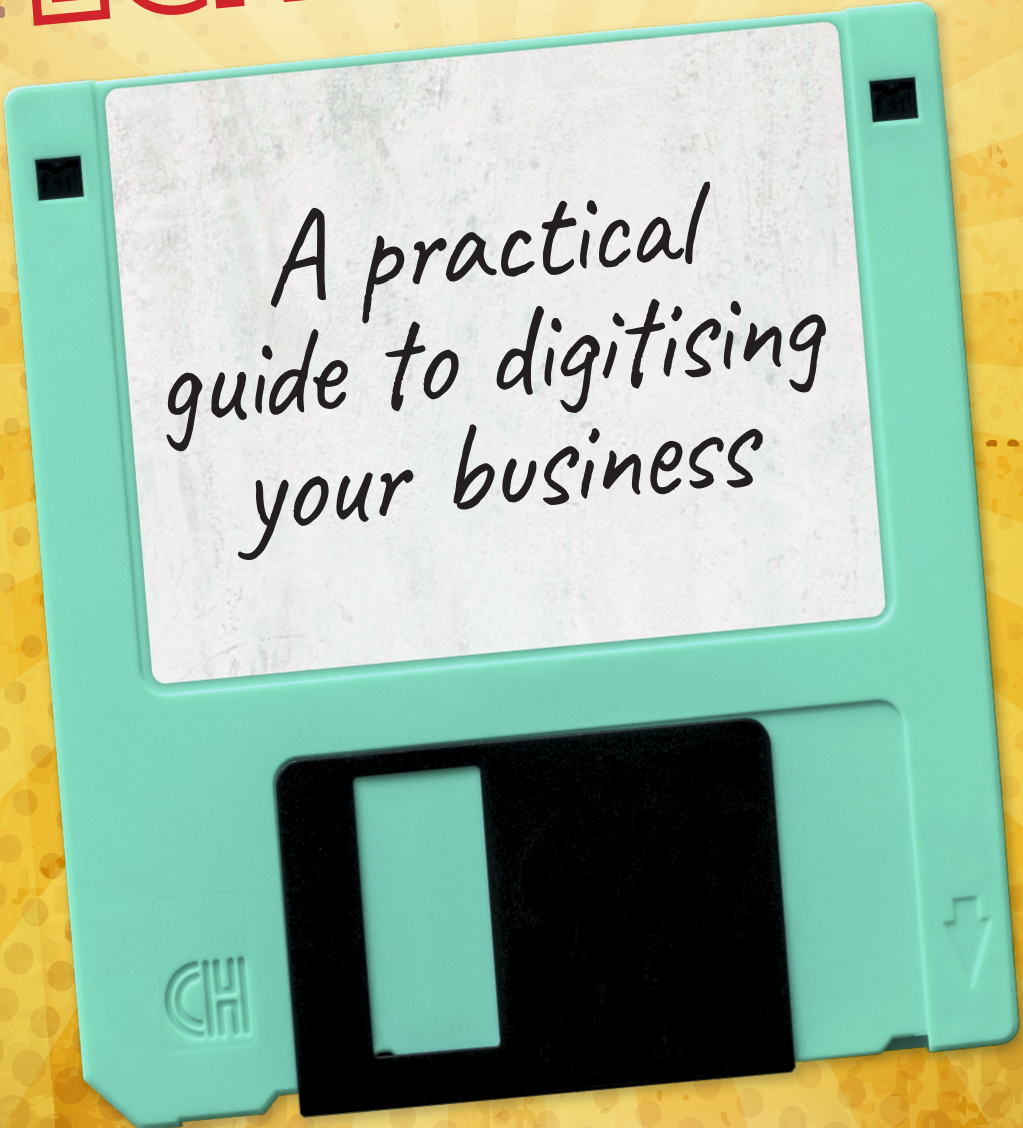


THE END OF TECHNOPHOBIA

A teal floppy disk is shown at an angle against a yellow background with a pattern of overlapping circles and radiating lines. A white label is stuck to the top surface of the disk. The label contains the text 'A practical guide to digitising your business' written in a black, cursive font. The disk has a black shutter cover on the bottom edge and a small black square on the top right corner. The letters 'CH' are embossed on the bottom left corner of the teal plastic.

