## This Issue:

### Best Practices for Setting Up Your Backups and Your Disaster Recovery

When we discuss backup and disaster recovery (BDR), it may seem as though we're talking about a single process - after all, there's just one acronym for it. However, the reality is that - while these two processes are related to one another - backup and disaster recovery each require a different preparation process, with different considerations made for each.

Here, we'll review what you need to address if you are to properly attend to each...

**Read the Rest Online!**
http://bit.ly/33gwXyc

## Showtech Solutions

We are a technology consulting firm specializing in technology implementation and management for businesses. We're known for providing big-business, Enterprise-Level IT services to small and medium-sized businesses.

Visit us **online** at:
newsletter.showtechsolutions.com

## Your IT Budget Says a Lot about Your Business

Budgeting anything can be difficult, but with many business' organizational reliance on information systems, finding the money to get your IT initiatives off the ground can be a challenge. That hasn't stopped the IT sector growing fast. In fact, IT spending in business is at its highest levels since 2007. Let's take a look at how your IT budget actually helps keep your organizational technology initiatives moving forward.

### Business, Reimagined

We often talk about the benefits organizations see from investing in technology. In effect, the integration of targeted technology can go a long way toward changing the way that your business operates. Since a budget isn't necessarily a ledger designed to manage every dollar and cent your business uses, having the right mindset when creating it is important. If you go into your budget resenting the capital you propose to spend, you likely will have a more difficult time creating one that works for your company. After all, your budgets are business tools, that if completed competently, a properly formed budget can really put your business on a fast track to success.

### What Does an IT Budget Do?

Like budgeting for any other reason, the IT budget is the process of allocating money to fund the programs a business undertakes. Most of the IT budget will be taken up with recurring costs that come with the technology that your business already uses, including hardware and software support, software licensing, and the like. Since most line-items on an IT budget are just reaffirming familiar costs, you may only be using your IT budget as a wish list for funding new technology.

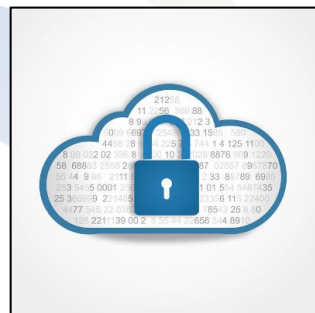## Azure Platforms Are Increasingly Providing Value

Microsoft is best known for its operating system and productivity software, but these days one part of its company is growing faster than any other: its Azure cloud platform. Let's take a look at the Azure cloud, some features that businesses use it for, and how it can fit into your IT strategy.

### Explaining Azure (and the Cloud in General)

As you've probably figured out already, Azure is a set of cloud services offered by Microsoft. Take about any type of computing platform that you could need, and Azure has an option for it. Organizations can run applications, buy storage, security, and support and alter the way their company operates with the use of the public/hybrid cloud platform. This provides the accessibility and the tools any business could need to further their organizational productivity goals.

Azure has solutions for a number of business problems, including

- The Internet of Things
- Artificial intelligence
- Enterprise resource planning
- Blockchain
- Databases

**SHOWTECH** IT SOLUTIONS

*Technology made large populations possible; large populations now make technology indispensable." - Joseph Wood Krutch*

**PAGE 2**

# Employees Are the Key to Productivity

Productivity is always going to be a big issue in the workplace. While you want to encourage your employees to get work done, you don't want to be too overbearing, as it could have the exact opposite of your desired effect. How can you make sure that your employees are staying on-task and focused on their goals? You can take the first step by understanding their motivations and long-term goals.

### Understanding the Employee Perspective

To make sure your employees stay productive, you first need to look at their duties from their perspective. Depending on their motivations and goals, your employees will have a different reason to want to do a good job. Some might be in it for the long haul, thinking of your business as a career. Others might only be using it as a stepping stone toward achieving their ultimate goal. Understanding where they fall on this spectrum is imperative to getting the most out of your workers.

If you give your employees the ability to invest themselves in your company for their own benefit, you might find that they are much more productive and efficient with their time. If you give them the opportunity to learn new skills that they can carry with them in the future, you may find they are more devoted to their work. After all, there's one thing that's certain: an employee who is unfulfilled and uncertain of their future with a business will be less productive, leading ultimately to their departure in search of greener pastures.

