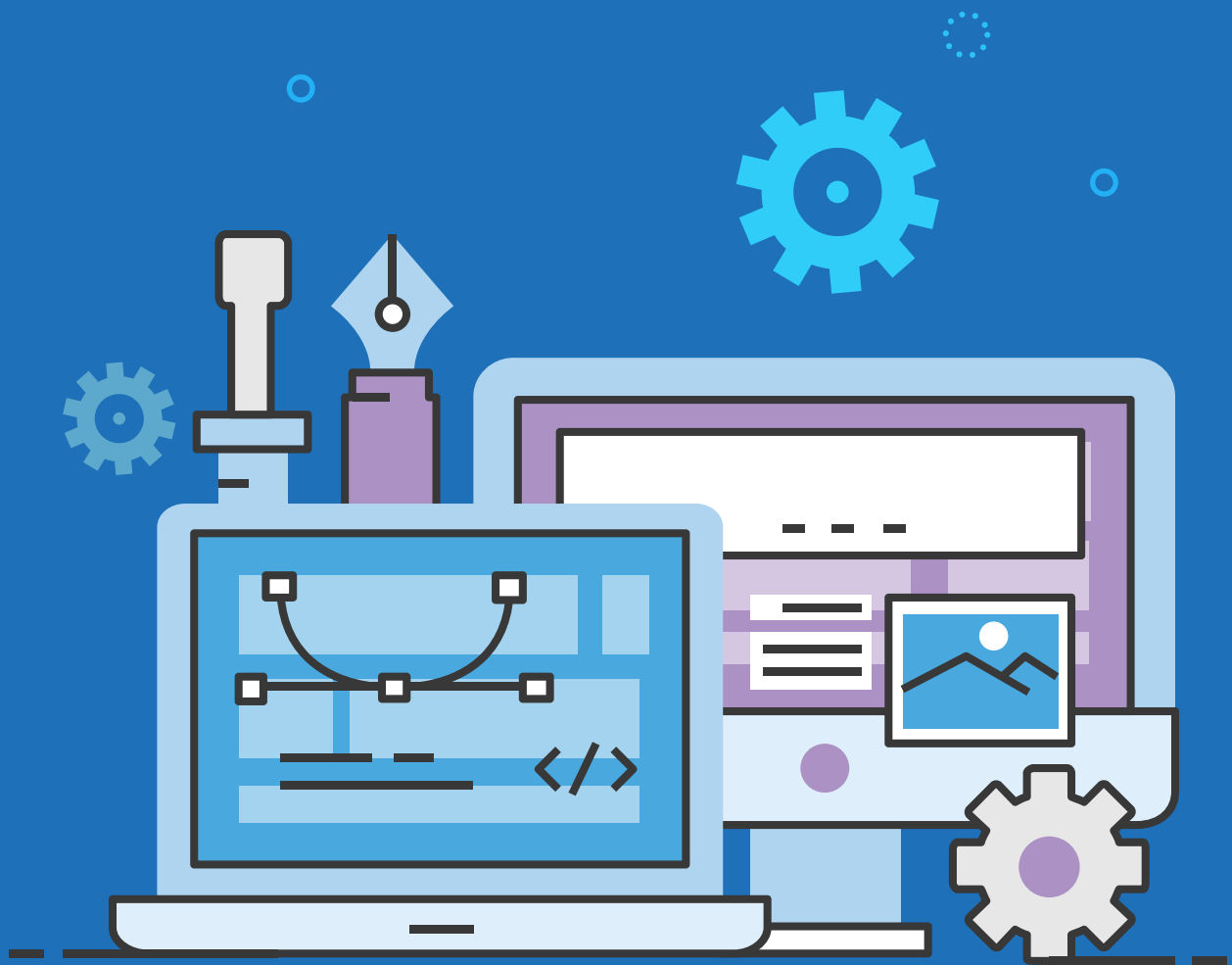


# Technology Tips for Startups

Discover How to Get the Up-to-Date  
& Highly Effective Technology Your  
Business Needs to Excel in Today's  
Marketplace





Technology has quickly become essential to the success of most businesses. In fact, in one recent report conducted by Capita Technology Solutions 78% of respondents acknowledged that keeping up to date with the latest tech trends was vital or very important.

It has reached the point where not doing so could easily result in the failure of a business. That's how important technology has become. New technological innovations are enabling companies to streamline their processes, gather critical analytics and establish lean operations.

As a result, those who aren't keeping up to date and using the latest technology risk falling behind their competition.

In other words, it used to be that startups failed due to running out of money or due to pricing or cost issues or due to having a poor product or not using advisors. **But now the reason for failure is just as likely to be due to technology mistakes.**

Here's why: successful startups often originate around a sole idea but they have the potential to expand and grow beyond that idea. A company's technological systems and processes must be able to adapt and grow as the company does.

Unfortunately, it can be difficult to build technology systems that offer that adaptability along with operational efficiency and data security. It gets even more difficult when a startup is not a technology company.

