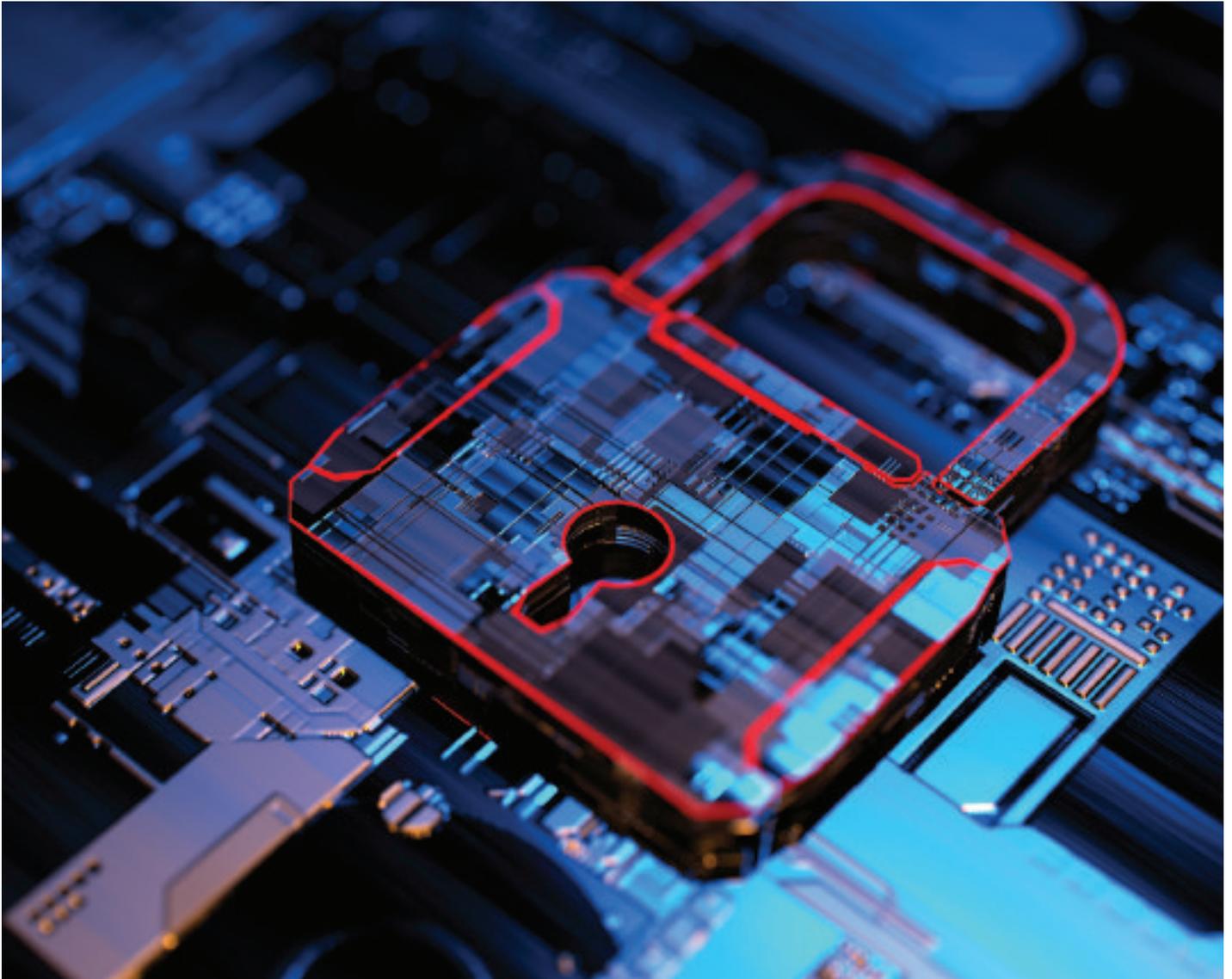


ESSENTIALS

Legal / Technology / Consulting



Why Hiring Local IT Matters :

Do you know who handles your business's online security?

