



The Monthly Newsletter of Invisik Corporation

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## Autumn Greetings from Invisik!

**OCTOBER** is in full swing with all the signs of fall. Leaves changing colors, pick-your-own apples and pumpkins, corn mazes, and, all too soon, trick-or-treaters. Whenever fall arrives—regardless of how much I'll miss the warmer weather—I'm always happy that we live in a state where we can experience all four seasons (even sometimes all in one day!).

This month we launch our new series focusing on the return on investment of technology implementation. This three-part series (called *The ROI Series*) was inspired by frequent conversations I have with business owners and executives about this time every year when year-end budget planning is rounding the corner. We will dive into the first part of the series this month (on page 3), then parts two and three in November and December. We hope you will find the discussion helpful for future planning.

Lastly, hardy congratulations to Laura Davis of New Hope who is September's Invisik Trivia Bowl winner. She was the first to respond with the correct answer: A. Sapphire. Who will win this month's prize of a gift card to Target? Be the first to correctly answer the Trivia Bowl question, and it will be you! Email your answer to [trivia@invisik.com](mailto:trivia@invisik.com) or call 612-298-3000.

Good networking,

*Matt Jurcich*

Matt Jurcich, President  
Invisik Corporation

## INVISIK TRIVIA BOWL

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) was founded in October of what year by the American Cancer Society and its corporate partners?

- A. 1970
- B. 1985
- C. 2001
- D. 2009

Did you know? The American Cancer Society's physical activity guideline suggests we should be active at least 30 minutes each day.

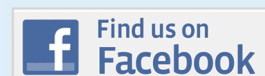
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# Cloud Computing: Yes? No? Maybe So?

A recent survey by Newtek's SB Authority Market Sentiment shows that almost half of small businesses do not see how cloud computing can cut down on costs and help increase their productivity. An additional 32% are still unsure about the entire cloud computing idea in the first place. At a minimum, these results indicate that there is a pressing need for a comprehensive and widespread campaign about cloud computing for small businesses. Many companies just see the cloud as a mere fad, when in reality it can offer opportunities to small businesses to enhance their operations and stream-line IT costs.



What sets cloud computing apart from other hosting services is the way it is managed and used. Management is handled completely by a service provider, and subscribers can adjust the specific features they want to use. Chances are your company is already using cloud computing in some form. If you use online banking, access an e-mail service like Gmail, or use an e-mail marketing service like ConstantContact, your business is using cloud-based apps (also called SaaS or “software as a service”).

Many businesses are moving to cloud computing because it frees them from having to install, maintain and upgrade expensive workstations that cost a lot to manage. Other advantages include unlimited storage, automatic off-site backups, higher-level security, and the ability to access your information from any device anywhere.

Of course, the way the cloud impacts each particular organization will vary, and how it will affect your business in the short and long term depends on your needs and requirements. In fact, not every application your business might require to conduct business may be suited or ready for the cloud yet. Nonetheless, advances are being made rapidly to make it the better solution for most businesses, so it is looking more like cloud computing is here to stay.

If you want to find out more about the pros and cons of cloud computing, or how it may benefit your business, please give us a call. We can discuss your specific situation and explore whether the cloud is right for you. Contact us at (612) 298-3000 or [support@invisik.com](mailto:support@invisik.com). ♦

## Scam Alert: Fake Customer Service Calls from Microsoft

You have to give it to scammers for constantly finding new ways to victimize people. A new scam making the rounds is fraudsters phoning and posing as people from Microsoft Customer Support. These scam artists call and scare victims into paying for bogus services so they can steal your credit and personal information. They may insist that you have a virus or that you need to install a certain program to help speed up your system. They are very persistent, so be weary, stay alert and informed.

The truth is, Microsoft will not call you about your computer *unless* you have asked them to do so—such as by filing a request for support form Microsoft. And were they to call you, they will not ask for credit or personal information, and they will always have a support reference number assigned to you (which you would already have from filing the request for support). Though it is always possible that Microsoft *might* call you

unsolicited to let you know about a new promotion or product, they won't call (unsolicited) to alert you regarding the status of your computer system.

Knowing how scammers like to work, it is most likely we will see this scam applied to various forms in the near future: a call from your bank, credit consultant, or even IT support. The best thing is to have the proper security protocols in place so you can verify the identity of the people who will call you, as well as keep your system safe.

Having the proper security protocol in place will do wonders for your business and your peace of mind. Remember, you can never discount the human factor when planning. If you need advise or would like to discuss tailor fitting a plan for your specific needs, we can help. Contact us at (612) 298-3000 or [support@invisik.com](mailto:support@invisik.com). ♦

# The ROI Series:

## Calculating the ROI of Technology Investments

### Part 1: ROI Basics and the Indirect Benefits of Technology Implementation

Cost savings are always important to small businesses, but that does not mean we should skip on technology. New technology may be necessary for the survival and growth of our businesses, and when you consider the return on investment (ROI), it may not be as expensive as initially feared. In this first installment of our three-part series, we will look closer at the basics of ROI, and why indirect benefits of implemented technology are important to consider when analyzing an IT investment.