To make matters even more challenging, it's often very important for a company to get their technology right the first time because whether it is product-involved technology or technology for back-office administration, failure can quickly cause a business to lose customer trust. Technology can also be very expensive and using the wrong technology or technology that is not reliable can produce even greater costs.

**For all these reasons, getting your technology right is essential to your company's success – no matter what market your company is in.**

That's why for many companies (especially non-technical start-ups) the ideal solution is to find a technology partner.

The simple truth is that most companies do not have the technological expertise to develop information systems that are sustainable and flexible.

**By aligning with a technology company, they can bring in advisors or partners to ensure the technology is right.** A good technology company will enable a business to avoid costly mistakes and get their business running as efficiently as possible as fast as possible.

To help you find the absolute best technology company for your business we have created this technology partner search guide.

# Startup Technology Checklist

What Every Company Needs to Get Started on the Right Foot

## 1 The Basics

Every business these days needs a digital presence. That means you need a website, hosting and email. You also need the right hardware and software to get business done.

You'll need computers and/or mobile devices and Internet access. You'll also need to determine what software to buy and who will get to use it. A Tip – don't get so enamored with professional software that you ignore less expensive, "open source" software.

Probably, the most important basic technology for companies to have is a website. Actually, building a website has been made much easier and many can do it themselves these days using an online build-your-own website service. You could also hire a freelancer to build the site. Often these solutions even take care of the hosting and e-mail domains for you.



The biggest issue with websites arises when you need them to be more than just a calling card. If the website is going to be an integral part of your business, if it is going to be responsible for making sales or generating leads or delivering customer service or accepting payments – then the more expert attention it needs.

This is when having a technology partner who provides you with a dedicated admin or technology consultant can spell the difference between the ultimate success and failure of your business. If your website fosters a pleasant experience for visitors and makes it easy for them to buy from you then your chances of success in today's marketplace skyrocket.

## 2 Data Security

Today, it is vitally important for a business to take data security seriously from the very beginning. Cyber-attacks on small businesses are becoming more and more popular – and many occur at the point of sale.

These attacks are also incredibly damaging – most businesses don't recover.

That's why you should either invest in the best, most complete cyber security system that you can afford or you should work with a partner who knows the right data security procedures that you should follow and can help you implement those procedures across your company.

In most instances, the latter approach can provide you with better security at a lower cost over the long run. To learn more about good ISO Information Security practices visit

<http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/management-standards/iso27001.htm>.





### 3 Customer Communication

As a company grows, managing its marketing communications with current and potential customers can become more and more difficult. You'll have to stay on top of multiple social media channels as well as manage multiple marketing campaigns through a variety of media, such as print, email and more.

Often automation is the solution and a good technology partner can help you get the ideal solution for your business. If you want to try to continue to manage marketing on your own just be careful. Managing multiple social media channels and posting and remaining active on each can take up a lot of time – time that you could be spending on other important areas of your business. There are also some free social media management solutions that you could try such as:



- Hootsuite allows 4 social profiles and automates your posting schedule
- Combining Buffer and If This Then That (IFTTT) also allows you to automate social posts
- Zapier allows you to automate social media posts, Google spreadsheets and much more



These solutions also offer “pro” or paid versions – that means that the free versions may be incomplete and not contain a feature that you could benefit from.

Regarding email, there are also companies that can help you automate and fine-tune your campaigns. But again, here a good technology partner like Dedicated Developers would know your business best and would be able to tailor a solution to meet your needs.

Also remember, when it comes to customer communication personal is always best. You should try to stay personal until you've grown so big that it is no longer a viable option.

## 4 Finances

When you are just starting out you may be tempted to use Excel to keep track of your finances but be warned this approach is rarely sustainable and can be a real source of frustration and stress at tax time. It is better to consider using a cloud-based or out-of-the-box financial solution instead. But you may likely run into difficulties with these as well as your business grows. That's when working with a technology company like Dedicated Developers can allow you to get a customized system that works ideally for your business.



## 5 Data Management

Properly managing data is another task that is vital to the ultimate success of your business. By getting a data analytics solution from your technology partner you can improve data collection and management efficiency and improve security. Remember, in many cases a business's data is its most important possession so don't treat it lightly. Make sure you manage it properly.





# How to Select the Perfect Technology Partner & then Ensure You Work Well Together

## Selecting a partner

Study potential technology partners carefully. Look at their website and their available services. Also be sure to look at testimonials. You may even want to contact past clients.

Talk to the company extensively and make sure in particular that they strive to foster a harmonious work process where everyone knows their responsibilities and expectations.

You want your staff and the staff from the partner to be able to work easily together in a team-based atmosphere.

Once you have found a partner, here are three things you can do to ensure that you work well together going forward.

## 1 Sign a Service Level Agreement (SLA)

The SLA must contain these two things: 1) An outline of everything that needs to be done and how completion is to be measured. 2) Penalties should the goals in the outline not be achieved.

