

TECH TIPS

TECHNOLOGY INSIGHT THAT BUILDS BUSINESS



HODGSON
CONSULTING & SOLUTIONS

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POWER MOVES:

HOW SMALL BUSINESSES ARE WINNING WITH SMART TECH STRATEGIES

This monthly publication is 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.

May 4–10 is National Small Business Week, so we're celebrating the business leaders who use smart tech strategies to work smarter, serve customers better, and grow stronger. Here's how small businesses are making big moves with smart technology—and how you can, too.



Getting Your Business Seen In The Age Of AI Search Engines

Once upon a time, ranking on Google was the holy grail of online visibility.

Today, AI-powered assistants like ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot are the new gatekeepers of information. If you're not showing up in their answers, you're missing out on potential customers.

The secret? Keep your website fresh, relevant, and easy to understand. AI tools prioritize well-structured, informative content—so make sure your site answers the questions your customers are asking. A regularly updated blog, an FAQ section that reads like a helpful conversation, and clear descriptions of

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what you do can boost your visibility. It's like Mom used to say: "It's not just about what you say—it's how you say it." AI prioritizes real-world language, so write like a human, not a robot. Focus on clear, engaging content that is relatable to your audience. And don't underestimate the power of customer reviews. AI systems scan feedback for mentions of your company, so encourage happy customers to share their experiences.



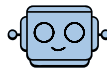
AI: The Secret Weapon For Small Business Agility

Small businesses have a natural advantage: they're not held back by the legacy systems that often slow larger corporations. This agility makes AI adoption easier—and the results speak for themselves. Nearly one in four small businesses have integrated AI into their operations, seeing a 12-point increase in profit growth potential compared to non-AI users, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

With AI-powered tools, small businesses can automate tedious admin work, optimize inventory with predictive analytics, and

enhance customer service with chatbots—all without the friction of outdated infrastructure. The key, however, is to start small. Pick one challenge, such as improving inventory management. Then, try a simple solution, like a low-stock alert powered by an AI-assisted system. Even a simple strategy like this can make a big difference in optimizing inventory without a significant upfront investment.

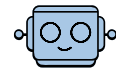
But success with AI isn't just about using it—it's about using it wisely. Customers still value human connection, so the most successful small businesses will be those that leverage AI to enhance, rather than replace, the human touch.



Tapping Into Consumer Trends For Growth

Staying ahead in business isn't just about adopting the latest technology—it's also about understanding what customers want right now. Consumer habits are shifting, with growing demand for self-care, comfort, and experiences that spark joy. Small businesses that recognize these trends and adapt their offerings can build deeper customer connections and gain a competitive edge.

But nostalgia isn't the only factor driving consumer choices. Shoppers are increasingly drawn to businesses that align with their values—whether it's sustainability, inclusivity, or ethical sourcing. Transparency and authenticity matter, which is where small businesses have an advantage. Unlike large corporations, small businesses can cultivate genuine relationships with their customers, authentically tell their stories, and create brands people trust and want to support. By staying attuned to these cultural shifts, small businesses can position themselves ahead of the curve, meeting consumer demand in ways that resonate on a deeper level.



Smart Tech, Smart Business

Running a small business has plenty of challenges, but technology can make things much more manageable. Whether streamlining daily tasks with AI, improving your online presence, or paying attention to shifting consumer trends, small changes will lead to meaningful results. As you celebrate Small Business Week, think about how tech can help you work smarter and connect with customers in new ways. Your next big move starts now.

FREE REPORT DOWNLOAD

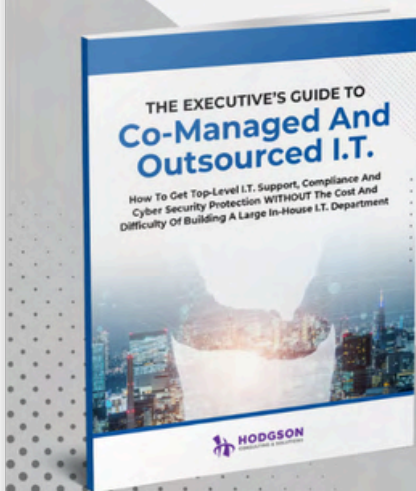
THE EXECUTIVE'S GUIDE TO CO-MANAGED AND OUTSOURCED I.T.

Discover A Far Superior Approach To Lowering The Risk, Difficulty And Cost Of I.T. Support For Your Growing Small Or Midsize Organization

Get instant access to a free report that details exactly which businesses Co-Managed I.T. works best with and if it could solve your IT departments heavy work load

Download the FREE report now at:

www.hodgsonconsulting.com/co-managed-guide
or by scanning the QR code



THE ART OF EFFORTLESS NETWORKING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES



Did you know the word “sales” was originally derived from the Scandinavian term for “to serve”? But when was the last time you thought a salesperson was serving you? This is why so many small-business owners cringe when it comes to networking. It feels, well, icky to try to “sell” your business. But what if networking were more than awkward handshakes and business card exchanges that rarely lead to anything meaningful? What if it were about crafting an authentic story so compelling that people sought you out instead? That’s the vision Matthew Pollard, “The Rapid Growth® Guy” and self-proclaimed introvert, presents in his approach to networking: Ditch the random encounters and master the art of strategic connection.

