



Small Business TRENDS

The magazine for successful small business owners

THE OFFICE OF THE FUTURE IS HERE

**25 Tech Upgrades for Your
Home Office**

**Is Desk Work Killing You?
How Tech Can Help**

**5 Ways Low-Code Tools Help
Small Business in the Office**

**240 Days – The Time Your
Company Spends on Admin
Tasks**

Spotlight:

**Bonusly Has a New
Way to Reward
Employees**



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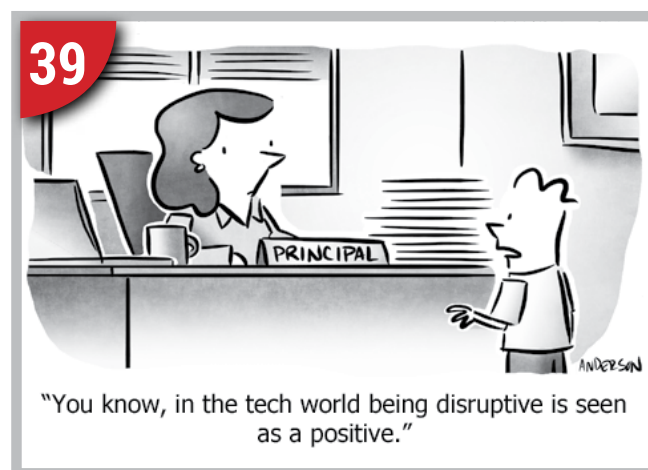
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Office Tech Edition 2018



Anita Campbell
CEO and Publisher
 @Smallbiztrends

Did you know that the average small business spends 240 days a year handling administrative tasks? That's six full work weeks!

What makes that number hurt small business even more is that it can change, and rather easily. And it's all thanks to new and emerging office technology. Software and hardware solutions are making the busy work part of running a small business less of a burden. That frees you up for more time to generate more business.

This is why we've decided to dedicate the first 2018 edition of Small Business Trends magazine to office technology.

In our cover article, I look at the concept of the office of the future and show you how it's here right now, and readily available to small businesses.

We also look at the home office. New tech is changing how work is getting done at home. Our Staff Writer Annie Pilon looks at 25 technology upgrades you can make to improve your productivity and work environment at your home office.

For a lot of small businesses, the technology available to them is OK but not exactly what they need. Well, custom software solutions are now helping small businesses like yours. Rob Starr found 5 examples of small businesses that use custom software and the problems these solutions are solving.

We've got all those exciting features and lots more in this Office Tech edition of Small Business Trends magazine.

Wishing you much success,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anita".

P.S. Please subscribe (free) so you never miss future editions. Go to

<http://smallbiztrends.com/magazine>.

Your Office Tech is More Advanced and More Vulnerable

In this issue of Small Business Trends magazine, we're tackling office tech. It's an area that's always in the headlines. Apps that we rely on daily are constantly changing -- hopefully always for the better -- and altering the way we do business.

Here's a quick look at some of the recent trends in office tech:

Meltdown, Spectre Flaws Impact All Computers

You've probably seen at least something about the Meltdown and Spectre processor bugs that are slowing down computers around the world.

The problem is, even if you do know about it, there's practically nothing you can do.

Anything that affects your computers is going to have an impact on your business. Better get a game plan in place if Meltdown and Spectre suddenly become an issue for the computers at your company.

Phone Chargers from Home Putting Your Office at Risk of Fire

A new study conducted by the British company CMD found that employees who bring their own



phone chargers in to the office from home are putting your company at risk of fire.

Phone chargers are available everywhere you turn and the chances of someone using their original charger unlikely. CMD found 70% of employees are bringing their own chargers to work. And not all chargers are created equally.

Internet of Things Will Be Targets for Hackers This Year



Cyber security experts agree that small businesses are becoming more vulnerable to the threat of hackers.

Connected and smart printers, smart speakers, smart lights, smart thermostats, smart refrigerators in the break room ... that's just some of the devices we seem to be adding and never thought we would.

Don't Forget Printers -- You Can Be Hacked There, Too

Small businesses can also be hacked via the Internet of Things. It's often these devices that lack the type of cyber security you're likely to



dedicate to your computer, laptop, or even your smartphone. But HP has just released new printers that take the issue of cyber security seriously. The company is even addressing cloud and remote printing with its HP Roam and HP Connection Inspector security features.

Comcast Offers Backup Mobile Internet

Business customers of Comcast just got an offer that would avoid any potential internet downtime. For an added monthly fee, Comcast will offer 4G mobile backup connection if their high-speed broadband fails.



If you're not a subscriber of this company, keep an eye out for similar offers from your ISP.



Shawn Hessinger

Executive Editor

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The Office of the Future is Here Already

Picture this: you step into your office and the light goes on automatically. You sit down at your desk and your computer recognizes your face, unlocking the screen. You ask your digital assistant what appointments you have, and you get a voice response back. No logging in, no typing.

You get ready to print off four copies of last year's strategic plan for tomorrow's team meeting. Then you see the advanced technology in your printer tells you the ink level is low and you're almost out. But no worries — you've already signed up for a subscription to ink supplies and have them on hand. You swap out the depleted cartridge for a full one, and hit "print" — no last minute rush orders.

You check your live chat system and see your automated chatbot "conversed" with a prospective customer while you were out.

Meanwhile, a visitor is in the lobby. You can see from your mobile phone who has arrived, via an interactive security camera app.

All of this technology is available today — and it's very affordable for small businesses.

Future Office Tech is Already Here

For small and home offices, you can deploy some of the same solutions as those we use in our homes.

Fueled by the growth of connected devices such as the Amazon Echo and Google Home hubs, forward-thinking consumers are beginning to see the benefits of smart home technology. According to Kagan Research, 15 million U.S. households were smart homes at the end of 2016. That number is projected to grow to encompass 28% of all U.S. households by 2021.

But not all advanced technology is for the smart home or even for buildings. A host of exciting advances are in business software and office hardware.

Three key trends are driving future tech for small offices and home offices:

- **Machine learning**-enabled software makes processes more efficient and positions businesses to achieve more without adding extra staff or manual processes. Also referred to as artificial intelligence or AI, it sounds complex and futuristic. But you are probably using business software today with AI, whether you realize it or not. It's already incorporated into a growing number of software applications including some analytics, CRM, email marketing, financial and other software programs.
- **Connected** cloud-based apps and devices save time and are incredibly convenient. A wireless printer that enables you to print directly from the cloud can make for a much more efficient office, saving time and money. When your data is stored or accessible in the cloud, coupled with

“connected” devices, you are untethered and gain freedom.

