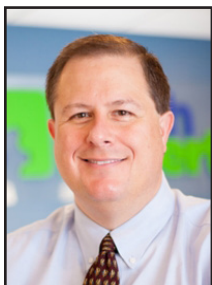


Goodbye 2020! Here's How To Boost Productivity In 2021



Thomas Fox is president of Tech Experts, southeast Michigan's leading small business computer support company.

What a year we've left behind. Thankfully.

Although we didn't have control over many of the negatives, there were some positive changes

we could implement, especially with our businesses.

Many businesses now have people working from home on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. We've seen offices downsize and change. More flexible locations and schedules are being implemented.

As much as no one asked for this, it's been great to see how many businesses that we work closely with have adapted and become more flexible.

This flexibility often results in a more motivated, engaged workforce who really appreciate the ability to work different hours and often work from home (WFH).

This flexibility is a huge benefit. Especially if you're looking to hire new people this year. Because what's the greatest competitive advantage in your business? It's your people, of course.

We believe that offering flexible working and the choice between WFH and going into the office will

help you attract the very best people in your field.

This year is going to be a "buyer's market" for employers and a great opportunity to take on truly excellent new people.

Of course, along with this comes a responsibility to give everyone the tools and accessibility they need to be able to excel at their roles from wherever they choose to work.

That means you as the business owner need to be on top of issuing the right devices, keeping security tight, and network access open but safe.

After the 2020 lockdowns, hopefully you've already got the fundamentals in place. But going forward, it's as important to offer your team as much IT support in their homes as they get in the office.

What changes could you make to help your team achieve more?

If they were given the right tools:

- Tools to help them make the most of their time
- Tools that complemented what they do
- Tools that simplified processes

... could they get more done in a day? Probably.

And fortunately, we live in an age where there is an app to help you do pretty much anything.

Why wouldn't you take advantage of that?

The thing is, it's too easy to get stuck in our ways. Yes, even when it comes to business.

We log into the same software each morning, have the same grumbles about how we wish it did things differently then carry on with our day.

Sometimes, what we need is a new set of eyes. Someone who can stand back and see the simple solutions that we simply can't.

When something is a habit, it can be difficult to imagine a different way of doing it. Even if that new way is easier, and brings about more benefits - like a more productive team, increased efficiency and better customer satisfaction.

Could we be that new set of eyes for you? We'd like to offer your business a productivity audit.

During this audit, our experts will take a detailed look at your business, what you do and the tools you currently use to do it. We'll talk to you about how your processes would work in an ideal world and help you to identify the apps or software that can help that to happen.

Before we carry out the review, we'll need to have a quick video call (no more than 15 minutes) to discuss your business, and to answer any questions you may have.

Visit www.MyTechExperts.com/productivity2021 to book your video call. You can see our calendar there and choose the time and date that suits you best. Or give us a call at (734) 457-5000.



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Network Changes Can Affect More Than Your Internet Connection

“Sometimes, it may not seem like we need to be involved – especially when, on the surface, it seems like a simple swap or adjustment – but it’s much better for us to be available for you in case of an issue. Your network is full of tiny moving parts that are reliant on other tiny parts, so often, things that may not seem like they would be affected can be.”



Mark Funchion is a network technician at Tech Experts.

There are some areas of your technology that you may think of as “your area” to handle, but often, what

might seem like a minor change or swap can be more complicated. This is especially true when it comes to any changes you make to your location that involve your network or Internet in any way. When it comes to these, we may be able to assist or at least make the transition easier.

One example of this is your Internet service and your Internet provider. Maybe you have Service A, but Service B calls and offers you more speed for less money. Sounds great! You sign up and schedule the install. Service B shows up, installs new equipment, and leaves after testing the connection from their device. The next thing you know, your PCs are not working, your

phones are having issues, and no one is happy with the change.

The cause of the issues? That equipment relies on the Network Address of your Internet device (your modem), and when you change providers, this information changes too. The same thing can happen even if you are just upgrading or getting new equipment from the same provider. When they come out and do the basic set-up at your home, everything typically reconnects fine, but at your business, there are usually too many moving parts for that to work.

This also applies if you change your phone system. If you have an old style phone system and are switching to an IP-based phone system or you move from one IP provider to another, there are rules in place on your equipment that would prevent this change from working properly.

The easiest way to lessen the chance of issues is to call or email us first as far ahead as possible. We can assist in the transition and make it easier on you and your staff. In addition, planning ahead avoids a

disaster where your location suddenly goes down and everyone is scrambling to find the cause.

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Allowing us to use our expertise and experience not only simplifies your day, but also makes sure you get the right solution for your business rather than relying on the cable, Internet, or phone company to make a recommendation when they do not know your business like we do.

Remember: we are your partner, and the happier your network is the happier we all are. Please reach out when you’re considering a change in your network, Internet, or phones, so we can make sure the change goes as smoothly as possible and doesn’t leave you scrambling after the fact.

Does Your Team Need An At Home VoIP Upgrade?

As work from home (WFH) rolls into another year, don’t forget to look at the phones your team use.

You don’t just have to default to them using their mobile. There’s a huge amount of choice available.

For example, you could easily let them access your business’s usual VoIP phone network from their home. So, people can still direct dial them on the same number.

There are huge benefits to this. Apart from helping them to compartmentalize work calls and personal

calls, the sound quality of calls on VoIP can be significantly better than on a cell phone.

In terms of the equipment needed for this, that can be tailored to each person’s personal preferences. Some will want a traditional handset. That’s easily done. Others will prefer a headset. And some may just want the VoIP software on their laptop and not have a “proper” phone at all.

All these options (and more) are easy, and allow you to give each member of your team the setup that suits them.