## 2 Build Trust

Being able to trust your technology partner is essential for creating a long-lasting mutually beneficial work relationship. You don't want things to devolve into an "us" versus "them" mentality. You want to foster a team environment where both sides work well together and often this means that you need to trust your technology provider to deliver as promised. Trust their expertise – unless they show you they can't be trusted. Then look for someone else that you can trust.

### 3 Focus on Good Communication

Few things can destroy a working relationship faster than poor communication. Remember when it comes to communication, e-mail is good, phone is better and face-to-face is the best. Here are communication methods that you can use to maintain a good relationship:

- Face-to-face conversation with physical whiteboard
- High-resolution videoconference with a virtual whiteboard
- High-resolution, large-screen videoconference
- Low-resolution, small-screen videoconference
- Clear telephone connection
- Clear VoIP connection over the Internet
- Instant messaging and real-time text chat
- Wikis and electronic discussion boards
- E-mail

Whatever communication methods you employ, be sure to communicate daily and to create opportunities for face-to-face meetings if and when possible.

If this sounds like too much work, remember a good relationship with a technology partner will reduce how much time you have to focus on technology yourself and free you up to work on other important matters. A good technology provider will also allow your company to operate more efficiently and will save money by keeping you from using out-dated or poor technology.

# The Do's and Don'ts of Working With Technology Providers

## Do's:

- Choose a provider based on how well they understand your business and your problem and their ability to deliver measurable results
- Choose a provider that is attentive to your company's needs and that seems easy to work with
- Choose a provider who truly understands your strategic visions and their accompanying technological challenges
- Foster clear, consistent communication
- Write SLAs that feature specific language and requirements

## Don'ts:

- Do not expect a provider to immediately eliminate all challenges
- Do not make the mistake of thinking lowest cost = best company for the job, sometimes paying more can prevent bigger costs later on
- Do not feel like you have to settle for lower quality, keep looking the right company is out there



# Get Answers to These Questions Before Selecting a Technology Partner

- Do you understand our business and our “big idea”?
- What applications will you implement to achieve our goals?
- Are you capable of providing the right amount of service?
- How will you be held accountable ... are you willing to work with detailed SLAs?
- What are your ideas for solving our business problems?
- When can we meet and how long do you estimate it will take to complete the project?
- Are you confident you can help us overcome our emergent technology challenges?
- Do you have experience working with the technologies we need help with?
- Can you identify which technologies we need now and will need in the future?
- Do you offer flexible contracts that will allow us to better manage changes – such as with a rapid ramp up or down?
- Do you have access to the sort of infrastructure we require now and will require in the future?
- Who are your partners?



# How to Use Kano Analysis to Determine What Your Customers Really Want

The Kano model is a theory for product development and customer satisfaction developed in the 1980s by Professor Noriaki Kano, which classifies customer preferences into five categories (see worksheet).

You can use the included bonus worksheet to identify crucial and wasteful features in your product or service. More specifically, the worksheet will allow you to examine what customers find valuable, what they dislike and what they don't care about in regards to your product or service.

This exercise can help you to make better use of company time and money going forward.

# Bonus worksheet: Kano Analysis

## Kato Analysis Steps:

1. Make a list of your product or service features
2. Identify customers from your key target markets
3. Actually talk to the people from your target markets
4. Ask them about their impressions about your product and service features
5. Analyze & make appropriate decisions

## Customer Preference Categories

- Must-Be Quality: These “threshold” attributes are necessary for functionality, but may be taken for granted
- Reverse Quality: Features customers dislike
- Indifferent Quality: Features customers don't care about
- One-Dimensional Quality: These “performance” attributes are not absolutely necessary, but explicitly demanded
- Attractive Quality: These “excitement” attributes are features customers didn't even know they wanted

List your product/service features:

Feature Type:

Your evaluation:

Avg. customer evaluation:

## Should You Keep or Delete a Feature?

- Good products must have features that are all must-be quality and none that are reverse quality.
- Include attractive qualities to "attract" more customers.
- Where possible, cut out indifferent features to reduce expenses.
- Choose one-dimensional, or performance, features carefully to deliver a product or service at a price the customer is prepared to pay, while still maintaining a good profit margin.

# About Dedicated Developers

Founded in 2007, Dedicated Developers has become a leading provider of Website Development, Mobile App Development, Software Development, Full-Stack Development, Cloud Computing Services, IoT Services, Enterprise Mobility Solutions and more to clients around the world.

The company has built a high performing team using strict selection criteria that has resulted in less than 5% of all applicants being chosen to work for the company. The team includes: Graphic & Website Designers, Web Developers, PHP Coders, Android & iPhone Mobile Application Developers, and much more. The company's founders have over 25 years of combined development and design experience and have earned master's degrees in electrical and computer engineering.

If a company is preparing to expand its business onto the Internet, or is in need of more modern technology, Dedicated Developers is uniquely qualified to help it reach more potential clients both local and worldwide. And, with its customizable service and pricing plans, the company makes the best web development services affordable for almost any business. For more information visit [www.DedicatedDevelopers.com](http://www.DedicatedDevelopers.com).