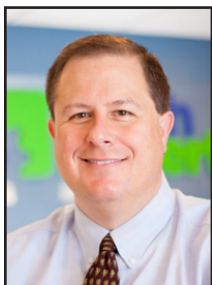


## How Much Of Your Business Can Be Automated?



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

Technology to help them get things done on autopilot.

Implemented well, automation will help reduce your staff's workload, increase efficiency, reduce costs, boost the quality of customer service, and help you use new data and insights to optimize performance.

The benefits will be felt by customers as well. As your competitors start to transform their businesses through automation, expectations can quickly change. If you don't adapt, you risk falling behind and losing customers.

Here are three of the main areas that are ripe for automation in many businesses.

### Marketing

Marketing automation can be broadly defined as software that lets the day-to-day execution of campaigns happen automatically.

Businesses use it as a way to nurture

Automation is transforming the way the world works.

Businesses of all sizes are embracing huge advances in technology

to help them get things done on autopilot. leads and free up their marketing teams to focus more heavily on strategy.

One of the most significant impacts of marketing automation is the way it allows small businesses to compete with even their most enormous competitors on a level playing field. In many ways, this was thought impossible only a few short years ago.

You can see marketing automation in many of the email campaigns you receive, the ads that fill your social media feeds, and the ways that businesses notice and respond to changes in customer behavior.

### Customer Service

Customer service automation gives businesses a way to provide support to customers 24/7 without the need to have staff involved in each interaction.

Chatbots are a great example of this, and artificial intelligence can make them pretty smart at understanding what customers are asking. So, they can quickly give the right support before a human needs to get involved.

### Employee Onboarding

When someone joins a company, the onboarding process can shape how they view their new employer and how quickly they can hit the ground running.

Do it wrong and you risk facing

problems with employee retention and staff morale.

You could even end up with a bad reputation that makes you less attractive to potential new hires.

There's a lot of room for manual error with onboarding, even with the most rigid guidelines in place.

With so many moving parts that involve so many different people, automating the onboarding process can help to make sure that all boxes are consistently ticked reducing the risk of human error and saving everyone an awful lot of time.

Work closely with IT experts to identify opportunities for automation. Automation is not an all-or-nothing option.

Most businesses see the best results by blending automation with more traditional ways of working. You have to find the right balance for you.

Far from threatening people's jobs, the right automation can help to reduce your team's workload and free them up to focus on the things that drive your business forward and generate profit.

Time is precious. Giving your team some of it back can completely transform their productivity and enjoyment of their work and improve profitability at your company.



Far from threatening people's jobs, the right automation can help to reduce your team's workload and free them up to focus on the things that drive your business forward and generate profit.



## Lately, Ransomware Has Added Blackmail To Its Arsenal

*“Now, many of these attackers using ransomware have upped their game. They realize that more businesses are using backups, so the chances of getting paid are lessening. To combat that, the attackers added an additional feature to their attacks: blackmail / extortion.”*



Mark Funchion is a network technician at Tech Experts.

At this point, ransomware is practically a lifeform – it’s constantly growing and adapting.

Originally, if you were hit with ransomware, your data was encrypted and you could pay to (hopefully) get the data restored.

If you had an effective backup solution, you could restore your data without paying and adjust your security to prevent this from happening again.

Now, many of these attackers using ransomware have upped their game. They realize that more businesses are using backups, so the chances of getting paid are lessening. To combat that, the attackers added an additional feature to their attacks: blackmail / extortion.

Not only do they encrypt your data, but they take it as well. Now, the payment is to decrypt the data AND keep it from being posted online for all to see.

If you are a business with sensitive files, this can be a real issue. Having a backup is not enough in this case; even if you don’t pay the ransom and you’re back up and running in a few hours, all your

data could be shared. Worse than the hassle of recreating all your files, the lasting effects from customer data, financials, and personal information being leaked could be devastating.

This is why it’s crucial to partner with an IT provider who understands network security.

An effective and tested backup solution is important, but there’s more that you need to have in order to be protected. Your network needs to be secured with a firewall, and

shares too. However, in that scenario, one compromised password that has full access to everything means the attackers do not need to look any further and can “walk” right in.

Another item that too many people turn off or find annoying is User Account Control. Yes, it can be frustrating to verify your user identity when you want to make changes.

That is, until a malicious program is launched without your knowl-



all your devices need to be patched regularly to limit your exposure when exploits are discovered.

Are you using 2FA? Do you know what 2FA is? Are your passwords changed regularly and are they complex? Do all users in your office use the same password? Do they share accounts?

We know it seems more efficient to have easy passwords and shared log-ins, but it’s a huge security risk.

Businesses often find it easier to give users full administrative access to their local machine and network

edge and the User Account Control prompt stops your network and data from being attacked. What’s worse – a few seconds’ worth of verification or a costly business disaster?

These cyberthreats will always continue to grow and evolve. They have been since we started using the Internet. If you are not in the business of technology, it is very difficult for you to adapt efficiently enough to stay secure.

That is why the right technology partner who does adapt and evolve is very important to the success of your business.



## 6 Low-Cost Productivity Tips To Increase Competitiveness

Increasing workplace productivity can mean the difference between a business that succeeds and a great idea that fails. When a company produces more products or delivers higher-quality customer service more quickly than the competition, it gains the advantage.

To get the most benefit out of technology, however, organizations need to match the technology solution to the business need. Start by assessing business processes to identify areas for improvement. For instance, do employees find themselves bogged down with paperwork? Or does distance hinder effective collaboration?

The following low-cost productivity tips will help address productivity problems without breaking the budget. Some cost relatively little to implement, while others pay for themselves quickly in productivity gains.

