

# Future proof your small business now

By [Deidre Fryer](#)

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Small businesses are in a tough situation. They are under pressure to implement new technologies to stay competitive in today's fast-moving tech-savvy environment while facing new problems which are constantly changing the way we do business.



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Many small business owners find today's biggest tech trends – such as cloud computing, AI and data analytics – complicated. However, these technologies when used correctly have the power to protect your business the unknown.

## Cloud computing

Whether you are a Fortune 500 company or a team of five, one way to future proof your business is to migrate your data or some of your data to the cloud.

Expensive IT servers, on-site software and bulky hardware are now a thing of the past. Small firms have flocked towards a different model of computing, which reduces the upfront costs of running a business, offers the flexibility to grow, and gives an improved customer experience.

Hybrid models lets you fully utilise your current IT infrastructure and migrate some data to the cloud. Hybrid cloud options also offer scalability and flexibility for the ever-changing workplace we see today.

A few things like file sharing and workflow in the cloud increases collaboration and communications. The cloud has changed the way employees interact with each other and with clients because data is not locked into physical devices and infrastructure.

For the remote worker, cloud-based solutions mean the convenience of accessing services from anywhere, anytime, from any device.

## IoT

While large industries such as manufacturing have already been using Internet of Things (IoT) devices, small business can also benefit for their application. The benefits to large and small businesses are similar as they both offer the ability to share and receive information as well as minimise some time-consuming tasks through automated functionality.

There is also a greater level of personalisation that can be achieved thanks to machine learning that the devices use to improve various interactions and experiences.

With an influx of devices, all of which are becoming increasingly interconnected, IoT has become more prevalent than ever, gathering data while allowing for actionable insights.

## Artificial Intelligence

All of this has fuelled organisations to add IoT and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to their products to capitalise on them. Companies are now able to invest in tools and processes that ultimately increase profit and productivity, as well as customer satisfaction.

In summary, IoT increases the volume of data entering a business' ERP system, at the same time improving the quality of that data.

Because businesses have access to so much more data, they also need new ways of analysing that data. Artificial intelligence is the ability for an application to understand what you are asking and infer the best possible answer from all the available data. With machine learning (just one of the applications of AI), AI has become an essential collaboration tool that businesses can use today.

AI can increase productivity, boost efficiency, and take on time-consuming administrative tasks, freeing up you and your team to concentrate on other more valuable tasks.



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To reach full potential, businesses should begin to seek an all-in-one solution. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) offers several solutions that enable mobility and leverage these trends from one platform.

Using these technologies together offers business the best results. IoT by itself isn't transformational. That's because merely connecting devices, machines and components won't create new value propositions, business models and markets. However, when IoT is combined with artificial intelligence (AI), and cloud computing, the solutions can be transformative.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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