

Strategies and tools to help you start and run a business



By [Peter Davidson](#)

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When you are planning on starting a small business, no matter what type of business it may be, you probably can't help but notice all the technology that is available to help you start, run and grow that business.

Today's advancing technology has produced innovative applications, efficient machines and time-saving software, designed to do anything and everything for your business, saving you time and expense.

There will, of course, be specific machines and applications that are clearly designed for niche businesses, and may or may not be perfect for you. But there is also a wide array of tools that are useful for almost all businesses - and having just a few of them at your disposal can certainly help you get up and running more efficiently and smoothly.

Most small businesses obviously rely on sales and in order to conduct sales in today's advanced technological age, you need to be able to take credit cards and quickly access pricing information for a wide range of products, as well as quickly figure in sales discounts and special promotions. An intuitive POS system is ideally suited to do just that. An all-in-one POS system can keep track of every product or item in your business, scan barcodes, record sales data, update tax information, provide receipts, apply discounts and sales information, and process credit cards.

To accept credit cards at your business, you obviously need a merchant account. There are plenty to choose from, so do your research before selecting one for your business. You'll want a merchant account that not only accepts various credit cards, but also debit cards and electronic checks.

VOIP phone system

When you are starting a small company you probably don't give much thought to your phone system. However, if you choose the right small business phone system from the onset, you can save a lot of time and money as well as improve communication overall with your staff and your customers and clients. Instead of selecting a traditional phone system, opt for an innovative, [advanced VOIP phone system such as Switch](#), and you'll quickly see how much more efficient and beneficial such a phone system can be. Switch is integrated with Google apps, meaning that in addition to just being able to make calls, transfer calls to mobile devices, and conference with others, you'll also be able to utilise Google apps such as email, docs, calendar and more, all with one easy-to-use yet feature-rich phone system.

You've probably heard of the cloud, and maybe you use it and maybe you don't. Many individuals use the cloud to store music and photos, but businesses can use it for much more. With a cloud-based storage app such as [Dropbox](#), you can easily share, store and edit many types of documents. Documents can be accessed by anyone with permission, no matter where they may be so long as they have access to a PC or mobile device. The online storage also helps to keep files safer and frees up space on hard drives, keeping your computers running smoothly.

Keeping projects running smoothly is the key to ensuring their success. Using management software such as [Google Drive](#), or [Basecamp](#), can help to organise projects. The apps enable you to contact a large amount of people at once, post assignments and assign tasks, discuss projects, check for status updates, share documents and files, and more, easily. Such apps are an excellent tool for keeping communication between team members and managers flowing consistently so that there is little lapse in productivity and no time wasted seeking information or needing to ask questions about responsibilities. Couple this with time management apps and you'll also be able to gauge how long employees spend on projects and various other tasks effectively, so that you can better manage daily functions and improve productivity within the workplace overall.

Web hosting

If you haven't already created a website, you'll definitely want to in order to remain competitive as well as get yourself noticed. Most consumers today discover new businesses through their web presence, so you'll want to be able to build a professional website and have it hosted on a reliable server by a reputable web-hosting company. There are many to choose from, and some provide you with website creation services as well. Take the time to research different companies thoroughly. You might also opt to host the website yourself on your own servers, but you'll want to make sure you have a good network technician on staff or on call in case any problems arise, so that the website isn't down for too long in the event of server issues.

ABOUT PETER DAVIDSON

Peter Davidson is a business analyst who loves to share entrepreneurship and marketing secrets with the world. Overcoming business challenges is his passion and he aspires to reach at the highest rung of this field.

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