

The image features the NextCorp logo in the top left corner, set against a background of abstract, light blue and white geometric shapes, including a large curved arrow pointing right and several smaller arrows pointing in various directions. The logo itself is in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font.

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The Choice *Really is* Yours

Exploring Ways for SMBs to Eliminate Technology Business Risk, Easily

A White Paper by NextCorp, Ltd.

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Technology has become the very heart of the new economy. It is impossible to operate, let alone grow, a business in the 21st century without utilizing some form of technological solution. Regardless of your business type, size or industry, you need technology. But where technology and business meet, there is risk - risk to productivity, customer service, operations, your bottom line. The key to reducing that risk and furthering your company's growth is, quite simply, about having options. You should have the option to not only decide how to grow your business, but also how fast, and for how much. Making smart technology decisions go a long way toward limiting business risk, as well as creating limitless possibilities.

The Greatest Thing since Sliced Bread...

When the right technology decision is made and is utilized effectively, it can bring new levels of productivity and lower the costs of doing business. Specifically, the use of technology - such as basic accounting software, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, or third-party website hosting - can:

- Aid in the automation of business processes, fulfillment.
- Integrate information from multiple departments, locations or channels.
- Accelerate your responsiveness to changing industry or customer needs.
- Improve employee communication and productivity.
- Can create a market advantage for your business by improving productivity and lower the cost of doing business.

In short, it can help realize your business goals faster.

...Can Quickly Become a Drag on Your Success

Unfortunately, this is often the case despite the multitude of technological options now available to Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses (SMB). Why is this, despite the fact that a vast majority of software tools are useful and do what they promise?

With all these choices, why do less than half (47%) of all SMBs believe technology has not improved their company's working life?* The short version? Despite the best of intentions and exhaustive research, the SMB just didn't select the right technology for their business. They didn't realize how the technology would affect their business short- and long-term; and they didn't receive any guidance or direction when making such a wide-reaching decision.

Let's talk in a little more detail about specific areas that can quickly become drags on an SMB when they don't think through their technology decisions.

Implementation problems are the most frequent and immediate pains SMBs experience with new technology adoption. In fact, 87 percent of SMBs experience bumps on the road to effective technology usage. They cite deployment delays, incompatibilities of different application platforms, and a lack of clear accountability - and finger pointing - across software vendors and support providers.** In other words, installations take much longer and cost much more than initially expected. As a result, operations can often grind to a halt because significant time and resources are spent trying to sort through a solution's real functionality and how it can actually address business needs. Productivity drops due to employees being reallocated to address the issue, as well as being unable to communicate to customers, vendors, or each other.

Another roadblock experienced by SMBs is not taking into account the uniqueness of their business. While many businesses do or sell the same things, no two companies are exactly alike. Be it the people, processes or mindset, every company is unique, with unique needs. There's no such thing as a 'one-size-fits-all' company, yet that's often how SMBs view their technology needs.

The most significant mistake SMBs make when adopting technology is making decisions based on the here and now. Unfortunately, many businesses do not take into account technology growth that *must* simultaneously occur with business growth. What starts out as an effective business tool quickly becomes limiting, inflexible and outdated. You would never create a stagnate business plan, one that just focuses on day-to-day activities and assumes no growth, ever. A truly effective business plan, *and business*, is the one that incorporates short- and long-term goals, melds structure with flexibility, and plans for tremendous, yet strategic growth. Your methodology for selecting, installing and utilizing technology should do the same. By doing this:

- You've eliminated a significant amount of financial and productivity risk to your business.
- You've simultaneously ensured the customer and employee needs of today and tomorrow are met.
- You've adopted scalable and flexible technology solutions that will grow with your company.
- And, most importantly, it is easier to implement than you think.

Eliminating Business Technology Risk, Easily

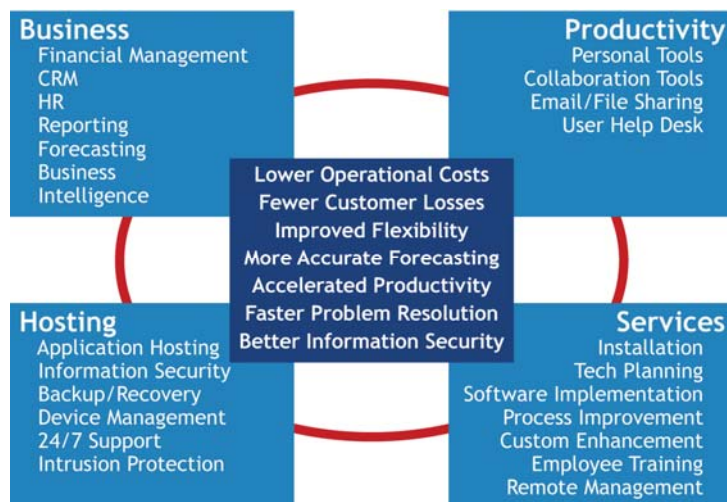
Executing this methodology starts with a simple mindset shift. Once you realize that your business is truly unique, with unlimited potential, you'll understand the need for a technological solution that is equally limitless in its capabilities.

What does that technology look like? What should it do? Where does it come from? It should look like and do whatever you want it to. It should break down obstacles, rather than create them. And it should come from a vendor that is completely dedicated to eliminating your company's business technology risks quickly and easily, thereby removing barriers to your business's success.

The Foundation for Your SMB's Success

Effective technological growth is just as critical to your business's success as organic growth. And just like organic growth, there can be risks and pains associated with technology adoption. What will set your business apart from the rest is the ability to strategically plan for that growth, avoid the associated risk, and speed up time-to-benefit. To do that, it is vital to partner with a vendor that is dedicated to your business success - a partner that will enable you to make smarter, faster business decisions; improve employee and business productivity; and gain that crucial competitive advantage.

