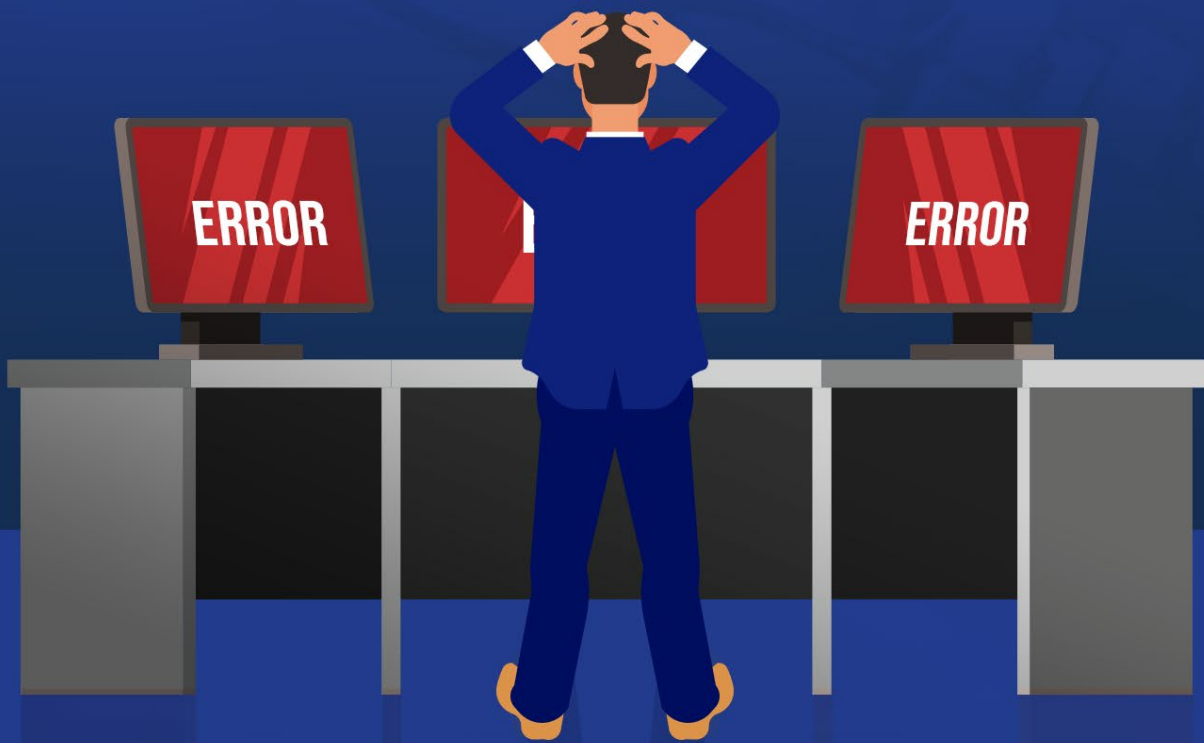
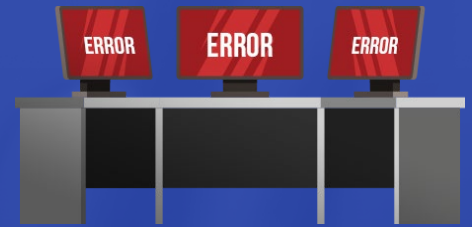


# HOW TO TACKLE **SMALL BUSINESS** TECHNOLOGY



# HOW TO TACKLE SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY



Digital transformation and technological innovation have made available new, improved products and services. Now, small businesses can afford tools previously only available to enterprise heavy hitters. That's a good thing, sure, but it can also cause some issues for small-business owners. This eBook considers common challenges and how to address them.

There's plenty of affordable technology that can make a real impact for businesses of all sizes. Digital tools make it possible to do more than ever before. There's a solution to streamline processes, improve productivity, or drive better bottom lines.

## BUT WHICH SOLUTION IS RIGHT FOR YOU?



One problem many small-business owners face is deciding where to invest their IT budget. With so many products and services, there is too much choice in pretty much every category.

Looking for a password manager? Robotic process automation solution? Social media management tool? Customer relationship management technology? Payment processing system? Cybersecurity solution? There are dozens if not hundreds of options in each of these top business technology areas.

Deciding what's best for your business is a daunting task. Even purchasing a single laptop or tablet can turn into a multi-day research mission. You weigh features available and reviews, but you must also consider your business needs and budget. It's all overwhelming, and you end up making a choice because you need to get something. Yet you don't feel certain you've made the best choice.

