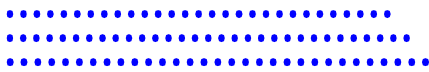




Bridge the gap between technology and people with policies and procedures.



What is an Effective IT Policy?

Uncontrolled computer use at work diminishes overall corporate productivity by squandering precious company time as well as wasting bandwidth, slowing down the network, and exposing the organization to security and legal risks.

infotex can help you develop a responsible computing policy to:

- Increase productivity and save time
- Block crucial information loss
- Decrease the possibility of lawsuits
- Reduce the threat of virus attacks
- Optimize bandwidth and improve network speed
- Eliminate unauthorized access by hackers and personnel
- Eliminate unlicensed software on your network
- Promote a comfortable work environment

Creating a Computing Policy

It is important to have a policy that informs all users that their Internet and Network usage is being monitored. It is also important to set guidelines that define what the company deems acceptable use of company computers.

Data Storage Policies

Your policy should strongly state that all data is to be stored on the network, rather than on workstations. Your policy should also state that all software and/or data found on company computers is owned by the company, and that employees are not allowed to download software and/or data without permission. Likewise, the policy should clarify the procedure for installing new software programs on the network to avoid licensing problems as well as viruses. Guidelines should be explicit regarding data transfers. Try to establish what data can and can't go home, be shared with customers or friends, etc.

Offensive Sites and/or E-mail Messages

Employees visiting pornographic or other offensive sites hurt office morale. Equally as important, such activities put users and the company at risk of harassment lawsuits.

Virus Attacks from E-mail and Data Transfers

E-mail, floppy disks, and zip disks all potentially contain viruses. Employees must follow stringent policies to avoid the possibility of destroying data. Don't wait until after your system crashes to set the guidelines and fix this problem!

"Organizations lose an estimated \$50 billion dollars a year in productivity due to employees web-surfing out of personal interest at the workplace."

- Sacramento Bee

Internet / E-mail Policies

Define acceptable use of your company's Internet connection for personal reasons. Do you want to allow employees to access the Internet for personal use during certain times of the day? Is personal e-mail allowed? Your policy should answer questions in a way that sets guidelines on "gray areas." Give examples of what is considered unacceptable usage.

Policy Abuses

It is important to specify the penalties that apply for breach of computing policies. To provide the ability to handle each instance individually, avoid absolutes, such as *"doing this will result in termination."* Instead, use language such as *"doing this may result in dismissal."* This is important in computing policies because of the unpredictable nature of computer usage. For example, what will happen to an employee who visits an unacceptable web site by accident when clicking on a seemingly relevant link during a work-related search? For this reason, your policy should also have a method for reporting accidental violations.

Introducing Your Policy

Prior to the effective date, give a hard copy of the final policy to every employee. Send an e-mail explaining that there is a new computing policy and the effective date. Explain that your policy is not only meant to help your company but also to provide a more pleasant and safe work environment. Send an e-mail reminder on the effective date.

It's the Information Age!

It's very important to always remember this when developing a computing policy. Your goal is to remove the risk of sharing information, but you are still trying to increase the ability of your people to USE information. Because it is the Information Age, the computing policy is one of those policies that must be reviewed annually!



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