

NEWS SUMMARY

MICROSOFT RELEASED NEW SUPPORT PLAN

Microsoft Corporation released revised guideline called Support Lifecycle policy. It standardizes Microsoft's product support policies, and applies to most products that are currently available via retail purchase or volume licensing, and most future release products. The new support lifecycle policy provides that Microsoft will offer a minimum of five years of mainstream support from the date of a product's general availability. After the end of mainstream support, you have the option to purchase two years of extended support. Additionally, most products will receive at least eight years of online self-help support.

Life Tips

There is no shortage of good days. It is good lives that are hard to come by.

— Annie Dillard

Support Lifecycle policy divides the software into *Business and Development Software group* and *Consumer/Hardware/Multimedia software group*. Each software group has different policy. Please visit <http://support.microsoft.com> and check the detail.

Business Tip: R.O.I. in I.T. investment. What really determines it?

The U.S. economy has been sluggish for more than a year, and most companies nowadays are very cautious about investing in their IT infrastructure. On the other hand, it is time to update their infrastructure because it has been about three years since the crazy Y2K issue arose. It was a time when many companies rushed to purchase new systems, which are now obsolete, thus learning a costly lesson. Since then, ROI (Return on Investment) of an IT infrastructure has become the focus of attention for many companies.

As a matter of fact, for the past five years, it appeared as if companies expected the new systems to bring fruit without any effort on their part. Fortunately, that has changed. Now, companies must have a clearer purpose for choosing and using a specific IT system. And, if these companies have a *purpose*, then they must also have a *goal*. This is where ROI has proven to be very useful. ROI is basically a measurement that tells you how much you have achieved in terms of your goal from the investment you have made.

“How do you determine ROI of an IT infrastructure?” Many IT vendors will say, “This CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software helps maintain good relationship with customers,” or “This accounting software will save a lot of precious time for your employees,” or “This warehouse management software keeps a good inventory control system.” Do any of these statements mean anything to you? Probably not because they do not explain about payback and how much benefit you can obtain from your investment in an IT infrastructure.

To illustrate, suppose your company uses the system for sales and demand forecasting. What factors do you need to control continuously in order to identify whether your business operations have made any improvements or not? If you ask this question to your IT vendors and they cannot give you the answer, then you should consider replacing them with the ones that can. They do not deserve to be your providers. If IT vendors have no idea how their work affects your company opera-

tion and how it contributes to the company's goal, then they are not apt to make important decisions about your IT systems. Therefore, it is necessary for your IT vendors, and you, to understand the aspects of ROI.



An IT vendor is not just any vendor. We believe that IT vendor plays an important role in your company; it is almost like a partnership. Your business operations rely heavily on your IT vendor especially when you have an IT infrastructure and do not have internal staff to maintain it. Therefore, how well your IT vendor understands both technology and your business operations determines ROI in your IT investment. So choose wisely!!

(If you want to know IT ROI estimation, please call YUJI IORIYA at (323) 265-3000 to obtain the details.)

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ACCPAC Messenger's Internet Fax Service is designed to improve flexibility and reduce costs by eliminating the need for on-site fax hardware or additional phone lines. The service provides users with a local or toll-free number to receive faxes into e-mail, and the ability to "print-to-fax" from Microsoft Windows applications like Word or Excel. Fax broadcasting is supported, as is fax on demand, an automated phone-in fax request mechanism.

Companies involved in real estate, medical services, travel, sales, customer service and other areas with high phone and fax traffic, especially those with remote workers, can all benefit from ACCPAC Messenger's centralized message management.

ACCPAC Messenger is available from ACCPAC Solution Providers. ACCPAC Messenger integrates with telephone systems from Avaya, Nortel, NEC, Mitel, Siemens and Panasonic.

Unified Communications Made Affordable and Easy with ACCPAC Integrated Voice/Fax Solution

ACCPAC International, Inc. announced the release of ACCPAC Messenger, a network-based unified communications product for small and mid-size businesses (SMBs). ACCPAC Messenger is designed to deliver low-cost voice mail, call center and fax management that integrates with standard e-mail and business applications. The solution offers lower installation and ongoing telephony-management costs compared with traditional hardware-based telephone-only solutions.

ACCPAC Messenger takes the place of the company voicemail system and improves upon it through integration to e-mail and other network business applications. The software is installed on a typical server equipped with a multi-line voice board connected to the company phone system and data network. ACCPAC Messenger is designed to enable businesses to easily design and manage their phone and fax system, including call routing trees, company and personal greetings, call transfers to internal or off-site workers, and fax routing to network printers, scanners, e-mail and other business applications. ACCPAC Messenger's simple-to-use interface enables users to make changes quickly. Call center options, for example, can be updated by the company's own staff, thus improving responsiveness to customer needs while reducing or eliminating consulting costs.

Because ACCPAC Messenger works with the data network, both voice and fax messages can be integrated with other network applications, such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems and e-mail used in a business. Voice and fax messages can be accessed, forwarded or saved as e-mail attachments, extending the functionality of the telephone and fax system to the desktop or remote PC. This gives employees the flexibility to use a local PC, remote laptop computer, desktop phone, or mobile phone to centrally manage a variety of communications.