### Augmenting Productivity

Productivity is a necessity to maintain operations without losing out on profit, so you should establish the following guidelines to ensure that your employees remain cognizant of their own work ethic. You might have to rely on them to self-police themselves at times, since if you micromanage too much, they might grow to resent your management style. Here are a couple of ideas to get you thinking about how to get the most out of your employees:

Establish KPIs for friendly competition: Key performance indicators help you establish guidelines for how much you want your employees to get done throughout the workday. These are generally used to ensure that projects and tasks are on time and on budget. While it could easily be marketed as the bare minimum to strive for in terms of productivity, you should instead look at it as an opportunity to instill some…

**Read the Rest Online!**
http://bit.ly/33j9hcf

# Your IT Budget Says a Lot about Your Business

*(Continued from page 1)*
The typical IT budget covers two major expenses for a business:

1.  Ongoing IT expenses
2.  2. Project expenses

As far as the ongoing IT expenses go, this makes up every dollar your business plans on paying for the IT it uses day in and day out, the support and management for those machines, and any other expenses that will be necessary to account for as they pertain to your organization's IT.  Examples of ongoing IT expense include:

- Hardware (servers, workstations {and any other client}, networking hardware, cloud subscriptions, support and management)
- Software (licenses, cloud subscriptions, support and management)
- Staff (internal IT support staff, remote IT support contractors, and recruiting costs.)

Project expenses are any expenses that a project would further cost the company. These include:

- Any outsourced consulting and/or management service costs
- Any administrative costs (e.g. any new infrastructure or temporary development platforms)
- Any special software
- Any special hardware

More sophisticated organizations could try to incorporate certain IT-related costs into their departmental budgets, using what are known as chargebacks to officially itemize these expenses. This method can get much more convoluted, but it may be an ideal way to successfully prioritize expenses.

### Why Do You Need an IT Budget?

Regardless of what your organization uses its IT for, there is a good chance that it is a core part of any budgetary coordination your business will do. The IT budget allows a business to itemize (and earmark) capital specifically for IT-based initiatives. In doing so systems that automate tasks, provide a reduction in operational downtime, and ultimately run your business from top-to-bottom have the necessary funding behind them, rather than having to have managers justify every IT expenditure to their superiors; a venerable nightmare for any manager looking to maintain productivity.

Another reason is that organizations are going through somewhat of a culture shift at this moment. Businesses are removing antiquated technology and processes for ones that are more computer-driven--even automated--and are using new tech to fill in gaps in workflow. Ultimately, the addition of high-end technology is used to drive down costs (typically from bloated payrolls). With this shift, the technology they…

**Read the Rest Online!**
http://bit.ly/33f3KU9

# Azure Platforms Are Increasingly Providing Value

*(Continued from page 1)*

- Private cloud platforms
- DevOps
- Mobile management
- E-Commerce
- Regulatory compliant platforms and reporting
- Collaboration
- Data warehousing
- Big data
- Business Intelligence
- Line of business applications
- Productivity applications (SaaS)
- Development (PaaS)
- Data backup and comprehensive archiving
- Marketing
- Digital media
- Gaming

If you can believe it, there are more uses for the Azure cloud platform. This array of services and uses gives any organization an option to get the scalable computing construct that they need to push their business initiatives forward.

Of course, before implementing any sort of cloud solution (even Azure or AWS), you'll want to first assess your options. If you're new to these types of platforms, you will want to test them to ensure they will meet your

performance and budgetary needs. At Showtech Solutions, we suggest working side-by-side with an IT professional. Their experience with cloud computing, business computing, and computing of all types can help you find exactly the solution you need to solve your business' problems.

If you want to talk to one of our certified experts about if Azure is right for your company's needs, call us directly at (813) 793-4700 today.

**Share this Article!**
http://bit.ly/33iuK51

# Locking Down Your Network with Active Directory
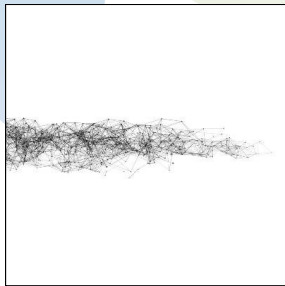
Active Directory is a feature of most Windows Server operating systems. In other words, if your organization has a Windows server, you most likely have Active Directory. Active Directory essentially dishes out access permissions to your users as they are logged in to the network.

This might sound pretty boring, but you can do a LOT to control your users and protect your business. On the other side of the coin, if your Active Directory isn't set up very well, you could be leaving things wide open, preventing you from meeting industry compliance regulations or granting your users with more access than they really should have.

We're going to discuss some of our Active Directory best practices, but a quick disclaimer first: there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution for all organizations. Depending on your security needs, the type of permissions you need to have, and any compliance regulations your business falls under, some of these policies won't apply as-is for you. Still, if you are coming from a situation where

you don't have anything (or hardly anything) in place, this is a great place to start.

**Nobody Needs to be an Administrator**
When users log into their PC on your domain, they are logging in with their domain account, which is centralized in Active Directory.

Not a single user on your network, whether it's the owner of the company, or your onsite IT person, or the Pope, needs to log into Windows on a daily basis with administrative privileges. This includes both privileged access as the Domain Admin, AND as a local admin on that particular machine.