*A practical
guide to digitising
your business*

TRACY SHEEN

'My over 20-year career of assisting Australian and international businesses to start, innovate, grow and prosper has identified that a key ingredient to small business success and sustainability is "confidence" – especially in our ever-changing digital world of globalisation. Having worked with Tracy in her capacity as an expert digital business adviser and mentor under the Australian Small Business Advisory Services Digital Solutions government program, I have witnessed Tracy's passion for and commitment to helping regional small businesses embrace digital technologies – working both directly and through stakeholder engagement. As an experienced, expert workshop creator, presenter and facilitator, Tracy has a rare talent to easily connect with people and deliver content in an easy-to-understand and practical way. Through both her extensive client work and especially this new book, Tracy engenders businesses with the confidence to "go digital" to more efficiently connect, collaborate, expand their brand to reach new customers, conduct business in broader markets, and get ahead of their competitors. I thoroughly recommend Tracy and *The End of Technophobia – A Practical Guide to Digitising Your Business* as key ingredients to the recipe of small business success.'

Rowena Ryan – AusIndustry (Australian Department of Industry, Science, Energy & Resources)

www.business.gov.au

'I have been blessed to work with Tracy over the last three years, referring many small businesses to one of her engaging workshops or advisory sessions. Many a technology challenged regionally based business have found a new love for all things tech thanks to Tracy Sheen. I personally thank you for your commitment to businesses across regional and rural Queensland. Your ability to deliver content in an easily digestible way has resulted in business owners being able to sell their products and engage worldwide, and for that Regional Development Australia Darling Downs and South West will be forever grateful.'

Trudi Bartlett

Director, Regional Development Australia Darling Downs and South West QLD

www.rda-ddsw.org.au

'Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce (GSCC) had the privilege of having Tracy sit on our board for a number of years. Tracy came to us at a huge time of change for the Chamber and helped us achieve so many goals.

'During 2017 Tracy helped us rebrand and provided the content for our new website; today this is still the hub of everything we do.

'Her commitment to small businesses, especially those in more regional and rural areas, is amazing; her desire to see them succeed is shown in the work and enthusiasm she has when working with them. We have been lucky enough to utilise all Tracy's amazing abilities – she has helped the Chamber provide educational training through being an ASBAS advisor. Her programs are easy to understand, practical and most importantly easy to implement in your own business. The chamber has often asked Tracy to create and present workshops to our members as we know she provides invaluable advice and real-life experience when wishing to grow your business.

'Tracy helped us to bring one of our much wanted events to reality: our International Women's Day Luncheon is now one of our stand out events of the year which Tracy has always MC'd for us.

'We cannot recommend Tracy's abilities as a presenter, educator and MC enough and we look forward to our continued relationship with her.'

Leila Stewart, Executive Assistant
Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce QLD
www.gsc.com.au

'Tracy is a fabulously knowledgeable and helpful business and digital coach. Our paddock to plate business prides itself on having good customer connections and Tracy has helped me to further develop my customer community through social media and online streams in a way that fits with my business ethos. I am excited to read Tracy's book and see what other tips and technologies I can incorporate into my business and personal life.'

Skye Douglass, HighBrit Beef and The Farm Crate
www.highbritbeef.com.au

'I've known Tracy for several years now. Her commitment to helping small businesses not only survive, but thrive is inspiring. She seems to have an endless amount of knowledge in digital marketing. It's not surprising that she is an advisor for ASBAS. Tracy has an uncanny ability to explain complex concepts in simple terms.

'She has helped me to simplify my business, making it easier for me to communicate what it is I do with my clients. Tracy has drawn out information that I didn't even know I had about my business and restructured it in a way that I simply would not have been able to connect without her. I've always found her presentations engaging and interesting, even the dry topics. She has this ability to introduce new life to old concepts and present them in a new light.

'I would recommend you read this book and consume any content that Tracy produces and has produced. You're guaranteed to learn something new.'

Steven Jaenke

Digimark Australia

www.digimark.com.au

'Tracy's mentorship and coaching helped transform my gin podcast ideas into reality. Her support, guidance and constructive feedback were crucial to making this happen

'To see the outcomes from our hands-on strategy session manifest themselves practically as 3 seasons and 30 episodes in 6 months, still staggers me.

'Tracy's belief in me and the project were unwavering, culminating in an on-time launch for World Gin Day 2020.

'Thanks Tracy, you've well and truly earned a Martini or two!'

