Why Buy a Business-Class Computer?

As a business owner or manager, you know as well as anyone exactly how valuable every dollar is in your budget, and it gets more valuable every day. You also know that prices for computers have fallen as technology becomes cheaper to produce and the marketplace becomes more competitive.

"Cheap technology" is everywhere. However, it is critical to understand the distinctions between business-class computers and consumer-class computers – those you would find in retail stores or online for purchase by individuals. Many computer manufacturers offer what appear to be the same computer make and model in both their consumer and business divisions, but in reality, that couldn't be further from the truth.

Durability & Reliability

When purchasing a computer, a business-class system will bring you more value for a much longer duration than the consumer counterpart. Parts used for consumer computers may be more generic or even cheap, and may even be different side by side on the production line. Computers designed for professional use more often include higher grade materials and name-brand parts. These parts are tested more rigorously and are all the same for like computers. Manufacturers plan obsolescence into both consumer and business-class systems. For consumer-class systems, that means that once the computer is out of production, the manufacturer will cease creating software updates and sometimes parts to repair them.

In contrast, business-class systems take into consideration, supportability of the computers far beyond production dates. The effort and planning that has been invested in designing and manufacturing a system will generally be reflected in its initial purchase price. Bottom line: business-class computers are built to last; consumer-class computers are built to be disposable.

Future options

Updating or modifying business-class computers is expected. Business-class systems are typically designed from the ground up with consideration for possible expansion or modification to provide new or greater functionality sometime in the future. Consumer-class systems are not designed for the future, so much as, they are designed to sell popular technology at the moment. Such a system may never be any more capable than when it's taken out of the box. A savings of one hundred dollars today, could mean costs of several hundred dollars in the future.

Security Concerns

With new technology comes rising concerns regarding security. Increasingly, manufacturers are providing enhancements to business-class systems that focus on safeguarding both their operation and the data contained on those systems. Independent of security software applications, manufacturers are building into the systems the ability to manage and secure the systems in a fashion required of many of their business clients. Features such as, storage encryption, chip-based tracking services, identity management – like fingerprint readers, and remote desk-top control software are becoming increasingly present in business-class systems. The same isn't true for consumer-class systems which have far fewer regulatory and management considerations to guide their design.

Service & Warranty

Business-class computer systems come with better service and warranty options, and will be more easily supported by your IT department as well. Consumer-class computers typically come with a 1-year depot service warranty. This means you need to transport the computer locally or across the country for service. Business-class systems often come with a 3-year, parts and labor warranty, and repairs are done onsite. Business users also tend to get priority support, via a dedicated support line, and you can opt for onsite tech support available within hours; rather than having to send in your computer for repair, which could take weeks. Although there are a number of variations on warranties, the terms for consumer-class systems are typically less thorough in coverage and convenience, which can cut into valuable production time.

Closing Thoughts

Business-class computers are designed to reflect and support a company's critical reliability and performance needs. Making a computer purchase based solely on price can make the cost of support and functionality much greater over time. If you're buying a laptop or desktop PC for your business, invest in one designed for business users and the investment will pay off in terms of better reliability, easier troubleshooting, and more professional features.

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