- **Mobility**, of course, is a key enabler for small businesses. When you have a small team, you need to get out and about but still be able to conduct business seamlessly. With a tablet or smartphone, you can accomplish most work using cloud applications no matter where you happen to be. Your customer never needs to know whether you're sitting in an airport or at the beach.

All of this technology is available today — and it's very affordable for small businesses.

Great Partners are Key

As I talk with small business owners, one of the biggest concerns I hear is how overwhelming today's technology can feel. So many buzzwords, so much to learn!

But the thing to remember is, much of this advanced technology is being figured out and driven by the product vendors we use. We in small businesses don't have to build machine-learning algorithms. Nor do we have to become expert in how connected IoT devices are made or maintained.

Instead, as business owners and entrepreneurs, we just have to find great devices and apps from great vendors that support us well.

It starts with being aware of what's out there, so we can make the best choices from the most advanced technologies to meet our needs.

Replace fear with desire: what do we want technology to achieve for our businesses?

Don't assume you know what a piece of software or hardware can do, just because that's traditionally what it's done. Instead, investigate what companies have to offer and embrace new tech. You may be pleasantly surprised what a simple device or app can do today.

For small and home offices, you can deploy some of the same solutions as those we use in our homes.

Reliability and Great Service are More Important Than Ever

Here's what to look for in today's "future" technology:

Is the product easy to set up? Is it easy to use? Is it intuitive?

What about integrations and interoperability? Does the technology work well with other technology you use? Case in point is Canon's recent integration with the Concur expense accounting app. According to Mike Duffett, VP & GM, ITCG Printer Marketing, Canon USA, this integration allows "Canon MAXIFY users to scan and save their receipts directly to their Concur account. By simply downloading the app using the MAXIFY printer screen, users can scan their receipts and save them to their Concur expense account all from the MAXIFY screen – no computer needed."

Being able to send scanned receipts directly to an expense app is a huge productivity enhancer. This is just one of the ways, he says, that Canon products "are streamlining workloads of our small business owners and ultimately supporting their business needs."

And what about support? Most vendors offer online Help files and email support. That's fine,

as far as it goes. But what about when you're in a major hurry? Or you've tried to figure out the solution from Help pages, but so far no luck? That's when live support from people by phone is what you need. And sometimes, with hardware products, you may need fast service on the hardware.

Duffett says Canon's research shows service is very important to small business owners. He adds, "The Canon MAXIFY lineup specifically has a dedicated line for small business owners to call that will route them directly to a team that can support their needs. For a business owner on a deadline – this is the type of make or break support that our brand provides. The customer support team responds with rapid speed to business owners, who will never be re-routed or speak with someone who is not an expert on the product."

As an extension of its service and support function, Canon is giving small business owners and entrepreneurs direct access to first-hand insights and advice from self-made successes in preparation for Small Business Saturday. On Nov. 14, New York Times bestseller and small business guru Carol Roth will sit down with mother-daughter cofounders of the Shark Tank success, Wicked Good Cupcakes live on Facebook from Canon USA HQ.

As technology continues to evolve at lightspeed and get smarter, your business has the potential to become more efficient and move with more speed toward capturing opportunities. And with smart technology already here today, your people can be freed up to do higher level tasks that add even more value to your business.

Sounds like a winning formula to me.



Anita Campbell

Small Business Trends Publisher

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25 Technology Upgrades for Your Home Office

With 3.7 million employees (2.8 percent of the workforce) now working from home at least half of the time, home offices need to be designed to nurture productivity and success. Technology should play an essential role in home office set ups. If it doesn't, your working environment may be hampering your success.

To ensure your home office makes the grade and helps your business remain competitive, consider these 25 home office technology upgrades.

Set Up VoIP

The chances are you'll have more than one phone service in your home – your landline and

mobile. Installing a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) in a home office can make voice calling simpler, cheaper and more efficient.

As the Computer Shopper notes: "Internet-based phone service is a great option for businesses of all sizes, as it's typically less expensive than landline or cell-phone plans."

Buy a Green Screen

If you shoot corporate videos, be sure to install a green screen in your home office. Green screens create a level of consistency to videos and provide a clean, professional look.

Home offices need to be designed to nurture productivity and success

Install Sound Buffering Panels

Home offices need to be quiet working environments away from the hustle and bustle of family life. Installing sound buffering panels in home working environments help dampen sound, consequently giving you peace and quiet to work productively.

Upgrade to a High-Quality Mic/Video Camera

When you work from the luxury of your own home, your home office is your meeting room. It is therefore important that you have a high-quality video camera with a decent microphone.

Use a Phone Camera Tripod

Enhance the professionalism of your home office by shooting video content or conducting teleconferencing meetings on your phone with a phone camera tripod. A sturdy camera tripod will not only stabilize a shot but will allow you to find the right height and angle.

Install Augmented Reality Apps on Mobile Devices

The Digi-Capital 'Augmented/Virtual Reality Report Q2 2015', claims the AR/VR market will grow to \$150 billion by 2020.

For professionals operating from a home office, installing AR apps on mobile devices can both facilitate and accelerate certain business processes. For example, project managers can monitor progress in real time with the help of AR markers.

Take Advantage of an Intelligent Personal Assistant

Make your home office more productive by getting an Intelligent Personal Assistant to perform certain tasks and services. Making an Intelligent Personal Assistant part of your home office, which has the ability to organize and maintain data and information, will free up your time to get on with running your business.

Buy Video Editing Software

Editing digital video is an important process for any business that uses video content. If you operate from home make sure you produce quality home productions by installing video editing software in your home office.

Use Graphic Design Software

If you're involved in graphic design, installing the latest graphic design software in your home office will give your business a professionalism boost. Tools such as Adobe's Creative Cloud and Affinity Photo, are excellent software for design professionals.

Installing sound buffering panels gives you peace and quiet to work productively.

Install a Backup App

If you work from home you need to have off-site backup as well as a local backup on an

external hard drive. For as little as several dollars a month, buying a backup app, such as CrashPlan, will ensure your data is safely backed up over the internet.

Download Exercise Apps

According to Olivia Judson, writer for the New York Times: "Irrespective of whether you exercise vigorously, sitting for long periods is bad for you."

Home workers have a tendency to sit for long periods of time. To counter the negative consequences of sitting at a desk, download fitness apps onto home office devices.

DeskActive, BreakPal and Office-Fit are three recommended fitness apps designed for sedentary working lifestyles.

If you work from home you need to have off-site backup as well as a local backup on an external hard drive.

