

AUGUST 27, 2009

## The True Cost of Tech Downtime And How To Avoid It: CMIT Solutions Jeff Connally

<http://smallbiztechnology.com/archive/2009/08/the-true-cost-of-tech-downtime.html>



CMIT Solutions headquartered in Austin, TX, has over 100 national franchises of local computer consultants.

Based on my personal experience CMIT's franchise owners are not simply propeller headed geeks, but are truly passionate about ensuring their business clients are successfully using technology to grow their business.

Instead of charging an hourly rate, CMIT charges one flat rate per computer (or server) or service (such as anti-spam, backup or monitoring). With this flat rate there are no surprises at the end of the month. You know your cost for IT maintenance and support.

What's also nice about this model is that it is in CMIT's interest to ensure your computers and other technologies are running smoothly. If CMIT has to come to your office to frequently, to solve problems, they'll be losing money.

In July CMIT introduced a new service, the "CMIT Service Center", which is a web based interface enabling CMIT customers to issue support requests via the web. For issues that do not require immediate assistance (hence a phone call)

being able to submit a request for help online saves time and enables the business to track the progress of the support request as well.

Jeff explained to me that the service center is a part of CMIT's overall strategy of being the "trusted business adviser" to businesses. Of course the role of "trusted adviser" is not exclusive to CMIT. Dell, your local independent computer consultant and other national technology consulting companies all want to be your trusted adviser.

**The question and decision for you is - who can do the job best at the best value.**

Jeff's goal for CMIT is to work with first class partners (the local franchise owners) to package solutions with the highest service levels at the best value.

Most small businesses are committed to a client server architecture, Jeff explained. This means they have one or more servers and then "clients" or individual computers connected to those servers through a network. CMIT's service is perfectly suited to manage this sort of setup.

For phone calls received by CMIT's help desk (as opposed to the web based portal) 80% of the time - the call is answered before the third ring. With a "level one" technician (based in the US) handling the call. If the call cannot be handled through a technician on the phone, the call is escalated to the local franchise owner to have a look and then visit the business or see if it can be remotely resolved.

For the times (20%) that calls go into voice mail, phone calls are returned in less than an hour.

For those businesses not paying a flat monthly fee, but instead using the "break and fix" model of support, their costs and frustration levels could be higher. Every time they call their local consultant, they are charged a fee.

Even if the problem is solved, Jeff explained, there is often a delay and the unplanned expense is surely not welcome, especially in these tough economic times. With a "managed service", which is an environment wherein the business' technology is proactively managed, symptoms of problems (such as low hard disk space on a computer) are often discovered before they are problems.

Jeff said that an indirect cost of the "break fix" model is a loss of productivity when a problem occurs. Having to pay to resolve a support issue is not good. But being unproductive for hours could be even worse.