# THEN, THERE ARE THE UPGRADES



The struggle to sort through all the bright, shiny new products and services is real. Then, you still have your older tech to deal with.

A software or system you've been relying upon might reach the end of life, meaning it's no longer supported by the manufacturer. Sticking with that familiar tool could leave you vulnerable to cyberattack. Plus, you're not getting the benefit of any of the new innovations in that particular area of your work.

Even if the tech is still supported, you must upgrade consistently as it ages. Either that, or you need to replace it. So, now you need to abandon what you've learned to know and rely upon for something new.

Your research problems begin again. Now, you need to determine if the upgrade will improve performance in the areas that you need and whether the upgrade is going to work with your existing hardware and IT systems.

## THEN, THERE ARE THE UPGRADES Cont'd



Some software works better with fewer, more powerful computer processing unit (CPU) cores, whereas other software can work as well with several less powerful CPU cores.

For example, computer-aided design (CAD) software is common for architects but uses hardware in very specific ways. So, while it would work on most machines, it may not be optimal for your systems.

Yet some business owners don't fully understand what their hardware and other systems can do. It's easy to get flummoxed trying to reconcile a long list of new features with the existing tools. Determining whether the upgrade does what you need becomes a skill-testing question.

You want your IT to work and work well, but it can feel as if the manufacturers pride themselves on making the purchasing process as arduous as scaling Mount Everest without the aid of a Sherpa.

# COMMUNICATIONS CAN COMPOUND THE PROBLEM



To this point, you've been expending your effort on software and hardware decisions. Settling on the most efficient communications solution is another steep mountain to scale.

Today there are many options to support secure, convenient communication, on- and off-premises. You might go mobile-only or also maintain landlines. You could upgrade to voice-over-internet protocol (VoIP) systems, which offer the benefits of scalability, affordability, and an array of features, or you might encourage communication and collaboration via Microsoft Teams or Slack.

You want to stay organized and keep on top of inbound and outbound communications. Your employees want to do the same, but again, there are so many decisions to make. You must determine if you get more ROI from corralling inboxes or cutting video chat. You weigh up if business trips are more valuable than workflow automation or document digitization. Perhaps you need a mix of all these options. Then, no matter what you select, you still need to make it all secure and resilient. As a small business owner, you don't want to add that to your already too-long list of responsibilities, but your people are equally stretched while you bootstrap your way to the next level of growth.

## YOU MAY ALSO LACK I.T. PLANNING OVERSIGHT



A small business can get by with an occasional hardware change here and a software upgrade there. There may be growing pains and some clunky transitions, but you all pull together and make the best of it.

But that's not a sustainable approach, especially if you want to scale your business. What you need is an overall IT strategy. To get the most of your investment in business tech, you need to:

- Establish IT objectives that align with your business goals.
- Plan both short-term and long-term.
- Prioritize IT budget spending.
- Get educated about the hardware and software advances out there.
- Ensure compliance and cybersecurity.
- Monitor and maintain both on-premises and remote technology.

It can all be too much for one small business to navigate. Without a well-thought-out plan in place, decisions are haphazard. Purchases are made because one salesperson made a better pitch, or the buyer got tired of trying to make the right choice.

# DON'T MISS OUT ON I.T. OPPORTUNITIES



That's not the solid foundation your business needs to build a competitive advantage. Entrepreneurship isn't easy, but the right new technologies and tools exist to augment your skills. Smart decisions on business tech can make your business stronger, faster, and wiser.

Leverage advances in technology by outsourcing to a managed service provider (MSP). Enlist an MSP to do research, manage upgrades, and suggest purchases. Let them build out your IT strategy and free yourself up to focus on other value-added areas of the business.

With so many choices, it's to your advantage to partner with an MSP's experts. They offer years of experience with these issues for businesses across industries. The MSP's team can narrow the field more efficiently and effectively.

The MSP gets to know you and your business, and learns your processes and requirements. Then, the MSP can consider compatibility and cost to get your IT where it needs to be to compete. Also, an MSP often has vendor connections that can lead to cost savings. They can help you get better pricing or service-level agreements.

Your business has its niche, and your people have their strengths. Compliment what you have with an MSP to consult with you and help solve your technology issues. Contact us today.



CONTACT NextGEN IT Solutions



# NextGEN ITSolutions

Phone: (724) 204-1950

Email: [info@nextgen-itsolutions.com](mailto:info@nextgen-itsolutions.com)

Web: [www.nextgen-itsolutions.com](http://www.nextgen-itsolutions.com)