Microsoft

Four technology trends helping SMBs thrive in a digital world

Microsoft Dynamics 365
for Financials

4 ways technology can help small and mid-sized businesses thrive in a digital world.

The past decade has brought extraordinary changes to the way people interact and expect to do business. The Internet has matured, mobile devices are part of everyday life, and cloud-based solutions have gone mainstream. New trends, enabled by these technology advancements, are emerging at a rapid pace. But is your business ready?

The good news is that the tools that help businesses capitalize on this digital transformation are more accessible than ever before. The cloud is removing barriers like high up-front costs, ongoing maintenance, and IT dependency. This allows companies of all sizes to take advantage of modern technology and become efficient, improve customer interactions, and positively impact their bottom line.

This white paper outlines four technology advancements that can help SMBs capitalize on the business opportunities that will keep them competitive now and into the future.

1. Cloud computing is no longer just a buzzword.
2. Digital transformation is taking connectivity to new heights.
3. The "Internet of Things" isn't a mystery, it's a reality.
4. Don't fear mobility, embrace it.

Cloud computing is no longer just a buzzword.

Cloud technology sets the foundation of transformation for businesses. The adoption of cloud services worldwide has continued to accelerate at an incredible pace. For almost all industries, the cloud changes how people work, where people work, and the way people do business. While cost reduction is still a top priority, scalability and business agility have stepped to the forefront as primary reasons businesses are adopting cloud solutions.

"71% of strategic buyers cite scalability, cost and business agility as the most important drivers for using cloud services." - Gigaom Research

The next generation of business applications in the cloud allow businesses to start with what makes the most sense for their business now, and easily extend and modify as their business needs change over time without IT complexity and disruption to their business. With the right service provider and the right applications in the cloud, even complex business processes can be moved to the cloud with confidence.

"If you're resisting the cloud because of security concerns, you're running out of excuses." - Forrester

"By 2020 clouds will stop being referred to as 'public' and 'private.' It will simply be the way business is done and IT is provisioned." - IDC

Digital transformation is taking connectivity to new heights.

We recently surveyed small and mid-sized business owners and employees to understand their most challenging problems. Lost productivity spent working across multiple systems that don't talk to each other was a common issue reported by business owners and IT managers. Disconnected systems cause manual processes, duplicate entries, and reports that are out-of-date before they finish running. Lack of visibility hinders decision-making and puts the longevity of your business at risk.

For businesses to survive and thrive in this new era, they must embrace digital transformation. But what is digital transformation? A simple definition is the use of digital technologies, such as mobile, social, analytics, and cloud to transform how people work and businesses operate. Less-mature digital businesses are focused on solving discrete business problems with individual digital technologies. The businesses that are connecting their processes, systems, people, and data are able to get deep insight into what's happening in their business. They are also able to anticipate what will happen and capitalize on that insight quickly.

Traditional boundaries are being reshaped by digital transformation. Historical silos that existed between disparate CRM, ERP/Accounting systems, and other third-party systems are becoming obsolete. In addition, business apps that now work seamlessly together with productivity tools like email, word, and data processing blur the lines between structured business processes and unstructured personal productivity so people and businesses can achieve more.

For example, with Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Financials you can go from quote to cash without the complexity of switching applications. Set up customers or vendors, create quotes, process orders, and submit invoices without leaving your inbox. Easily export data and create outgoing documents directly in Word and Excel with seamless integration between Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Office 365.

The "Internet of Things" isn't a mystery, it's a reality.

The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to the collecting and analyzing of data to identify patterns, track trends, and even predict behaviors.

Every business collects data. The secret is to use that information for better insight into customer behavior and operational efficiency. Organizations that can tap into the value of their data to predict the future instead of simply reacting to the past will thrive.

The cloud is transforming the way data is managed and delivered. There is a world of data available (both inside and outside your organization) and business applications that infuse big data, advanced analytics and IoT into business processes can actively guide employees and customers to optimal outcomes.

More and more, we're seeing IoT become part of the fabric of business, bringing together assets, data, and processes with people and business systems. This intersection is driving new business opportunities while providing insight that drives meaningful customer interactions.

Through IoT, businesses use their data, often combined with public data, to better understand their products, customers, and markets. The challenge for each business is to understand what data is available and how it can apply to your operations.

With Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Financials, data and insights are transformed into actionable intelligence so you can:

- Deliver end-to-end information that provides insight across your entire organization.
- Analyze data proactively to spot sales trends, identify your highest margin customers, uncover under-performing product lines, and so much more.
- Combine data from public sources to build a better understanding of your customers and market opportunity.

Don’t fear mobility, embrace it.

Mobility enables businesses to put technology advancements into practice… on any day, across multiple devices, and at any location.

Your employees need to be connected like never before. Customers expect your sales, service, and office employees to have immediate access to the information they need to solve their problem or deliver on a good or service they expect to receive. Calling back to the office to see if a part is in stock or waiting for a follow-up response to schedule a service appointment just doesn’t cut it.

Cloud-based business applications make it easier to give employees the information they need to stay productive regardless of where they need to work. But it's not enough to be able to access information; you need to be able to act on it based on customer demand. Your mobile experience needs to be consistent and secure, replicating what you could do in the office on your phone, laptop, or tablet regardless of the operating system.

With the mobile experience of Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Financials, your employees can:

- Manage quotes, proposals, and orders from the field.
- Confirm inventory status before making a commitment to customers.
- Deliver better service with full access to customer history, maintenance contracts, and service schedules.

Get on your way.

Digital transformation doesn't happen overnight. The good news is

Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Financials provides customers with a modern and familiar experience with built-in insights, intelligence, and workflows to get you started. Dynamics 365 for Financials enables businesses to:

Enhance productivity and reduce time wasted switching back and forth between business applications and email. Surface business tasks such as requests for quotes or invoices within Outlook and enable the user to take immediate action without leaving thier inbox.

Make better decisions when you connect data from accounting, sales, purchasing, inventory, and customer interactions to get an accurate end-to-end view of your business. With business applications that infuse big data, advanced analytics, and IoT into your business processes you get built-in intelligence where and when you need it.

Start and grow easily by accessing apps that fit roles, industries, and business needs. Start with your need and grow at your own pace so change doesn't get in the way of your day to day.

Learn more about **Dynamics 365 for Financials** and start your free trial today.

© 2015 Microsoft. All rights reserved. This document is provided for informational purposes only. Information and views expressed in this document, including URL and other Internet Web site references, may change without notice.