

## Create a Computer Usage Policy for Your Small Business

If you are a small business owner, chances are that you have at least one computer and employee working for you. In order to protect your business and maximize your employee's happiness, consider creating a fair and practical computer usage policy.

Begin by researching how your business operates and what sort of data it generally uses on a computer. Key points to consider are as follows:

- **Understand the risks-** Define the sort of information you need to protect and determine how cyber threats might affect that data.
- **Understand your system-** Learn about the IT security protections (firewalls, antivirus, etc) your company uses and understand how they work to protect your data and IT network.
- **Understand your users-** Learn how tech savvy your employees are—find out how informed your users are to the risks of internet usage and project how their behaviors create risk to your company's data.

Once you've discovered your business's computing needs and learned more about your employees' knowledge of threats, create an easy to follow policy that addresses what actions are permitted and be sure to spell out prohibited actions. Be sure to cover the following areas:

- **Mail-** Decide how your users deal with business and personal email, and make sure that they don't affect each other.
- **Files and documents-** Make sure users save information onto the server so that it can be backed up.



- **Laptops-** Find the best way to keep the data on company laptops protected, up to date, and available for users' mobile needs.
- **Instant messenger-** Many small businesses struggle on what to do around IM. Using IM can expose your IT network to outside security threats, so balance the possible benefits to your users and business against the possible drawbacks.
- **Internet usage-** In clear language, state what the company uses the internet for and how users need to use it safely and securely.
- **Personal programs-** Decide if you will allow users to use personal programs such as iTunes, streaming music, twitter and other applications that have do not impact business but make your employees happy. If your business is exposed to little risk through the use of personal programs, consider allowing them.
- **Applications and piracy-** All employees should know your company's policies against copying or illegally distributing programs.

Once you've created your small business's computer usage policy, introduce it to your employees with some simple actions such as:

- **Training-** Educate computer users on the new computer usage policy, and provide additional information and retraining when necessary. A great resource for free online security training can be found at <http://www.thinksecurityfirst.us/>.
- **Commitment-** Once users have received education and training, have them sign the new policy. Also consider reevaluating the policy on a semi-annual basis, or anytime major changes occur in the IT network.
- **Implementation-** When possible, enforce the policy indiscriminately by using computer configurations.



Depending upon your business's specific needs, your computer usage policy may be liberal or restrictive. To learn more about constructing a personalized computer usage policy that meets your business computing needs, please contact the [IT outsourcing](#) experts [All Covered](#) at 866-446-1133.

Contact All Covered Toll-Free Nationwide at (866) 446-1133 or at [www.allcovered.com](http://www.allcovered.com)

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