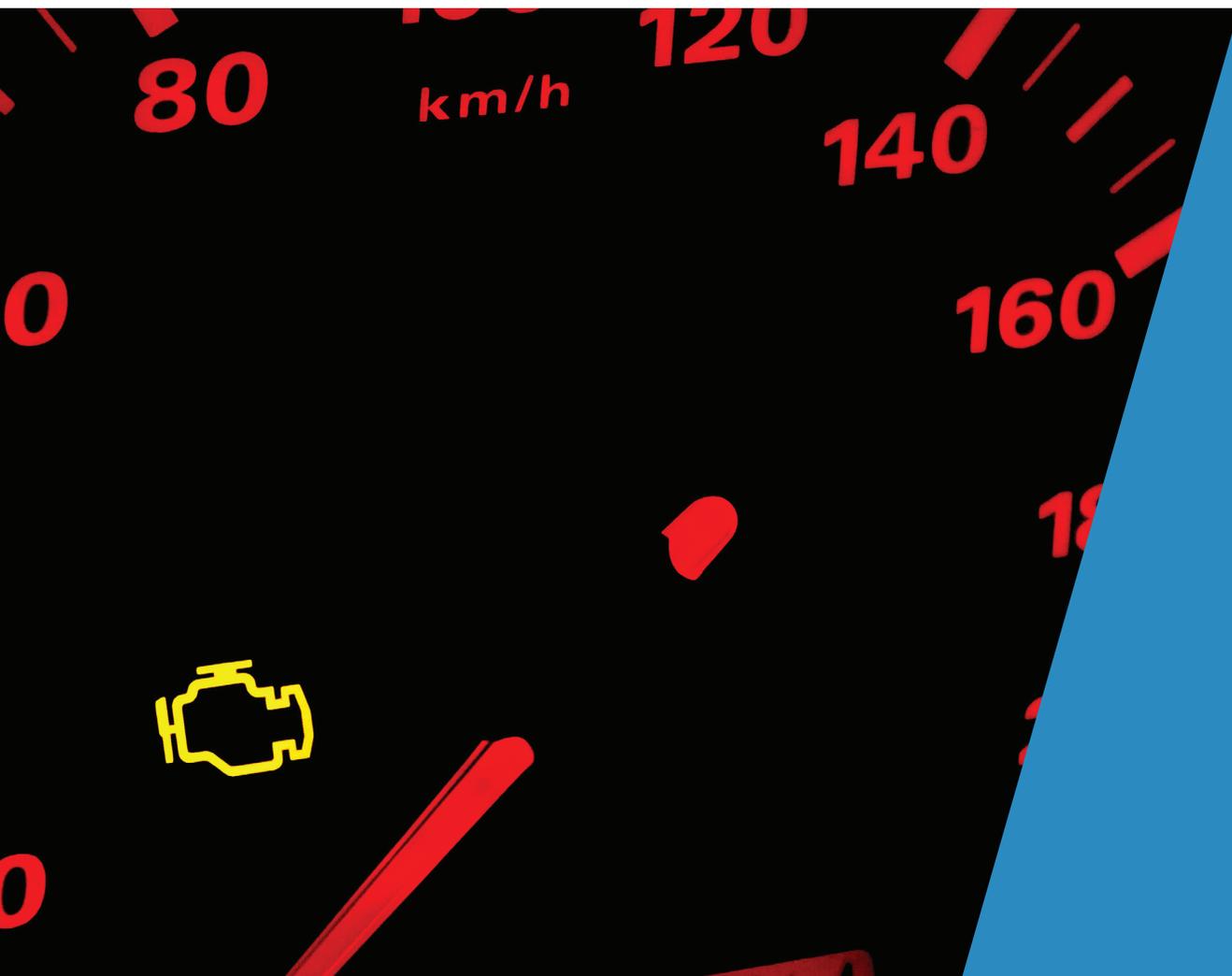


You Wouldn't Ignore the Check Engine Light on Your Car's Dashboard, Would You?

By Brian P. Weaver/VP, Cloud Services



You Wouldn't Ignore the Check Engine Light on Your Car's Dashboard, Would You?

Perhaps the warning light this time is not anything major, but what if it is? If you have owned a vehicle for any length of time, you certainly would not let much time pass before taking it in for service to find out the cause of the issue.