Now this vendor - your partner in success - should promote and execute a strategy that includes several overarching best-of-breed components that are critical for ensuring scalability, flexibility and cost-effectiveness, thereby easily eliminating your company's business technology risks.



- A Strong, Provable Foundation of Technological Expertise: Don't just take a vendor at his word when he says his technology is high-performing or dynamic. The foundation of any superior technology solution should be based on the proven and the rock-solid.
- The Best Applications: The same standard of excellence should be applied to the next component of your technology solution, the software. Only the best should be considered, such as the powerful, flexible, and widely-accepted Microsoft Dynamics software applications.
- Professional Services: In order to take the first step in eliminating risk, you must be personally assured and guaranteed that the right solution will be matched to the unique

requirements of your business. Additionally, the only way to sidestep the most common risk associated with business technology implementation -cost and time overages - is to deploy proven methods and experienced personnel to every project.

- **Help Desk and Support:** Your business and employees deserve accurate and fast help when they encounter a problem. To effectively eliminate the risk of downtime and lost productivity, it's critical to have 24/7 access to Help Desk experts. These experts should be able to solve the issue the first time, ensuring your business continues without interruption.
- **Environmental Flexibility:** Even the best business strategy - one that incorporates strategic organic *and* technological growth - is subject to change. The future is hard to predict. Having environmental flexibility ensures that you're never locked in to one way of doing business. Specifically, your technology solution should allow your business to seamlessly grow in size, number of users, transaction volumes, and new functionality. Neither your technology, nor your service provider should ever hold your business back.

If a technology solution provider can't adhere to this methodology in an affordable and flexible manner, walk away. They either don't understand your unique needs, or they don't care. Either way, technology risks won't be eliminated. In fact, new ones may be created.

Ready, Set, Grow!

You've found the right solutions and the right solutions partner to eliminate your technology business risks, easily. What now? What specifically, are the benefits an SMB will realize as a result of adopting this new methodology? Immediately, your company should experience:

- Speedy implementation time, thereby reducing technology time-to-benefit.
- Reduced internal business distractions by not having to allocate significant human resources to the installation process; and by being able to turnkey the solution to meet your business needs.
- Increased data security for your important company transactions and information.

Ongoing benefits will include:

- Lowered costs across all areas of operations - from technology support and maintenance costs, to operational and sales expenditures. These lowered costs are a direct result of a tighter alignment of your technology to business requirements, as well as significantly improved employee productivity.
- Faster response to customer and market needs.

- The ability to take advantage of new opportunities as they present themselves, in real-time.

The most significant long-term benefit your company will realize is the elimination of technological obsolescence. No matter which direction your company grows and how it might evolve, your technology should accommodate change by providing tremendous scalability - allowing for numerous 'snap-in' functionality options based on current need.

NextCorp - A Continuum of Business Value

As mentioned above, every company is unique and has distinctive needs. You don't want a 'one-size-fits-all' technology, and you don't want a vendor that expects you to adapt your business to their one solution. We know this.

NextCorp offers a full range of solutions that eliminate technology business risk, easily. Our continuum of value allows your business to adopt just the right technology your business needs today, while ensuring you've got the right options for tomorrow. Most importantly, we *know* this approach works for SMBs - whether they partner with NextCorp or another reliable vendor. More than 60 percent of SMBs attribute lower expense rates and increases in productivity as driving factors for adopting methodologies similar to NextCorp's best-of-breed solution set (software-as-a-service offerings).*** Our clients consistently realize a drop in their installation expenses, a decrease in ongoing IT expenditures, and an increase in productivity levels.

NextCorp brings to your business several solution areas, delivered to you in three different ways.

1. Comprehensive financial solutions such as general ledger, accounts payable/receivable, payroll, inventory, automated reconciliation, etc.
2. Complete customer relationship management solutions which allow you to manage your sales and marketing and customers for increased revenue and profitability.
3. Advanced reporting and forecasting to help you understand your business and chart a path to the future.
4. Customer/User Safety Net - a full range of training, customer support, and 24/7 help desk assistance.



Each of these solutions is delivered to you in three different ways - depending upon your business and cultural requirements. First, we offer each of the solutions in a subscription-based model where you sign up to 'rent' the solution capability. A second delivery method is a hosted environment - where your software applications are hosted and managed by NextCorp in our secure, managed data center. And the third delivery option is in a traditional manner, where the software and technology systems are within and managed by your business.

Regardless of the size, scope or delivery model of your solution, your technology will be tailored to meet your unique business needs.

The Next Step

Are You Ready to experience limitless benefit and growth? Are you ready to experience the true meaning of 'proactive'? Are you ready to not only become a 21st century business, but to become a benchmark for all other SMBs?

Are you ready to take the *next* step? We would welcome the opportunity to discuss your company goals and how you could benefit from the solution available. Email info@nextcorp.com or call 888-525-NEXT to learn more about Eliminating Technology Business Risk, Easily.

About NextCorp, Ltd.

NextCorp is an established leader in eliminating technology business risks. They do this through a comprehensive software, service, hosting and software-as-a-service offering to businesses of all sizes. NextCorp is a pioneer of ASP solutions with a proven record of accomplishment with Microsoft Business Solutions. NextCorp provides an integrated, scalable and comprehensive solution of leading software; hosted in a state-of-the-art data center with 24-hour support, network monitoring and customer service. Visit us at www.nextcorp.com.

**Lloyds TSB Business Division. 2006*

***AMI-Partners. 2000*

****Excerpt from Yankee Group 2005 Small & Medium Business Infrastructure Survey*