



## ***KEYS TO SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO BUSINESS***

By Laura Dallas Burford

There is no escape. Regardless of your business's size, technology must be part of your business strategy and not thought of after a business plan is completed. In today's environment it can be difficult for businesses to grow without technology integrated into the business. The challenge for many businesses is there are limited resources, minimal time, and technology changes on a regular basis.

It is possible for businesses to integrate manual and automated processes. For example, a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) package will assist with tracking activities with customers such as phone calls, personalized marketing efforts, emails, newsletters and depending on the software even status of open invoices.

The challenge for businesses is to integrate the technology into the daily activities without losing that personal touch. And to know when technology is not the answer to the problem.

So what are the

### ***Keys to Successfully Integrating Technology into the Business.***

**Include Technology in Your Business Plan** -- It is important to treat technology investments like any other business outlay.

- Evaluate the costs against the benefits.
- Plan for periodic outlays. Technology is continually changing and PC's do wear out.

- Change technology to support your business objectives. Don't let your technology drive you business, let your business drive what you need from the technology.

**Understand Your Options** – Use someone who can align your business needs with available technology. They should be objective, willing to provide you with options and be able to explain technology in your language. There are a variety of applications, hardware, software and networking options available to businesses today. The strength of technology is in how it is integrated. It is necessary to think about how you need to use technology to support your business.

Some questions to think about:

What activities are repetitive and time-consuming? If we automate the activities can we save time, money or provide better service to our customers?

What data is stored in paper files or in the computer? How fast do I need the information to make a customer decision?

**Set Clear Objectives** – Poorly defined decisions based on “everyone's talking about” or “it is the next best technology gadget” might cause you to miss the company's bottom line objectives. Always set clear and tangible goals for any new technology you might consider – know what results you want your business to achieve.

**YOUR BUSINESS  
TECHNOLOGY ADVISORS**