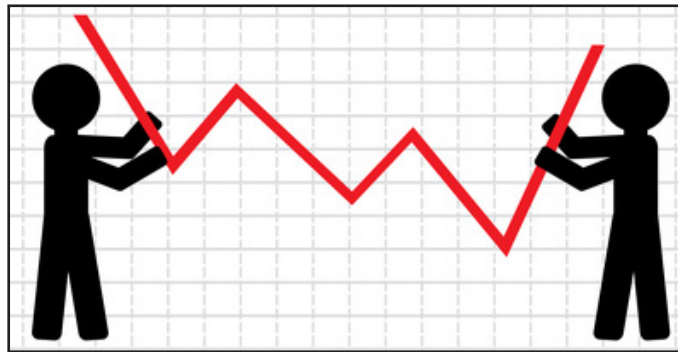
### Low-Cost Productivity Tips For Remote Workers

For many employees, remote work has become a way of life. A few essential technology items can significantly boost comfort and productivity for remote workers. Here are some examples:

**Desktop comfort:** Start with a wireless mouse, a Bluetooth keyboard, and a laptop stand.

**Headsets:** Wireless headsets enable office corridor roaming on calls and generally doing two things at once. Studies show that using a headset increases productivity by up to 40 percent.

**Video conferencing technology:** When employees spend hours each day on video conference, the right technology makes a significant difference. Start with an external web-



cam and a dedicated mic. Headsets can increase sound quality, as well.

**Multiple monitors:** For many jobs, such as customer support, dual monitors increase productivity by streamlining the process of copying between windows and improving multi-tasking.

### Fewer Meetings, More Communication

Nothing interrupts a good work rhythm more than a useless meeting. On the other hand, when teams integrate communication technology into the workflow, productivity rises.

For instance, Microsoft Teams incorporates group chat directly into its popular Office apps. This allows team members to conduct just-in-time communication without leaving the work at hand.

### Put It On The Calendar

When employees get in the habit of putting everything on the calendar, they work more efficiently. And when groups share a calendar, colleagues can determine availability at a glance, even for team members in another office.

### Facilitate Information Sharing

In a data-driven environment, workers require on-demand access to up-to-date information. Cloud-based document management systems make essential documents

accessible anytime, anywhere.

And when employees share critical documentation through centralized information repositories, people have the information they need to work effectively and reduce errors.

### Automate Repetitive Tasks

The more organizations automate repetitive tasks, the more employees can focus on core business tasks. Take an inventory of bottlenecks in your organization and determine whether automation can help solve the problem.

For instance, automation can help reduce time-consuming paperwork such as invoice processing and expense tracking. Likewise, sales and marketing departments benefit from automated call logging and tools that manage social media publishing.

### Use Existing Tools More Effectively

Sometimes the solution lies not in purchasing new technology, but rather in optimizing the technology already at hand.

We can also help you adjust your network management and cybersecurity systems to ensure business continuity. And we can assist you with determining optimal email settings and retention policies to streamline communications. Call us today to discuss more low-cost productivity tips.

*“The more organizations automate repetitive tasks, the more employees can focus on core business tasks. Take an inventory of bottlenecks in your organization and determine whether automation can help solve the problem.”*



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## Best Tips To Maximize Efficiency When Working From Home

A quarter of people plan to work from home either permanently or more regularly when the pandemic is over.

No surprises there. Many people feel more productive when they work from home. And three-quarters believe there are fewer distractions at home (when the kids are at school, anyway).

Here are five things we recommend you put in place for everyone who's going to be working from home, long-term:

### A dedicated working space

Trying to work in the same space as

other members of the family is testing for everyone. Help your team to identify where they will work and set up a proper work environment. This will also help them draw the line on the day's work when they leave their workspace.

### Fastest possible Internet

Slow speeds are the biggest frustration. There are often options to speed up Internet speeds. Maybe you could subsidize them upgrading to a better service?

### Dedicated tech

62% of home workers would like their company to provide better technology to help them stay con-

nected to what's going on in the business.

From a data security point of view, you'll have a lot more control if you give team members a business device to use only for work.

### Collaborative software

Whether it's Microsoft Teams or other software, it's so easy these days for anyone working anywhere to stay up to speed on all relevant projects.

### Help them feel involved

This can be as simple as sending pizzas to everyone's houses, so your team can have lunch together on a video call.

## Four Useful Features in Microsoft Onenote

OneNote is a brilliant tool for staying organized and on top of all of the bits of information you collect throughout each day.

But are you using the Microsoft 365 app to its full potential? Here are four useful features you may not have tried out yet.

### Integrate it with other apps

OneNote integrates very well with the rest of the Microsoft 365 ecosystem. Did you know there are also a load of third-party apps that integrate with it?

From Zapier to Feedly, it's worth exploring the ways that OneNote can work better with the rest of your technology.

### Turn on dark mode when the lights go down

If you're burning the midnight oil and the bright light of a white



protect individual sections of your notebook.

This can make it difficult for others to view things you'd rather they didn't see.

Be careful though... adding a password doesn't encrypt it. And if you lose your password you lose access to your notebook.

### Extract text from images

OneNote supports Optical Character Recognition. This lets you throw a picture into OneNote and have the software automatically extract the text for you.

This can save a lot of time if you need to get hold of text from an image and then paste it into other documents. It can make quick work of a stack of business cards, avoiding the need for you to type all of the phone numbers and email addresses into your computer.

screen gets a bit too much, OneNote has an excellent dark mode feature. It turns everything dark while still maintaining enough contrast to make it easy to keep working.

### Password protect private sections of your notebook

If you're using OneNote to write or organize information you want to keep private, you can password