



# *5 key IT areas*

*you must address in 2021  
as part of your overall  
business strategy*

*– end of year IT strategy advice from our MD*



## 5 key IT areas you must address in 2021 as part of your overall business strategy

As we finally approach the end of what we can all agree has been a challenging year, it's likely that the last thing you want to think about is your IT for next year.

However, being the IT super-fans that we are, *we'd suggest that now is the best time to do this.* We're about to begin a new year. It's going to be another challenging one. **So what greater way to start than with a clear strategy for the months ahead?**

A solid IT strategy is a crucial part of any business's growth plan for the year.

You can't grow the business unless your technology serves and enhances what you want to do.

Of course, we're biased. But a powerful IT strategy really is the foundation of moving the business forward. Especially when times are tough.

### ***With the right strategy and implementation plan, your IT will be one of the greatest tools you have working for you***

Perhaps you haven't created an IT strategy before. Or maybe you have, but the business has outgrown your original plan.

Or it's possible that good old 2020 has thrown yet another spanner in the works and the business direction has completely changed.

So, where do you start?

It sounds like a huge undertaking. But with the right advice and guidance, it's actually a lot simpler than you'd think to create a personalised IT strategy.

Here, we've listed the 5 most important areas to include in yours.

**Before we begin, it's worth noting that your strategy should take into account business goals for the:**

- Short-term (let's say 6 to 12 months)
- Long-term (2 to 5 years)

We'd always suggest that you focus on a strategy that has plenty of room for movement. Because as we've seen this year, things can change... and quickly.

You and your team must be adaptable in order to survive – no, to **thrive** – in these tougher times.

Here are the **5 areas** that need to be addressed in your IT strategy >>

1

## OUTLINE YOUR GOALS

As a successful manager, it's likely that you already have clear goals. After all, this is what drives you to keep pushing the business forward.

But it's also important to consider how the IT infrastructure will accommodate them. Your IT strategy should support and compliment your goals.

You may be considering how the business will function during the rest of this pandemic & after? Even though there is great positivity around the vaccine, the world will never function in the same way again from an IT point of view, it is most definitely changing. Many of our customers are considering how much office space they need and if working from home will remain as part of normal life. IT strategies like 'IT anywhere' & using the best of cloud technologies to create cost-effective hybrid networks are the latest trend.

2

## IDENTIFY YOUR KEY PEOPLE AND A TIMELINE

You probably already know the key people within the business, but they may not be the same people you make responsible for delivering your IT strategy.

Will you have an internal department handling things, or does it make better financial sense for you to partner with an external company? Who will manage liaising with your IT partner? And who does your strategy apply to?

Consider these questions carefully, and take some time to speak to key people in each department. Find out how they currently use the technology you have, how they feel it could be improved, and which elements are vital for them to fulfil their roles.

When are you looking to implement any changes you may need to make? If you need to make some dramatic changes, will it be a company-wide roll out? Or will you do things gradually to help with the budget and troubleshooting? If the changes are smaller, when do you anticipate completing the update?

Security breaches are also at an all time high for SME'S and Mid Market businesses. You should really consider a security risk assesment. You might be surprised on the findings!

You'll need to think about the sales pipeline and operational goals. How can your infrastructure make achieving those goals realistic?

What about any future partnerships you plan on making? Will you make any acquisitions or mergers along the way? What requirements will your customers place on you? How will your infrastructure support this kind of growth?

You should also consider action plans for individual departments. Will some departments require additional IT tools or support? Will the whole business benefit from your plan, or will it need adapting for key people or departments?

There is also a trend to use SharePoint and create a central hub for your business. All departments can access critical information in a central, visually appealing and easy to use 'Intranet' It's cloud based and included in your Office 365 subscription.

3

## REVIEW YOUR CURRENT IT INFRASTRUCTURE

You really need to understand how well your current infrastructure is working, in order to see what improvements (if any) need to be made.

