

How to extend the life of IT equipment in a volatile economic environment

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As a result of the current climate of economic uncertainty and a highly volatile exchange rate, many organisations are attempting to 'sweat their assets' for as long as possible in an effort to reduce IT spend. Since the vast majority of hardware and software is produced internationally, a weak rand means that any technology purchases are a costly exercise and an expense that many businesses feel they cannot justify.



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The problem here is that out of date equipment could have significant negative consequences, resulting in costly downtime. This is true of any industry, but particularly those in which uptime is mission critical, including contact centres and e-commerce businesses.

It is important to be smart when it comes to extending the life of IT equipment, and utilising professional services can help businesses achieve this aim while at the same time accommodating changes that may be required to improve business efficiency.

Sweating assets while allowing for change

Although the economy is under pressure from a global economic downturn as well as added strain from South Africa's recent junk status downgrade, customers still require an enhanced experience and continue to expect this from businesses. They demand superior service with minimal interaction, and organisations need technology to meet this demand.

A volatile economic environment cannot be allowed to dictate IT expansion. Unfortunately, this requirement is at direct odds with the need to tighten belts and make already stretched IT budgets work even harder.

The solution is to adopt a gradual displacement approach, with regard to both hardware and software, which enables businesses to effectively sweat their assets while still allowing for change and growth. In addition, services can be used to extend the life of IT equipment.

Services are a useful tool when it comes to ensuring that products are adequately maintained, which is essential in ensuring that they work optimally for the duration of their asset lifecycle. This includes ensuring that hardware, software, and firmware are up to date. However, simply maintaining IT infrastructure does not support growth or change, which is essential in today's fast-paced technology environment.

Customer experience enhancement should always be a top priority, and this often requires new technology. The most sensible approach in a volatile economy is, therefore, the migration of certain aspects of an existing solution, following a structured plan and roadmap to accommodate growth without huge capital expenditure.

The importance of a services contract

Services are critical for ensuring that IT solutions continue to function optimally, regardless of growth or migration plans. Without a services contract, downtime is a reality and resulting from that, the need for costly system maintenance and recovery. Aside from the additional cost of downtime, there is always the risk associated with being unable to run the business, and the resulting loss of productivity and reputational damage.



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Continuous service is essential, and a back-to-back services contract, therefore, needs to be maintained with suppliers. This is because products are invariably dependent on service interval checks, typically referred to as health checks, which highlight the maintainability of the system and, therefore, the predicted uptime. Software patches and upgrades could mean the difference between fractional downtime and a complete system failure.

There is a constant focus by suppliers on the software or hardware provided to ensure that firmware updates and software patches are developed and released to cater for the changing IT environment. These costs are included in the back-to-back agreements. Back-to-back contracts afford customers the peace of mind that their solution is at that 99.99% availability.

The right partner for growth and stability

When it comes to selecting a services partner, it is essential to evaluate suppliers on a number of criteria. This includes a solid track record, national footprint, and dedicated support personnel at all levels from intermediate to advanced. This is key to extending the life of your IT equipment in a volatile economic environment. The professional services provided by such a service partner are critical to not only sustaining your environment but also in the transformation of your solutions catering for the changing customer experience.

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