Why? It's just too risky. This overrides all other settings and there is just no reason for it. Instead, we suggest following the **least privilege administrative model**. Each user should only have

the minimum permissions to complete their work. You can always elevate access temporarily if needed. Otherwise, if a user gets a virus, that virus will have the same access the user does and could do a lot more damage because the user has access he or she didn't need in the first place. The virus has the capability to spread across the network, whereas if the user's permissions were locked down, the virus would only have a minimal impact.

This means that everyone on the network, including the business owner, IT staff, and/or the Pope, log in as a regular non-administrator to do their normal day-to-day work. If they need to get administrative control, they can log in with a separate admin account.

Keep that administrative account secret, safe, and carefully guarded (by the Swiss Guard if need be).

**Force Strong, Complex Passwords and Set Password Expirations**
Human beings are terrible at creating and memorizing complex passwords. Unfortunately, hackers, or at least the tools that hackers use, are very good…

**Read the Rest Online!**
http://bit.ly/33eRh2J

# Organization Inside Windows 10

If you don't take care of your PC's files, you will quickly discover that it's easy to lose track of where everything is. You have countless file types, folders, and applications sitting around without any real sense of organization or continuity. Today, we're going to focus on how to help you better organize your files in a way that it easy to find and understand. You should be able to do so in either your operating system file explorer or in your cloud-based file storage.

There are three ways you can organize your files. You can distribute them based on clients (or projects), dates, or file types. We'll focus on how it can be beneficial to organize your files based on the file type.

A file-based setup helps you group all files in folders designed to hold a specific file type. If you have a lot of ebooks, for example, they would be placed in a folder that is labeled "ebooks," meaning they are all located in the same place, not all over your desktop or Downloads folder. This file organization method focuses on making sure all files are in places where they belong. This could take some work, but it's well worth the effort.

If you work for a business, chances are they use a shared network of some sort with its own custom file storage nomenclature, so be sure to do your research before making any major changes in file storage.

Windows 10

## Tip #1: Stick to Your Filing System
Once you've made your choice on a filing system, it's important to stick to it. File things away as soon as you can; this keeps folders like Downloads from getting too out of control. Plus, you mitigate the risk of misplacing files by putting them in the right location as soon as possible.

## Tip #2: Avoid the Desktop & Download Folders
That being said, it might be tempting to just choose your desktop or the downloads folder for storing files, but you should avoid doing so at all costs. The issue stems from the fact that your desktop only has so much real estate, meaning that it will fill up before long and leave you with a giant mess to clean up. If you put the files where they are supposed to go as soon as possible, you can avoid clutter and wasted time by knowing exactly where files are located soon after the download.

## Tip #3: Sort Once a Week
If you aren't able to file away files where they belong immediately, you need to make it a point to do it periodically. We suggest once every week or once every 10 days or so. If you go any longer than this, chances are it will get pretty messy.

## Tip #4: Naming Practices
A great way to sort out of your files, even in folders, is to use a naming convention that distinguishes them from each other. That being said, having a ton of files with the same names will be confusing. Therefore, you should shoot for specifics when putting together file names.

Managing your files doesn't have to be challenging. Showtech Solutions can help you out with that. To learn more, reach out to us at (813) 793-4700.
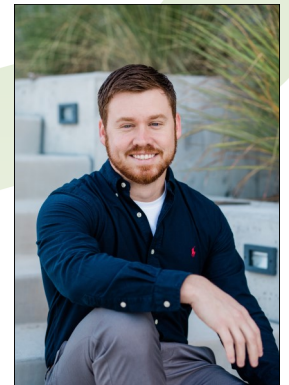
**Share this Article!**
**http://bit.ly/2TkKyA1**

We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is our success, and as you grow, we grow.
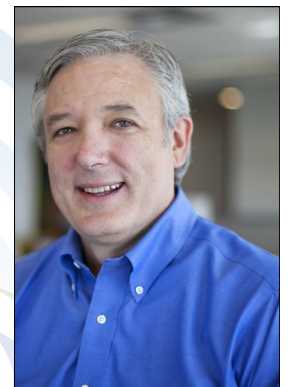
Cary Showalter
President

Christopher Storey
Director of Business Development

# Showtech Solutions

200 N. Pierce Street
Suite #300
Tampa, FL 33602

Voice: (813) 793-4700

Visit us **online** at:
newsletter.showtechsolutions.com

newsletter@showtechsolutions.com

facebook.showtechsolutions.com

linkedin.showtechsolutions.com

twitter.showtechsolutions.com

blog.showtechsolutions.com

HA! YOU REALLY UPSET YOUR END-USER WITH THAT ERROR!

OOH! QUICK! BACK TO NORMAL! THE TECH IS COMING! PRETEND THAT NOTHING IS WRONG!