

The big guide to growing your small to medium business



You're one in a million

In fact, you're one in 5.7 million small and medium sized private sector businesses in the UK.¹ Businesses like yours are crucial to the national and international economy – especially when you consider they make up 95 percent of all companies worldwide and 63 percent of total employment.²

Technically, small and medium businesses can employ 1 to 250 people and include start-ups and new businesses. However, the term “small to medium sized business” can be misleading. We know that to you and your team, there's nothing small (or even medium) about your business. It's a big undertaking and you have no doubt invested time in making it successful. But a growing business is never finished. There are always new challenges, opportunities, and questions.



Your business' biggest questions

Our teams are working away from the office more and more, so how do we keep everyone connected and secure?

How do I make sure our management team has enough time to actually run our business?

We need to reduce the cost of so many technology suppliers – how do we simplify things?

With increasing cyber security risks, how can I be sure my business is protected?

what tools will keep my employees motivated and make sure they can do their best work?

You'll find answers to these questions on the pages that follow.

¹ The Federation of Small Businesses statistics
² Levelling the Trading Field for SMEs, World Trade Report 2016

How to get more done

Time is a scarce resource in any business. If you're not being pulled into payroll meetings or interviews, you're updating a previous presentation for a new client. All of which takes you away from the task of actually running your business.

Wouldn't it be better if you could cut back on some of that day-to-day admin so you could be more productive?

The good news is that with the latest technology in Office 365, you get the tools you need to do precisely that. How? Put simply, it combines general everyday workplace tools with special productivity apps, artificial intelligence (AI), collaboration tools, online storage, and easy file sharing. All of this comes with the kind of security you need to protect against the latest cyber-threats, while helping you remain compliant with data regulations.

The average small business owner spends over 33 hours a month dealing with internal admin.³

3 The top admin tasks holding back small businesses, ICAS, May 2016

Get on with your day wherever you are

With Office 365, you can respond to changes in your schedule without wasting time. It's the worldwide standard for desktop apps like Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. And it makes it possible for you and your team to view and edit content across any of your devices, wherever you are. So if you're away on business and your meeting moves from 10 AM to 12 PM, for example, you'll know you can use those two hours to get some other work done while you're waiting. Because with Office 365, your office can be anywhere. Plus, you'll always have a clear and unified view of your email, calendar, contacts, and tasks via Outlook.

Take things to the next level with AI

Wouldn't it be great if you could rely on a robot to take care of some of your more mundane tasks? Thankfully, as AI becomes more mainstream it's becoming a feature of productivity apps too.

For example, Office 365 apps include AI that can do some pretty clever stuff. Like making smart suggestions while you author content, or analysing data to find new customer insights. Whether you're creating a presentation or evaluating your budget, tools like Designer or Insight Services will save you valuable time. The AI part learns from your personal style. Once you've done the same thing several times, it prompts you the next time round and helps complete the task. All of which speeds up what you're doing so you can work more productively.



How to get more done

Be more efficient through more organisation

Efficiency: It could be one of the most over-used words in business, but there is good reason for that. It is something most businesses strive for to increase margins and stay profitable.

Yet efficiency isn't limited to preventing waste on a production line or optimising the number of deliveries per day. It's also about how people work in and out of the workplace. For example, you could cut down on the number of journeys you have to make into the office just for a quick 30-minute meeting and set up a video call instead. The time you save could be put to better use meeting clients and building your business.

So that's why Office 365 brings together the tools you need in one place – email, conferencing, cloud storage and productivity apps. And with Microsoft Teams you can integrate all your Microsoft apps to keep track of everything you need to get things done quickly and with – here it is again – efficiency.

Say you want to see what everyone else thinks and give feedback on the latest draft proposal, you can use Teams to review your Office documents. Or when you want to build stronger connections with your contacts, you'll find the Office 365 integration with LinkedIn comes in really handy. In fact, there are over 2,400 apps in the Office store and over 70,000 in the Microsoft store. And they're all specifically designed to help you get more done.

Work in the real world

Life might be simpler if you could just focus on one task at a time. However, life has its way of interrupting you no matter how often you lock yourself in your office. Constant phone calls, emails, and social media notifications (not to mention knocks on the door) are hard to avoid.