#### The Basics

There are two ways to look at the value of technology: total cost of ownership (TCO), which quantifies only the cost of a project, and return on investment (ROI), which quantifies both the cost and expected benefit of the project over a specific timeframe.

Traditionally, businesses have used TCO when analyzing the cost of internal infrastructure projects such as upgrading an e-mail system, but even with internal systems, ROI can be a better method of analysis. For example, if your old e-mail system goes down, your sales team would have to spend more time making phone calls to contact customers. If each sales team member spent two more hours on phone calls than they would have on e-mails, you have actually *lost* money by not upgrading your e-mail system.

So the question at the heart of an ROI analysis is which will cost more in the long term: spending the money to provide a solution, or the losses the company will incur by not doing so?

That question may be easier to ask than to answer. As important as determining ROI is, there is still little consensus about how to measure it accurately. Why? Because ROI has many intangibles that are difficult to quantify by traditional cost-accounting methods, yet still maximize the economic potential of the organization—i.e. brand value, customer satisfaction, or patents. This leads us to discuss the significance of indirect benefits of technology implementation.

#### The Indirect Benefits of Implementing Technology

It is easy to quantify the direct benefits of new technology—such as increased revenues—because they show up as line items on financial statements. However, it is also important to consider indirect benefits: an ROI that is harder to calculate, but is nonetheless realized.

A good example of an indirect ROI is employee productivity. When a company implements new technology, staff can perform their jobs better and faster. For instance, an application that facilitates better communication between attorneys and clients at a law firm may not generate a direct return by reducing head

count, but it can significantly improve the quality of service clients receive, while at the same time giving attorneys more time to focus on value-added tasks—such as sales. Better sales will in turn increase clients, and more clients will increase profits—a very quantifiable direct return.

In other words, all technology will generate a return on investment, but it can be tricky to determine how much is direct and indirect. One research firm found that direct returns account for only half of technology ROI. They found that less than 50% of companies that implemented a document management system saw a direct ROI, while 84% saw an indirect ROI in the form of measurable increases in employee productivity.

It could be helpful to consider the following three key factors when determining if a proposed technology implementation's ROI will be indirect or direct:

- **The kind of technology being implemented.** While all technology provides some indirect ROI, some technology generates more. For example, supply chain software can improve productivity, but most of its ROI is direct, such as in the form of reduced inventory or transportation costs. Mean while, content management systems tend to generate significantly more indirect ROI because they lend to faster filing and decreased retrieval times.
- **The area in which technology will be implemented.** Where and how you deploy technology will also impact the portion of its ROI that is indirect vs. direct. For instance, consider a business intelligence dashboard. If it is used to give a logistics manager the ability to better control transportation costs, the ROI is primarily direct. On the other hand, if it is used to provide financial analysts with faster access to monthly metrics, than the ROI is indirect because the primary benefit here is time-savings.
- **Your current IT environment.** Finally, the extent to which a new technology's ROI is direct or indirect may depend on how much change the technology will drive. Consider a time tracking and payroll processing application. A company that has *manually* collected time and processed payroll checks could see direct ROI in the form of reduced number of staff needed to track and process payroll. Mean while a company that already had an automated way to track time and process payroll would see more of an indirect ROI in the form of better efficiency from the new application.

Thus, though not easily visible, companies should consider the benefits of indirect ROI, too, rather than deciding not to improve its technology simply because they cannot quantify the direct ROI. Other wise, they risk not being able to keep up with their competitors. In part two, we will discuss more tips for predicting ROI. ♦ **Page 3**



At Invisik, we value our clients' feedback. One of the most important feedback we can receive is a client's referral. To show our gratitude, we want to give you a \$25 Visa® Gift Card when you refer your business colleagues to us to receive two **FREE** hours of guaranteed, no-strings-attached tech support to use anyway they want—that's a \$300 value for **FREE!**

Our only requirement is your colleagues must be the owner or the person in charge of IT for a company with 10 or more PCs and a server.

You already know the benefits you receive as an Invisik client: sleeping like a baby because you have zero tech worries, increased productivity because of minimal downtime, protected and secure data because your backups are safely stored, and enjoying more time for yourself because you aren't agonizing over your IT network. Why not share all this with a colleague who will then owe you a big favor that you can call-in whenever you want?!

**YES!**

Please contact the people below and let them know I referred them to receive 2 **FREE** Hours of guaranteed, no-strings-attached, tech support with Invisik.

Your Name: .....

Title: .....

