



LET'S **TALK** TECH

Winter/Spring 2024

axon

Welcome to Axon's Let's **Talk** Tech magazine

Dive into the latest edition of our Let's Talk Tech magazine! We've discussed some of the biggest IT and tech trends for Winter/Spring 2024. Take a look below for the latest on a range of Dynamics CRM, Office 365, cyber security and more.

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Getting started with Dynamics CRM: A beginner's guide

In order for businesses to succeed, managing customer relationships efficiently is a must. That's why Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems are invaluable tools, and we at Axon believe that Microsoft Dynamics CRM stands out as the comprehensive solution.

If you're new to Dynamics CRM and are wondering how to get started, you've come to the right place. In this beginner's guide, we'll walk you through the process and highlight some of the key benefits.

Getting Started with Dynamics CRM

Here's our quick guide on a few of the main points to remember when it comes to getting started with Dynamics CRM:

DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES

Begin by setting clear goals for implementing Dynamics CRM. What are you looking to achieve? Whether it's boosting sales, improving customer service or streamlining marketing efforts, having a clear vision will guide your implementation.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT VERSION

Dynamics CRM offers various versions tailored to different business needs. Consider your organisation's size and requirements when selecting a version. Small businesses may benefit from a different version of Dynamics to larger enterprises.

PLAN YOUR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation planning is crucial. Create a project timeline, allocate resources and involve key stakeholders. Ensure that your team is adequately trained to make the most of the CRM system.

DATA MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

Migrating existing data and integrating with other tools or systems is a critical step. This ensures a smooth transition and continuity in your business operations. Microsoft provides tools and services for data migration to simplify the process.

Are you interested in outsourcing IT for your business, or just want to find out more? Axon provides no nonsense IT support including cyber security, CRM, Microsoft 365 and much more.

Call us today on 01625 837800 to chat to one of our experts.



Why choose Dynamics CRM?

In case you're still undecided on utilising Dynamics for your business operations, here's a reminder of some of the benefits:

COMPREHENSIVE CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT

Dynamics CRM offers a 360° view of your customers. It consolidates customer data, interactions and transactions, allowing you to tailor your services and marketing efforts more effectively. This holistic approach leads to improved customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

MARKETING OPTIMISATION

Dynamics CRM integrates seamlessly with marketing automation tools, enabling you to create, execute and track marketing campaigns. You can analyse customer behaviour and preferences, allowing you to deliver more targeted and relevant content to your audience.

STREAMLINED SALES PROCESSES

Sales teams can benefit significantly from Dynamics CRM. It helps automate repetitive tasks, simplifies lead management and provides real-time insights into sales pipelines. This means your sales team can close deals faster and more efficiently.

ENHANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE

With Dynamics CRM, customer service teams can provide personalised support. Cases and tickets are managed efficiently, and customers can enjoy quicker issue resolution, resulting in improved satisfaction.

Office 365: A guide to **cloud productivity**

Time is money – and, in every industry, businesses are constantly seeking tools and solutions that can enhance productivity, streamline operations and facilitate collaboration.

One of the most common is Microsoft Office 365 - the cloud-based suite of applications has transformed the way businesses operate, enabling employees to work efficiently from anywhere.

Here's how Office 365 can help businesses and their employees maximise productivity and achieve more in less time.

SEAMLESS COLLABORATION WITH TEAMS



Collaboration is at the heart of any successful business, and Office 365's Teams application is a game-changer when it comes to teamwork. It offers chat, video conferencing, file sharing, and integration with other Office apps, making it a hub for communication and collaboration.

Whether your team is in the same office or spread across the globe, Teams ensures that everyone can work together effectively, leading to better project outcomes and higher productivity.

EFFICIENT DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT WITH SHAREPOINT



Managing and sharing documents can be a headache for businesses. SharePoint, a component of Office 365, provides a centralised platform for document storage, sharing, and collaboration.

With features like version control and real-time editing, employees can work on documents simultaneously, reducing the time spent on back-and-forth emails. This not only enhances productivity but also maintains document integrity.

STREAMLINED EMAIL COMMUNICATION



Outlook, an integral part of Office 365, offers a comprehensive email solution that goes beyond simple messaging. Its features, such as focused inbox, calendar integration and intelligent search, help employees manage their emails more efficiently.

