

## ***Ten Ways Businesses Can Save In Troubled Times***

As the economy continues to slow and the outlook appears bleak for recovery in the near future, businesses have no choice but to find ways to reduce costs. One avenue for cutting costs is through expenditures in the Information Technology area. Whether your company has downsized or is just finding ways to reduce cost, I have come up with ten ways to reduce costs while keeping productivity high:

1. **Extend the life of current equipment.** As equipment becomes dated, it slows down and employees become less productive. The employee who runs that computer becomes less productive as they have to often wait for the computer to either boot or just perform a task. One of the cheapest ways to increase the performance of a computer is to increase the amount of system memory. For around \$50 per computer, you can add an additional 1GB of memory which will often turn a turtle into a hare. This little trick is most effective on computers up to 6 years old. If you are running Windows XP, we recommend a minimum of 1GB of system memory for proper operation for the average task oriented worker. For Windows Vista we recommend 2GB minimum, but recommend 4GB for regular operation. You can find the amount of system memory your computer currently has by right-clicking on My Computer, click Properties. On the window which appears you will find the amount of memory installed. Online @ [kingston.com](http://kingston.com) you can find a tool to help you find the right memory for your computer.
2. **Decrease the number of telephone lines.** If your company has downsized, you may no longer have the large call volume of just over a year ago. Decreasing one or two telephone lines that are no longer being used can save you \$100 a month. Sometimes when companies order a DSL line, the phone company will install an extra voice line to put in the DSL. So you are paying for an extra line from the phone company that you are not using. Most often the DSL is installed on the fax line.
3. **Look for telephone bundle programs.** Often telephone companies have special bundle pricing of which you may not know about. As the years go by, you continue to add lines and services, but never take a total look at your complete telephone line packaging. You may be already approved for special business discounts of which you are not taking advantage. You may also look at changing the type of service you are receiving. If you have 6 or more lines, upgrading to a T-1 circuit may bring some cost savings on your lines, taxes and long distance.
4. **Clean your computers.** I'm not just talking about the normal system defragmentation; I'm talking about opening up the computer case and blowing out the dust. When computers operate in any environment, the fans, which are designed to cool, act like a vacuum, sucking up every bit of dust in the local area. This dust creates a nice insulation layer on the computer's internal parts. Where a nice furry coat is ideal during an Alaskan winter, it is not good for the computer. The coat of dust will insulate the computer, not allowing for proper cooling. This extra heat will not only cause premature system failure, but will also cause the computer to run slow. So if you have not cleaned out your computer lately or ever, next time you are at the office store or mass merchant buy a can of compressed air and blow out the cobwebs. Note: If you have a very dusty computer, I would take it outside before blowing it out.

5. **Anti-Virus says it all.** Make sure all of your computers have an active and updated anti-virus installed. The cost of cleaning off the viruses and repairing the damaged caused will often cost more than several years of anti-virus subscriptions. Even more if you consider that there are some good free solutions out there for non-business computers.
6. **Anti-Spyware tools.** Just like Anti-Virus software, Anti-Spyware software protects your computer from malicious software which can ruin your day and your computer. Running Anti-Virus is just not enough; a good Anti-Spyware will round out your protection plan.
7. **Outsource your IT needs.** Having a dedicated IT person at your business can have many advantages, but it has many downsides. Outsourcing your IT needs can: 1) make your IT department more flexible, as an outside vendor has a larger set of resources to augment in times of increased need; 2) with outsourcing you do not have to worry about your IT person being on vacation or sick when you need them; 3) you don't have to worry about hiring the right IT person; 4) you don't have to worry about payroll taxes or benefits and 5) you can have the knowledge that you will always get the best, most up to date information.
8. **Replace your copier.** If your copier is under lease and is within a year or two of the lease expiring, contact your copier dealer to see if there is a better model to suit your needs. Often you can get the vendor to buy out your current lease and replace the unit with a new machine which is color and has many more features for about the same cost or less of what you are currently paying. The money savings also comes in the decrease energy of the new energy efficient machine.
9. **Replace inkjet printers.** The real cost of an inkjet printer is not in purchasing the printer, but in replacing the ink cartridges. An average inkjet page printed in color will cost you .23, whereas a color laser printer can produce the same page for about .08. That means for every color page you print on your inkjet printer, it is costing you an extra .15 x 20 pages per week = \$3 x 52 weeks equals \$156 a year. So replacing an inkjet with a color laser will save you \$156 a year on average. Printer companies do not make their money on the printer, but on the cartridges.
10. **Be Proactive, Not Reactive.** When times come where we have to cut back, the first thing people look to cut in preventative maintenance, because it is easy. The problem with ease is that the ramifications of this can be far reaching and expensive. A good example is changing the oil in your car; you would not go without that because you blow your engine. The same applies to your technology and other equipment in your office.

As times become tough, there are many ways to tighten the belt without affecting the long term stability of your company. Pick the right measures and you will help your bottom and keep your company safe in the long run.

You can find links to software downloads and configuration tools mentioned in this article in our Support section under Downloads and Resources on our website [connectutech.com](http://connectutech.com).

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