

TECH TIPS

TECHNOLOGY INSIGHT THAT BUILDS BUSINESS



Inside This Issue

These Technologies Hold The Key To Growing Your Business | 1

FREE Consultation: Take A CLOSER LOOK At What You're REALLY Spending On IT Services | 2

A 3-Part Strategy to Better Meetings | 3

2 Things Every Customer-centric Brand Needs | 4

The Best Incentives To Attract And Retain New Employees Post-Pandemic | 4

July 2021



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Robert Zehnder, President of Hodgson Consulting & Solutions.

Our Mission:

To eliminate every technical frustration, obstacle and inefficiency for companies with multiple locations and/or a remote workforce.



These Technologies Hold The Key To Growing Your Business

After a roller coaster of a ride in 2020 and into 2021, businesses just like yours are looking to the future. Their eyes aren't just on recovery. Many businesses are eager to make up for lost time, and they want to bring new customers into the fold.

There are countless growth strategies out there, but one area offers a lot of options you can dial into your specific business needs: technology. Under the umbrella of tech, you have plenty to choose from. It really comes down to finding the right solutions that fit the current or future needs of your business.

This month, we'll dive into two ways you can utilize various technologies to grow your business in the second half of 2021 and in the years to come. Let's get started.

Using Automation

Many businesses have yet to crack the code on automation. They aren't sure how to implement it and make the most of it. And that's okay. Automation

comes with a few hurdles, like just getting started for one. It's an investment of time and money. However, once you get started, it does the rest.

A majority of daily business activities can be automated. One increasingly popular form of automation is artificial intelligence (AI), often used by chatbots. In the past, chatbots were useless. From the user standpoint, they never worked as expected. But those days are over; thanks to major strides in AI technology, chatbots are automation kings.

Chatbots are highly customizable. You can use them as the first "person" a customer or potential customer sees when they visit your website. From there, a chatbot can ask questions and mimic a real person. But here's where the automation really comes into play: if a potential customer has a specific request or question, the chatbot can instantly direct them to

Continued on pg.2

Continued from pg.1

the person within your company who can help. It saves a lot of time.

Automation is also useful when it comes to collecting data. Now, you can rely on numerous apps to collect different types of data and have it all sent to one place. For instance, you should have forms on your website where people can input data, such as their name and e-mail (and other similar data you may be interested in). You lock free content (such as special reports, books, videos, demos, offers, etc.) behind a “data wall.” Once a potential customer gives you what you want, they get access and you have a lead.

Investing In IT Security

Many businesses went through huge changes last year. One common change was the shift to remote or hybrid work models. In the process, these businesses had to figure out a lot of things on the fly, from how to get their employees up and running to making sure their data was secure.

Unfortunately, many businesses, particularly small and medium-size businesses, struggled to balance getting their employees up and running and staying secure, due to a lack of resources, support or know-how. They ended

“There are countless growth strategies out there, but one area offers a lot of options you can dial into your specific business needs: technology.”

up having to focus on one or the other – data security often got left in the dust. And in the mix of it all, growth completely fell off their radar.

We’re going into Q3 2021, but many businesses still lag behind when it comes to their IT needs. Not investing in network security, and an overall IT security strategy, has the potential to hold your business back and prevent the growth you’re looking for. Not only is your data at risk from both internal (hardware failure, data loss, etc.) and external (data breaches, cybercriminals, etc.), but there are also other issues to be aware of.

Here are a few questions to consider:

- Do your employees have strong endpoint security? (Are their devices and network connections secure?)
- Are they trained in IT security protocols? (Do you have protocols in place?)
- Are your network and IT needs scalable? (Do they allow for growth or are they static?)

These questions are a starting point. If you aren’t happy with the answers, it’s time to fill the gaps and give your business the advantage it needs for the future.

Getting Started

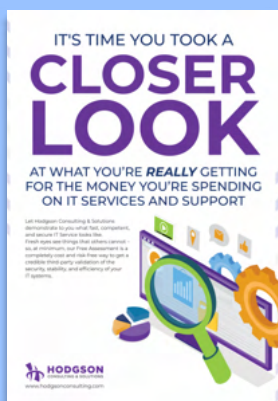
If technology still eludes you, you want to jump into the cloud or automate parts of your business, or you need to boost your data security, your best next step is to partner with a managed services provider (MSP) or a firm that specializes in IT solutions. You never have to do any of these things on your own – especially if you have questions or aren’t sure how to get started. This is the kind of partnership that can put your business on the path to hitting your growth goals and set you up for tech success!