IN AN OFFICE setting, IT support can send out waves of negativity; technology-based issues seem to be at the crux of employee frustrations. It's a double-edged sword that cuts deep, the age-old adage "can't live with them, can't live without them." The real culprit, however, might just be that businesses are outsourcing overseas or to out-of-state support, rather than finding

a company with a nearby home base.

Specialists in the IT field are trained to manage a company's technological needs in addition to providing employees with expert guidance. They're not only equipped with the knowledge to handle general computer systems, cloud platforms, electronic hardware, device networking and software

Information Technology Gets Personal

You would not give a person you don't know the credentials to your bank account, right? So why allow an IT professional to crack open the heart of your business without even meeting them face to face? Why your IT company needs to be local
By **Aly Payne**

applications; they should also leave you feeling confident in their ability to handle immediate problems, as well as create preventative measures for potential future issues. In a nutshell, the added tech support should pave the way for an increase in business efficiency and productivity. It's a responsibility you'd only give to someone at the top of their field. So, make sure you do.

"Just like with any professional business partner, having a close relationship with your IT service is important for solving near-term problems while keeping your longer-term goals in mind," said Lawrence King of Addison-based Headstorm. "Such a relationship requires good communication and trust. Having a local partner means that you can rely on Headstorm to work closely with your team without the challenges and costs of out-of-town providers." Familiarizing tech support with the company culture and overall work environment can give IT a firm grasp on your needs and perhaps even enable them to anticipate needs as your organization grows. If you're

outsourcing these services overseas or out of state, the likelihood of forming this initial bond is rather slim, as is the chance of receiving a product that is tailor-made for you and your employees.

Imagine business takes off, an additional 200 employees are hired and the server is in overload. Suddenly, it crashes, but your current tech package doesn't cater to the change, and reaching an agent is nearly impossible. How many days of work might you lose? It's no secret that technology plays an integral role in business success, and having the flexibility to cater to consumer demand and market drive can put you at the forefront of industry trends. This is where forming a relationship with your service provider

is crucial. Ultimately, you should consider them an important member of your team, one that works in tandem with the evolving needs of your organization.

Local businesses recycle a greater portion of revenue back into the Town's economy, provide jobs with greater wages and benefits, ensure that local decision-making considers everyone affected, and foster innovation and competition.

The greatest impact is felt on an economic level. As more of us turn to one another for products and services,

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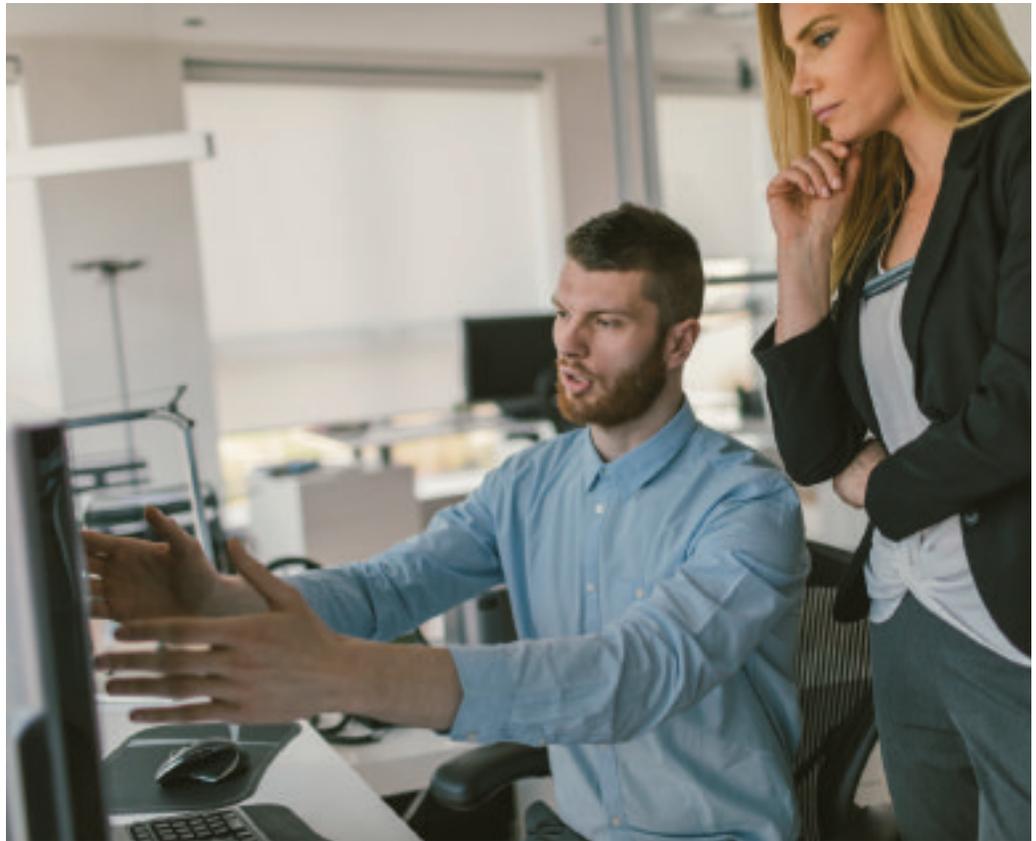