Use a Wireless Mouse

Give your thumbs a rest when you're working from home by investing in a wireless mouse. With clickable scroll wheels, and snappy left to right clicks, a quality wireless mouse can help speed up your workflow.

Invest in a Bluetooth Keyboard

If you spend all day typing at a keyboard, investing in a Bluetooth keyboard that you can easily swap between devices, can improve the productivity of your working day in the home office.

Buy an All-In-One Printer/Scanner/Copier

Whatever profession you work in, the chances are you'll need to print, scan and copy documents. Having an all-in-one printer/scanner/copier in the home office will take care of all your printing requirements from one convenient device.

Use a NAS Device

Treat your home office set-up to additional terabytes of storage without needing to keep an external drive connected with a NAS device, a small computer with an internet connection.

Take Advantage of a Multiport USB Charger

Home offices can require a multitude of devices to be charged via a USB socket. Ensure you're not stuck for a USB port by purchasing a multiport USB charger.

Cancel Out Noise with Noise-Cancelling Headphones

Home offices can be noisy places. Cancel out unwanted background noise by purchasing a pair of noise-cancelling headphones.

Download Productivity Apps

It's easy to be distracted when working in a home office. Fortunately, help is at hand, with the many productivity apps on the market.

Downloading Fantastical, for example, will mean you can check and input calendar events and schedules from the convenience of your device.



Download To-Do Apps

Don't lose track of important tasks ahead in your home office by downloading to-do apps onto devices. Wunderlist is a highly recommended to-do app, helping users keep on track of tasks and deadlines.

Keep on Track of Finances with Financing Apps

With a zillion and one things to do, it's easy for businesses operating from home to lose track of finances. By downloading finance apps such as TurboTax, home-run businesses can keep on top of their income and expenses with greater ease and efficiency.

Download Web Meeting Apps

Ensure your remote meetings are conducted with professionalism from your home office by downloading web meeting software.

Zoom is hailed by the Wire Cutter as the "fastest, most painless route" to remote meetings.

Use a Surge Protector

An often-overlooked device, simply plugging in a surge protector into your home office can

protect your equipment and data from the damage voltage spikes can cause.

Bundle Up Excess Cable Length

Another overlooked yet important technology upgrade for your home office is simple cord and cable wrangling. Bundling up excess cable length will not only make your home office look neater and more professional, but it will make it safer and less likely people will trip over the chord.

Use Bluetooth Trackers

With papers piled up and documents everywhere, it's easy to lose things in a home office. Use a Bluetooth tracker to help find vital items, such as your phone, keys or tablet and save precious time hunting for lost items!

Invest in a Media Streaming Device

Media streaming devices such as an Amazon Fire Stick, Google Chromecast and Apple TV can, as Kayla Matthews, smart technology and future trends writer for Inman Technology writes, be "handy tools for work purposes."

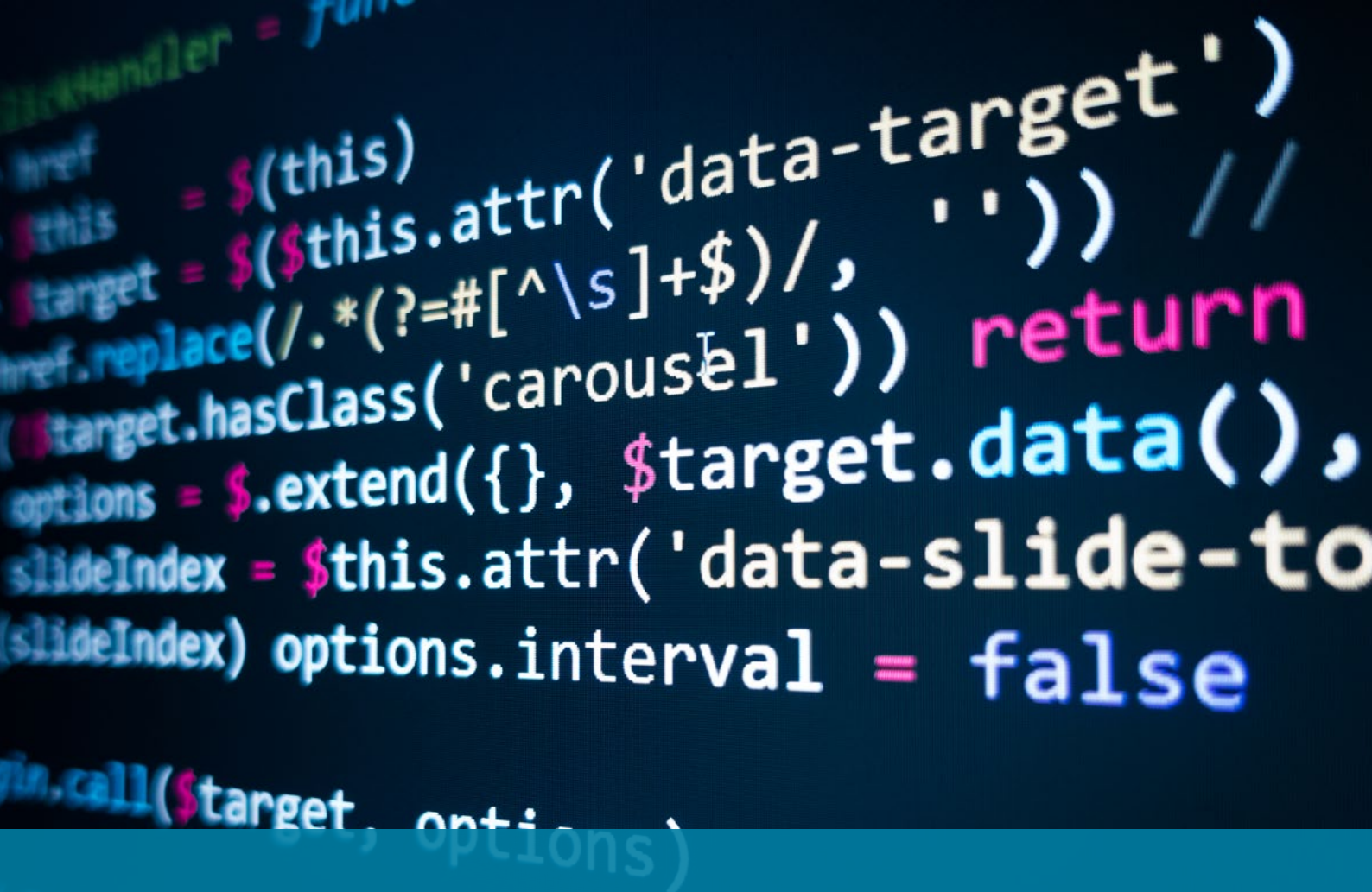
Do you run your business from a tech-efficient home office? If so, what gadgets, software and devices do you have in your home office? We'd love to hear our readers' home office tech tips.



