



The Importance of Getting IT Right

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When your information is wrong or out-of-date, or you use it badly, the people that you serve, rely on and deal with feel the effects.

Getting IT wrong

You send letters to their old address, despite being told their new address. You mis-spell their name. You send them an email inviting them to become a Life Member of your charity when they already are a Life Member. You make them fill in the same information on your website every time they come back. You mix up your clients' appointments. You email people your newsletters even when they have asked you not to. You charge them for services they have cancelled, or cancel their services when they haven't asked you to.

And the result? Your clients, suppliers, donors, members – the people who matter to your organisation or business – feel a little bit less "known" or cared for, and are irritated by your mistakes. And they become that little bit less likely to support you, to stay loyal to you or to use your services.

Information is the life-blood of many organisations. Mis-handle it or make it unavailable and the life drains from the business. These days, most businesses and organisations rely on Information Technology (IT) to manage their information and keep it safe. So if your IT doesn't help you to keep your information in good shape, then your ability to serve your clients or members is put at risk. When information is at the heart of what you do, so is the IT that manages it for you.

So it is critical that you have the right IT to support you and your information. How do businesses end up with the wrong IT? No-one sets out to buy the wrong IT or to have their IT project end in disaster, with thousands of pounds wasted on unsuitable software or incomplete systems. Despite this, up to 60% of IT does not deliver what was promised or hoped for.

Generally, if an IT purchase is going to go wrong, it goes wrong at the very beginning. If you don't think through and write down what you want, how will the salesman know what you are expecting? If you don't engage the people who will use the system in that process of working out what's needed, how can you be sure it will do the job? If you don't research and test out the potential suppliers, how will you know who are the cowboys and who can be relied upon to deliver? If you don't adopt a structured approach, how will you compare like for like between suppliers?

Getting IT right

For busy managers, especially if they don't have a background in IT, the prospect of buying IT can be intimidating. It's not clear where to start, and it can be all too easy to buy from the first plausible-sounding IT salesman that calls. Fortunately, there is guidance available. The Business Link website has advice on [how to](#)



[choose and manage suppliers](#). There is an excellent book specifically on the subject: [IT Procurement Handbook for SMEs](#). Clearsight Consulting has [published resources](#) that provide checklists for setting about IT selection. And of course there are consultants such as [Clearsight Consulting](#) who specialise in managing IT specification and selection.

The bottom line

There is no need to be one of the 30 to 60% of people who regret their decisions about IT. By getting it right from the start, it is possible to buy the right IT first time around.

Further information

Clearsight Consulting helps businesses to invest wisely in technology through their [Buying IT service](#).