

HOW TO INVEST IN SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY FOR MAXIMUM ROI

Boost Your Small Business with Technology

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INTRODUCTION

If you're considering investing in small business technology, it's important to both meet your immediate business goals and maximize your return on investment (ROI) over the technologies' lifecycles. According to the [2022 Spiceworks Ziff Davis State of IT study](#), IT budgets are climbing. One of the key drivers cited was investments in devices such as hardware, laptops, monitors, and smartphones to modernize the fleet after years of focusing on other facets of IT.

Small businesses can use intelligent strategies to manage their device lifecycles, decide how to manage technology upgrades, oversee device selection and rollout, and identify tools to make new technology deployments as painless as possible.

Here's a closer look at best practices and how to move forward with your small business technology plan in 2022.

- What infrastructure investments could transform your operations or customer experience? For example, moving key applications to the cloud could help reduce costs or speed up end user delivery for specific applications.
- What support does your IT team need to capture a technology's ROI? For example, you may be able to reduce the hidden costs of supporting new technology by exploring managed services to help with deployment or ongoing IT support.



DETERMINE BUDGET PRIORITIES: WHERE YOUR DOLLARS ARE MOST LIKELY TO GAIN ROI

Investing in small business technology is an important strategy to help your company stay competitive and empower your talent to perform at top levels. The [Harvard Business Review](#) recently noted that today's top talent wants to work with companies that are innovating in productivity and technology. At the same time, [Forbes](#) reported that 91% of Gen Z employees note technology in the workplace influences their job selection when they receive multiple employment offers. In today's landscape, where there's significant pressure on businesses to attract and retain the best talent, technology can be a key asset.

As you're exploring your small business technology investment plans, what steps do you take to determine budget priorities? Even a growing budget has limitations. Identifying your top priorities and exploring those categories most likely to yield a positive ROI can help you make significant progress in one calendar year toward your overall objectives. Some questions to consider include:

- What stakeholders should be at the table to determine technology priorities? For example, getting end user feedback early in the process can help you choose solutions that meet employee needs.



- Are there significant strategic areas of investment that technology needs to support? For example, if you're planning to move toward a hybrid workforce model in the year ahead, mobility platforms and devices become urgent priorities.
- What investments can support your employees' productivity? Maybe it's time to update outdated core devices. Or, if your employees are often on the go, exploring tablets or smartphones that can support device consolidation could be a priority.
- What infrastructure investments could transform your operations or customer experience? For example, moving key applications to the cloud could help reduce costs or speed up end user delivery for specific applications.
- What support does your IT team need to capture a technology's ROI? For example, you may be able to reduce the hidden costs of supporting new technology by exploring managed services to help with deployment or ongoing IT support.

DEFINE ROI: WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Once you've established your top priorities, it's important to lay out metrics for success. Not only can those metrics guide you in everything from sequencing new technology acquisitions to how you roll them out, but they can help you create a common language among executive leadership, IT, finance, and end users on how to define technology ROI.

[Future of Work](#) notes that the simplest way to calculate ROI is net gain divided by cost. If a new technology costs \$1,000 and allows your employees to generate \$10,000 in additional profit, that provides a clear financial metric. However, the value of small business technology investments isn't always—or only—captured in terms of straight quantitative returns.

Other aspects to consider include:

- Employee or contractor productivity improvements
- Cost savings
- Streamlining or speeding up operations
- How many existing customers a technology touches and how it shapes their experience?
- Allowing you to attract or serve new customers
- Improving sustainability or environmental factors and impacts
- Intangibles such as employer brand, brand reach, and reputation in the market



IMPLEMENT A TECHNOLOGY LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

One of the keys to getting the most out of your technology is proactively managing your technology lifecycle. By having a lifecycle management plan in place, you can eliminate deployment challenges, ongoing management issues, and even security risks. At the same time, lifecycle management helps ensure that devices are deployed to support maximum employee productivity while still adhering to company policies or compliance concerns.



Lifecycle managed services solutions often include options such as:

- Capturing data on—and extending the lifecycle of—existing assets
- Responsibly decommissioning and disposing of hardware
- Simplifying and standardizing your rollout and deployment processes
- Creating effective support plans for new solutions and technologies being deployed, so employees know where to get support and help desks are trained to assist
- Establishing ownership and enforcing service levels
- Creating technology lifetime use, support, and sunsetting roadmaps that are easy to implement

With a lifecycle management strategy in place, you'll have internal compliance and guidelines to help you make key decisions about what technologies should be upgraded—and which ones still have life that can help your business grow.



THE MODERN WORKFORCE HAS GONE HYBRID

Enable Equitable Meetings from any Workspace



Companies now offer flexible hybrid working policies that give employees the freedom to work in or out of the office. Splitting time between multiple work locations could be a hassle—unless your workforce is powered by a set of tools and technologies that enable productivity, without straining your IT resources.

In the office, at home, on the road, or anywhere in between—if your employees aren’t working everywhere, they will soon. But not everyone has the same way of getting things done. Whether it’s the CEO, a manager, or an intern, your hybrid workforce needs audio and video devices that match not only where they work, but how they get work done.

Build a hybrid work strategy with Poly to help with:

- Recruitment and Retention
- Meeting Equality
- Culture and Workforce Wellness
- Technology Evolution

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SELECT THE RIGHT DEVICES OR TECHNOLOGIES

You've committed to investing in new small business technology, highlighted your priorities, defined what you want to get out of the investment, and created a framework for managing technology over its lifecycle and as part of your total business technology portfolio. Now it's time to choose the specific hardware, software, or platforms and solutions that will take your company to a new level of productivity.

