

Technology: The Superhighway to Business Differentiation

It's a given that technology can help you run your business more efficiently. But today's smart businesses take it a step further, applying technology aggressively to differentiate themselves from competition. In fact, business experts advise companies across all industries to think of technology first, especially in commoditised markets. "Every company is a tech company", says Cliff Johnson in *Forbes*. "The more you think about technology and its essential role in your business, the more successful you'll be"¹.

The key is to not implement technology for technology's sake. Companies must develop clear and compelling business cases before investing in major IT initiatives, followed by performance targets that help measure return on investment. These new solutions must then be thoughtfully chosen, expertly implemented, and well managed on an ongoing basis in order to achieve differentiation.

But what does that differentiation look like? Companies that make smart technology investments can see impact in four major areas.

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DIFFERENTIATED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Companies have a world of technologies they can implement and leverage to create truly innovative products and services. These companies can identify customer needs and preferences more accurately, develop and enhance their offerings more efficiently, market them more effectively, and deliver them via the channels customers expect.

Netflix is a perfect example. "Netflix is a technology juggernaut whose analytics, algorithms, and digital-streaming innovations have changed how customers watch movies and TV shows", says Bill Taylor in *Harvard Business Review*. "If you aim to disrupt an industry, you must be willing to disrupt yourself. Netflix could be the dictionary definition of a Silicon Valley disruptor"².

From end-user devices to servers and storage, the right technology can help companies achieve significant differentiation that creates value, generates revenue, and reduces costs at every phase of the product lifecycle. To bring about differentiated products and services, companies need to aggressively take advantage of available technologies to equip users with world-class capabilities, even if that means fundamentally rethinking core processes.



DIFFERENTIATED BUSINESS PROCESSES

Differentiation reflects not just what goes out the door in terms of products and services. It also reflects what goes on behind closed doors—your business processes, everything from sales and marketing to employee retention. The latest technologies, for example, can completely reinvent internal and external communications for your company, eliminating barriers between individual employees, teams, and entire business units, as well as with suppliers, vendors, partners, and customers.

Technologies this powerful do come at a cost, especially for small and mid-sized businesses. But a calculated investment can more than pay for itself. “Although IT may seem expensive when first implemented, in the long run, however, it becomes incredibly cost-effective by streamlining a company’s operational and managerial processes”, says Tim Zimmer in the *Small Business Chronicle*. “In effect, IT enables companies to do more with less, without sacrificing quality or value”³.

DIFFERENTIATED BUSINESS STRATEGIES

Cutting-edge technology can provide business intelligence and capabilities that enable new levels of strategy and planning. Big-picture insights have the potential for positive impact on every aspect of the company, including key partnerships, go-to-market methods and pricing, and even the business model itself.

“One of the fundamental advantages of IT is its ability to enhance a company’s competitive advantage in the marketplace, by facilitating strategic thinking”, says Tim Zimmer. “When used as a strategic investment

rather than as a means to an end, IT provides organisations with the tools they need to properly evaluate the market and to implement strategies needed for a competitive edge”³.

DIFFERENTIATED EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Strategies for differentiation may be initiated at the macro level, but they are executed by your employees and experienced by your customers. Forward-facing companies are using technology, from AI to business analytics, to align customer needs with service levels. Likewise, they are equipping their employees with the latest technologies to boost productivity and accelerate innovation.

For most of these companies, the technologies they require are found in the cloud. In fact, according to Forrester, three out of four customer service technology deployments are now in the cloud⁴. Cloud-based technologies often offer the flexibility companies need to develop and implement a custom approach for delivering services to employees and customers alike.

DaaS: DIFFERENTIATION AT THE DESKTOP

One technology driving differentiation at the desktop is Device as a Service (DaaS). Offering the latest end-user technology can create differentiation by facilitating mobility and collaboration, driving user productivity and business innovation. DaaS allows organisations to supply their workers with the latest end-user devices at a predictable per-device cost. By offloading device procurement and lifecycle management to a specialised vendor partner, companies can easily and cost-effectively deliver and maintain the high-performance devices their users expect.

HOW XERETEC CAN HELP

The Xerotec Group is the UK’s leading independent integrator of digital print hardware, software, solutions, and services. Xerotec is now bringing its expertise and experience in service delivery and bespoke solutions to DaaS⁵. For more information, visit our [DaaS portal](#).

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Sources:

1. Johnson, Cliff, “Why Every Company Is A Tech Company (And How To Use This To Your Advantage)”, *Forbes*, 21 November 2016. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2016/11/21/why-every-company-is-a-tech-company-and-how-to-use-this-to-your-advantage/#651980e3631a>
2. Taylor, Bill, “To See the Future of Competition, Look at Netflix”, *Harvard Business Review*, 18 July 2018. <https://hbr.org/2018/07/to-see-the-future-of-competition-look-at-netflix>
3. Zimmer, Tim, “What Are the Advantages of Information Technology in Business?” *Houston Chronicle*, 28 June 2018. <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/advantages-information-technology-business-774.html>
4. Leggett, Kate, “Customer Service Operations Rest On Mature Technologies, But Emerging Ones Add Differentiation”, *Forrester*, 27 July 2018. <https://go.forrester.com/blogs/customer-service-operations-rests-on-mature-technologies-but-emerging-ones-add-differentiation/>
5. DaaS by Xerotec is fulfilled through Landscape Printing Systems – a Xerotec company.



Xerotec recommends Windows 10 Pro.