

How Managing Software Assets Helps Businesses Win

Simple Steps Aid Businesses by Maximizing the Value of Software

(NAPSA)—Business owners in search of advantages when competing against larger companies can reap tremendous benefits by knowing what software they own and where it is installed.

But many firms don't realize what software asset management (SAM) can do for them.

Common benefits of effective SAM plans include increases in employee productivity and satisfaction, improvements to business performance, and reduction of costs. Software management also helps keep data safe and provides peace of mind.

To achieve these advantages, businesses should establish a SAM plan consisting of a few important policies and procedures.

Taking time to make a detailed software inventory can help most businesses get ahead. This can be done manually with the help of software inventory tools. Knowing what software you own provides these advantages:

- Helps ensure that you buy only what the business needs, which saves money
- Helps you budget for current and future technology needs and spend wisely
- Improves security as a result of your awareness of what is installed and where, increasing protection
- Can help qualify you for valuable volume licensing discounts

Companies with just a few computers can check each manually with the Add or Remove Programs tool in the Windows Control Panel. Businesses with many PCs can use automated programs that scan and list the installed software. The Microsoft Software Inventory Analyzer does this and can be downloaded free of charge at <http://www.microsoft.com/msia/>.

Next, businesses should match their software inventory with related license acquisitions. These



More firms are realizing what software asset management (SAM) can do for them.

agreements ensure that businesses receive helpful product support if problems arise. If businesses have more software installed than related licenses, purchases can be made by contacting an authorized Microsoft software reseller or visiting <http://shop.microsoft.com/helpdesk/reseller.asp>.

Draft a policy for employees to ensure proper software use, which helps prevent viruses and unauthorized downloads and limits security risks. Businesses don't have time for these headaches.

Determine which departments will buy new software. A single source prevents wasting money on incompatible software or redundant efforts. Develop a centralized system to keep track of what software is in use. This makes maintaining inventory accuracy easy and prevents you from buying software you already own or don't need.

Finally, develop an ongoing SAM plan. This helps businesses plan budgets for technology, train employees on software to be more productive and generally better understand their technology needs.

For more easy tips on SAM, visit <http://www.microsoft.com/sam/>. Information about Microsoft licensing can be found at <http://www.microsoft.com/licensing/>.