Gabrielle Pickard Whitehead

Staff Writer

[GabsP78](#)



5 Ways Low-Code Tools Help Small Business in the Office

Small businesses need to use software to stay efficient and increase profits. Now, low-code technology is making it possible to create custom apps without the need for prior coding experience.

Small Business Trends contacted FileMaker, a custom app company, to get some low-code software examples of specific areas where the technology they supply helps small businesses.

Productivity

Sometimes, people working on the same project are in different locations if your

business is creative. For example, a video or television production company might need to bring things together from across the continent or even around the world.

Being able to see progress from one location is important. Independent TV production company Kung Fu Monkey used a custom app they built to track scripts, projects and ideas. There's a good lesson for other companies in the entertainment and leisure industry here.

Kung Fu Monkey reported an increase in team productivity between 40 and 60 percent.

Orders

Keeping track of orders is a bellwether of any efficient business. There are packaged software solutions available, but most have a very specific use. They fit a mold and template. If your business is in a unique industry, creating an app with this kind of customized software means you always have the information on hand with tablets — and orders are never lost.

Tucci Lumber creates customized baseball bats for discerning hitters. The business used the FileMaker Platform to accomplish this goal. Pete Tucci, the CEO of Tucci Lumber, found he could even build on the customized app that started tracking orders.

“Our app has been such a benefit to the business,” Tucci said in a FileMaker case study. “We’ve been able to increase production and decrease inefficiencies. When we need to further augment or customize the app, the functionality and resources are never in question.”

Small businesses need to use software to stay efficient and increase profits.

Data

Collecting data is critical to many small business owners. NMR Group Inc. works in market research, evaluating renewable energy programs. The custom apps help to collect data from businesses preventing the mistakes that happen when this is done manually.

If your business is in a unique industry, creating an app with customized software means you always have the information on hand and orders are never lost.

Analysis

Custom apps like the ones from FileMaker give small businesses a deeper view into their sales numbers and what they mean. This can be especially true for smaller businesses getting bigger and companies switching their bookkeeping to an online software model.

Summer Snow Juice noticed bookkeeping errors that kept popping up when they transferred numbers from paper to accounting software. When they switched over to the customized app they built, they found more accuracy and a deeper perspective on sales data through analytics.

Communications

Some small businesses have people who are scattered across the country, state or even around the globe. Communicating sales and inventory data correctly between all the different points was a problem for food services distributor Wood Fruitticher. The comp communications needed to run through a variety of different channels like email, voicemail, PDF files, spreadsheets and handwritten notes. The custom app they built streamlined communications by aggregating useful information through the software.

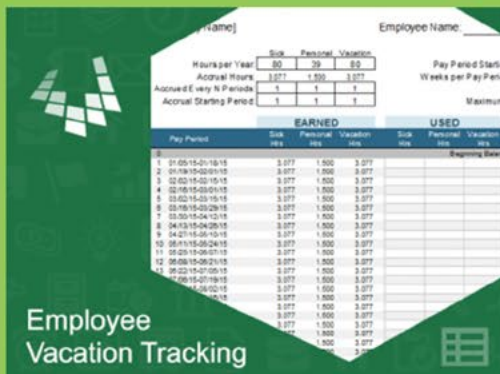


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Is Your Desk Work Killing You? Maybe!

Do you run a small business which requires you to sit at a desk for long periods? Perhaps you're a freelancer working from a desk at home, day in, day out? If you have a sedentary job, you may be working to the detriment of your health.

This is the finding of a study by the Annals of Internal Medicine. The research examined the association between sedentary lifestyles and mortality. It focused on adults aged 45 and over. Almost 8,000 adults participated in the study.

Sedentary time among the participants was measured using a hip-mounted accelerometer. The research concluded that sitting over

prolonged, uninterrupted periods is associated with 'all-cause' mortality.

So, Is Your Desk Work Killing You?

The conclusion of the Annals of Internal Medicine study is that physical activity guidelines should be issued, targeted at "reducing and interrupting sedentary time to reduce risk for death."

The research may have focused on the over 45's but it sends a message to all who have inactive jobs.

It reiterates the importance for small business owners, freelancers, or anyone who works at a desk and is not active during their working day, to regularly get up from their chair and exercise frequently.

If you have a sedentary job, you may be working to the detriment of your health.

Wellness Programs

The research underlines the importance of companies implementing a wellness program into the cultures of their businesses. From starting a running club after work, to encouraging healthy eating habits at lunchtime, wellness programs are a great way to motivate employees into becoming more active and healthier and to help offset the

potential damage to health their sedentary job could create.

Get up from your chair and exercise frequently.

Deskercize

You might run your own business and work on your own, or work in an office as part of a team. Either way, just about anyone can carry out exercises at their desks to ensure they get their bodies moving throughout the day.

Simply stretching and shuffling about at your desk can be a great way to help prevent ailments and health issues building up as a result of a sedentary job.



Gabrielle Pickard Whitehead

Staff Writer

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Why Your Small Business Should Adopt New Technology Bit by Bit

There are tons of tech tools out there that can help your small business. But adopting all of that new technology at once can be overwhelming and potentially lead to a loss of productivity. Instead, it can be more beneficial to take small steps.

Small Business Trends caught up with Rebekah King, director of marketing systems for Cox Automotive at Salesforce's recent Dreamforce event in San Francisco. Cox Automotive is a company that helps dealers and other automotive businesses digitize their marketing and sales processes. So King

is uniquely familiar with how technology can help businesses of all sizes.

But just because technology can be helpful doesn't mean you should just adopt every tech tool out there right away.

So for small businesses looking to shape a tech adoption strategy, choose one small thing to focus on.

In fact, King says that Cox Automotive's strategy is more about taking small steps. And she thinks it's a model that can work really well for companies of all sizes, no matter how big the vision might be.

King said, "We may have a big vision about unifying our client experience. But we get there through putting one foot in front of the other in a very small and practical way. And one day you'll look up after doing that and see that you've put together a whole program that is really moving your business forward but you didn't spend seven months figuring it out or two years formulating the strategy. You just spent three weeks on that one piece."

So for small businesses looking to shape a tech adoption strategy, King's advice is to choose one small thing to focus on. Then make that small change and execute it fully before moving onto the next thing.

