

Computer Systems Unit

(Part of the Standard Question and Answer Business Plan)

Computer System Requirements

Why does your business require the use of computers?

- Word processing, correspondence, reports, etc.?
- Point-of-sale transactions?
- Record keeping: financial, sales, purchases, inventory?
- Producing financial statements?
- Creating promotional materials?
- E-commerce / Website Operation?

How many computers or work stations are needed?

Do you require a Local Area Network(LAN) or an Intranet?

- Will you have network connections to peripherals such as printers, scanners and fax machines?
- Will you require centralized file server(s)?
- Do your workstations require internet access?
- Will you require an intranet between two physical locations?

What type of internet service do you require?

- Dialup internet access for a sole computer?
- High speed internet access(ADSL, Cable, T1 etc.)?
- Static IP address(es) for hosting your own web server(s)?
- Will you operate your own email server?

Who is going to service your computers and computer systems?

- An independent computer service?
- A consultant with limited clientele?
- In-house employees?
- Casual contractor?
- Will you have a schematic of your entire system that is easy to update?

Do you require portable facilities?

- Will these interface electronically with in-house facilities?
- Will these use laptop computers, palm pilots or telecommunications?

What provisions are there for the electronic transfer of data?

- Does it extend to your LAN, intranet and internet connections?

Data Access and Security

What level of security will be provided?

- Will confidential files be protected from others in your organization?
- Will data from such functions as marketing contacts, sales, payroll and finance have controlled access?
- Will the entire system be protected from external threats such as hackers, spam, computer viruses and data miners?
- How will you control access to programmable functions?
- How will user accounts be managed and controlled?
- What safeguards will protect you from sabotage by a disgruntled employee?
- Will your security extend to peripheral and off-site devices?

Who is going to perform inputs to your database or other information sources?

- Will some employees have limited access?
- Which employees will have unlimited data access?

What backup systems are in place?

- What are the backup routines?
- Will you have offsite storage?

Computer Software

What Operating System will you use for your computers?

- Is it compatible with your software requirements?
- Is it compatible with your network requirements?
- Does it meet your security requirements?

What type of software will you require?

- Can Open Source software meet your needs?
- Will you require commercial software packages?
- Will you have access to programs maintained by your industry or profession?
 - Will this service satisfy all your internal needs?
- Are you going to create your own custom software applications?
- Will this integrate all data from your sales, operations, personnel and finance areas?

- Will the data be relational to all or parts of sales, operations, personnel and finance areas?
- Who will design and maintain the database system?
- Who will program the various modules?
- Who will coordinate the development of the system?
- Will your programs be documented sufficiently for another programmer to alter or do maintenance?

What type of accounting software is appropriate to your business functions?

- Will batching on simple spreadsheets be sufficient?
- Will proprietary programs such as AccPac, Quicken or Intuit be sufficient?
- Will you create your own database management from off-the-shelf applications such as MS Access?
- Does your software control accounts receivable?

What other types of software applications are required for your business functions?

- Do you require spreadsheet, flowcharting or wordprocessing software?
- Do you require photo and graphic composition and editing software?
- Is there any other software you require?

Need Help With Your Business Plan?

Whatever your situation or budget - let's discuss it!

For a FREE consultation with NO obligations, send a brief request to:

BPCoach@UncleMaxSays.com

or visit

<http://www.unclemaxsays.com/businessplancoaching/bpcoaching.php>