

Hey! What's New? 2025-111

How to Get Your SME Tech Stack Right

Alexandra Cain writes, in the latest issue of *INTHEBLACK*, that “According to CPA Australia’s *Business Technology Report 2024*, profitable small companies are doubling down on digital tools, outspending their less successful peers and embracing innovations like artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics and robotic process automation. Thinking about investing but unsure where to begin? Here’s your road map.”

She notes that, “When putting together a small business tech stack, Peter Worn, joint managing director of wealth tech consultants Finura Group, says step one is to map out workflows in the practice.” He advises businesses to “Work out what the client experience needs to look like and the jobs that need to be done within the practice to make client service as efficient as possible. Only choose the technology when that step is complete.”

He says most firms’ business technology has two pillars. The first is general productivity software, including the tools and apps to run the business, such as Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace. “Ninety-nine per cent of businesses use Microsoft because of the capital and research and development Microsoft pours into its business enterprise technology. Small businesses benefit enormously from how much those technologies are improving and accelerating by using AI.”

The second pillar is the specific accounting practice technology, such as Xero or MYOB for small practices. Worn’s advice is to choose tech that staff are familiar with. “That’s why people often go with Microsoft and Xero, because tens of thousands of people are familiar with them and you can have staff using the technology really quickly.”

Cain adds that, “core tech aside, Worn says accounting firms also need a practice management solution. Xero Practice Manager, FYI Docs or Microsoft SharePoint are popular client-portal and document-storage platforms.” Payroll and HR software, as well as tools for automating compliance and digital signatures, are a must, although, some of this functionality is built into Xero.

Maximizing existing tech is essential, rather than constantly adding to it, Cain writes, quoting Worn: “We always say choose one, learn it deeply and maximize it to its full potential before you start adding new things,” He adds, however, that “there are some situations that call for specialist software. The Xero client portal, for example, is not considered user-friendly for people accessing the software on a phone.”

Some accounting firms use myprosperity, because it is designed to be a collaboration tool between accountants and clients. “But get the foundations right first,” Worn says.

It is also important to recognize the risks and rewards of being an early adopter, he advises. “There are potential benefits if you have a team and culture that embraces innovation and constant improvement. You can impress clients by differentiating your business with technology, and being an early adopter can be an employment value proposition when recruiting great people into the business,” Worn says.

Cain explains that “the risk of early adoption is making mistakes, and the firm’s culture needs to have the capacity to handle that. Similarly, the business has to be adept at embracing change when it comes to tech. As well, any early adoption of technology needs to be accompanied by support resources.”

According to Fiona Dixon, partner at professional services firm HLB Mann Judd, there are also potential risks that come with working with relatively unknown software developers. “If you make a big investment and then you need to make another big investment fairly soon, or [the developers] promise the world and it just never quite gets there, you’re stuck with workarounds. It can be a game changer, but it really depends on where you are in the business and in its life cycle.”

“It comes down to people management, she adds, “getting staff comfortable with changing the tech they are using to something that suits your needs more holistically. Especially given the rapid advancements in AI, technology is something that needs to be regularly reviewed. Tech is not set-and-forget.”

There’s more advice at [How to get your SME tech stack right | INTHEBLACK](#).