



TECH TALK

“Insider Tips to Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier and More Profitable”

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We love technology and we love our customers!

This December Newsletter includes tips and tricks on integrating new technologies and staying cybersmart this holiday season. We hope to continuously provide our customers with the latest in the tech world!

From my team to yours, Happy Holidays!

- Mandy Irvine
Founder & CEO

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY APPLY TECHNOLOGY TO YOUR BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE

Technology can help your business to become more efficient, engaging, and successful within your industry. Implementing the right technology can greatly help transform business infrastructure.

Here are 9 of the most common and ground-breaking technologies that can help your company succeed today:

Use of Mobile Apps

You can improve your business's overall reputation and seek higher brand recognition by introducing a mobile app with your business logo. Keeping your products, services, and customer support at your client's fingertips wherever they are. And depending on the complexity of your business, it can be surprisingly affordable.

Business Operation Automation

Not only can this greatly improve efficiency and reduce costs; the use of automation technology helps free up resources that can be re-directed to higher revenue-generating tasks that in turn, increase customer satisfaction.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

This modern technology can exhibit a human-like behavior. For example, when your customers visit your website, they can benefit from communicating with a Chatbot. Chatbots are a form of artificial intelligence that informs your customers with and answers their queries by using existing data. AI can also enable your business to better use the large sets of raw data acquired from your customers behaviors. By analyzing and setting trend patterns, your business can ensure more effective decisions.

Cloud Computing Infrastructure

Cloud computing can help your business reduce IT infrastructure costs by providing a virtual resource space for your operations. Using a combination of hardware and software by hosting your data on virtual platforms you can create a highly scalable infrastructure ready to grow (or shrink) as your business needs change.

Hybrid Workplaces

Hybrid workplaces are a modern solution to the complex problem of social distancing. Offering employees to either work remotely can help to lower business costs. In addition, hybrid workplaces allow employees to work with more flexible hours, which boosts productivity. This allows for business expansion in terms of operations and employee base without substantial costs and investments of traditional offices.

Project Management Tools

These tools allow remote access, multiple project management, progress-tracking, and much more. Your teams can use such tools to meet deadlines, track their progress and ensure effective project management.

Time-Tracking Tools

Time-tracking tools greatly complement project management tools as they help keep track of the time spent on each individual task on a project. This helps your team perform tasks within the given time-frames for increased productivity. This will also help identify tasks that are potential time wasters or require more careful planning.

Social Media Platforms for Marketing

Using social media platforms to market your products, services, business, and brand is one of the principal uses of technology today. Utilizing several social media platforms in tandem allows you to reach a larger audience worldwide and boosts your brand recognition and sales. Plus, it also helps you identify the potential market gaps that you may be able to fulfill.

THE BENEFITS OF AN ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

Many businesses prefer handwritten signatures over electronic. Here are some benefits of a digital signature and why your business may want to adopt this technology:

- An electronic signature enables you to communicate and collaborate globally. It also facilitates your business with remote authentication.
- This technology ensures added security over traditional paper documents. You can easily conduct transactions with this enforceable and stronger online signature system.
- This new technology reduces your energy and time as all the documents are digital.
- It facilitates communication with the clients keeping them satisfied and happy.
- It's an environmentally friendly way to decrease paper production.

Please Note: Make sure your documents allow for electronic signatures. Many documents still require wet signatures.

SECURING YOUR HYBRID WORKPLACE

The massive shifts in how and where we work have bred new types of threats from cyber criminals and have made it more important than ever to secure your workplace.

VPN

A standard baseline security solution that many organizations have established is a VPN (virtual private network). VPNs provide safe, remote access to the organization's servers for all employees, while protecting the organization's data through encryption.

Password Protection

If you are a company that manages client accounts, password and data protection are the number one priority. LastPass is an application where you can manage your passwords safely and keep track of which of your employees have access and where. Software like this prevents classified information from leaking out.

Adopting Multifactor Authentication

Requiring more than one form of authentication, or multifactor authentication (MFA), is an effective resource at verifying identity and boosting security. Microsoft CVP Ann Johnson recently shared that, "Using MFA blocks 99.9 percent of the account hacks your organization and customers face, on average". With such an effective tool readily available, we should all implement MFA into our workplace toolkit.

Migrating to the Cloud

Organizations should consider migrating to the cloud to boost security, as maintaining and defending on-premises data centers can be costly and time consuming. Turning to the cloud outsources much of that work, allowing Hoop5 your IT partner, to prioritize their time to focus on high-value issues.

Upskilling Your Workforce

We strive to ensure that our customers have the skilling and training resources needed to keep your team prepared to handle increasingly complex cyber threats. By building the security skillsets within your organization, you can better position your company to both protect itself and offer guidance to others.

MICROSOFT TEAMS ESSENTIALS

Designed for Small Businesses

What's the difference?

Microsoft offers a few versions of Teams, each with more features than the last. The free version of Microsoft Teams includes meetings up to 60 minutes, attendee capacity of 100, custom backgrounds and a few other features. The biggest upgrade of Teams Essentials is the increase of meeting duration from 60 minutes to 30 hours, and the attendee capacity increase from 100 to 300 participants. Teams Essentials also offers a total of 10 gigabytes (GB) file storage, which is twice the amount of storage available in the free version of Teams.

What's the cost difference?

Teams Essentials costs only \$4 user/month, creating a middle option between Teams Free and purchasing Microsoft 365 Business Basic. It is specifically designed for businesses with needs that exceed the free version of Teams, but don't yet require Microsoft 365 Business plans. This new product allows companies to grow into Microsoft 365 over time, making it easier to stay on budget while still growing your business.

STAY CYBERSMART THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

- If you find yourself on a new website, inspect the site and its URL before you enter any information. Secure sites will typically direct you to a secure page starting with "https://".
- During the holidays, a common phishing scam involves sending people a prompt to check their Amazon order. Before you click on anything in these emails, take a minute to remember whether you placed an order or check on your order directly in the app.
- If hackers get to a website's data and steal users' passwords, they will likely try to use the same passwords on other platforms. Use different passwords often and remember, the more complex the better!
- Many people don't know that leaving a cart full of items can expose their data. Some good practices are, either complete your purchase or empty your shopping cart, and/or find out whether your Internet Provider is collecting cookies and, if so, ask them to opt you out.

If you'd like more tips and tricks on how to keep your personal information secure, give us a call. Stay cybersafe this holiday season!