

# FIVE MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CHOOSING TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUR BUSINESS

By James E. Dion



No business can avoid using technology. In fact, the proper deployment of technology can help cut expenses and improve customer service. But we have all heard horror stories of companies that spend thousands of dollars and end up worse off than when they started.

Here are five common mistakes that companies make and some simple ways to avoid making them:

1. **Not fully researching current users of the hardware or software.** Never make any investment in technology without talking to current users and finding out what they like and do not like about it. Interview at least three current users of

the technology you are considering to find out if it really works.

2. **Not learning how to use the technology.** Even a mediocre technology can deliver amazing benefits if you know how to use it and the best technology is all but useless if you don't. Invest in training; it is worth it in the short and long run.
3. **Not having a disaster recovery plan.** It is not a question of whether your technology will fail, it is a question of when. Invest in the best backup software and hardware you can find. Tape is still the best. Do a full system backup at least once-per-week in addition to your daily data file backup. Keep one set of tapes in a different

location to ensure continuity of your business if there is a fire or flood. Test your backups at least once-per-month to make sure you can restore from the tapes. Remember, tapes wear out over time so replace them at least once-per-year.

4. **Not investing in a battery-run Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS).** The best UPS systems filter power as you use your computer and prolong the life of your hardware. The extra money you spend on a good UPS will pay for itself very quickly. In the event of a power outage, the UPS should be configured to begin an orderly shutdown of your system before you run out of battery power.
5. **Buying cheap hardware.** Good business hardware is "hardened" for a business environment. It will stand up to rough use and last far longer than hardware designed for home use. This is especially true of printers. Check the "duty cycle" of the printer, which tells you how many pages per month the printer was designed to produce. Most lower priced ink jets are rated less than 1,000 pages-per-month while even a low priced laser printer will be rated at 5,000 or more pages-per-month.

That's it! There are other mistakes to make, but if you pay attention to the five biggest ones, it will save you time and money, as well as a few gray hairs. **S**

---

James E. Dion is founder and president of Chicago-based Dionco Inc. and is an internationally known consultant, keynote speaker, trainer and author of the best-sellers *Retail Selling Ain't Brain Surgery*, *It's Twice as Hard* and *Start and Run a Retail Business*.

