

## Tech Advice for Businesses

In today's world, technology and business go hand in hand. As a business owner, you want your tech to work smoothly with as few interruptions as possible. Interruptions mean lost time, upset customers, and potentially lost business. This guide includes practical advice designed to minimise downtime when your tech inevitably develops problems.



### Choose Quality

Cheap tech is cheap for a reason. A cheap computer, tablet or smartphone will be slow and poorly built. Waiting ten seconds for Chrome to load may not seem significant at first. Multiply it over the hundreds of times that you or your employee will do it and it amounts to a lot of lost productivity. Make sure you research your options thoroughly and speak to experienced tech experts before you make your purchases.

### Invest in Faster Internet

If your business requires you to access the Internet, then you want that Internet to be as fast as possible. A few extra seconds here or there waiting for websites to load and email to come down might not seem like much, but it adds up to a lot of lost productivity over time. Fortunately, if they are available to you, faster solutions are usually not that much more expensive than standard ADSL broadband. Ask an expert for advice. They can assess what you currently have and present you with possible alternatives.

### Consider Device Lifespans

For businesses, it is always far less of a problem to bring a new device into play while the old one is still functional. Predicting when a given device is going to fail beyond the point of practical and cost-effective repair is impossible. But based on prior experience we can make some reasonable estimates.

Laptop: 4 – 5 years

Tower Desktop: 5 – 7 years

All-in-One Desktop: 4 – 5 years

Smartphone or Tablet: 3 – 4 years

Cash Registers / Tills: 6 – 10 years

Laser Printers: 5 - 7 years

Inkjet Printers: 3 – 4 years



Even if you do not necessarily replace these items in the timeframes specified, it is still a good idea to factor the need to replace them into your budget so that when the time comes, you have the funds ready to go.

### Have a Plan B Ready

This is another good reason not to use old tech until it dies. Having an old but still functional device ready to step in to cover for a new one that fails prematurely and needs to be sent away for repair will save a lot of grief. This is particularly critical for smartphones but applies to any device your business relies upon to function.

### Make Use of Cloud Services

There is a lot of confusion about what the so-called cloud even is. Simply put, any app or service that functions primarily online is said to be cloud. For example, the Xero accounting software functions in your web browser so is a cloud-based accounting package. Microsoft's Office 365 lets you both install the latest versions of Word, Excel and so forth, but also includes their cloud storage service OneDrive.

The good thing about cloud services is that they make you device independent. Consider the following scenario. You buy a new laptop for your business. You subscribe to Microsoft's Office 365 for businesses (\$13.50 ex GST per month if you commit to a year at the time of writing). You save all of your documents to your OneDrive folder, and this backs them up and makes them available online to any device that you log in on. Your new laptop develops a premature hard drive fault and needs to be sent away. So you fire up your old laptop, install Office 365, log into your Microsoft account and continue working with very little interruption while you wait for your new laptop to be repaired and returned. You can also install the Office and OneDrive apps on your smartphone, allowing you to access your documents anywhere.

### **Make Good Use of Windows User Accounts**

In Windows, you can have more than one user account as well as controlling the level of power each user has. You might have a password protected administrator account for yourself, and a standard account for your employees. This will let them use apps already installed on the computer to complete their work but will not let them install things themselves. It can reduce the risk of viruses and other security risks. Finally, it gives you more control over file access. There may be some business documents that you do not want your employees being able to see and this will aid in that.

### **Invest in Decent Anti-Virus and Security Software**

Free anti-virus and security software is readily available. Windows 8 and 10 have an anti-virus system built into them. And while these free systems are certainly better than nothing, good paid systems provide additional protection that can potentially make a lot of difference.

### **Train Your Staff (and Yourself) in Smart Security Practices**

This does not need to be elaborate. Employees should not be allowed to access personal things on company computers except in an emergency. No personal email. No Facebook. Unexpected email attachments and links in emails should be regarded with suspicion. The Go Tech tutorials "Avoiding Scams" and "Ransomware" provide valuable additional information. They can be found at our website <http://www.gotech.co.nz>, or printed copies can be collected from our shop.

### **Make Sure Critical Software Can Be Reinstalled**

When you get a new computer or have to reinstall Windows on an existing one, any software you depend upon will need to be reinstalled from their original source. Make sure you keep any installation discs, product keys, or account logins relating to commercial software. Make sure you can find this material quickly.

### **Conclusion**

Taking action now will save you time, money and stress later. If you need assistance implementing anything detailed in this guide, then please do not hesitate to give us a call on 027 285 1859 or come and see us at our shop at 65 Mackay Street in Greymouth next to Maggie's Kitchen.