Mac IT Best Practices

Michael Volchok
Volchok Consulting, Inc.

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Volchok Consulting

✳ New York-based Apple Network VAR

▸ Provide IT Consulting

▸ Operate a Mac Help Desk

▸ Develop MAX Help Desk Management software

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How IT impacts your business

- ✳ IT has a direct impact on the success of the business

- ✳ IT can be a competitive advantage

- ✳ IT is a major expense

- ✳ Poor IT management can be a productivity drain

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IT WARS

* The names of our clients have been changed to protect the guilty and innocent

  ▸ "Good" Guys: Alliance Recycling

  ▸ "Bad" Guys: Imperial Waste Management

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Alliance Recycling

* Business growing

* Staff not stressed by IT problems

* Work regular hours

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Imperial Waste Management

✳ Business shrinking

✳ Low employee morale

✳ Reactionary IT support

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How to Evaluate Your IT Service Delivery

Macworld San Francisco 2006

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Methodology

✳ Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) vs. Return On Investment (ROI)

  ▸ Total Cost of Ownership is a cost-only analysis, does not look at benefit

  ▸ Return on Investment looks at both cost and benefit

    ✦ Productivity

    ✦ Cost of Support

    ✦ Employee Retention

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IT Management Software

✳ Users per technician

✳ Calls per user

✳ Help desk solve rates

✳ Tracking IT workflow

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IT Software Example

✳ Alliance Recycling

▸ All issues must be entered into IT software

▸ Extensive use of knowledge base

▸ Clear procedures

▸ As a result more incidents resolved at the first level

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IT Software Example

✳ Imperial Waste Management

▶ Many issues not entered into the software

▶ Almost no use of knowledge base

▶ Few incidents updated by desk side

▶ Much lower solve rate at help desk

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Service Level Agreement (SLA)

✳ Determine the business requirements

✳ Create SLAs that match the requirements

✳ Ensure SLAs are being met

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SLA Example

* Imperial Waste Management

  ▸ No written SLAs

  ▸ Have unwritten expectations requiring extremely high levels of support for all users and all issues

  ▸ Expectations are rarely met

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SLA Example

* Alliance Recycling

  ▶ Written SLAs, differing response levels based on urgency

  ▶ Manage user expectations well

  ▶ These expectations are almost always met if not exceeded

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Personnel

* Support teams: Help Desk, Desk Side, Network, Application Support, Telecom

* Purpose of support teams

  ▸ Different skill sets, different pay rates

  ▸ Clear lines of responsibility

  ▸ Establish lines of promotion and growth

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Personnel Example

✳ Alliance Recycling

- ▸ Five support groups

- ▸ Strong focus on getting least expensive group to handle any issue

- ▸ Strong use of help desk

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Personnel Example

✳ Imperial Waste Management

▸ Two support groups use software two others do not

✦ Communication to these groups is verbal or via email

✦ Service delivery is undocumented by these groups

▸ Desk side technicians handle almost all issues

▸ Little use of help desk

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Outsourcing

* When to Outsource

  ▸ Cost Savings

  ▸ Specialized service

  ▸ Hide head count

* Pitfalls of Outsourcing

  ▸ Loss of control of service delivered

  ▸ Don't outsource your competitive advantages

  ▸ Requires management

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Service Delivery:
The Alliance
vs.
The Empire

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Imperial Waste Management

✳ Spending per year per user - $1250

✳ User to Desk Side Tech Ratio - 77:1

✳ Support Level - Inadequate

▸ 15% solved at Help Desk level

▸ Poor Documentation

▸ No defined procedures and policies

▸ Poor coordination, no management

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Alliance Recycling

✳ Spending per year per user - $1250

✳ User to Desk Side Tech Ratio - 90:1

✳ Support Level - Excellent

  ▸ 44% solved at Help Desk level

  ▸ Excellent Documentation

  ▸ Well defined procedures and policies

  ▸ Centralized management and coordination of service delivered

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How to Maximize Your IT Resources

Macworld San Francisco 2006

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Principles

* No single point of failure

  ▸ Equipment

  ▸ Staff

* Have problems solved at the lowest level possible

* Make sure IT supports the business

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IT Management Software

- ✳ Issue tracking

- ✳ Communication

- ✳ Centralized knowledge management

- ✳ Reports

- ✳ SLA management

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IT Management Software

* Major packages – HP, CA, Remedy, Heat, Footprints, Magic, Peregrine

* Mid-Tier package – Web Help Desk, MAX Help Desk

* Free packages

* helpdesk.com has an overwhelming number of choices

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Asset Management

✳ Deploy, manage and track assets

✳ Reports

✳ Repair histories

✳ Widely used systems: Casper, Track It, Altiris, Apple Remote Desktop, Microsoft Excel

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Backup

✳ Backup/Archiving Management

▸ Backup schemes to fit business requirements

▸ Legal requirements – compliance

▸ Backup client machines?

▸ Major packages - Retrospect, Backup Exec, ARCserve

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License Management

✳ Legal compliance

✳ Don't overbuy or underbuy

✳ Track and don't lose licenses

✳ Upgrade/sidegrade opportunities

✳ Per-seat vs. per-user licenses

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NetBoot

✳ Imaging

✳ Troubleshooting

✳ Centralized server architecture

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Remote Control

* Fast access to users' desktops for help desk and desk side

* Some software distribution capabilities

* Examples: Apple Remote Desktop, Timbuktu, Filewave, VNC

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Software Distribution

- ✳ Software maintenance without a desktop visit

- ✳ Batch upgrade capability

- ✳ Examples: Casper, Filewave, NetOctopus, Apple Remote Desktop

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Standardize Hardware

* My theory

  ▸ Macs have 3 year life span (PCs tend to have shorter life spans)

  ▸ Purchase 1/3 of your total machines every year

    ✦ Facilitates budgeting

    ✦ Only have to support three models of machines

  ▸ Roll down machines to lower demand users

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Standardize Hardware

✳ Alternate method - Buy as you need

▶ Most common approach

▶ Meant to minimize machine purchases

▶ Maximizes number of models to support

▶ Harder to budget

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Standardize Software

✳ Images

▶ More upfront work, less day to day support

▶ Template Users

▶ Much easier for users to swap machines

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Standardize Software

✳ Limit users to non-Admin accounts

▸ Prevents users from installing and updating software

▸ Prevents users from making changes in System Preferences

▸ Requires solid help desk support

▸ Requires remote control

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Policies and Procedures

✳ Change management

▸ Green zone

▸ Test before deploy

▸ Back out plan

▸ Change frequency

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Security Policy

✳ Security Policy

▸ Balance between business security and productivity requirements

▸ Sarbanes-Oxley requirements

▸ Remote Access

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Disaster Recovery

* Evaluate time business can be down

  ▸ Recovery can be in stages

* Create disaster relocation/recovery plan in advance

* Test your plan regularly

* Keep your plan updated

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Evaluate

✳ Continually evaluate service delivery

▸ Run reports from your IT software

▸ End user satisfaction surveys

▸ Manager satisfaction surveys

▸ Periodic reviews for IT staff

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Thank You

Michael Volchok
Volchok Consulting, Inc.