

From: <http://smallbiztechnology.com/sixrules/>

## **Six Rules for Leveraging Technology In Your Business**

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Over the past few weeks, I've been really chewing on the following six rules I created that I believe will really help you boost your business. There's a lot more technology rules and guidelines you need to keep in mind, but these six rules are ones really dear to my heart.

- Spend money on your technology as an investment - not as a cost
- Email is NOT CRM
- Web 2.0 is no joke
- Mobile technology empowers small businesses
- Outsource
- Don't technologize a bad business process

Here are the details:

### **Spend money on technology as an investment - not as a cost**

You spend money on insurance - right? You have a lawyer (most likely) and an accountant (for sure) - right? However, when it comes to spending money on technology, many of you ONLY spend money if you have to. You don't spend money on technology that you think you don't need. This is a mistake.

If you are building a business that's built to last you must think of your technology spending as an investment in how technology can help your business GROW. You must spend money on technology that will help you now and in the future. The right investments in technology will help you save money, save time, do more with less and overall grow your business. Don't think of where your business is now, but think of where your business will be in 5 years and invest in technology accordingly.

### **Email is NOT CRM**

Many of you, like I do, use Microsoft Outlook or some other email program as the core foundation of their business. You use it to manage your email, tasks, notes and calendar and that's good. But if you want to increase sales to your current customers and really know everything you can about each customer, based on each interaction they have with you - you must use a true CRM product or service. When a customer buys from you, chats with your sales rep and maybe returns a product, for whatever reason, a TRUE CRM product can help you mine this data and help you use this raw data as POWERFUL information to know more about your customer.

## **Web 2.0 is no joke**

You've heard all about FaceBook, MySpace, LinkedIn and a few dozen other social media tools that help you connect with others. Many web sites also enable you to comment, upload your own videos and share your own insight with others. This is what web 2.0 is about. It's more than you giving content or a sales pitch to someone - a one way conversation. It's about having a conversation with customers and letting customers have a conversation with each other - all about you and your product or service.

You need to do this with your own online communications. You must have a great web site, with awesome navigation and content. You must have an email newsletter to reach people right in their email inboxes. You really should have a blog to foster more conversation and boost your web sites rankings in search engines.

The next step is to ensure your web site enables visitors to communicate & connect with you and each other as well via "Web 2.0" technologies.

## **Mobile Technology**

If you and your staff are sitting desks all day long I guess you don't need mobile technology. However, if you and your staff are traveling around (as I suspect you do) then you need to implement mobile technology solutions. This means that you can access your office, wherever you are - email, faxes, files - you can access it all.

There's no reason you should have to tell a customer you didn't get their fax or voice mail as you were out of the office. Take your office with you by leveraging mobile technology.

## **Outsource your technology**

There is NO need at all for you to manage and implement technology on your own. Sure, you are an expert in what you sell (be you a florist, computer vendor, lawyer, graphic artists or media consultant). But you are not an expert in network security, data backup or mobile technology.

The only way you are going to maximize your use of technology is to outsource your use and implementation of it, it in your business.

Technology is not all that you need to outsource. If you find that you are scanning business cards, answering phones and faxing proposals you need to hire someone else to do these tasks for you so you can concentrate on your business. If you are a one person business or a 50 person business - you need to manage your company and concentrate on its growth. Hire someone else, like a smart virtual or in-person assistant to help you.

## **Don't technologize a bad business process**

I'm sure you run a very good business and do your best to manage its various processes, however if there are parts of your business that are not going so well and you think technology is the answer, you're wrong.

I was recently in Puerto Rico at the great Ritz Carlton Hotel. The entire experience in Puerto

Rico and at the hotel was simply splendid, what most impressed me was the customer service. It so happens that customer service is a HUGE part of the hotel's culture and ingrained into each employee.

However, they use technology to profile each guest and build a database of their likes and "don't likes" and maximize their culture of customer service. What if the Ritz Carlton had employees that were rude, inconsiderate and nasty. Ritz Carlton would only be "technologizing a bad business process".

They first hire great employees and then leverage technology.