

How to Upgrade Your Business to the Latest Microsoft Technology

REDMOND, Wash. – March 3, 2014 – In today's fast-paced world, efficiency is everything. Bigger, better, faster – that's what everyone, small businesses included, seems to be chasing. Technology has, of course, allowed us to get more done in our day-to-day lives. However, technology at many small businesses today remains stuck in the past. The result? Less efficiency, unsatisfied customers, an inability to compete and, perhaps worst of all, lost money. In order to remain competitive, small businesses should look to [upgrade to Windows 8.1 and Office 365](#).

A recent study by Techaisle, a global SMB and channel partner analyst and research organization, found that businesses using outdated technology on just three PCs spend an average of \$1,683 a year on maintenance and upgrade costs above and beyond an up-to-date PC, and that an average of 42 hours of productivity is lost per employee, per year, due to older PCs needing repairs.

"Technology has evolved rapidly over the past several years – hardware is cheaper, operating systems are faster, cell phones are smarter, cloud services are affordable and workforces are mobile," said Thomas Hansen, vice president of Worldwide SMB at Microsoft. "Small businesses using old technologies are missing an opportunity – from better protecting their data and reputation, to being able to acquire and serve customers better. The good news is that upgrading to newer technology has never been easier."

With support for Windows XP and Microsoft Office 2003 ending as of April 8, 2014, small businesses should look to upgrade their systems now. For tech-savvy and non-tech-savvy businesses alike, upgrading is easy – provided they know where to turn for help. Here are two ways to upgrade:

1. Find a technology partner

A partner, also referred to as an IT consultant or IT provider, can offer a tremendous amount of support to small businesses that need help deciding which device and software combination will best meet their needs. In many cases, a partner will also help businesses set up their new technologies and even train employees on the software tools.

To locate a Microsoft Certified Partner to help with technology upgrades, small businesses can:

- Contact their current IT provider
- Request partner help from Microsoft's [Get2Modern](#) website
- Use [Microsoft Pinpoint](#) to locate a local technology partner that meets their needs

2. Do-it-yourself

Tech-savvy small businesses can also upgrade their current PCs if they are compatible with the newer operating system and productivity tools. To find out if your current PCs will work with modern operating systems such as Windows 8.1, visit the [Windows 8.1 website](#). Alternatively, small businesses can download the Windows 8 Upgrade Assistant to see if their existing PCs can run Windows 8.1 and follow the steps in the [upgrade tutorial](#) – including backing up important settings and files – to install the new operating system. Once the small business has upgraded to Windows 8.1, they can choose the right [Office 365 subscription](#) to meet the needs of their business. Microsoft also offers resources to help businesses [safely transfer their files and data](#) to their new devices, as well as free tools to help determine whether their [applications will be compatible](#) with the new technology.

Getting started

For more information on the benefits of upgrading to modern technology, and help doing just that, visit the [Retiring Windows XP site](#), the [Windows 8 Pro site](#) and the [Office 365 for Business site](#).