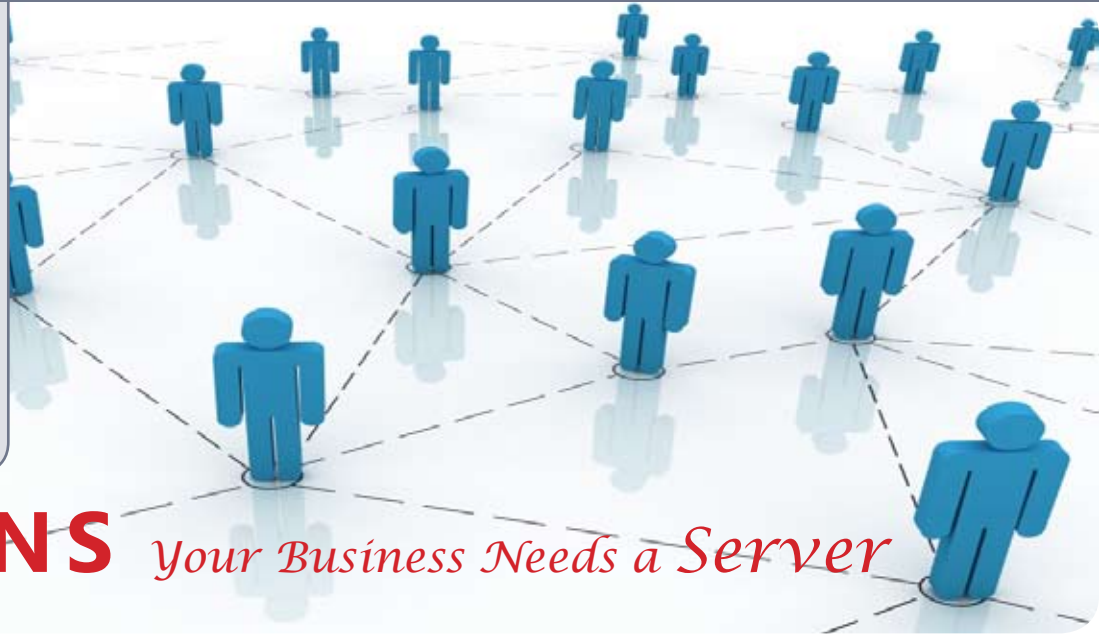




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## 8 REASONS *Your Business Needs a Server*

The words server and network used to conjure images of big computer rooms tucked inside the bowels of corporations, and managed by tech specialists in windowless offices. Thankfully, times have changed.

Today, server-based networks can be found in more than 20% of the U.S. small businesses with more than one PC, a percentage that continues to grow, analysts say. What's more, servers and networks have even moved into businesses with fewer than five PCs, as users see the efficiencies and better productivity of a shared network, analysts say.

"I see more and more small businesses running servers, even one-person offices," says Laura DiDio, small-business analyst for The Yankee Group, a Boston-based tech research firm. "They allow you to get more bang for your technology buck."

### *Eight Reasons You Need One*

Based on these analysts' feedback and others', here are eight reasons to buy a server for your small business, rather than

doing without or relying on peer-to-peer networking.

**1. You can create order from chaos.** By centralizing data on a server, you can better manage business-critical information. Sharing files and other data across PCs becomes much easier, as does migrating data from one PC to another.

**2. You can protect your data by making backups easier.** Two features of Windows Small Business Server 2003, for example, enable users to better protect their data assets by simplifying backups and the restoration of critical data. The features are the Backup Configuration Wizard and Volume Shadow Copy.

**3. You can collaborate better as a business.** Not only is data sharing easier with a server-based network, but Windows Small Business Server 2003 comes with Windows SharePoint Services, which is software that enables your employees and other team members to collaborate via the Web. With SharePoint, you get a company intranet...

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## 8 Reasons Your Business Needs a Server (continued)

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portal with a user-friendly interface to organize and share information. It comes pre-populated with help documents and resources. A server also is a must if you want to run line-of-business applications, such as accounting solutions from Microsoft Business Solutions, on multiple PCs.

**4. You can accommodate a mobile work force.** Servers enable authorized out-of-office workers to have remote access to your network, enabling data sharing among those who travel, telecommute or work in off-site locations. Through Remote Web Workplace, users of Windows Small Business Server 2003 can get access to server data via the Internet. Out-of-office workers also can connect to the company intranet via SharePoint.

**5. You can share high-speed broadband access.** “A real catalyst to server sales among small businesses is in providing high-speed Internet access across a network,” says IDC’s Boggs. “If I’m running a business now that has three or more dial-up accounts, it’s time to get a server and go broadband.” The return on investment will come quickly in the form of higher productivity, he says.

**6. You can set up new computers, add users and deploy new applications more quickly and easily.** Expect to grow? By managing your data from a central location, you can better coordinate the addition of new PCs, software licenses and software applications. You can also better manage firewalls and monitor threats to your data, and more easily deploy virus protection and intrusion detection.

**7. You can get more processing power.** A server can supercharge your network, storing large chunks of data, freeing up memory and enabling individual PCs to perform better. Small businesses today need that additional processing power to run Web services, manage Web sites, do e-mail newsletters, and use more sophisticated tools and applications, DiDio says. (Boggs says he foresees more and more households buying servers to accommodate students using their PCs as educational labs and teenagers who buy online games and other sophisticated applications.)

**8. You can look more professional and connect better with your customers.** Server software such as Windows Small Business Server 2003 enables you to consolidate your e-mail accounts (AOL, Yahoo!, Hotmail, etc.) into a single, company-hosted e-mail account, enhancing your image to customers and partners. “You could have several aliases from one root e-mail address,” Brelsford says. “A server can make a lot of businesses look bigger than they are.” Adds DiDio, “It not only gives you more bang for your buck; it makes you look more professional to those you want to do business with.”