"The very practical thing is to just take one piece of the functionality you want to be able to do."

King added, "The very practical thing is to just take one piece of the functionality you want to be able to do. If you want to do lead nurturing — lead nurturing is a huge end-to-end vision. So just start with one part of that."



Ramon Ray

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10 Ways Workplace by Facebook Can Help Your Small Business

Workplace by Facebook has been designed as competition for Slack. It's the latest mobile and team app that keeps the members of your team connected.

Small Business Trends spoke with Monica Adractas, Director, Workplace by Facebook. She supplied 10 reasons to use Workplace by Facebook at your small business.

You Can Work Online with Other Companies

Multi-company groups (MCGs) allows you to work with other companies outside of yours

like agencies, suppliers and even peers in your industry. Workplace by Facebook establishes a broad swath when it comes to a small business online network.

It Keeps Things Simple

Workplace by Facebook can take the place of several different communication tools. It's the perfect tool to replace newsletters,

the intranet and even internal emailing lists. Keeping things simple means building efficiency for small business.

You Save Time for Training

Because many of the features in this app like News Feed, Groups and Messages are already familiar, there's not a big technology training curve involved.

"People in small businesses are busy enough – they don't want to spend time learning how to use work technology," says Adractas. "That means less time and money spent on training and the ability to get running immediately."

You Can Share Files on the Go

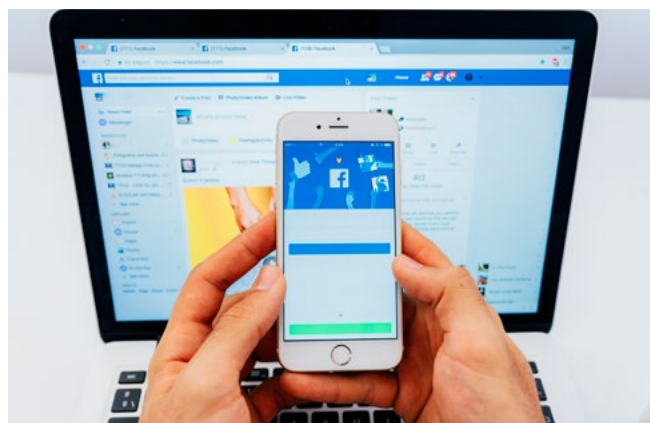
The chat that comes with Workplace is offered in both mobile and desktop. You can use it to connect in real time and even share files. This feature makes it easy to make big decisions for small business on the fly or for administrators to share with field staff.

Workplace by Facebook establishes a broad swath when it comes to a small business online network.

It Creates An Inclusive Work Culture

Everyone has a voice and everybody gets to input with Workplace by Facebook.

"By offering real-time, two-way communication features, Workplace makes it easier for people to share ideas and make an impact at work," Adractas says.



It's Separate and Secure

Making sure your data is kept secure and safe is a number one priority for small business. The app is ISO 27001 compliant and a SOC3 reports are available.

It Works With The Tools You've Got

You can share and organize your existing files. This kind of seamless integration allows your team to keep working from multiple locations.

You Can Focus on Growth

Workplace by Facebook helps your small business to focus all team efforts in one location. It keeps the email flow in one place and reduces the time spent on meetings and conference calls.

"It reduces costs and time wasted so that time can be spent actually getting work done," Adractas says. "It gives small business owners more time to focus on growing their organizations."

It Automates Tasks

The bots in this app help to make your small business more cost effective and efficient. Adractas says this automation works to foster business culture and increase productivity.

"We see customers using bots for everything from connecting stores to support, to alerting new customer leads, to celebrating work anniversaries and birthdays," she says.

"People in small businesses are busy enough – they don't want to spend time learning how to use work technology."

It Helps You Watch Over Your Business

There are a variety of administrative and

reporting controls that help small business owners watch over their small enterprise from one convenient location. The Live Video feature works to bring everyone together from different locations.

Workplace by Facebook has a standard version that's free and the premium version comes with a 90 day free trial.



Rob Starr

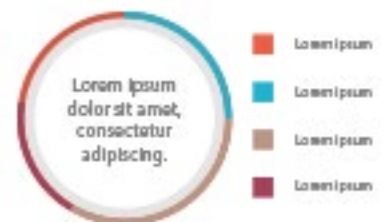
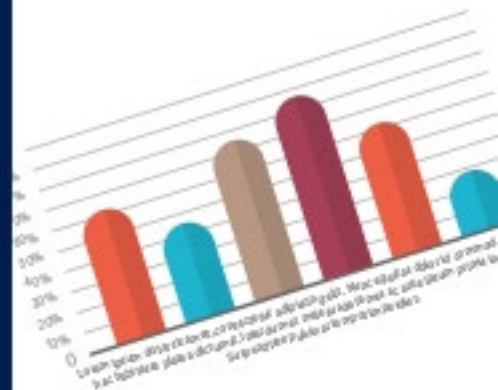
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Ability to Speak With a Human Representative is Important to Customers, Survey Says

When customers call, they want to be heard — not by a machine, but a real human being. That's the key insight from a new survey by Washington-based research firm Clutch. The survey reveals the ability to speak with a human representative is the most important characteristic of any phone call for customers.

Customers Want to Speak with You – Not a Robot

Of those who speak to a representative, 21 percent said human interaction is the most important. And, 25 percent of callers said

they wanted automated phone services to have an option for human interaction.

But reaching a human is not enough. Among the other qualities respondents said they expected when reaching a human representative, 19 percent said friendliness, 17 percent said

clarity, 16 percent said fast service and 13 percent said a decisive outcome.

Customers want an assurance you are taking their complaints seriously.

Customers Not Happy with Their Call Experience

However, respondents also say the kind human interaction they get is important. For example, 39 percent of customers think they're speaking to call centers when they are transferred to another line. And when that happens, customers feel their calls don't matter to your company.

What's more, less than half (44 percent) of respondents who thought they spoke to call centers had a completely satisfying call.

25% of callers said they wanted automated phone services to have an option for human interaction.

The ability to speak with a human is the most important characteristic of any phone call for customers.

Customers Expect Authenticity

What customers want is an assurance you are taking their complaints seriously. If callers experience transfers, low-quality audio, or answering service representatives speaking sub-par English, they will not feel satisfied with the service.

On the other hand, if representatives speak like normal human beings truly interested in resolving their issues, callers will feel their grievance is being given adequate importance.

For the study, Clutch surveyed 468 individuals who had called a business or medical organization with a question or concern within a month of taking the survey.