With the option to access emails from any device, it's easier than ever for employees to stay connected and productive while on the go.

ENHANCED TASK MANAGEMENT WITH PLANNER



Keeping track of tasks and projects can be challenging, but Office 365's Planner simplifies this process. This user-friendly tool enables teams to create, assign and track tasks effortlessly.

With visual boards and due date notifications, employees can prioritise their work, ensuring that nothing falls through the cracks. Planner promotes better time management and overall productivity.

SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE



Office 365 also offers robust security features such as data loss prevention and multi-factor authentication to protect sensitive information.

Additionally, it assists businesses in achieving compliance with industry standards and regulations, ensuring data security and legal compliance.

Investing in Office 365 isn't just about enhancing productivity; it's about future-proofing your business! Axon can help your organisation make the most of this powerful platform, ensuring that you're always ahead of the curve in terms of cloud productivity.

Want to get started? Contact us to speak to one of our experts.

Outsourced vs in-house IT: Which is right for your business?

For businesses of all sizes, making the right decision about how to manage your IT needs is crucial. Many companies face the ongoing dilemma of whether to outsource their IT operations or maintain an in-house IT team.

Each approach comes with its own set of pros and cons, and the choice often depends on the unique requirements and circumstances of your business. We've explored the advantages of IT outsourcing and in-house IT, to help you determine which option is the right fit for your organisation.

Benefits of **outsourced IT**

COST SAVINGS

One of the most significant advantages of IT outsourcing is cost savings. By outsourcing your IT services, you can eliminate the expenses associated with hiring and training an in-house team. You only pay for the services you need, which can result in significant cost reduction.

ACCESS TO SPECIALISED EXPERTISE

IT outsourcing companies often have a deep pool of specialised talent. They can provide your business with access to a wide range of skills and expertise, including cyber security, cloud computing and software development, without the need for extensive training or recruitment efforts.

FOCUS ON CORE COMPETENCIES

Outsourcing IT allows your organisation to focus on its core competencies. With IT experts handling your technology needs, your team can concentrate on business-critical tasks, leading to improved overall productivity and efficiency.

SCALABILITY

Outsourcing providers can easily scale their services to meet your changing needs. Whether you're expanding or downsizing, you can adjust your IT support quickly and efficiently.

Benefits of **in-house IT**

CONTROL AND CUSTOMISATION

Having an in-house IT team provides you with complete control over your technology infrastructure, which could allow for greater customisation if your business has specific needs.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

In-house IT teams can respond immediately to issues, which may be more beneficial in certain industries.

STRONG COMPANY CULTURE

An in-house IT team can integrate into your company culture, understanding your business's unique needs and goals.

Choosing the right option

The choice between IT outsourcing and in-house IT depends on your business's unique needs, size and resources. For smaller businesses with limited budgets, outsourcing often makes sense. It provides access to expertise without the high costs of building an in-house team. However, larger organisations with specific security or customisation requirements may opt for in-house IT to maintain control and address their specialised needs.

There is no one-size-fits-all answer when it comes to deciding between outsourced IT and in-house IT. Consider your budget, the nature of your industry, and the level of control and expertise you require to make the right choice for your business.

Contact us to speak to one of our experts for an initial chat.

At Axon IT, we can help you make an informed decision and provide the IT solutions that best fit your business.



Microsoft Teams

Top tips for effective collaboration



With remote work now commonplace among many businesses, teams in all kinds of organisations have found themselves spread across different locations and time zones. It's unsurprising then, that effective collaboration is often the key to success in the modern business landscape. Therefore, finding the right tools to enhance communication and encourage teamwork has become imperative.

This is where Microsoft Teams steps in. Here are the biggest benefits of Microsoft Teams and some quick tips on how to get the most out of it.

COMMUNICATION

Microsoft Teams serves as a centralised hub for communication, allowing teams to chat, meet, call and collaborate in one place. With instant messaging, threaded conversations and the ability to share files and documents, it's super easy for team members to communicate and stay connected. No more sifting through email threads or losing track of important messages!

TIP: Encourage your team to use Teams for all non-urgent communication. This not only reduces email clutter but also keeps all discussions in one place for easy reference.