It’s Time To Take A CLOSER LOOK At What You’re Spending On IT Services. Schedule For A FREE 15-Minute Consultation With Us

This Assessment can be conducted 100% remote. At the end of the Assessment, you’ll know:

- Where you are overpaying (or getting underserved) for the services and support you are currently getting from your current IT company or team.
- Whether or not your systems and data are truly secured from hackers and ransomware, and where you are partially or totally exposed.
- If your data is actually being backed up in a manner that would allow you to recover it quickly in the event of an emergency or ransomware attack.
- How you could lower the overall costs of IT while improving communication, security and performance, as well as the productivity of your employees.

Sign-up today at: www.hodgsonconsulting.com/closer/



A 3-Part Strategy to Better Meetings

It really doesn't matter what type of business you run or how many employees you have; the better you are at holding meetings, the more motivated your staff will be to stay productive and to outperform.

What people fail to remember here is that 'more' and 'longer' do not necessarily equal better when it comes to meetings. But if what you're going for is dread and monotony, then have at it. If you aren't, though, here's a little advice to improve the quality of your weekly meetings.

USE TECHNOLOGY.

Technology is one of the simplest ways to capture and maintain attention, and this can be used not only for internal meetings, but externally, as well. You can do any variety of things like using a touchscreen Mondopad to display ongoing projects or distributing tablets so meeting attendees can take notes or review a weekly agenda.

Think of it this way: The more opportunities you give your staff to engage, the more likely they are to participate. The more they participate, the more likely your team, as a whole, is going to stumble upon something great.

USE AGENDAS.

Stay away from 'meeting' agendas and, instead, try to create a weekly agenda. An agenda that describes what is to be covered during a meeting is always a bad idea. These may prevent staff members from discussing other important action items not present on the agenda, as well as inhibit the opportunity for open-ended debates and creativity.

A weekly agenda, however, will provide an overarching outlook of what items are hot and what will be coming up, helping to steer meetings in a more beneficial direction. Going back to the technology piece, upload the agenda to a file-sharing application like Dropbox and allow team members to review the document on a tablet or phone during the meeting.

CHANGE IT UP.

You don't always need to have a Monday morning meeting. It doesn't always have to be exactly 45 minutes long. And it doesn't always have to be in the back-conference room. The point is that the more you change things up and the more you keep your staff members on their toes, the more likely you are to avoid that whole "dread and monotony" ordeal.

Meet for an hour at the local coffee shop, bring your mobile devices, and discuss the upcoming week over pastries and lattes. Or, skip the Monday meeting altogether and gather for about 10 minutes on Thursday to chat about new ideas and potential prospects. Then, schedule a follow up meeting for late Friday afternoon to dig a little deeper into how viable these ideas are and how hot these potential prospects might be.

Do what you can, when you can, with whatever resources you have. Don't force meetings if they aren't necessary, and don't suck up valuable time if it can be spent better elsewhere.

■ 2 Things Every Customer-centric Brand Needs

When you're building a new brand from the ground up or rebranding, there's a good chance you're thinking about the customer. *How can my brand connect with customers?* Not every business puts thought into their customer experience, nor do they strive to connect with the customer outside of the sale, but for a brand to be successful, that connection is a must. Here are two things every business must do in order to build a customer-centric brand.

Be Empathetic. Understand where your customers are coming from. What are their needs, wants and desires? What's causing them stress? Be

there for customers and their problems. You might not be able to solve every problem, but by listening to their needs and helping them (even if that means referring them to someone who can help), you make a positive difference in how they perceive your brand.

Know Your Customer. You need to have a "full view" of your customers. Not only do you need to understand the demographic you serve, but you also need to get personal and understand what they like and dislike. It goes hand in hand with knowing what they need and want. The more you know about your customer, the better you can serve them. Send out surveys. Ask them about themselves when you engage with them in person or online. Build this approach right

into your business. *Forbes, April 15, 2021*

■ The Best Incentives To Attract And Retain New Employees Post-Pandemic

Businesses Are Struggling To Hire. The pandemic has created a workforce that is pickier than in years past, and this isn't likely to change anytime soon. They want to work from home (at least part of the time) and to know their workplace is safe, and they want to know their work is valued. Here's what some businesses are doing to attract attention and to fill vacancies.

A Focus On Wellness. Several businesses have started providing various resources for employees. This includes child care services to help ease the burden many parents face. Others are subsidizing various health and wellness programs, including paying for some or all gym or training memberships. Some employers are even paying for their employees to further their education.

A Focus On Vaccination. As the COVID-19 vaccine reaches more communities, businesses are doling out bonuses for employees who get the vaccine. Some businesses are even tacking on bonuses to new hires who come on already vaccinated. *Inc., April 16, 2021*