As mentioned before, speak to your key people in each department to find out how they're currently utilising their resources:

- What improvements do they feel could be made?
- What would make their job easier?
- What is making things more difficult than they need to be?

What external factors should be considered? An example could be an ISO Certificate, your customer requirements, COVID19 or by ceasing BT lines. *(Means you need SIP on your phone system or move to the cloud)*

It's important everyone understands that this step needs some critical thinking. The sky's the limit. Your people should be telling you how they'd love things to work in a perfect world; if there were no limitations on what you're able to do. That way, you can work to find solutions as close to perfect as possible.

Remember that each department or function will have a different take on this, because they will be using the technology differently, depending on their roles. The key is to find the sweet spot in keeping everyone productive, motivated and happy.

4

## CREATE YOUR IT ROADMAP

This might sound like the hardest step, but creating a roadmap for your new IT strategy is vital. If you've followed my advice and planned properly, it shouldn't be too complicated.

This is probably where you could do with some help from a strategic IT partner, such as us. You'll need to think about the overall technological architecture, which includes cloud solutions, hardware, software, and other tools your people will be relying upon.

Your IT partner should be able to make the appropriate recommendations to fit your requirements. And suggest tools that will all work with each other seamlessly.

Section your roadmap into departments and the differing technologies they will require. This will help to give you an overview of how everything will fit together when the time comes for implementation.

5

## DEFINE NEW METRICS

While your new IT strategy should work to make your business life easier, it's also of vital importance that it's cost-effective too.

Again, breaking it down into departments is critical. And we suggest creating new KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to help you monitor exactly how performance is changing over time.

It's worth remembering there may be a short period of adjustment for your people. So you may not immediately see the results you're hoping for if you've made some dramatic changes. But it shouldn't take long for you to notice longer-term improvement.

Creating and tracking a range of metrics will give you a fantastic insight into how well your new technology infrastructure is working for you. It will also allow you to be more proactive in identifying and solving minor issues as they arise. And importantly, before your team is impacted.

**If you would like more help, the following services are available ...**

- **IT Strategy Consulting**  
*(Simply booked on a day rate. It's a high level interactive planning session, helping you to achieve your strategic goals and overcome obstacles)*
- **IT Audits & System Reviews**
- **Security Audits & Pen Testing**
- **Commercial IT Relocation**  
*(We have a partner in our business that can help with office relocations, so while we focus on the IT part, they will do the furniture)*
- **Managed IT Support**
- **Connectivity**  
*(Fibre leased lines, FTTC, FTTP, Broadband)*
- **Cloud IT Solutions**  
*(Office 365, MS Azure, Email Security)*
- **Cloud Telephony**  
*(No more copper lines!)*
- **Security Solutions including Firewalls & Web Filters, Email Filtering for 365, Anti Virus**
- **Business Continuity, Backup, Off-site Backup, Cloud Backup**
- **Desktop, Server and Storage Hardware**
- **Virtualization**
- **Networking**  
*(Switching, WIFI, Cloud Infrastructure)*
- **Web Development and Digital Marketing**  
*(Delivered by Breathe Clicks, our development team)*

## ***Your choice of strategic IT partner is crucial to getting this right***

This might all sound a little overwhelming, especially if it's not something you've done before. However, hopefully you can see the many benefits of creating an IT strategy or at least have a plan to support your business plan.

Bring in the experts if it still seems daunting, and you will definitely see improvements to the way you do business.

**If your current IT support company can't act strategically, then it's time to switch. Lots of businesses trust us as their strategic partner.**

Breathe is here to support you. We have extensive experience and a skill set, that is second to none. You just need to reach out.



*"I would like to wish you a super successful 2021 and look forward to supporting you and your team, technically and strategically."  
– Craig van Aswegen.*



[www.breathetechnology.com](http://www.breathetechnology.com)  
(live chat available)



Cambridge HQ Tel: 01223209920



[Lucy@breathetechnology.com](mailto:Lucy@breathetechnology.com)