

November Thanks

I asked my employees for a short answer on what they were thankful for:

Heather: Thankful its finally fall—my favorite season!

Juan: Thankful my family is healthy.

Stacy: Thankful my children are so excited about the holidays.

Greg: Thankful for my family and the challenges we overcome together.

Jackie: Thankful I hardly ever get sick.

Matt: Thankful for my family and tightly knit group of close friends.

And me? I'm thankful it's November and no one in my house has caught a cold yet.

November 2016



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Chris Benson, CEO of AlwaysOnIT.

"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"



Thanks to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and ever-improving cloud technologies, the phone-service options available to you as a small business are plentiful, with more features at a lower cost than were ever available before.

However, with all the options and vendors, separating the good from the bad and navigating the hype can be difficult. Not only are some VoIP systems a complete waste of money, but fees can be "hidden," so what appears to be a big cost-saving decision can end up costing you more in the long run once you've calculated in ALL costs over a three- to five-year period.

Here are six revealing questions you must ask to cut through the hype, half-truths and "little" white lies that could bury your company.
1) What will the call quality be like on my new system

Companies that sell phone systems

6 Questions To Ask Before You Move To VoIP

and do not install and support computer networks – which is what your VoIP system is running on – are often NOT qualified to recommend or install a VoIP phone system for your office. One of the biggest reasons for VoIP failure (poor sound quality, slowed Internet speeds, etc.) is that the person selling you the system does not understand how to properly assess your company's firewall, routers, network traffic, Internet connection speeds, as well as a host of other factors, to make sure their phone system will work as advertised in YOUR SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT. That's because they're phone-system sales guys, not network engineers.

2) How many data centers do you have and are they geographically dispersed?

If the answer is only one, run away! What happens if their ONE data center goes down? Or, more commonly, what happens when the VoIP equipment *inside* the data

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center goes down? Your business is without a phone until they get their systems back online! Insist on at least two redundant data centers that are states away from each other to lower the risk of a natural disaster wiping out both data centers at once.

"If they're THAT confident, have them guarantee it in writing..."

3) What was your uptime last year? What's your guarantee for uptime?

If it's anything less than 99.999%, find a different provider. And don't just take them at their word; ask for documentation proving the reliability of their network in the previous year. If they can't even do that, don't buy their system!

NOTE: Uptime is the system's ability to make and receive calls. If an individual office happens to be down due to an Internet outage, this does not affect the overall reliability of the system, because the system was ready and able.

4) If my phone is unreachable, do you have automatic failover to another phone?

If your provider's system isn't constantly monitoring the status of your network, VoIP system and VoIP phones, you should consider going with another provider. If your Internet goes down, or even a single phone stops working, the system should know that within a few minutes and automatically forward the calls to a

predetermined destination (like a cell phone or another office location).

5) Do you monitor my phones and system 24/7/365 for any potential issues?

If you have to tell your provider the phones aren't working, then find another provider. Any quality vendor should be monitoring and maintaining your system for you, using remote management tools. If you are missing calls, move on to a different system.

6) Do you offer a money-back guarantee?

If your provider is not willing to back up their claims with a

WRITTEN, no-small-print, money-back guarantee, free of "weasel out" clauses, look for a vendor that does. Every phone-system sales guy is going to tell you how wonderful their system is and how you won't experience any problems. If they're THAT confident, have them guarantee it in writing so you're not stuck paying for a new system that doesn't work.

Free VoIP Assessment Cuts Through The Confusion, Myriad Of Options And Tech "Mumbo Jumbo" To Help You Make The Smartest, Safest Phone-System Choice For Your Company

If you're looking to upgrade your phone system to VoIP sometime in the near future, this free assessment will help you avoid making any mistakes and help you navigate the endless number of choices, techy "mumbo jumbo," conflicting advice and confusion. We'll answer all of your burning questions and determine which phone system is BEST FOR YOU, based on your specific needs, budget, Internet connection and existing network. No charge and no obligation! Simply call us today at 503-601-4335 to get started!

Free Report Download: The Business Owner's Guide To IT Support Services And Fees



You will learn:

- ◆ " The 3 most common ways IT services companies charge for their services, and the pros and cons of each approach.
- ◆ " A common billing model that puts ALL THE RISK on you, the customer, when buying IT services; you'll learn what it is and why you need to avoid agreeing to it.
- ◆ " Exclusions, hidden fees and other "gotcha" clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to.
- ◆ " How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn't anticipate.

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Here's a tip that can save you a bundle on your taxes!

Most people, including me, think of Section 179 as some mysterious or complicated piece of tax code. The bottom line is that it is important that you understand what this specific code means for your business because you may be missing out on big deductions.

In this post, I'll walk through Section 179 in plain English and explain how your investment in computer equipment might be the perfect way of you to take advantage of this deduction.

First, what the heck is the Section 179 Deduction?

Section 179 of the IRS tax code lets businesses deduct full purchase price of qualifying equipment—which includes computers and software— purchased during the tax year. What this means is when your business buys qualified equipment or software, they can deduct the FULL PURCHASE PRICE from your gross income. The logic behind why Section 179 exists? To encourage businesses to buy equipment and invest in their businesses.

How does Section 179 work?

Basically, when your business purchases certain equipment and software, you can write off purchases little by little over time because it depreciates in value. For instance, if you purchase a server for \$100,000, you get to write off (lets say) \$25,000 for four years. Note: these numbers are just my dummy example. Your accountant will know the specifics!

But wouldn't you rather just write off the entire purchase up front? That's why Section 179 was originally written—to motivate spending in the American economy. For most businesses, the entire cost of equipment and software can be written off for the 2016 tax return.

