Making Small Businesses Compute

(NAPSA)—New technologies have helped small and medium-sized businesses make big contributions to the economy. In fact, the Small Business Administration estimates that small firms now represent more than 99.7 percent of employers in the U.S., employ more than half of all private-sector employees and pay 44.5 percent of the total U.S. private payroll.

So how do these businesses keep their technology in working order? Perhaps surprisingly, many do not keep IT personnel on staff. Instead, they use phone tech support, computer stores or on-site service. Here's a breakdown of each:

Small businesses can work with on-demand, on-site technicians to cut IT costs.

Telephone Support

Telephone support can sometimes be a convenient fix. Some phone tech support companies offer remote takeover to fix your computer (where the technician controls your computer from his), but that option only works if you can connect to the Internet—and it can pose privacy issues. Therefore, a user may need to interrupt his or her workday to sit through what can be a lengthy call. If you use phone support, it's important to be clear on all instructions you receive before you do anything to your computer. Also, keep in mind that it can sometimes be difficult to understand technical jargon over the phone and some problems simply can't be fixed over the phone.

Off-Site Locations

If you bring your computer to a location to be serviced, be sure the store's technicians are certified—and do not feel pressured to sign up for services or add-ons with any purchases you need to make. In addition, find out if the store has a privacy policy. Technicians generally have access to all files on your computer, so it's a good idea to make clear which files they are free to access and which files they are not. Also, keep in mind that you may have to turn your computer over to the technicians for a number of days.

On-Site Technicians

Companies often work with groups such as Geeks On Call because the group focuses on customer service as well as tech support. They generally provide same-day or next-day service, and their technicians are A+ certified, tested regularly, and are graduates of a weeklong repair and customer service course. They can be a good on-demand tech resource, or companies can use them as part-time support. An added bonus: Users can watch the technicians work, helping to ensure privacy.

For more information, visit www.geeksoncall.com.