

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL - SMALL BUSINESS MONTH**

**TREVOR LONG**

# **TECHNOLOGY FOR SMALL BUSINESS**

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## ATTENDEE NOTES - KEY POINTS & TAKEAWAYS

# EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

**T**here's no doubt we've all seen just how critical technology is to today's society over just the last few months. COVID-19 has changed everything, it's brought forward dramatic changes to the way we communicate, the way we shop, the way we engage with business and our customers.

For me, this has meant that in over six months I've been to the Channel 9 studios less than five times, yet every week I am on the Today Show two to three times. This is possible because I was willing to adapt, as was the program and the network.

Likewise, In 2019 I travelled over 70 times, this year, I've made three trips.

Times have changed, we can't turn that back, so now is the time to look at all aspects of our business to ensure we're lean, efficient, and in touch with our customers and our competition.

I hope you found my webinar informative, and hope you were able to listen, and not need to take notes. Instead, the bits you need are all here in this document.

Find me online at [EFTM.com](https://www.eftm.com), follow me on Twitter @TrevorLong, Instagram @TrevorLongAU and Facebook /TrevorLong.



## **YOUR SMARTPHONE**

Consider your phone to be part of your business. Look at all aspects of business, from Accounting, Checkout, Rosters, Documents, and get those apps on your phone. Never before has it been so possible to run your business from your phone.

Even if it just means taking some time on your phone for emails, or using your phone to check sales reports - it's a little less time at the business, or behind a desk.

It is also possible today with some smartphones (Samsung Galaxy S20/Note 20) to use your smartphone as your only device. These phone can be plugged into a monitor, paired with a keyboard and mouse and be as powerful as a laptop.

## **CONSOLIDATE YOUR DEVICES**

Many of us have Smartphones, Tablets, Laptops, maybe even a computer at home or the office. There's a few things to consider at this time regarding what next for all those devices.

Remembering what I've said about the power of Smartphones, invest in one that will help you run your business. If you have a laptop and a tablet, consider a single device that might be able to do both - an iPad Pro for example can do everything a tablet can do. The need for a home computer is almost completely gone with portable devices like Tablets and Laptops now so powerful.

Consider the government incentives on offer today to write-off new assets. Could be an ideal time, if cashflow allows you, to refresh your technology. The computers and tablets you use every day and in your business.

By thinking about what you could use your tablet for more, and forgoing your laptop or computer you will not only save money but be more efficient with your devices.

## CONNECTIVITY

NBN:

- It's great, don't let negative stories over many years stop you switching.
- You can choose from 100 Telcos, they all use the "NBN" network, but different support and pricing models. Personally, I recommend Aussie Broadband, Australian Call centre for support & Sales, and excellent speeds
- Remember that the NBN/Telco only brings the internet TO your home or business. To ensure great speeds IN your home or business you need good WiFi. I recommend a MESH WIFI system (Netgear Orbi, Nest Wifi, Linksys Velop, Dlink Covr)

5G:

- 5G is a great connectivity option IF you have coverage in your area.
- Probably 40% of Sutherland Shire is covered by 5G at a glance.
- 5G is faster than 4G, but importantly is mobile so a great alternative to NBN for those who are more out and about for business.
- Remember the cost of Mobile data per GB is far more than NBN, so don't assume you can use unlimited data on 5G

## WORK ANYWHERE

COVID has normalised video calling and video meetings. Do you need an office space? Or, have you considered office space and now wonder if it's really worth it?

Consider co-working spaces - WeWork and Wotso are huge names in this space, but locally Inspire CoWork have desk sharing from under \$40 a week.

In addition to those options, Technology like portable devices and mobile connectivity mean we can literally work anywhere. At a Cafe, the park, the beach, wherever you choose. Often a change of scene inspires a bit of creativity too!

## E-COMMERCE

For those with large scale online business already, if it's being done independently, now's the time to look at Marketplace options. Selling products on [amazon.com.au](https://www.amazon.com.au) or [kogan.com.au](https://www.kogan.com.au) gives your products more eyeballs, with the payment processing via the larger brand, the fulfilment you do (or you stock with them in some instances).

If you're new to it, Shopify is a great example of a 1 hour setup to get selling online.

List products, control stock levels and variations of products, it's really an amazing system for anyone with a product to sell.

## GOOGLE YOUR BUSINESS

Do you own your business on Google?

If not, claim it. No matter how much effort it takes to "prove" ownership - it's worth it.

You get a monthly email telling you how many people called you, searched you, clicked your website from Google.

