

Information Technology Infrastructure

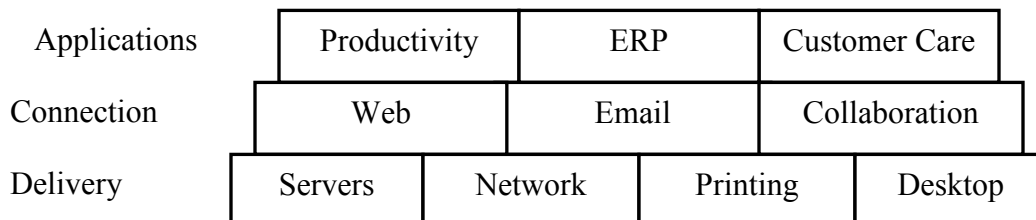
When you begin to assess and design an information technology strategy and plan, it can be overwhelming. This document is meant to simplify the process by recommending solutions based on our experience.

The target for these recommendations is a small to medium sized business. We do not go into an exhaustive list of all the possible solutions; we recommend solutions that should support you for years to come.

Influx Networking can provide you with a customized plan to suit your individual needs. To engage us for a comprehensive Business and Technology Assessment, contact us at 616.443.9448 or sales@netinflux.com.

Overall, our information technology strategy is made up of 3 layers: Delivery, Connection, and Application. The delivery level is made up of: Servers, Network, Printing, and Desktop. Connection is made up of Web, Email, and Collaboration. Applications then are very company specific, but we will discuss the ones that cross most industries: Productivity, ERP, and Customer Care.

IT Strategy Layers



Delivery Layer

Servers

- 5 users or less - A Network Attached Storage Device for shared files, with an online backup process running on one of the attached computers. Alternatively, use 2 large USB Drives, swapping them out each day for offsite backup.
- More than 5 users – We recommend Windows Server 2003.
- We also recommend the purchase of a media safe to protect your magnetic media.

Networking

- An internet router/firewall and as many switches as necessary (most routers come with 4 ports available). Select the highest speed switches that you can afford.
- If setting up wireless networking, please be sure to use the WPA encryption method to secure the network.
- Influx Networking has extensive experience in getting company systems electronically communicating with the systems of vendors and customers.

Printing

- A laser printer or multi-function device. You will probably want to have multiple printers (usually one for sensitive data, plus one for every 4-5 users).
- For lower volumes, or for color, inkjet printers are an economical choice. We do not recommend inkjet for significant volumes of printing, due to the high cost per page of inkjet printers.
- Influx Networking recommends you use an internet faxing service which will eliminate the need for a separate fax machine and phone line, and is especially economical if your company does a lot of long distance or international faxing. Check out the link on our website.

Desktop

- Desktops and laptops running Windows XP or Vista should be ordered with the Microsoft Office productivity suite (minimum of Word and Excel). The Maven Group www.mavengroup.net delivers quality hardware with local support
- We recommend AVG Anti-Virus and AVG Anti-Spyware products. www.grisoft.com

Connection Layer

Web

- Influx Networking provides a web hosting package that delivers a basic site economically. See www.netinflux.com for details.
- Influx Networking has extensive experience building data-driven websites that can let your customers and vendors answer their own questions, without exposing your systems to the web.
- Currently we recommend TDS service for Internet connectivity where available.

Email

- Outlook Express or Mail email client comes free on every Windows System.
- We recommend using hosted email through The Maven Group www.mavengroup.net.
- For advanced users, we recommend Mozilla www.mozilla.org for email and browsing.
- If Time and Chaos is implemented (see next page), we recommend using their email client for integration.

Collaboration

- Use the server to place all common documents through drive mapping.
- We recommend the PaperPort line of products for indexing and retrieving documents.
- If you plan to scan documents, replace one of your printers with a multi-function device.
- Individual scanners are relatively inexpensive for higher volume scanning needs.
- We recommend Jabber for instant Messaging.
- If Time and Chaos is not implemented, Influx Networking can provide a very inexpensive web based calendaring solution that includes group scheduling.

Applications Layer

Productivity

- We recommend the Microsoft suite of productivity solutions, with the exception of Outlook, as we find that Outlook works best with Microsoft Exchange, which is an expensive solution for small businesses.
- We recommend Time and Chaos for group and individual Calendaring (chaossoftware.com).

ERP

- Quickbooks Pro meets many small business needs.
- Influx Networking has developed solutions for Manufacturing, Distribution, and other businesses that integrate with Quickbooks Enterprise. These solutions add to the capabilities of Quickbooks, resulting in expenditures a fraction of competing solutions.

Customer Care

- Time and Chaos is a great contact management application integrated into Windows applications.
- Influx Networking can install Sugar CRM for more sophisticated Customer Care needs.

Influx Networking is available to consult with your for any further application needs you may have.