So when you need to break off from editing that client presentation, OneDrive lets you go back to what you were doing whenever you like. If you have to leave your desktop and rush to a meeting, you can simply pick up where you left off on your tablet in the back of the cab. You can also securely store, access and share your files with colleagues and customers, wherever you are.

You can easily access and edit documents offline too. Then when you're back online, your updated files sync automatically. With OneDrive's automatic file saving and versioning features, you can even view or revert to a previous version of a document.

“Hiring someone used to take three or four days of going back and forth, and now it takes three or four hours because I can check calendars and respond quickly.”

Travis Moore, Vice President

Jemco Components and Fabrication

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How to work better together

When business is booming and the team is growing, it can be hard to maintain the same sense of togetherness as when things first started. But when people work together, you often find you achieve more. So what can you do to bring back teamwork and keep everyone connected?

Don't let your devices let you down

When different people work on different devices and systems, things can get messy. Documents aren't compatible, or there are issues with formatting and viewing. There are issues with formatting. If you take these issues away then you can simply share what you're doing with anyone – co-workers, customers, and suppliers alike.

That's why Office 365 includes productivity tools that work across all your devices, including Mac, iOS, and Android. You can share and edit documents in real-time using Office and OneDrive for Business. You can use Outlook to access emails, contacts, and calendars, even when you're offline. You can even allow co-workers to collaborate on the same document at the same time, with all edits displayed on everyone's devices.

Make meetings a little easier for everyone

Conference calls have been parodied around the world in everything from LinkedIn posts to corporate advertising campaigns. And rightly so. With some conferencing facilities there seem to be no end of problems – from people unable to find the dial-in details through to no way to share a screen.

But with Office 365, you can easily set up a Microsoft Teams meeting. Anyone inside or outside your company can join your online meeting. Meaning everyone can work together face-to-face from virtually anywhere. You can choose to meet right away, or schedule a meeting for later via Outlook. Meetings can be recorded and you can share screens, create meeting notes, and use instant messaging to draw out ideas and work together to solve challenges. There are also interactive tools such as on-screen annotation, highlighting and laser pointing. Coworkers collaborating on projects will feel like they're in the same room together.

It all means you and your colleagues can be more flexible about when and where you work. It will do wonders for productivity and motivation when people know they can work from home from time to time.

Small and medium businesses are embracing remote work and saving an average of \$20K a year for full-time remote employees, while increasing employee productivity by 22 percent and reducing employee turnover by 50 percent.⁴



4 10 Small Business Trends to Watch Out for in 2018, Huffington Post, January 2018

How to work better together

Don't stop talking

Sometimes it's the simple things that make a business really sing. Like chatting with your colleagues, sharing a few thoughts and maybe finding that great new idea. With Microsoft Teams, you get a hub where people can chat, hold meetings, and share files, arranged by the various teams and projects that they are part of. It's all about connecting your people to each other and allowing them to store and share content together.

They can host audio, video, and web conferences or chat with anyone inside and outside your company. They can set up a private chat or a group discussion as well as share files and co-author content. And when you have Microsoft Yammer they can also create an internal social network.

Of course it's important that your employees and internal staff can invite external guests to collaborate in the same projects. No problem. Microsoft Teams allows guest access too, with a range of controls on who and how they can connect with your internal team.

Keep in step

When you've got customers, suppliers, and colleagues to keep happy then you'll want to make the most of your day. That means using whatever device is to hand to check your emails, your calendar, or your contacts. With Office 365, all this is synced across your mobile devices and PC or Mac. So everything's always up to date, no matter what you're doing or where you are. And if you or one of your colleagues loses their phone, there's no need to panic. Device access rules will keep prying eyes out. And then you can wipe it remotely to protect information and keep your business data secure.

"There's 200 of us. The fact that this technology allows us to do a better job of utilising all that brainpower has created more value for our clients and new business opportunities."

Patrick Kashfia, Business Development Manager
Revel Consulting

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How to scale your business

Coordinate your teams and your work

Supposedly, it was American President Benjamin Franklin who coined the phrase, “If you fail to plan, you’re planning to fail!” It might be several centuries old but as quotes go it’s one that resonates with businesses to this day. Yet planning can be a painful process. Especially if it means waiting to get all the right people together in one room or it all just looks like one giant Gantt chart with no context.