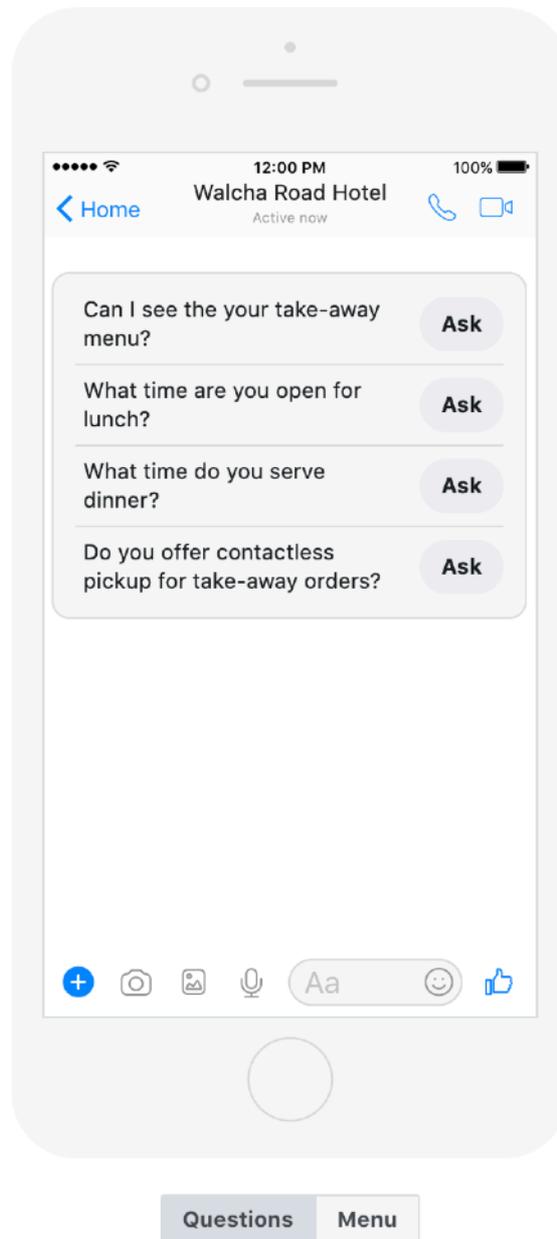
You can add photos, messages, opening times, products, a whole lot of information about your business, and of course read and respond to any reviews.

It's important to remember that even though you have a website, Google is the front page of the internet. More and more Google displays the info people want, well before they even click on your website.

## CHATBOTS & SOCIAL

Chatbot sounds nerdy, but it's a way to simplify the messages that come to you on places like Facebook. Why not setup a bit of computer driven triage for your customer communication.

Goto Facebook, Page Manager, Messaging, Automated Responses, Setup.



This allows you to answer those really obvious first questions automatically. This might be sending price lists, menus, or whatever it might be.

Using a “bot” takes away that first interaction, but creates a meaningful second phase to the conversation where you jump in.

## PAYMENTS

Cash is no longer king, and while cards are king, the smartphone will soon be king.

Digital Wallets like ApplePay, GooglePay and Samsung Pay mean we can carry our cards around virtually. Tap your phone to pay. It's just so easy.

Customers want tap and go more and more, if you're not catering to that you might be missing sales.

This might be the sports club weekend canteen, or a daily retail business.

Assess your costs, the transaction fees, and look at if the offering from your bank is best or if a simple solution like SQUARE might do the trick.

This also applies to those on the go. Tradies, door to door workers can all accept payments on their smartphone with Square.

The best thing about these services is data. You can get statistics on what sells well on given days, times and how you're tracking week to week.

## THE CLOUD

Do not be afraid of The Cloud.

You're already using it, even if you don't know it.

### **What is the Cloud:**

There's a huge building called a Data Centre, it's full of computers, all of them connected to the internet. When something is stored in "the cloud" it means it's sitting on a computer off-site, such as these Data Centres.

Data Centres are in Sydney, Singapore, The US, they are all around the world. Good "Cloud" companies will store data in multiple locations for redundancy and fast access.

### **Cloud Applications:**

Accounting software like Xero is a great example of the Cloud. You don't install anything, you just go to a website to access the software and your own data.

Office 365 - Instead of buying Word, Excel and Powerpoint these days, you can subscribe to them and pay a smaller monthly fee, but always have the latest version, and web-based version of the applications too.

For Software, Cloud systems make them an Opex not Capex cost to your business.

### **Cloud Storage:**

Perhaps the biggest benefit of the cloud to your business is storage for documents.

Using services like Google Drive or Dropbox, you can setup a folder structure like on a regular PC, and use that as your primary storage location for business files, documents, spreadsheets, photos whatever it is.

There are two key reasons why this is critical.

1. **Access Anywhere** - Every single file you save in the cloud is accessible on any device, in any location. As long as you have internet - you can view the file. That might be on your own device, or just on a computer in a hotel - never missing information, always able to work.
2. **Backup** - There's plenty of simplicity and ease of access in having a small portable hard drive to save important files on, but they can fail, they can be lost. This is where the Cloud is a perfect companion to portable or on-site storage. No matter what happens to your work computer, you can always access your files.

## **QR CODES**

We're using them to check into pubs, restaurants, local sport, they have become mainstream. A QR code is a visual link to a website. This means you could use them for almost anything.

- A QR code that sends people to a particular place on your website.
- A QR code on things you send out that dials your phone number
- A QR code that opens up a new email to your business.

Possibilities are endless, and here's the thing, if I was telling you this 12 months ago, you'd be rolling your eyes thinking "what the hell's a QR code" or "no-one uses QR codes" - but in a post COVID world - it's a whole new ballgame!

## TRENDS AHEAD

The trends in business will follow much of what I've covered here today.

Take these concepts and accelerate their growth, not only in how many businesses are adopting them but how much innovation occurs in each area.

As a result of COVID, tech companies today, and the startups of tomorrow will be focussed on:

- Work from Home / Remote Working
- Device Consolidation
- Automated Communication
- E-Commerce Simplified & Logistics
- Cloud Services and Software