

# The Bottom Line

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News You Can Use From the World of Technology

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## SMB Stocking Stuffers For 2009



What priorities are going to be stuffed in your company's IT stocking for 2009 given the delicate economy? According to a white paper issued in October by CompTIA Research® of survey results of Small/Medium Businesses (SMBs), **78%** will invest in "protecting the company's intellectual property by enhancing data security and **72%** by beefing-up backup and recovery." Another **42%** are planning to make PC upgrades or replacements in 2009 and a more recent trend is investment in "top-line" market advantage technology, such as customer relationship management solutions (**27%**) for retention and desktop publishing (**24%**) for promotion. Other areas that the surveyed SMBs said they would be investing in, despite the need to watch budgets, are those which offer quicker access to information to make better decisions, storage area networks (**30%**) and network attached storage (**27%**).

Are you certain where you should be spending and saving your IT budget for 2009? Do you need help ensuring you invest in the right solutions for your business? Give [Blackline CIO Services](#) a try. Staffed by Senior Engineers who have decades of IT Management and Executive experience, our experts can help or even be your CIO.

## IT Governance - What and Why?

Of the many "best practices" a small/medium business can adopt, the collection of practices and processes which provides a calculable and tangible ROA can be found under the umbrella of IT Governance. Most small/medium businesses do not see the value of implementing a strategy of IT Governance until spending or compatibility have already become profit and productivity issues. At its core, IT Governance defines what IT decisions should be made to increase organizational value, who should make these decisions and how those decisions are made and monitored. A solid IT Governance plan goes hand-in-hand with IT budgeting and planning and is critical for emerging businesses who see technology as a key tool to staying competitive. To understand which IT best practices would bring you the quickest and most valuable ROA, visit [IT Governance](#), where you can learn more and request a complementary initial consulting discussion on the topic.



## Ring Out the Old. Ring In the New!



Microsoft® recently made available a new generation of Small Business Servers (SBS). You can read a brief overview of the Server 2008 value at <http://www.microsoft.com/sbs/en/us/overview.aspx>. Black|Line has just completed its first client SBS 2003 to SBS 2008 migration. The transition was smooth and successful, and we learned things only experience can teach. If you have been contemplating the life cycle of your Microsoft® capabilities, especially in the areas of security and scalability, or if you just want us to evaluate how your business would benefit from implementing or waiting on Microsoft's latest developments, send an email to the [Black|Line Support Desk](#).

**Looking For A Blazed Trail?** Have you been thinking about a new solution or technology to address a business issue? Are you concerned about being a trailblazer and the risk to your business. Well, good thinking on your part! Maybe we can help. Starting in January, The Bottom Line will be offering a link to Black|Line case studies for you to review for ideas and confidence that someone else has already blazed a trail for you. Additionally, let us know the solution or technology you are considering, what problem you are trying to solve, and we will try to find actual client solution case studies that describe a successfully implemented solution. Contact your Black|Line Account Executive or Engineer, or email [CustomerFirst@BlackLineConsulting.com](mailto:CustomerFirst@BlackLineConsulting.com).

From the Editor's Desk...



As another New Year approaches, I am eager to look ahead to the changes we are going to make to be better and to the successes that we hope to have as a small growing business. However, I would be

hasty to not reflect on the lessons learned from the year (almost) gone by.

Lesson #1: It's all about the Customer. We learned for the 15th year in a row that this is the "secret sauce" so many service businesses blend into their success recipes but fail to put in enough of. From the beginning of January, we focused on eliminating basic "holding" and "off-side" penalties. We improved at returning calls, following up, and doing what we said we were going to do (among other things); and we made changes to our starting lineup when the passion and willingness to improve just was not up to our committed standards (See #2).

Lesson #2: A company's brand is only as good as the people who represent it. As Jim Collins, the "Good To Great" author puts it, you have to put the right people in the right seats on the bus. He recommends hiring the best people you can and then together mapping out the exact route for the "bus," not the other way around. To some degree, as a business owner, you have to know your destination, but I am surrounded by people at Black|Line who have great internal compasses. They all have the same high level of passion for Lessons #1 and #3.

Lesson #3: Have a beginner's mind. Phil Jackson, in his book "Sacred Hoops" about his early championship Bulls' seasons, talked about how Michael Jordan never stepped on a game or practice court with too much pride and arrogance; he was always willing to learn something new—from everyone. Jackson called this having a beginner's mind at all times. It has helped the people in #2 be humble and eager and open to what the people in #1 need and want.

In 2009, if we ever forget our learned lessons from 2008, you will remind us, I hope. Thank you for your business and trust over the past year. I look forward to doing great things together in the twelve months to come.

Jody Jankovsky  
Black|Line Owner