Integrating technology
How to increase the productivity of your operations in 2015

INTERVIEWED BY JAYNE GEST

As companies continue to grow, particularly through mergers and acquisitions, many expect their existing employees to do more work with fewer resources.

"This is common in the business world today and throughout Cleveland. It's happening in about 90 percent of the companies and industries we speak to today," says Melanie Boyes, sales manager and director of managed service sales at Blue Technologies.

In order to achieve success with your current staff and resources as your company continues to grow and evolve, you need to evaluate new and changing technologies to improve the efficiency of your operations.

By keeping up with technology and being open to change, you'll be able to work smart and handle the demands of continuous growth while staying ahead of your competitors. Your existing way of operating might not be the best solution available as you look toward 2015.

Smart Business spoke with Boyes about evaluating existing operational processes and inventory layout and then improving upon them to increase efficiency.

How should companies evaluate their existing processes and inventory layout?

Every company should have a dedicated technology plan and/or goal for 2015. The best way to create or improve upon that goal and/or plan is to listen to your staff about pain points that continually come up.

It's important to note that an infrastructure goal won't be solved overnight. It may take months to get to where you want to be, but you can get on the right track if you start by hearing what your staff is saying.

You also can work with a technology partner on this evaluation, in order to fully see what opportunities and options are possible in your industry when your software, hardware and infrastructure are optimized to work together. A technology partner should evaluate your hardware inventory — every piece of paper you print out, scan and/or send — in every location, as well as your company's IT infrastructure, to supply an overall consolidation plan.

Once you've evaluated, what's the next step to making improvements?

The overall consolidation plan should include recommended technology upgrades and placements to keep your hardware, software and IT infrastructure up to date and on par based on your operational needs.

The assessment should include line-by-line recommendations based on individual positions' performance and needs, which can differ among individual roles, departments and locations. For example, your sales team may need remote access to the server and printer, while that might not be as important for C-level staff who stay in the office.

Can you give some examples of gaps or inefficiencies that can be solved with a technology solution?

Your hardware setup should be designed to maximize your print and scan flow, while boosting productivity and security compliance through integrated functionalities. For instance, companies within the banking industry must be able to track faxes, emails, prints and copies between users for security purposes. They can utilize a report system solution for this with the right software, infrastructure and hardware setup.

Another key gap is that any company running a 2003 server or Windows XP must partner with a technology solutions provider, since Microsoft has stopped support of these platforms. If this is your company, reach out to a technology partner immediately to get a free assessment of your system and a recommendation for what changes you need to be making.

How granular can you get with these solutions?

A qualified technology partner can get extremely granular to customize a best-fit solution for your company's unique needs based on industry protocols and compliance, as well as what value the technology brings.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Again, listening to your staff, fostering teamwork and getting the right education and training is essential. When you ask your people to do more work with fewer resources, they need to be involved in the operational improvements that will enable them to be more efficient to do so. ●

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FOLLOW UP: Request a free business assessment of your current operational processes and inventory at www.btohio.com/contact-us/evaluation-request.

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