

HOT Technology Trends for SMBs

SMB Quick Reference Series

Trends that Will Affect Your Business in 2010 and Beyond

Business owners tend to focus on customers, products, competitors, managing employees, collecting cash, and running the business. For small and medium businesses (SMBs), taking a peek and adopting appropriate new technologies can help your business run faster and better, get you closer to your customers, and achieve new profitability.

We've compiled a list of things you will want to watch out for and consider in your business as a way to create a new advantage, drive out cost, increase customer responsiveness, and manage your business more tightly. Read on...

Real-time: Customers expect that business happens in real-time. When they have need for a product/service, they want it delivered now. If they need an answer, they want it now. There is a heightened immediacy to interactions that can't be ignored – even if you're an SMB. To overcome this, there are numerous web-based solutions that can enhance your ability to conduct business in a real-time manner. Most are low cost, many are free. Check out Microsoft's Dynamics, Sharepoint, and personal productivity solutions. Real-time is not 'out of reach.' (www.dynamics.com, www.sharepoint.com, www.office.com)

Going mobile: Business has expanded beyond the traditional 'brick and mortar' walls or geographic location. Watch for an accelerated rush of even more powerful 'smartphones' that allow you and your customers to interact, conduct business, and even collect payments. You'll want to look at the Windows Phone platforms and applications. Your business can go with you, no matter where you are. (www.windowsphone.com)

Cloud computing: Gone are the days where you have to 'buy' or 'own' the technology within your business. Cloud computing now offers you a full range of choices for your accounting, payroll, cash management, banking, forecasting, collaboration, communication, and even productivity applications. And, in almost every case, the cost to the business is substantially lower. If you're not using or considering cloud computing, know that you're competitors are. You'll want to check out the SMBSuite, from NextCorp. It is the industry's leading solution for accounting, collaboration, and personal productivity – all from the cloud! (www.getsmb.com)

Advertising: Forget what you did yesterday, last week, last month, or last year. Today, and going forward, reaching new prospects is all about electronic marketing. It's about SEO (search engine optimization), social media, webinars, on-line product/service testimonials, and your website. It is no longer 'good enough' to have a website and simply do email. SMBs must embrace and optimize these advertising and communication vehicles to survive and thrive in the new economy. Your prospects are waiting to hear from you. They just don't look for you in the mail or by fax, in the newspaper, or in the yellow pages any more. You'll want to check out the latest BING offerings to guide you to new opportunity. (www.bing.com and www.microsoftadvertising.com)

Business integration: Businesses are no longer 'islands', standing alone in the sea of commerce. Integration of businesses, business processes, supply chains, information, and communication continue to move at an accelerated pace. SMBs everywhere are getting on the bandwagon to drive out costs, drive up loyalty, discover new opportunities, and manage their businesses more tightly. Those SMBs that choose to ignore this trend will quickly become marginalized in their market while opportunity gravitates to those businesses that work in an integrated fashion. (www.sharepoint.com)

Green technology: Make no mistake, technology has been one of the largest contributors to increases in energy consumption and pollution. Thankfully, the newest generations of technology has reversed this trend. Unfortunately, many SMBs rely on older technology. Consider upgrading your devices for those that are more energy efficient. Better yet, shift the technology away from your business and use 'cloud-based' services for the heavy lifting required by business processes and accounting. Going green is fast becoming a requirement for businesses doing business. What are you doing about it? (www.microsoft.com/environment/greenit/ or, www.getsmb.com)

Don't think that technology trends are only for big business or 'geeks.' Your SMB needs every advantage possible. Thoughtful application of key technologies can propel your business ahead of the competition, sustaining new levels of excitement, revenue, and profitability. To learn more, Visit: <http://www.getsmb.com> or call 1-800-525-6398.

1-888-525-6398

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