that money begins to circulate in our local economy, making a more significant impression on development than if businesses and consumers turned to larger out-of-area corporations. As a matter of fact, a study executed by private research firm Civic Economics closely monitored how much of a dollar spent at an independent store was re-spent in the local area as payroll, goods/services purchased from area business, profits spent locally by owners, and as donations to area charities. It revealed that “on average, every 48 percent of each purchase at local independent businesses was recirculated locally, compared to less than 14 percent of purchases at chain stores.” Alongside the industry-related perks, it’s important to know why these aforementioned community benefits matter. It’s the epitome of “you get what you give,” and it’s an aspect of business that remote IT services lack.

That’s not to say, however, that your local support team can’t assist you remotely; that’s the beauty of their work. They can monitor your company’s status, manage security features and implement updates on an as-needed basis. In fact, any minor complications that occur can likely be handled without interruption at the office, but it’s in those select few instances – and every company has had their share of run-ins – that you’ll be thrilled you made the decision to hire local. As they arrive with a team more than equipped to handle your data professionally and delicately, you’ll thank the business gods above for keeping the IT crew’s commute at a minimum.

The fact that they come at all, and typically in a timelier manner, certainly distinguishes local IT support from its remote counterpart, but it’s also that they care to fix your immediate problem in the first place. By taking you on as a client, they’ve invested in your company, and this aspect will be reflected in the support team’s attention to detail and careful analysis of issues at hand. Furthermore, they’ll be more in tune with the local market and, therefore, understand what types of issues area organizations encounter.

Having that extra peace of mind and knowing where you stand with your IT consultants contributes to rapport, and it allows for an open line of communication and trust. While communication is key, trust is vital when it comes to your company’s private information and important data. In this regard, you don’t just want to know



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your IT support team; you want to be closely acquainted, with a strong knowledge of their service history and reputation. And who better to promote and review your chosen service than other local entrepreneurs whose opinion you value? It all comes full circle when you remain within the city limits. “At our core, Headstorm provides custom development services including core business applications and websites,” said Russ Pearlman of Headstorm. “Our talented team of technologists can help throughout the lifecycle from setting in place a technology strategy, designing solutions, building applications, maintaining them and ensuring performance security. In addition, our desire to help the broader North Dallas community means that we are committed to the success of not only our business but all businesses in the area.”

They should keep you updated on the latest technological improvements, new programming, superior software and, if they’re doing their job right, they ought to ensure that you receive these services at a reasonable price. When you really get down to it, without extensive knowledge of a particular market or continued relationship growth, it’s highly unlikely that they’ll suggest more than the basic upsell, and modifying your contract after the fact becomes a problem in itself.

Regardless of whether your only need is website management or clearing the printer’s paper jams, IT support is necessary for every company to run smoothly. So, the next time you peruse the internet for an ideal local IT group that best suits your needs, we hope you’ll see the advantage to staying close to home. Make a point to create a relationship, form a partnership, and trust that the recommendations of fellow North Dallas business residents served you well. As you reap the benefits of a well-established partnership, we’re sure you’ll conclude that there really is no place like home. **NDB**