

THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT PLANNING TOOL

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Trade Development's Office of Information Technologies under the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Technology Industries (ITI) has created a CD-ROM-based tool which provides an interactive database for managers of small and medium-sized organizations to examine their IT usage. The product is called the Information Technology Management Planning Tool or IT Tool, for short. The IT Tool was the result of the office's experience in 1999 with a similar CD-ROM-based tool that dealt with the Year 2000 computer problem. The so-called Y2K Tool was available in English and eleven other languages and it was directed toward small to medium-sized organizations. It was very popular with users because it gave them a logical structure to address the Y2K problem in their organizations. The office distributed over 300,000 copies of this CD worldwide.

The Y2K problem highlighted the importance of IT investment to the successful operations of governments and businesses. The ITI staff concluded that a useful successor to the Y2K Tool would be a product that helped management of small to medium-sized organizations review their current IT investment and plan for additional investment. They designed the Tool to encompass a wide variety of IT investment situations from standalone PCs to e-business and e-commerce applications. The IT Tool is directed toward senior management, and it ties IT investment into an organization's mission, goals and core functions.

Additional explanatory materials are on the CD-ROM, including a video on the benefits of IT, a voice-over guide to each element of the Tool, a users manual, a video and presentation on critical infrastructure protection, and Internet links to appropriate informational sites. The CD-ROM loads automatically on a PC when it is inserted in a drive and presents a menu of options.

The Tool itself has four phases:

PHASE 1 links an organization's mission, goals and core functions in a priority ranking;

PHASE 2 creates an inventory of existing IT systems and links them to the organization's core functions;

PHASE 3 assesses an organization's readiness for use of the Internet and electronic commerce applications and provides e-business and e-commerce options;

PHASE 4 offers a cost/benefit analysis framework for managers to estimate the resources required to implement new IT projects.

Evaluation copies of the CD have been distributed throughout the world and reaction from the recipients has been very favorable. A Spanish version of the CD is slated to be ready by the beginning of February 2001.

Information Technology Industries is currently discussing partnerships with U.S. IT suppliers to support the translation of the CD into additional languages, including Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese and Russian and the development of an Internet-based version of the IT Tool. Any firms

interested in exploring such partnerships should contact Raymond Cho at Tel: (202) 482-0396 or via Email: Raymond_Cho@ita.doc.gov

During the year 2001, the Office of Information Technologies is planning several seminar missions to key markets, which will combine business meetings for U.S. IT companies participating in the missions with tutorials on the use of the IT Tool for managers of small and medium-sized organizations in these markets. Companies interested in participating in these events should contact the staff member listed below next to each event.

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