### *How you know it's time to buy a server*

- You need to centralize and organize your data (you can't always find what you need when you need it).
- You need to share hardware such as printers and fax machines for two or more PCs (peer-to-peer networks mean lots of cords and wires to trip over).
- You need to simplify backups to keep your data more secure.
- You have employees who travel, frequently telecommute, or work off-site, and want to connect to a network.
- You could benefit from an intranet (your employees who travel and telecommute don't always remember to tell you).
- You have high storage needs (and your loaded-down PCs wince and groan when you add more data).
- You'd like to run accounting software or other line-of-business applications on more than one PC.
- Your company's growing and plans to add new computers and employees (congrats!).
- You mean business: You want to look professional (and bigger than you are).
- Your PCs are old, old, old, and you want to get rid of them. A server makes migration easier.

By Monte Enbysk

# YOUR LAWYER IS MOWING YOUR LAWN?

## 9 SIGNS YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS TECHNOLOGY HELP

While the notion of your lawyer mowing your lawn seems absurd, many small businesses are doing the equivalent when it comes to managing their own technology. Suffice to say, a lawyer's talents are best suited to practicing law, not caring for lawns. When it comes to mowing my lawn, I personally prefer professional lawn care to the \$500/hour lawyer. Would you consult your CEO, President, CFO, or Vice President when your computer is running slow or your VPN doesn't work? Sounds just as crazy as having your lawyer mow your lawn doesn't it? Truth be told, hundreds if not thousands of small businesses are doing just that and more when it comes to managing their technology. Here are 9 not-so subtle signs that your business needs technology help:

### **Your company's mission statement has become "I don't care as long as the network is not down again."**

Business continuity is critical to any organization's success. A proper backup strategy, clear disaster recovery plan, and understanding of the costs of downtime to your business will pay dividends in the long run. If the phrase "Is the network down again?" is all too familiar in your organization, you might want to evaluate your technology support strategy.

### **Network?! I'm not really sure...I think I have a server or something in our back closet.**

Your network or infrastructure is the equivalent of your company's plumbing. Your company's infrastructure can be in-house or hosted and serves many critical functions including storing/protecting your IP, supporting critical business functions, and allowing connectivity regardless of location. Network infrastructures often comprise your computers, servers, routers, switches, and wireless transmitting devices. A sound network is the foundation for your entire technology program.

### **Often overheard around the office: "I don't know just reboot and see what happens."**

Employee productivity and efficiency is critical to overall business success. If end users are spending more time trying to fix computers than performing their designated job functions it ultimately affects the bottom line. A dedicated support resource can not only boost productivity and efficiency, but also make life a whole lot easier.

### **New employees call the VP of marketing the "computer person."**

This situation is all too common! It's what is termed the "accidental techie" Long story short; your VP of Marketing has inadvertently become your tech support specialist. This means you're looking at mediocre lead generation and technology support at best. Find a tech person to fix computers, so your marketing person can market.

### **The only thing backed up around your office is your iPod, your vacation photos, and the line to Dunkin Donuts.**

Protecting your most vital business information is critical. Your backup system should be monitored and maintained on a daily basis and tested to ensure restoration capabilities in the event of a data loss episode.

### **Most of the people in your office think Exchange is some new extreme sporting event.**

If most of your office is still using Hotmail, Gmail, and Yahoo accounts for email, it's time to take a look at some other options. Your email is vital to both your user productivity and your ability to communicate with the outside world. Today there are a number of options regardless of your business size.

### **You keep thinking there's got to be a better way to do this! *(There is, read below to find out how)***

**Are you tired of computer problems? *There is a better way.***  
**Call for a free Problem Prevention Audit**

To introduce you to our services, we would like to offer you a FREE on-site, problem prevention audit. Upon completion of this audit, we'll provide you with a detailed report that will outline where you are at high risk of viruses, downtime, or other problems, and what options you have for protecting yourself. As always, our goal will be to find low-cost simple fixes to conserve your budget.

To request your FREE Problem Prevention Audit, contact our office:

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## Clear Focus Named In The **TOP 100** Managed Service Providers Around the World!

Clear Focus, was just ranked 89th out of more than 500 Managed Service Providers across the globe. A managed service provider is a company that offers outsourcing of an IT function, such as data security, backup, e-mail, internet, etc. Managed service providers also monitor and fix computer networks proactively; often remotely rather than having to work hands-on at a client's office.

The ranking was compiled using an index measurement calculating overall managed services revenue, overall managed services growth, number of computers managed and other data.

Clear Focus is one of the early adopters and leaders of the MSP model. The MSP industry has been rapidly growing across the country. "We are very excited to be in the Top 100 MSP's in the World. We knew businesses needed a higher level of service than traditional computer repair companies could offer and this is clearly the trend for the future," said Doug McLeod, President of Clear Focus, Inc.

### **About Clear Focus**

Clear Focus provides a suite of managed services for small to midsized businesses allowing for end user support, network management, and strategic growth. Clear Focus delivers the same level of complete technical support found at large companies but at an affordable cost, charging clients a flat monthly fee. Clear Focus is continually improving the value of its services and focuses on making its customers more efficient, productive, and satisfied with their technology investments. Located in Wenatchee, Washington, Clear Focus provides services to a wide range of clients ranging from nonprofit organizations, professional service firms and manufacturing companies. For more information on Clear Focus, visit [www.clearfocus.net](http://www.clearfocus.net) or call 509-663-7000.