CRAFT A NETWORKING HOOK

We’ve all been there—listening to someone drone on about their job title while we nod politely, waiting for an escape. Pollard challenges business owners to embrace what he calls the “networking hook.” “People want to identify with a message, and for that, they will pay a premium. So, what’s yours?” he asks. Instead of stating your role, describe the unique impact you make. If you can make someone stop, think, and say, “Tell me more,” you’ve already won.

THE POWER OF SPECIALIZATION

“Speaking to everyone is speaking to no one,” Pollard warns. In a world drowning in generic pitches, specializing is the key to standing out. Pollard himself zeroes in on business coaches, chiropractors, and attorneys—not because he can’t serve others but because these industries need his expertise most. Finding your niche isn’t about exclusion—it’s about sharpening your value to those who need it most.

KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY

Most people fumble when asked, “What do you do?” Pollard’s advice is to keep it simple and

intriguing, and let the conversation unfold naturally. For example, skip the elevator pitch and start with a question or a bold statement. “I’m the [insert your unified message],” he suggests. Your unified message should help you authentically connect to the particular person/audience you’re speaking to. Then, pause. Let curiosity do the heavy lifting before you continue. “Well, I hate seeing [niche] [define problems],” or “I love seeing [niche] [define success], but I find that [define problems].” This structure turns a monologue into a dialogue, inviting engagement instead of forcing a sale. It also makes it easy and smooth to ask, “Do you know anyone like that?” to elicit a response.

FIND THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT PLACES

Pollard’s golden rule for finding prospects is to be selective: “What meetups do they go to? What annual conferences do they attend? What associations are they part of?” These aren’t rhetorical questions—they’re a road map. The secret to effective networking isn’t meeting more people; it’s meeting the right people in the right places.

MASTER THE FOLLOW-UP

Great connections are meaningless without follow-up. Pollard introduces the concept of “Momentum Partners”—peers who open their networks to you—and “Champions”—high achievers whose credibility you can leverage. The best networkers don’t just collect contracts; they cultivate relationships, check in with thoughtful messages, and offer value before asking for anything in return.

The ultimate goal of networking? To never need to network again. “My goal,” Pollard says, “is to help you master the room so you never have to go back into one.” When you become known for your expertise, craft a compelling hook and nurture relationships, opportunities start coming to you.

BYTE-SIZED BRAIN CHALLENGE

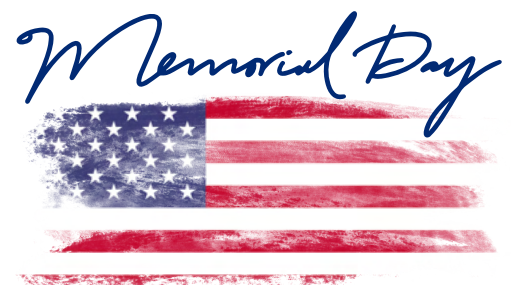
This month it’s Mother’s Day in the U.S. Mother’s Day has the highest number of these every year.

- A. Phone calls made
- B. Greeting card purchased
- C. Flower bouquets purchased
- D. Massages booked



Answer: A. More than 122 million calls are made on Mother’s Day every year, more than any other day of the year.

CARTOON OF THE MONTH



REMEMBER AND HONOR



May 26, 2025

WHAT'S NEW

Hodgson Consulting & Solutions Ranks No. 99 on Inc.'s Midwest Growth List

Exciting news—Hodgson Consulting & Solutions has been ranked **No. 99 on Inc.'s 2025 list of the fastest-growing private companies in the Midwest!** This recognition places us among an outstanding group of businesses driving growth and innovation across the region. Collectively, these companies added nearly 8,000 jobs and contributed over \$13 billion to the Midwest economy between 2021 and 2023.

We couldn't have done it without the dedication of our incredible team and the continued trust of our amazing clients—thank you!



CYBERSIDE CHAT

One Dance And You'll Feel Better

Stop glaring at your running shorts because a new study shows that just 20 minutes of dancing is as good as a gym session or jogging! Dancing combines aerobics, balance, coordination, and strength-building exercises, so even just 20 minutes of boogying can have substantial health benefits.

Going Abroad? Turn Off Uber's Preferred Pricing

If you're traveling abroad this summer, make sure to turn off Uber's new Preferred Currency Pricing feature that sneakily adds a 1.5% conversion fee. It keeps prices in your home currency but makes you pay more. Here's how to turn it off: Open the Uber

app > Account > Wallet > Preferred Currency > No preferred currency.

Woman Receives First AI Bionic Arm

After being run over by two underground trains in London, a woman received the world's first AI bionic arm. Using AI, the arm continually learns and translates muscle twitches into arm movements. It's pretty cool when the stuff of fiction meets reality.

7 Days

That's how long Google says you have to enter your correct recovery phone number to get access to your account if it's been hacked. Go to your Google Account > Personal Info > Phone > Set up to make sure your number is correct!