But with Microsoft Planner you can take the chaos out of teamworking. It’s easy to create project plans, organise and assign tasks, share files, chat about what you’re working on, and view progress updates. When used alongside Microsoft StaffHub you can turn the planning into a plan of action. StaffHub is designed for your firstline workforce (that’s those on the frontline talking to customers every day). It lets you easily create and manage schedules on the go and stay informed when changes are made. That way you can quickly and effortlessly address customer needs by assigning the right tasks to the right people.

“80 percent of the global workforce are firstline workers, and half of them are in small and medium businesses. Empowering this workforce is key to success.”⁵

5 The Frontline Advantage, Harvard Business Review

For simpler tasks, Microsoft To-Do helps you keep track of deadlines via reminders, due dates, and notes. Each list can be personalised, and accessed anywhere on any device.

Cut the bottlenecks from your processes

Internal processes are there for a reason. But that doesn’t mean they aren’t sometimes a sticking point. Especially when sales or operations want to get on with the task in hand but there are three more steps to go until it is ready to begin. So it helps if you can speed things up and reduce the usual bottlenecks.

With Microsoft Flow, you can create automated workflows between your favourite apps and services. For example, marketing can capture tweets on a specific subject relevant in your industry, check if the user has plenty of followers, and then create a record so you can add them to a list. Or you could just use it to automate saving email attachments to OneDrive. All this functionality is there to reduce the time taken to process basic actions. The app also provides notifications, synchronises your files, and collects data for analysis.

You can also create your own custom mobile apps with Microsoft PowerApps (no coding necessary). You’ll have access to a large selection of templates or you can start from a blank canvas. You just connect your app to your data and use Excel-like expressions to add logic. Then you can publish your app to the web, iOS, Android, or Windows 10 so others can use it. It really is that simple.



How to safeguard your data

Information security is a hot topic for all kinds of businesses. That's because cyber criminals or hackers often have no other agenda than making money or causing disruption. It's an issue that is closely related to industry compliance too. As a result, businesses can ill afford to ignore data security when the fines for breaches, whether malicious or accidental, can be so high.

Safeguarding a vital asset from external threats

Data is the lifeblood of most industries and your customers want to be able to trust you with their information. Yet cyberattacks can undermine all your hard work in building up your brand. And according to research, those attacks are predicted to cost \$6 trillion worldwide by 2021.⁶ So advanced threat protection has become an imperative.

Thankfully, Office 365 offers enterprise-grade threat protection without the need for an enterprise-sized IT department. When hackers send spam emails, documents containing malware, or attempt to scam your senior managers with phishing campaigns and malicious links, you'll have peace of mind your business is protected.

Exchange Online Protection will safeguard email inboxes against spam, malware, and known threats. For more sophisticated threats hidden in email attachments and links, Office 365 Advanced Threat Protection defends against viruses, ransomware, and more advanced malware.

Plug any accidental leaks

Unintentional internal data breaches have just as big an impact on business as a hack from outside. However, with the right security tools and protocols you can cut down on this risk to your revenues and reputation.

For example, Office 365 offers built-in Mobile Device Management to secure and manage your people's mobile devices. That's everything from iPhones and iPads to Android and Windows smartphones. It also helps you keep in control of your device security policies, and gives you proactive ways to stop what might be a small issue from escalating into a major crisis. This means sensitive information – such as your customers' credit card details – is far less likely to find its way out of your organisation.

⁶ Forbes.com

How to safeguard your data

Control access and stay compliant

Some people use the same password for every device they use. Others are prone to leaving their phone on the train. None of which you want to hear if you're trying to run a business and keep everyone's data secure at the same time.

So Office 365 comes with security groups and customisable permissions. In layman's terms, these functions mean you can control who can access your business information and when. To solve the issue of an easy-to-guess password, it also allows you to require users to reset their passwords after a given amount of time. And if a company device is lost or stolen, you can remotely wipe business data.

