

WHITE PAPER

# Smarter web solutions for ambitious SMEs: how to accelerate your business growth in 2019

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KAYO



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## With change comes opportunity

However, for every challenge that change brings, there is also an opportunity. Those ambitious businesses that can effectively harness the right technology will be the ones to gain competitive advantage and grow. In fact, figures from industry analysts IDC show a huge correlation between the use of digital technology and business growth figures.

To be able to capitalise on disruptive technology though, businesses need to be able to identify and harness the right technology for their – and their customers’ – unique needs. Anticipating how customers want to consume products and services is key here, as well as having a solid understanding of how existing and emerging technology is influencing customer behaviour.

For example, in 2018, purchases via mobile phones overtook sales from physical shopping centres for the first time. As such, all businesses need to be embracing a mobile first approach. This doesn’t just mean having a mobile app, but having an overarching strategy for web systems and customer interactions that is constructed with mobile in mind.

In the same way, while still in its infancy, AI is set to have huge ramifications for all industries. It is not just something for the IBMs and Googles of the world to take advantage of, AI in the form of simple chatbots or machine learning in terms of search and keyword functionality can be employed quite simply and inexpensively by SMEs, if they have access to the right expertise.

## The importance of getting back to basics

While it is true there is a lot of exciting technology becoming mainstream, it is important for businesses to not try and run before they can walk. When implemented and integrated correctly, digital technologies have the potential to really drive business growth, but all too often, we see organisations either rushing to buy technology, which then does not deliver

on its promise or expectation. They are all driven by a desire to stay one step ahead of the competition and carve out an advantage in an increasingly crowded and fast-paced environment.

Businesses need to ensure they have the basic building blocks in place in order to get real benefit from any technology. Have messaging in place, build your digital profile, develop a roadmap, know your objectives, test and learn. Don't choose a piece of software just because a peer or friend has recommended it. It may work for their business but that doesn't mean it is right for yours. Equally, don't bend your business to suit off the shelf technology, instead find a partner who can shape technology to meet your needs.

This is especially true for growing businesses, as there will come a tipping point where expansion, especially when it comes to appointing new employees, can often dilute processes. It is important to consider technology in any growth plans for example looking at what can be automated as you grow.

A massively important part of setting a business up to harness digital technology for growth is recognising what you really need. Many businesses mistakenly think they just need a website, when actually what they really require is a quite advanced technology platform. This is a relatively easy error to make – after all, Uber looks like just an app and AirBnB just a website, but in reality they are both very complex booking systems.



## Are you ready?

We encourage clients to ask the following questions before embarking on any digital technology or web design project.

### 1. Do you understand your own business?

How well do you understand your processes, operating procedures, current technology and skill sets? Do you have a clear vision of how any new digital technology will impact all these areas?

### 2. Do you understand your customers?

Who are your customers? How do they interact with you? How often? What would encourage them to purchase more from you? What is the user journey like and how could it be improved?

### 3. What are you trying to achieve?

What does success look like? How will digital technology help you to achieve this? Do you have objectives mapped out? How will you measure the success of any technology you implement?

Once these questions have been answered, businesses can look at the right kind of digital technology for them.



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Development  
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## Looking beyond design for successful websites

A website is the front door to any organisation, but any organisation who sees this as its only function is doing a disservice to the power of a successful site.

Think of website as your digital Business Development Manager (BDM). If you compare a salary for a BDM, including travel, holiday, expenses, lead generation services and business cards, with your budget for a new or refreshed website, it quickly becomes clear that you need to invest well in order to reap the rewards of a website that can properly generate new business.

Also think very carefully about the functions you want your site to deliver. For some businesses, their website will act as a brochure to help drive sales, for others it will be an eCommerce hub. The design and functionality of your website needs to reflect this.

Whatever function a businesses' site is fulfilling, it is vital to make sure it is constantly optimised to evolve with your business. Those businesses who invest in a new website and then don't monitor trends and analytics, or regularly update content, will not be maximising their investment, or getting the most out of their new site.





## To app or not to app?

Apps continue to grow in popularity. In a world where convenience is king they are a great way for consumers to easily access services they use regularly. However, just because they are popular, doesn't mean they are right for every business.

They are a really useful tool for repeat customers as they can massively improve the customer journey and experience. They're also a great marketing channel, as can be used to push out information to users, something which is incredibly important in a post GDPR landscape.

However, an app will not attract people to your business. It can't and should not replace an eCommerce site, although it can compliment one.

## Bespoke software

The way a business delivers its services is usually at least in part unique. While generic software solutions can work well in some areas such as accounting or payroll, for other areas, trying to find an off the shelf technology solution to suit your specific needs can be challenging.

Time and again we see organisations purchase a solution they think is best for them, but then have to shoehorn their processes and operations to suit it. In reality the opposite approach should be taken.

Your digital technology solutions should be built to suit your needs, not vice versa.

This is especially true when it comes to eCommerce platforms. People expect an Amazon level of service and content, but most off the shelf eCommerce platforms such as Shopify or Magento can't deliver this. However, by working with the right partner, it is perfectly possible to customise these platforms to deliver the flexibility needed to succeed.

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## Making it all happen

Identifying, implementing and optimising the right digital technology for your business can seem like a daunting task. The following key steps offer a good guide of how to bring everything together to help realise investment and drive growth.

### 1. Don't lead with technology

Start with the customer and your business goals, not with technology. Don't rush in and throw some technology at a perceived problem in the hope of solving it. Instead, look at how your customers are interacting with your business and how they are likely to in the future.

Create a roadmap of what the current customer experience looks like and how you want it to look and combine this with your own business growth objectives. Use these to create a strategy, which can then inform the specific role you need digital technology to play.

### 2. Build on data

Before purchasing any new technology, organisations first need to fully understand what they already have and what they want a new solution to achieve. Don't make assumptions here; conduct an audit of current capabilities, skill sets and data to make sure you have all the information needed before making any kind of decision.

### 3. Get the right advice

Recognising that you need outside advice and expertise is a sign of astute leadership. You may be an expert in your business area, but the world of digital technology is fast moving and rapidly evolving. Niche expertise and experience is needed to navigate through all the available technology options. As such, seeking independent, expert advice can save considerable time and money. What is vital here, is to choose a partner who is technology agnostic. You need to know that whatever technology they recommend is truly the best fit for you. Better still, find a partner who can build a bespoke solution just for you.

### 4. Continuously optimise

Digital technology, by its very nature, doesn't stand still. Neither do your customers. They are constantly adopting new ways of purchasing or accessing services and you need to ensure you can meet their ever-evolving demands.

Don't look at any digital technology solution as a finite project. To get true value and really drive business growth, businesses need to constantly optimise their systems to stay one step ahead of the competition.

### 5. Involve your employees

You can invest in the best piece of digital technology there is, but if it is not used properly it will be virtually worthless. Make sure you have the right



team in place to implement, integrate and optimise your chosen solution, and do not overlook the importance of communicating with all employees about what you are trying to achieve with digital technology.

Take employees on the journey with you and invest in training them to use digital technology appropriately.

Used correctly, digital technology has the potential to streamline processes, drive efficiencies and accelerate business growth.

Getting it right can be a challenge, with often seemingly daunting choices to be made. It does not have to be this way though, with the right approach, advice and strategy, all organisations can harness digital to really stand out from the competition and realise their ambitions.



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