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5 Ways Technology is Saving Restaurants Money on Operations

Sure, a restaurant isn't exactly the average small business office setting but it's one type of small business that accounts for every penny (at least, the best ones do).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports 133 billion pounds of food got wasted from stores and restaurants in 2010 alone.

To be fair, running a restaurant is a complicated business. Keeping on top of streamlining operations, reducing waste and replenishing ingredients is a big order.

Here are 5 ways technology is saving restaurants money on back of house operations.

Automated Inventory Management

Restaurants are all about food and food is all about ingredients. SimpleOrder CEO Guy Evan Ezra told Small Business Trends how automating the inventory makes a difference.

“Every time someone makes a sale through a point of sale system, it gets broken down by ingredients,” he said. “The inventory gets reduced based on what was sold and an alert is provided.”

Keeping on top of streamlining operations, reducing waste and replenishing ingredients is a big order.

Purchase Order Management

From there, a purchase order is created and sent to the right supplier.

The results are less waste as ingredients are measured and tracked more efficiently. There's also a small business cost savings since there's no need for an employee to manually check these levels.

Increased Menu Efficiency

A digital mobile or desktop solution also allows restaurants to tweak their menus and make them more cost efficient.

In the past, these calculations were done with a pen and paper or more recently an excel sheet. The goal was to compare what a dish costs versus what you charged for it.

Ezra describes how SimpleOrder works here. The product is a good example of technology innovation in the industry.

“SimpleOrder has all your suppliers on board and all the products that you are purchasing. This food costing becomes much easier.”

Monitoring Costs

The other advantage to technology in back of house restaurant operations lies in the fact the prices of the menu ingredients are updated continually. This way, calculations are never outdated. If you see the price of olives is making a certain menu item unprofitable, you can substitute something else in or buy ones from a different supplier quickly.

Monitoring Ingredient Portions

Digitizing this aspect of a restaurant allows the owners to make sure ingredients are being portioned out properly. For example, the amount of grated cheese is often clearly laid out in a recipe for chefs to follow. However, under the pressures of a small working kitchen, the measurement isn't always followed to the letter.

“A digital system allows you to identify these inaccuracies and make sure your margins are where they should be,” Ezra says. In other words, you can take more accurate aim at your food cost benchmarks.

If you see the price of olives is making a certain menu item unprofitable, you can substitute something else.

Cutting Waste

If your diner wastes a lot of food, you're working against your own bottom line and the health of the whole planet. With the right digital technology, everything that goes into the restaurant can be checked against what goes out.

Not only does save money on waste, it can even identify theft too.

“Everything that goes into the restaurant can be checked against what goes out.”

Keeping on Top of Changing Tastes

Technology saves restaurants money by controlling both margins and costs in real

time. What's just as, if not more important, are the latest innovations allow you to stay on top of today's changing tastes.

By using the real-time analytics available, every small business from the diner to the white glove restaurant can change items quickly.



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Small Businesses Spend Up to 240 Days Per Year Working on Admin Tasks

A new report from Sage reveals small businesses spend up to 240 days annually working on administrative tasks, translating to 17 percent of their total manpower.

Suffice it to say, spending 17 percent of total manpower dedicated to a task outside the core function of a small business is counterproductive.

With so many automation solutions available in the marketplace, why aren't small businesses using these technologies? And

what can be done to lower the administrative burden for these companies?

In order to find out, Sage commissioned Plum, an independent consulting firm, to carry out a survey. More than 3,000 companies across 11 countries took part with the goal of finding out if technology can be used to get rid of this inefficiency.

Spending 17 percent of total manpower dedicated to a task outside the core function of a small business is counterproductive.

What is Administrative Burden?

As defined by Sage, administration is divided into operational and regulatory. The regulatory portion doesn't contribute to the running of the business, but it is mandated by governments with required compliances across industries. Small law firms, medical practices and accounting firms are but a few examples of the businesses needing to comply with such regulations. And it is the regulatory portion which is responsible for the lost man-hours and cost.

Making small companies efficient benefits the country as a whole. The survey found in the US a five percent rise in productivity can increase the GDP by \$324.3 billion. And when it comes to total contribution to the country's economy, these businesses provide more than 50 percent of the GDP and employment.

Findings About the Administrative Burden on Small Businesses

Eight types of administrative tasks were identified as being responsible for small business inefficiency. They are accounting, HR, payroll, tax-related tasks, chasing late payments, processing invoices received, generating invoices and processing payments, talent acquisition and training.

Many small companies are aware of the benefits of digitization, with 30 percent having fully digitized their accounting, the

most time consuming of administrative tasks. However, 47 percent don't have a software solution in place.

When it comes to HR — another time intensive administrative task — it has the lowest uptake of software followed by late payments.

Regulations are most responsible for lost man-hours and cost.

What is the Reason for Not Digitizing Administration in the US?

The respondents to the survey had several reasons. The biggest one is actually "Nothing," with close to 30 percent giving this reason. Another 20+ percent said it was time consuming, while an almost equal number gave implementation costs as their reason. Others pointed out complicated processes, incompatible legacy systems and lack of training.

Sage says convincing small companies of the benefits of using administrative software to save time and money must be a priority.

The CEO of Sage, Stephen Kelly, said in the report, "We believe that digitization is a critical enabler in reducing the burden of admin."

Convincing small companies of the benefits of using administrative software to save time and money must be a priority.

Available Solutions

Small businesses have many options when it comes to the automation solutions available to them in the market place. Whether you want to take on the task yourself or outsource the job, in today's digital environment, the sky is the limit.

The most important thing is to ensure the product or service you choose is compliant with the regulations in your industry.



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64% of Small Businesses Can't Track Printer Usage or Costs – And They Really Should!

Almost two thirds, or 64 percent, of small businesses can't track how much their print devices cost them nor can they track their usage. And if you are not able to track these basic stats in your business, you will not know how much is being wasted.

The How to Optimize Your IT Budget With Smarter Document Management report and The State of SMB Document Management survey by Xerox provide valuable insights and solutions to printing in a digital world.

The Survey

The survey was carried out in the US, France, Germany and the UK, with more than 1,000 small and medium sized businesses taking part. The goal was to find out how



these companies were managing print and documents. The breakdown of printer usage represents what is taking place in small businesses.

Of the businesses interviewed, 56 percent reported billing and invoices as paper intensive process in the organization, 53 percent said business and financial reporting was similarly paper intensive, and 51 percent said HR forms and employee files were flying out of their printers in huge numbers.