Office 365 continually keeps itself up to date too. So there's no need to worry about upgrades. In addition, it will help you meet international, regional, and industry-specific standards. There are more than 1,000 security and privacy controls for more than 25 key compliance certifications. And when it comes to new data protection regulations, Microsoft offers you enterprise-grade privacy, security, and compliance.

“Our employees appreciate being able to use their own smartphones at work. And IT staff appreciate the ability to encrypt corporate data inside a folder and wipe that piece of the device if it's lost or stolen.”

Robert Lewis, Chief Information Officer
Assurant

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How to keep things simple

No one wants to spend all their time setting up new users, managing all their devices, and responding to basic IT issues. Even your IT team would prefer to save time for value-adding activities. Unfortunately, these tasks are still part and parcel of supporting your users. So it helps if you know that people have all the tools they need to be productive and that upgrades, security, and the more mundane aspects of IT management are all taken care of.

Mix 'n' match and get more for your money

Unless you have rows and rows of people doing the same task day in, day out, you'll know everyone's IT needs are different. Some people are more tech savvy than others and like to use all the productivity apps under the sun. Others prefer just the standard tools like email, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

To make sure you're not paying for what you don't need, Office 365 lets you mix and match plans so that your employees have exactly what they require to do their jobs. You'll get new features and apps as they are added – at no additional cost. You'll also save money by getting all the standard Office apps as well as conferencing, online file storage, and business-class email.

No IT expertise? No problem.

To take the pressure off your IT team, it would be better if other people in the business could set up their own devices. With Office 365, selecting apps based on business needs is easy. Adding or removing users takes just a few minutes. And you can install Office on up to five PCs or Macs, up to five mobile devices, and up to five tablets. That way, your people are free to use Office on all their devices, wherever they are.

Staying safe and secure

As a final word on security, you'll want to know that your investments in technology not only help your business run smoothly but come with the very latest security updates. With threats evolving all the time, you can rest assured that you're covered with Office 365. There's no need to worry about, wait for, or pay more for upgrades. That's because they are automatically delivered and installed as soon as they become available.

“From an overall IT management standpoint, we like having security tools, built-in control, and all employees on the same platform. We analysed our options and found that having everything bundled in Office 365 is an excellent cost value.”

Catrinia Cook

Cardel Homes

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Your business' biggest questions – answered

Our teams are working away from the office more and more, so how do we keep everyone connected and secure?

Wherever your people are, you can find them in one place, with Microsoft Teams in Office 365. It's a hub for chatting, sharing, and meeting – so your team can work better together.

How do I make sure our management team has enough time to actually run our business?

Make more time for running your business. Let a robot take care of some of your more mundane tasks, with AI tools built into Office 365.

We need to reduce the cost of so many technology suppliers – how do we simplify things?

The apps you use every day are all included in Office 365. And they work across all your devices, including Mac, iOS, and Android.

With increasing cyber security attacks, how can I be sure my business is protected?

Threats evolve. Advanced Threat Protection in Office 365 keeps up. Every new security update is automatic. So your business, people, and devices are always protected.

I want to keep my staff motivated – what tools can I give them that I know will just work?

Picking and installing apps on Office 365 is easy. Each employee can mix and match, and use them across desktops, tablets, and mobile devices – anywhere, any time.



Looking for the right device to run Office 365?

Microsoft Surface will cover you for the 5 Ps of running a growing business:



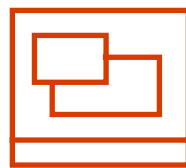
Pride

It reflects your professional image by looking impressive and practical.



Protection

It continually safeguards your work and your business data.



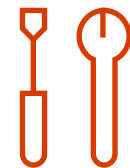
Peace of mind

It is a familiar extension for existing Microsoft users.



Productivity

It frees up as much as 25 percent more time for employees to be productive.



Performance

It gives your team high-performing tools, not toys.

For a small to medium business, you’ve got a lot on your plate. Get more done. Work better together. Scale your business. Safeguard your data. Keep it simple. Fortunately, there’s one suite of tools that can deliver on every count – Office 365.

Get the Office 365 advantage

Find out more about running and growing your business securely with [affiliate name] and Office 365.

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