Hardware Shortages Continue Amid Pandemic

When the pandemic hit and lockdowns were enforced, many people moved to working from home, including students.

Businesses and schools had to adapt to their new circumstances and embrace remote functionality to continue on.

So what does this have to do with a hardware shortage?

Many students were supplied Chromebooks by the school, and if they didn't already have enough, schools suddenly needed devices for their student body.

And that's on top of folks needing laptops to work from home. Everybody who didn't already have a laptop suddenly needed one.

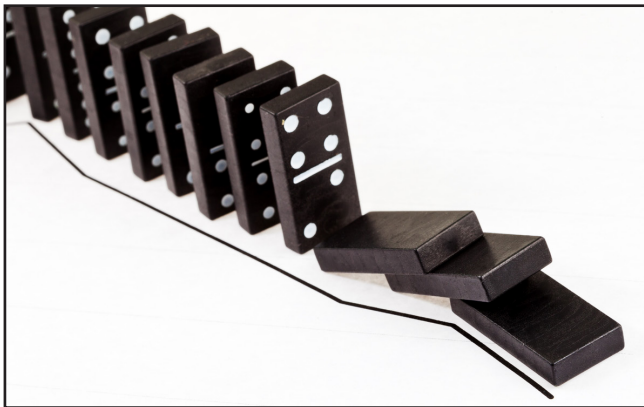
This demand continues to be a problem for manufacturers. Companies like HP and Dell, two of the three largest PC manufacturers (Lenovo being the third), have been reporting issues with PC parts.

When the pandemic first hit, there was a shortage of many components, but RAM stood out as one of the shortest supplies. Recently, CPUs and boards have had issues.

It's difficult to adequately meet demand when your product is missing essential parts – but that demand is persistent and isn't just going to go away while we're still

working and learning remotely. Much like the craze we've been seeing for recent video game consoles, devices are selling fast when they are available.

HP reports that its PC sales are up 7% annually overall with a 25% increase in notebook sales and a 31% decline in desktops. This is a good indicator that people are prioritizing being able to work anywhere, whether that's the office or between different rooms at home.



HP also reported that their Chromebook sales more than doubled this year. The PCs and Chromebooks are flying off the shelf.

Dell reports 14% consumer revenue growth and 5% commercial. The commercial increase is directly related to government orders, as well as schools; those large orders for notebooks or Chromebooks pushed Dell's commercial sales.

Dell also reported double-digit growth in major categories because of the need to work from home. They had four different models that exceeded the double-digit growth reported.

With all of the increase in sales, it is understandable that there is a shortage. It wasn't only Dell and HP experiencing the shortage either.

High-end gaming PCs are becoming hard and harder to equip as the high-end equipment is also harder and harder to come by.

Companies like NVidia are struggling to keep GDDR6, the RAM used in video cards, readily available.

Nvidia also has a new desktop PC, which has been unavailable too. Along with AMD's new RX6000, these items are not only out-of-stock, but are commanding a premium on the resale market.

Those who CAN get them are profiting off the demand (again, much like the people buying up and reselling PS5s and Xbox consoles).

Even Apple is having supply issues. It was reported that supplies are still low for Macbooks.

We're seeing the pandemic's impact in areas most people wouldn't consider and watching it happen to companies we would expect to be invulnerable.

Things will eventually even out and stabilize, but until then, we'll have to wait and see how it plays out, just like everything else during this pandemic.

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AI Will Affect Every Business In The Years Ahead

Artificial intelligence (AI) makes it possible for machines to learn and adapt their behavior as they gain experience.

The code that powers AI gets smarter and smarter as it's exposed to more data and scenarios.

As computers have developed more processing power, AI has become useful in lots of different ways. We believe every business will be using some form of AI in the years ahead.

AI is already being applied in many different industries to carry out a range of specific tasks with more and more use cases expected to emerge over the coming years as the technology gets more sophisticated.

AI is embraced by businesses because it can make their products and processes much smarter.

It can also save lots of time and remove the need for employees to do repetitive, manual tasks.

Using AI can optimize existing business processes and result in a significant boost in how your business performs.

A key feature of many AI applications is the ability to process huge amounts of data very quickly. This can give you real-time insights into opportunities and challenges as they occur.

Plus, the information can help you plan more quickly and with more clarity. So, this is all well and good for big businesses... but how will you use AI in YOUR business?

The chances are that you're already using some form of AI in your business. It's increasingly built into the software that we all rely on every day.

But are you taking full advantage of what's available? As a business, we track the latest applications that use AI to help protect us from cy-

bercrime and help staff collaborate and communicate better, to get their jobs done faster.

Let's talk about the latest smart applications that can help you.

While many types of businesses are using AI to improve a wide range of processes in a variety of different settings, banking, retail, and healthcare offer good examples of how AI can be used.

Many online retailers use AI to offer personalized shopping recommendations. These recommendation algorithms analyze data on previous clicks and purchases.

The more recommendations are tailored to your personal tastes... the more you end up buying.

With a huge number of transactions flowing through the global financial system each day, banks are increasingly relying on machine learning and AI to automatically detect fraud.

Working in real-time, AI helps banks to block dodgy transactions before they happen.

This is key as stolen money can be difficult to track down and get back once it's left the victim's account.

Artificial intelligence is also transforming healthcare.

By giving medical professionals accurate data and insights, they can work faster while providing high-quality care to more patients. It also helps doctors make better treatment decisions and diagnose patients with increased speed and accuracy.

AI can help to encourage healthy living by coaching people on actions they can take to improve their health. For example, a smartwatch may learn an individual's behaviour patterns, and send well-timed notifications to start exercising if it notices they've been sitting still for too long.