FILE SHARING AND COLLABORATION

One of the standout features of Microsoft Teams is its file-sharing capabilities. Teams integrates with Microsoft 365, making it easy to collaborate on documents, spreadsheets and presentations in real time. Co-authoring, version history and the ability to access files from any device make collaboration simpler than ever.

TIP: Use the built-in SharePoint integration to create and manage shared documents, ensuring that all team members have access to the latest versions.

MEETINGS AND WEBINARS

Microsoft Teams offers a range of meeting and webinar features, meaning virtual meetings can be just as productive as in-person ones. Some of the most useful features include screen sharing, whiteboarding and meeting recording. Additionally, webinars can be conducted for a wider audience, making this a versatile tool for both internal and external communication.

TIP: Take the time to learn how to use the full suite of meeting and webinar features to make your online interactions more engaging and productive.

INTEGRATION WITH THIRD-PARTY APPS

Customisation is a key feature of Microsoft Teams, meaning you can integrate third-party apps to tailor the platform to your specific needs. Whether you need to access project management tools, analytics software or customer relationship management systems, Teams can be the central point of access for all your applications.

TIP: Explore the Microsoft App Store to find the right third-party integrations for your business's needs.

SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE

Security is a top priority in today's digital world. Microsoft Teams takes this seriously, offering a wide array of security features. From data encryption and multi-factor authentication to compliance with industry regulations, Teams provides a safe and secure environment for your organisation to collaborate in.

TIP: Regularly review your organisation's security and compliance settings to ensure that they align with your business requirements and industry standards.



Want to get your organisation started with Teams? Axon IT can help you implement and optimise Microsoft Teams, ensuring your team is equipped with the essential tools they need.

Contact us for an initial chat.

Ransomware attacks

How to prevent and respond

Since the WannaCry outbreak in 2017, ransomware attacks have been on the rise. This further increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the shift to remote work left businesses with gaps in their cyber security.

Ransomware attacks have remained a popular choice with cyber criminals, and it's vital for businesses to know how to stay protected. Here's all you need to know about the world of ransomware attacks, what they are, how to prevent them, and the crucial steps to take after falling victim to an attack.

What are ransomware attacks?

Ransomware is a malicious software designed to encrypt a user's files or entire systems, rendering them inaccessible. Once encrypted, the attackers demand a ransom, typically in cryptocurrency, in exchange for restoring access. These attacks often exploit vulnerabilities in security systems, infiltrating networks through phishing emails, malicious websites or software vulnerabilities.

Ransomware attacks are a persistent threat in the digital landscape, requiring proactive measures and a well-defined response strategy. By implementing preventive measures, staying vigilant, and having a robust response plan in place, organisations can significantly reduce their risk and ensure business continuity.

If you're interested in learning more about how to boost your cyber security and how it can benefit your business, contact us today to speak with one of our experts.

How to **respond** to ransomware attacks

Do not pay the ransom

The golden rule – don't pay the ransom! There is no guarantee that paying will result in the recovery of files, and it only encourages criminals to carry out further attacks. Instead, focus on restoring systems from backups and strengthening security measures.

Report and seek advice

Report the incident to the police and contact cyber security professionals to help respond to the attack. Police can then work to investigate the incident, while cyber security experts can assist in mitigating the damage.

Isolate infected systems

Immediately isolate affected systems to prevent the spread of ransomware throughout the network. Disconnecting compromised devices can mitigate further damage and protect other assets.

Communication plan

Develop a communication plan to inform stakeholders, customers and employees about the incident. Transparent communication helps maintain trust and provides clarity on the steps being taken to address the situation, strengthening security measures.

How to **prevent** ransomware attacks

Regular data backups

Implement a thorough backup strategy, ensuring that critical data is regularly backed up to an offline or cloud-based system. This reduces the impact of an attack, allowing for the restoration of systems without giving in to ransom demands.

Employee training and awareness

Educate employees on recognising phishing attempts and other social engineering tactics. Human error is a common entry point for ransomware, so the knowledge of your team will often be the first line of defence.

Update and patch systems

Regularly update and patch operating systems, software and applications to close vulnerabilities. Attackers often exploit outdated systems, making it essential to stay ahead with the latest security updates.

Deploy advanced security solutions

Invest in the latest antivirus and anti-malware solutions, along with intrusion detection systems. These tools can identify and prevent ransomware before it has chance to take effect.



**Get in touch to see how Axon can transform
your business through technology!**

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