

Microsoft Software Asset Management

Tips on Reducing Support Costs

- 1. Establish a central database** and generate reports to capture hardware, software, and user information. Your staff will have a thorough knowledge of each employee's system and will enable them to provide better and faster support.
- 2. Track the service history** and hardware. Specific software titles and hardware components that are typically troublesome can be examined and, if necessary, replaced with more robust solutions.
- 3. Limit the number of applications** your staff must support by standardizing applications and systems whenever possible.
- 4. Maintain support contracts** for all company-critical software and hardware and encourage your staff to use them. Every time the staff gets help from a vendor they become more skilled and efficient at their jobs.
- 5. Avoid custom in-house solutions** if possible. The support overhead is generally greater for custom applications than for prepackaged software.
- 6. Consider purchasing a helpdesk** and issue tracking system. These systems may be more expensive, but they generally have more features than ad-hoc database systems, frequently take less time to implement and make software support tracking easier.
- 7. Provide training sessions for your support staff** on how to use your core software and hardware even if they don't use the software directly for their jobs. A thorough knowledge of your company's software will lead to better and faster support for those applications.
- 8. Encourage staff-led lunches** and group discussions so employees can share knowledge and to improve overall efficiency.
- 9. Encourage your staff to find ways to automate** repetitive tasks. This gets them thinking more directly about their jobs and can result in greater overall efficiency. Be sure to document any automated task and set up a procedure for reviewing it regularly.