Let me lay it out with a little example. Let's say you had made equipment purchases totaling \$650,000 in 2016, all of which was covered by the Section 179 Deduction. Below is an example calculation to figure out your total deductions for the year and how much you would actually be paying for your purchased equipment in 2016..

2016 Section 179 Example Calculation	
Equipment Purchases:	\$ 650,000
First Year Write Off: <small>(\$500,000 = maximum in 2015)</small>	\$ 500,000
50% Bonus First Year Depreciation: <small>(updated to 50% via PATH Act of 2015)</small>	\$ 75,000
Normal First Year Depreciation: <small>(20% in each of 5yrs on remaining amount)</small>	\$ 15,000
Total First Year Deduction: <small>(\$500,000 + \$75,000 + \$15,000)</small>	\$ 590,000
Cash Savings: <small>(590,000 x 35% tax rate)</small>	\$ 206,500
Equipment cost after Tax: <small>(assuming a 35% tax bracket)</small>	\$ 443,500

Do you qualify?

All businesses that purchase, finance or lease new or used business equipment (to a certain amount) during 2016 may qualify for the deduction. The purchased equipment must be used for business purposes at least 50% of the time to qualify. To understand the amount a specific piece of equipment qualifies for the deduction, you can simply multiply the percentage used for business purposes by the cost of the equipment! Your accountant will know the specifics to Section 179- I encourage you to reach out to them to see if you are making the most of your deductions!

Computer equipment and software are included in the Section 179 Deduction!

Any computer needs- laptops, desktops, servers, routers, out-of-the box and custom-built software are eligible for the Section 179 deduction! I want to make sure you are taking action and getting your maximum benefit! But to reap the benefits of Section 179 for this fiscal year, you need to act quickly. The deadline for purchases to be claimed for 2016 is quickly approaching!

Contact me today to come up with a game plan for any imminent computer spending you had been considering and let's figure out a strategy for you to get the most out of your deductions!

Client Spotlight: Neptune Pools

Neptune Swimming Pool Co. was established in the Portland Metro area in 1959. They are one of the oldest pool contractors in the local area, give them a call for all your pool needs. We recently helped Neptune Pools update their server, install a new firewall and implement our cloud backup and sharing solution, giving them the flexibility they need for their techs in the field to access previous work and immediately update their job progress.

Would you like your company highlighted here in our "Client Spotlight"? Then give us a call today at 503-601-4335.

Being “smart” isn’t just for phones and TVs anymore.

Soon, Microsoft’s Cortana will be able to see inside your fridge. With cutting-edge, fridge-safe technologies, Cortana can identify the foods you place there. After spending some time with your fridge’s contents, Cortana learns your food preferences. It can even offer up recipes or shopping lists to make your life easier. While other smart fridges have cameras that show users what’s inside without opening the door, the Cortana version actually helps you keep your fridge stocked. By the time this fridge hits the market, it will have captured thousands of photos of food packages from around the world. And that means you may soon have a smart new helper when it comes to shopping and fixing meals.

-TechCrunch

Ditch the meeting, get more done.

The average manager spends 30%-50% of their time in meetings. And most feel 67% of meetings are an utter waste. So what can we do to stop killing time? Quit having meetings. Here are three ways to tell if a meeting is worthwhile. 1) Compare cost to benefit. Take the number of folks attending times their average pay rate. Multiply that by their time spent meeting. Is the desired outcome worth it? 2) Will this be a one-sided affair? A dead giveaway is the conference call when the boss puts everyone else on mute. 3) Is the meeting a guise for “communication”? Instead, send an e-mail, point to a website or suggest someone to consult with. Now you’re talking...

-Entrepreneur

Want earbuds that last – and sound great?

Bragi’s new earbuds, named simply The Headphone now have “bragging rights” on both battery

life and sound quality. At six hours of battery life, these buds shred all competition. That includes Erato’s Apollo 7 and the Earin buds – both of which wimp out at three hours. Bragi’s Headphone also delivers a crystal-clear sound that beats most Bluetooth and WiFi earbuds. And they let sounds come through from whatever space you’re in. They also receive phone calls and respond to voice commands. Plus, all of this is 100% wireless. They even include a sleek-looking lanyard-style carrying case. All that being said, The Headphone is well worth a look if you’re looking for a great pair of earbuds.

-DigitalTrends

Google’s Chromebook Pixel may have faded into a high-resolution sunset...

But the good news is, some great new challengers will soon take its place. The Dell Chromebook 13, for instance, sports a 1080p touch-screen display, aluminum chassis, glass trackpad and a (very fast) Intel Core i3 processor. Meanwhile, weighing in at just 2.9 pounds, the Toshiba Chromebook 2 delivers nearly the same performance as the Dell. Yet at a full two pounds less, you’ll appreciate its light weight. And the new kid on the block, the Acer Chromebook 14, offers a high-end feel and near top-of-the-line specs for just \$300. Any of these challengers will fill the bill for you if you love the low price of a Chromebook, but want something a little more premium.

-AndroidCentral.com

Who Else Wants To Win A \$25 Gift Card?

The Grand Prize Winner of last month’s Trivia Challenge Quiz is Paula of Portland! She was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month:

The correct answer was **c) 1889**.

Now, here’s this month’s trivia question. The winner will receive a gift card to Buffalo Wild Wings.

What is the oldest bridge in Portland?

a) Steel Bridge b) Broadway Bridge c) Hawthorne Bridge d) St. Johns Bridge

Email your answer to:
trivia@alwaysonit.com

Correct answers will be entered into our monthly drawing.
Drawing held on November 21st