Consider the case of laptops. If you're planning to upgrade your company's laptops, a quick search reveals nearly endless options. Should you choose a Samsung device or one made by Apple? A traditional clamshell laptop, or a 2-in-1 tablet and laptop combo? Does your management team need the same devices as your company's graphic designer or programmer—who likely needs high computing power—or your sales reps or field techs, who need devices they can take on the go?



There's a lot to consider. Improve your ROI by considering the following factors:

- What specific features do you need the technology to deliver? How do the different brands and/or models compare?
- What are the use cases? Are other companies with similar needs happy with the product?
- Do you need a range of options for different scenarios, i.e., employee roles or locations where that technology will be deployed? Which vendors cover the full range of solutions that you need?
- How well will the brand integrate with your existing technology stack and/or business processes?
- What kind of training will it require for end users and technical support?
- Do the warranties and support options meet your needs? Are there managed services options that can help you augment your solutions?
- How do the initial purchase and lifetime cost of ownership projections fit with your budget and business needs?
- Does the solution fit your company's secondary needs? For example, a hardware purchase might have ergonomic considerations in connection with HR policies, or sustainability or compliance requirements due to regulatory considerations.
- What's the projected lifecycle of the product, and does that fit your timeline for future investment planning?

SELECT THE RIGHT DEVICES OR TECHNOLOGIES

CONTINUED

Again, there are a lot of factors to consider. However, it's also important to remember that you don't have to go it alone. An experienced small business technology partner routinely works with the industry's best brands and often has seen solutions deployed in dozens of different settings. Consider contacting a technology partner like Connection who can help you home in on your specific needs and identify which solutions are the right fit for your unique small business.

LEVERAGE REMOTE DEPLOYMENT TOOLS AND BLUEPRINTS TO SIMPLIFY ROLLOUT

Deploying new technology can take significant person-hours to manage. Sending mobile devices into the field, for example, might mean configuring dozens or even hundreds of devices across your business for company policies, data, and security standards.

Today, there are a variety of solutions available that can make the process simpler. For example, cloud storage solutions often have integrated tools that make it easier to stand up instances required, and enterprise mobile device management tools make it easier to provision, update, and secure smartphones and tablets from anywhere.

Explore what tools—and any necessary support services—can be leveraged to simplify your rollout and make new technology adoption a painless process for your business. A smooth rollout can help deliver a higher ROI and put you on the path to capturing a technology's full value faster than ever before.



UNDERSTAND WARRANTIES AND SUPPORT

The last thing you want to think about when buying new technology is things going wrong. However, taking the time to understand how you're protected when purchasing technology can help you put your mind at ease that you're making a smart purchase. A strong warranty and support program can help mitigate the cost of ownership and help solidify your ROI. Some factors to consider include:

- What does the technology's manufacturer's warranty cover?
- Is there an extended warranty option, and if so, does it make sense with your planned device lifecycle?
- What support does the company provide?
- Are there experts or consulting options available if you need more detailed help?

OPTIMIZE I.T. INVESTMENTS WITH MANAGED SERVICES

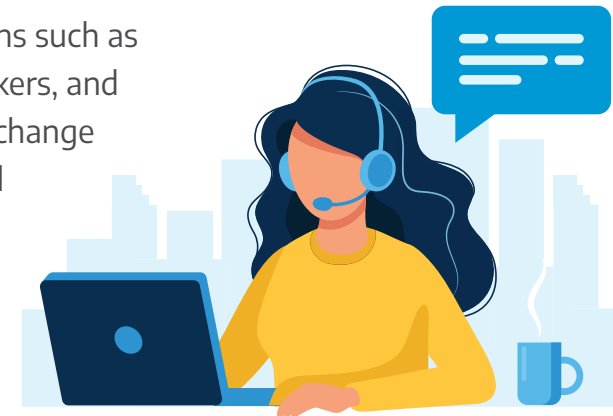
You've identified what technology you need, purchased it, and rolled it out. How can you maximize the value of your investment over its lifetime? If your team is busy or you need outside expert assistance to get more from your small business technology investments, managed services can help. With a managed services contract, you partner with an expert firm that has the expertise to deliver the services needed while taking critical workloads off your IT department. Here are two kinds of managed services contracts that can help maximize the ROI of your technology investments:

Lifecycle Management: Lifecycle management is a crucial aspect of a small business's long-term technology plans. However, many small businesses have lean, busy IT teams that can't spend significant time on this area. Managed services providers can help better manage your fleet of devices and technology, select solutions that are tight fits with your needs, and eliminate challenges during rollouts, deployments, and ongoing management phases of technology investment.

End User Managed Services: Your company's technology experience can greatly impact your ability to attract and retain top talent. However, rolling out new technologies can quickly put a

strain on your internal IT team—and new devices and software are only as effective as they are functional. Don't let a heavy IT workload lead to technology support delays that leave your top performers frustrated. Instead, consider end user managed services programs that can help you provide 24x7x365 support to meet a variety of technology needs. Such programs can also allow you to introduce different tiers of technical support into your IT help desk model without adding full-time staff. End user managed services programs can also offer solutions on both back-end IT management and end user engagement, including:

- Employee onboarding and offboarding
- Developing and maintaining IT services catalogs
- Governance and IT strategy planning
- Request and incident ticketing, management, and reporting
- Unique IT support options such as walkup bars, vendor lockers, and advanced equipment exchange maintenance as required



NEXT STEPS

Making investments in small business technology is a critical part of your budget—and building your organizational infrastructure. And you don't have to go it alone.

Contact Connection today to speak to a small business technology expert and discover the solutions that can help address your most critical technology challenges.

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