Forty-seven percent complained employees printing email added up to a sizable part of their printer use, and the same percentage claimed legal signatures were a big drain on paper and printer usage. A little over 40 percent of businesses reported purchasing approvals, marketing materials and customer quotations took up a good amount of paper and printing resources.

For small medical, legal, architectural and design firms, the print output can be much higher the survey showed. And more often than not, these businesses don't have a Managed Print Services provider taking care of this labor intensive task.

Another glaring statistic from the survey was the amount of time wasted with processes involved in printing? Waiting for jobs at the printer, running out of supplies or going to printer shops to pick up documents add up to a considerable amount of time. The cost, of course, may not be visible, but it is there.

Xerox says in the US the wait time for a document at a business with a shared central printer is about three minutes for each employee. This comes out to 13 hours every year per employee.

So even a small business with 10 employees can experience 130 hours of wasted time.

If you are not able to track these basic stats in your business, you will not know how much is being wasted.

The Report

The “How to Optimize Your IT Budget With Smarter Document Management” report has solutions small businesses can deploy to avoid the problems the survey highlights.

The first one is to find an Managed Print Services partner to help them manage their printer usage more efficiently. In a post on the official Xerox blog, Xerox Channel Marketing Manager Lisa Graham writes of the need for businesses to become more proactive in assessing printer use. “Print assessments can quickly identify cost savings and efficiency improvements,” Graham explains.

Everything from abandoned documents on printer trays to buying supplies, unnecessarily printing in color, and other inefficiencies are costing you.

With digitization transforming almost every part of your business, a trusted Managed Print Services or other partner can incorporate digitization, document workflow, mobile printing, cloud technology and security.

As a separate but related issue, the report indicates 90 percent of businesses have been breached because of unsecured printing.

Everything from abandoned documents on printer trays to buying supplies, unnecessarily printing in color, and other inefficiencies are costing you.

Conclusion

At the end of the report, Xerox recommends companies of all sizes find the right Managed Print Services partner, but this may not be possible for small businesses. The report provides valuable information for those that can't afford to hire such services as well.

By choosing the latest printers with tracking and monitoring solutions, implementing best practices with good governance, and educating your workforce, you can effectively manage the problems associated with unregulated printer use. Some solutions include standardizing settings so all copies are in black and white, integrating with cloud and mobile workflows, automating workflows and coordinating the purchase of supplies.



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Bonusly Offers a New Way for Businesses to Reward Employees

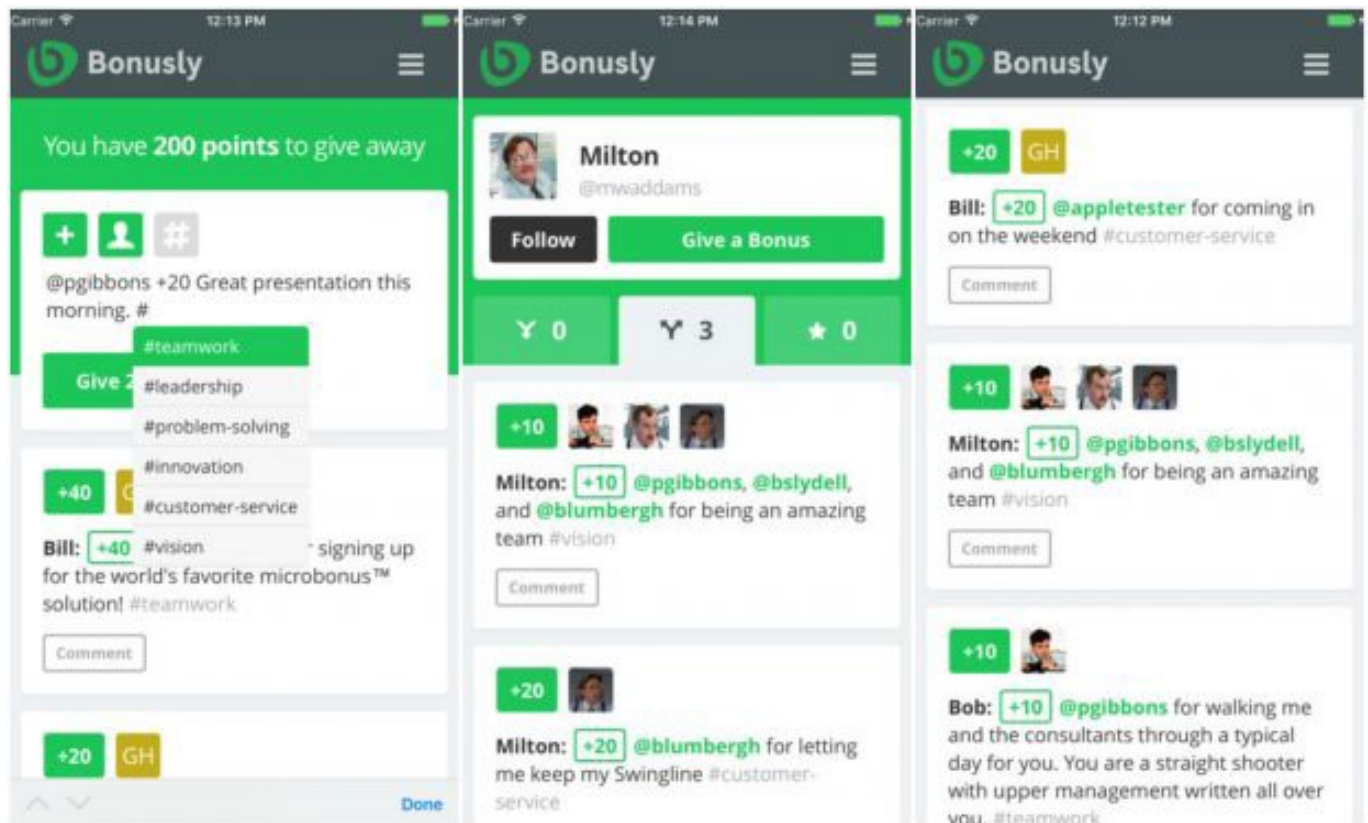
Rewarding employees can be a great way to keep your whole team engaged and happy at work. But what if there was a better way to actually hand out those rewards? That's exactly what Bonusly aims to provide.

The company has created a system to allow team members to recognize great work from their co-workers. Read more about the company and its offering in this week's Small Business Spotlight.

What the Business Does

Provides a new way for companies to recognize great work from employees.