We don't like paying for repairs in advance when they might not be needed. It's human nature to feel this way, yet many of us realize the importance of staying proactive with issues that crop up with our vehicles. We know (many times from past experience) that ignoring or avoiding the issue (that pesky dashboard light) is to do so at your peril as it could lead to costly breakdowns, unbudgeted expensive repairs, and being left stranded on the side of the road.

But why is it that we often do not feel the same sense of urgency and proactive mindset when it comes to our company's IT? Even small offices these days have several machines that are required to perform a range of functions, deal with thousands of files, and make millions of calculations a second. What's more, they have to do this while trying to run ever more sophisticated software and are under ever increasing threats from hackers and viruses, not to mention kicks from frustrated staff whenever there's a paper jam in the printer. Perhaps you haven't experienced any major problems so far. You will, and it's not a case of if, but when!

Reactive Support Costs Your Business More

So it's eventually happened. That aging hard drive on your CFO's desktop that has been making grinding sounds for months finally stopped working. Unfortunately, it contained all of your Account Receivables data. You're going to need someone to come in and fix it - if that's even possible. While you're frantically calling around to find an IT service company, your accounting staff can't collect or pay bills. This is the world of reactive IT support.

But what if.... someone had been continually checking your networks and IT equipment? They would have seen that the systems vital hard disk needed replacing and let you know. What's more, they would have been able to back up its contents so you would have access to the data you need to work. This is how proactive, rather than reactive, solutions can end up giving you a much greater return on your investment than you expect.

How Proactive IT Support Saves You Money

If you're paying a Managed Services Provider (MSP) partner to look after your IT, they can carry out a range of tasks for the same monthly fee. Best of all, they're proactively monitoring your entire infrastructure 24 hours a day, seven days a week – they truly have your back! This means that one of the experts on your MSP's team can see potential problems before they grow and cause downtime. It is easier to fix problems when they begin rather than after they've spiraled out of control. If you're using reactive IT support, chances are your IT issue is already massive by the time you call someone. You've then got to spend more time waiting for them to diagnose and fix the problem. In the meantime, ask yourself: can you operate without your computers or file access?

You Can't Budget with a Reactive IT Approach.

Let's go back to our "Check engine light" analogy. The person paying the automotive service company knows how much they need to put aside on a regular basis for standard recommended maintenance and can budget for it accordingly, perhaps avoiding that check engine light from ever coming on. The person with the smoking engine, broken down on the side of the road, now has an



enormous and unexpected bill to pay. You simply can't budget for expenses that you don't know are coming. You're just hoping, and probably praying, for the best. When that nasty virus does hit, or your servers crash, will you know in advance how much it's going to end up costing you? Proactive support means you are paying a fixed monthly fee; you know it's coming and can work it into your budget.

A Dependable, Secure Network Saves You Money.

Of course, you may be lucky with your choice of reactive support and never suffer a major disaster that necessitates calling out the IT service company – however, you are still actively losing money! This is because machines that are not regularly patched with the latest software updates will slow down and become a security risk. The time your staff is using to wait for computers to boot up, open websites, and complete tasks, is time being wasted.

Of course, if you're not constantly updating your system security, ensuring backups are scheduled and that firewalls and antivirus applications are being used correctly and are up to date - you can expect a disaster sometime soon. It has been estimated that there are nearly a million new malware threats released every day. Hackers don't even need to be particularly innovative to attack you. Verizon's 2015 Data Breach Investigations Report found that 90% of hackers rely on computer bugs that have been around since 2002 and target companies that haven't got around to patching them. A proactive managed support team would have fixed this long ago.

Quite simply, except for very small companies relying on only one or two desktop computers, reactive IT just doesn't make sense these days. Proactive IT maintenance with periodic hard- and software checks and diagnostics will improve network dependability and guarantee more uptime. It also helps to prevent any number of dangerous and potentially very expensive technical issues.

To end with our check engine light analogy, which method of automotive maintenance is most efficient? The one where you spend an average of a couple of hours a month getting regular, scheduled service, or one where you leave everything to chance? You probably already know the answer.

So I ask you... is your IT check engine light on? Do you even have one?! Contact NSA and let us "watch your back"!

NSA Professional Services

270H Duffy Avenue
Hicksville, NY 11801

Phone: 516.240.6020
Fax: 516.240.6035
Sales & Client

516.240.6020
solutions@nsacom.com