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Please fax or mail your completed form to receive a \$25 Visa® Gift Card!  
 Fax to: (612) 243-1477  
 Mail to: Invisik Corporation, 7240 Grand Avenue S, Richfield, MN 55423

## Choosing the Right Smartphone for You

For many people these days, smartphones have become more of a necessity than a luxury. Being able to stay in touch through constant access to the Internet and the thousands of mobile smartphone applications available has made smartphones an indispensable tool. With the boom in smartphone use also comes a conundrum for consumers: Which smartphone should I get? With so many choices available, it is can be confusing to pick the right one. Here are a few tips for canvassing the market:

### 1. Know what you want.

What do you need a smartphone for? Each handset has its own strengths and weaknesses. There are smartphones that integrate email, web browsing, and put more focus on multimedia tools such as audio and video. Then there are other no-frills, no-nonsense models that trim features down to the basic essentials.

### 2. Consider your carrier.

Carriers are important because there are some smartphones that are only available with certain carriers, or carriers that limit certain features of a particular smartphone. You do have the option of getting an unlocked phone (meaning the device does not come with carrier requirements), but this has its own set of pros and cons to consider.

### 3. Get a feel for your choices.

Nothing beats actual experience, so visit local stores to get the physical feel of each phone. Is the keypad big (or small) enough for you? Is the device too thick or too thin? Do you like the user interface, or is it too complicated? These are just some of the questions that you can answer once you get an idea of how it actually feels to use them yourself.

### 4. User feedback is important.

Talk not only to sales people, but also to other smartphone users you know. Your friends and colleagues have hands-on experience, so ask them what issues they have with their particular models.

Of course, if you have additional questions about how you can better use your smartphone for business purposes, we are here to help. Call (612) 298-3000 or email [support@invisik.com](mailto:support@invisik.com). ♦



## Cheap Firewalls: You Get What You Pay For



Part of establishing a proper security cordon around your business data is having the right hardware— such as a router/firewall— to not just get the job done, but done well. Resorting to cheap and basic equipment might cut it for personal or home use, but it is not ideal for business applications.

In business, protecting important information and data is paramount. This is why it is recommended for any size company to invest in a security system that will prevent cyber-attacks that might be launched against your business. Unfortunately, it is too often lost on many that a security system is not just one single improved thing: upgraded software, better staff training, newer hardware, et cetera. A good and solid security system is composed of several factors working together to create a virtual chain that envelops your business and keeps it safe.

One of the most underestimated links in this chain is the router/firewall. Many businesses are content using the most basic and cheapest option available on the market without realizing that their security chain is only as strong as its weakest link. And if you make do with a cheap router/firewall, odds are you will get what you pay for: very little protection.

While basic routers might work fine for personal use, it is a much different scenario when it comes to business operations because more is at stake. With viruses, malware, and cyber thieves continually trying to attack sensitive company data, it is nearly irresponsible to take the risk with cheap routers that lack the proper security features. It is essential companies understand what it takes to protect their computer network so they can invest in the best solution.

If you need help securing your company network, contact us today. It only takes one incident or infiltration to bring your whole business down. Call (612) 298-3000 or email [support@invisik.com](mailto:support@invisik.com). ♦

*Happy Halloween, Everybody!*

*~Team Invisik*

## Why Hackers Commonly Attack SMBs

There is a misconception among many small-to-medium-sized businesses that they are small targets for would-be cyber-attacks. "We're too small a company to be of any worth" is the mindset of many. However, there is an ongoing trend in which smaller companies actually find themselves victims of the most elaborate and vicious cyber-attacks.

Why? Security experts are discovering that SMBs tend to have less or inferior security protocols established to counter cyber-attacks. While this was of little consequence in the past, cyber criminals have taken notice of this fact and are exploiting it to their advantage. And it is profitable for them, too! An attack on one SMB might not amount to as much as a larger organization, but given the greater ease through which hackers can attack smaller businesses, they more than make up for the difference in the volume of companies they target. According to several news reports, these cyber-thieves can make off with as much as \$70 million.

The more unfortunate fact is that smaller companies are less able to counteract the effects of losses from

cyber-attacks. This is a compelling reason to stay one step ahead of hackers by updating company security systems. Short term or long term, it is a practical solution to keep information and data safe, and your operations stable.

### ***MORE HELPFUL TIPS INSIDE INCLUDING...***

- CLOUD COMPUTING: YES? NO? MAYBE SO?
- SCAM ALERT: FAKE CUSTOMER SERVICE CALLS FROM MICROSOFT
- THE ROI SERIES: PART ONE
- CHOOSING THE RIGHT SMARTPHONE FOR YOU
- CHEAP FIREWALLS: YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

***PLUS WHO WANTS A \$25 VISA GIFT CARD? GET THE DETAILS!***

**MORE INSIDE**