Co-founder and CEO Raphael Crawford-Marks told Small Business Trends, "Bonusly is a rapidly scaling start-up that empowers companies to reward and motivate employees through peer-to-peer micro-bonuses, so teams can recognize and publicly praise their colleagues for work they've done well. When Bob in accounting stays late to help meet a deadline, or Rick in sales closes a major deal, anyone within the company can recognize



Bob and Rick with Bonusly points. As points accrue, they can be redeemed for real-life rewards such as cash, gifts cards to Sephora, Amazon or Home Depot, or even charitable donations. Bonusly seamlessly integrates with the leading HR and communication tools like Slack, Basecamp, BambooHR, Namely and ADP. Currently used by more than 1,000 companies including Hulu, Gilt and Chobani, Bonusly improves employee lifetime value by improving learning and development, increasing motivation and job satisfaction, and ultimately retaining employees for longer.”

Business Niche

Being fun and easy to use.

Aside from the various integrations and analytical features, the platform makes the process of awarding bonuses fun for all involved, so they’ll be likely to actually use it.

Crawford-Marks says, “Bonusly is not a chore. You never have to send out a nag email reminding employees to use it. Employees find it fun, delightful, and habit-forming. You can enrich bonuses with images, emojis, and Gifs.”

How the Business Got Started

Because of frustration at other startups.

Crawford-Marks says, “[Co-founder] John Quinn and I were both veterans of startups large and small, and had been frustrated by a lack of recognition, and also by companies that asked only managers to dole out recognition and spot bonuses. We knew peers had the best vantage point to identify and celebrate contributions and accomplishments, yet there was no way to easily empower employees to do so. So we decided to build Bonusly.”

Biggest Win

Securing a major round of funding in 2014.

Crawford-Marks explains, “The company was bootstrapped up until that point, until one of Bonusly’s paying customers introduced us to the investor at FirstMark. That introduction was significant, since it opened the door to a meeting and eventually landed us \$1M in seed funding. The customer? InVision, who is one of Bonusly’s strongest supporters to this day.”

Biggest Risk

Moving away from a major startup hub.

Crawford-Marks says, “Bonusly was founded in San Francisco in 2012 and eventually moved the company to Boulder, CO in 2016 with some employees working remotely from various cities around the U.S. It was a risk from a sales and marketing perspective since the largest deals are typically done on the coasts. Also, the Bay Area is the center of the tech industry, where startups have unfettered access to media, investors and talent. However, the move has proven to be hugely beneficial, opening the door to new tech and design talent in Boulder at a more affordable cost. It has also nurtured the team’s work/life balance, who enjoy living more healthy, active lifestyles.”

Lesson Learned

Have a plan for charging customers early on.

Crawford-Marks says, “Bonusly launched as a free service John and I were curious to see take off. It quickly gained traction as the go-to peer to peer rewards system and we then realized, it’s difficult to monetize something people have been getting for free. The company adapted by offering a freemium pricing plan, where teams up to 8 have free access and larger teams scale up from there.”

How They’d Spend an Extra \$100,000

Hiring a full-time marketer.

Crawford-Marks says, “This person would focus on driving both new and expansion demand through integrated and automated marketing, targeting SMBs and mid-market enterprises.”

Favorite Quote

“If you’re going through hell, keep going.” — Winston Churchill



Annie Pilon

Staff Writer

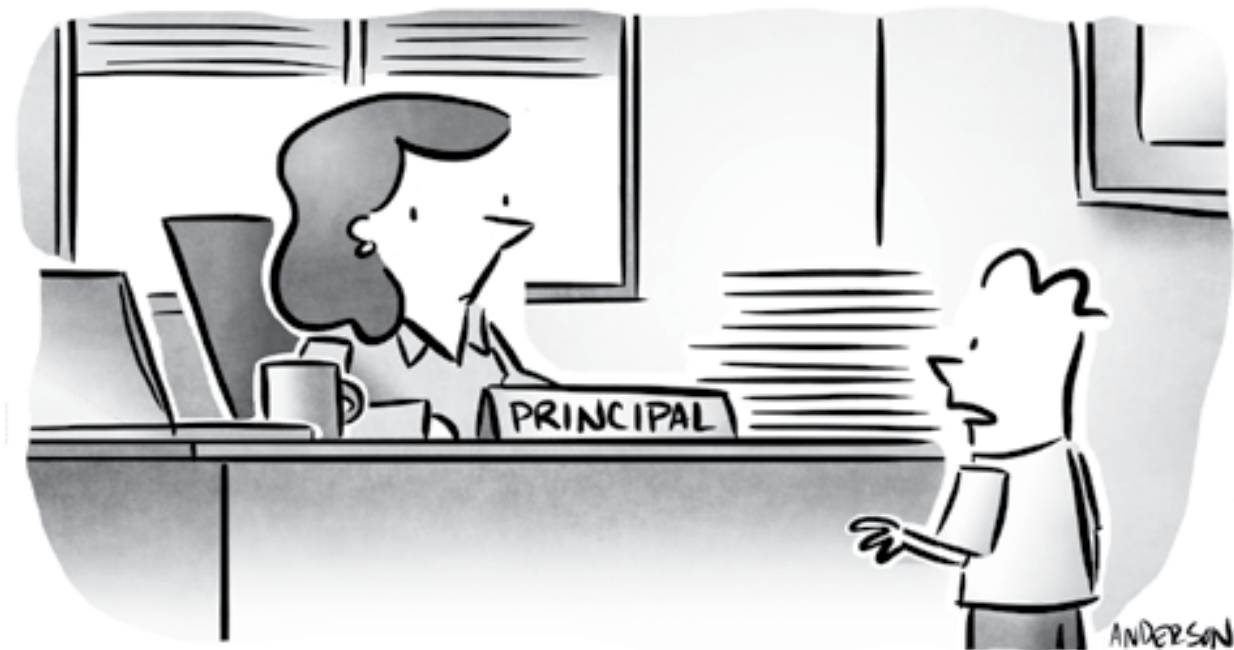
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Being Disruptive Used to Be a Bad Thing

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"You know, in the tech world being disruptive is seen as a positive."

I don't remember when "disruptive" became a positive, but I can tell you as the husband of an elementary school teacher, that change has yet to occur in education.

I hear almost nightly at dinner about some student being disruptive in class and it's never good.

Still, you just know some smart, media-savvy kid is going to recognize the shift someday and this cartoon will actually happen. And that night, our family dinner discussion is going to be something to behold.



Mark Anderson

Contributor

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Mark Anderson's cartoons appear in publications including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Reader's Digest*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Forbes*. Anderson is the creator of the popular cartoon website, Andertoons.com. The cartoonist also creates custom cartoons for companies looking to associate his gentle wit with their products and brands. He blogs at: Andertoons Cartoon Blog.

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