easier collaboration).
- 6 Define the cost of doing nothing.**
In addition to the ROI associated with carrying out your IT strategic plan, include a description of the business risks and potential costs of not investing in new technology.
- 7 Consider a phased approach.**
You don't have to accomplish everything at once. Sometimes it can be more cost effective to adopt technology in stages. It can also be easier for employees to adjust to incremental changes.
- 8 Find the budget for IT investments.**
Demonstrate how your proposed IT initiative will fit into the corporate budget. A phased approach may provide progress now without breaking the bank.
- 9 Be mindful of longer-term goals.**
Although you may be planning initiatives for this year, look two, three, or even five years down the road. Investments made today should help to build the IT infrastructure you'll need later.
- 10 Encourage employees using new technology.**
Does your company culture encourage change? Do you need to provide additional training? What processes can you put in place to help employees adopt new technology?

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