

Call It 'Health Care for Your Computer'

Decatur, GA – One minute a small business is humming along - the next, one computer can't print, another is stalled from spam, and a third won't stop flashing an error message. A small business can be startled with I.T. bills that range from zero dollars a month – to thousands of unbudgeted dollars.

The new trend is paying up front for the security of knowing your computer will not stumble when you need it. Many computer consulting firms nationwide are now offering what the industry calls "Managed Services," a sort of health insurance for small business computer needs.

For a flat monthly fee I.T. gurus like Chip Reaves handle all regular maintenance and take care of any computer problems. "Technology consulting firms like ours used to get paid when computers broke down. Now, more and more, our franchise owners are telling us clients prefer to pay a predictable monthly bill to keep computers healthy."

Companies that are large enough to have I.T. departments can deal with the occasional computer crash, but businesses with 25 or fewer employees tend to contract out their computer repair and maintenance.

"Those smaller businesses are actually the ones that can least afford to have computer trouble," says Reaves. "Little guys really depend on all their staff being productive all the time. We fix everything from virus infections to server crashes." His company, Computer Troubleshooters, is the world's largest provider of Managed Services and offers a unique 'No-Downtime-Guarantee.'

"It's actually a much better service," says Reaves. "Instead of getting paid when your computer is broken, your local I.T. guy gets paid to keep it from breaking. We have an incentive to keep the business problem free. It's better karma," he laughs.

New technology doesn't just mean more computer components to break. New advances mean more ways to keep the small business up and running. Some technology consulting firms are able to install software so that I.T. service is paged when the computer system gets too hot, or gets infected. "Sometimes, we know before the client does. We'll call up and say, 'Hey, I see your back computer isn't hooked into the network,' and they'll go check and say, 'Hey, your right!'"

Small and medium sized businesses, like the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center operated by Darrell Keating, find it more cost effective to pay I.T. repair companies to keep their computers working, rather than pay when they break down. "The best part...is that we don't see enough of them – this is meant as a compliment. Monitoring is done from their 'home office.'"

Reaves says small companies are wasting valuable time on computer issues. "We want to eliminate computer problems so that our small businesses can stop worrying about when their next computer problem will be and, instead, let us show them how they can enhance their businesses with new technologies."

About the Author

Chip Reaves is the National Director of Computer Troubleshooters. To help pay for his studies in computer science at Georgia Tech, Reaves began fixing computers for local businesses in the late 1980's. The part-time work quickly became a full-time business, with Reaves establishing Chiptech in 1992. Reaves was surfing the web when he discovered Australia- based Computer Troubleshooters in 1998, and by 1999 he had negotiated the rights to operate CTS in the US, a move that has led to over 500 franchise locations nationwide. Reaves is also on the board of directors of two local charitable organizations. Chip Reaves' website can be found at www.comptroub.com

Source: <http://www.spivo.com/articles>