Marcel Thompson, Distiller and author of Still Magic

www.stillmagic.net

'I have had the pleasure of working with Tracy on a number of digital items. She has supported us in our business in transitioning to a CRM program, along with providing a getting started training module delivered over Zoom. This was very helpful as I found her to be systematic and concise in her approach. It was a great leap to launching a new program into our business. We have engaged her to help with website reviews, copy reviews and various advice on a number of other digital solutions which we required to support the growth in our business. I have also attended some of her online training and always go back for more. She is very professional in her approach with businesses, her knowledge in the digital space of all things geeky is quite incredible. If I need advice or would like options to consider to implement in our business Tracy is my "go-to person". I've found her to be honest and direct, which is how I prefer to do business.'

Kylie Martin Hollonds

Managing Director, GF Oats Australia

www.gfoats.com.au

Everyone has dreamed about their Oscar acceptance speech (haven't they?). With that in mind I do have a few people I'd like to acknowledge, thank or otherwise share my appreciation for. And so, in no particular order (because you're all important to me).

Peter. Thank you for bringing me coffee, keeping me fed and watered and always being proud of what we achieve together. I still don't know what I ever did to get so lucky, but I thank the Gods every day that you're my person. Can't wait for what happens next.

AG. Without you I can honestly say this book would not have happened. Thank you for pushing me for better outcomes and playing a lead role in this chapter of my journey. Thank you for being there to talk me down from the metaphorical ledge and for believing the Digital Guide is a project that needed to find its voice. You really are a good egg.

Mum, Dad and my family. Thank you for believing I could be an author... I wonder what Charmaine would have to say.

To every single one of the small business owners I've worked with. You have each contributed something to this book. Thank you for daring to build your own future, being so willing to overcome your technophobia and embrace your inner geek.

To my broader support team. Drew, Wendy, Simone, Geoff, Leila et al, thank you for listening to the rants and keeping me focused when it all felt too much.

And finally, Obi and Watson... for reminding me there is always time for play, time for cuddles and time for naps.

Oh... and I cannot forget you, my fabulous reader. Without you this book would be nothing but a paperweight.

Big hugs... Tracy.

First published in 2021 by Tracy Sheen

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A catalogue entry for this book is available from the National Library of Australia.

ISBN: 978-1-922391-96-4

Printed in Australia by McPherson's Printing

Project management and text design by Publish Central

Cover design by Peter Reardon

Illustrations by Jane D Thornton e: jdt@charactergirl.com

The paper this book is printed on is certified as environmentally friendly.

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FOREWORD

*by Andrew Griffiths – Best Selling Author, Speaker
& Entrepreneurial Futurist*

What a weird and wonderful world we find ourselves in, one filled with previously unimaginable technology, all available at our fingertips, 24 hours a day. Things have become so much easier haven't they? Because you're reading this book, I'm pretty certain the transition from technophobe to techno geek hasn't been a smooth one. And all I can say is thank you Tracy Sheen for being our guide on this perilous journey.

There is no doubt that technology is an incredible tool. If you can remember, think back to the dark ages when you had to get up and walk over to your television to change channels. Imagine life without a remote? Or having to have to go into a bank to withdraw money? Oh the horror. And whilst these are examples of tech that we've all hopefully mastered, there is a constant and never-ending barrage of new tech that we have to deal with. And nowhere is this more relevant than in the world of business.

As a business owner you know you need to be doing things smarter. In the words of Alvin Toffler, author of the famous book *Future Shock*, "the illiterate of the 21st century won't be those who can't read or write but those who can't learn, unlearn and relearn". And never has there been a statement that is more relevant than this. We are in a constant state of learning, unlearning and relearning, often just to keep up.

It's easy to fall behind, to struggle to embrace new apps, new software, new machines, new platforms. And we can often get to a stage where we are so far behind that catching up seems impossible. To be honest, that's a scary feeling for a business owner.

It's OK to have a little technophobia. Don't beat yourself up – we all do. That's why we need people like Tracy Sheen to come along and take what looks like the overwhelmingly complex and impossible, and show us a path through. And Tracy goes to great lengths in this book to make this process simple, easy to understand, fun and most importantly doable.

As I was reading *The End of Technophobia* I kept getting lost in the content. I started a list of things to do, I opened my phone and played with apps and settings, I went onto platforms that I was scared of and figured stuff out, all the time being gently guided and coerced by Tracy's reassuring 'just do this' narrative.

There really is a big reward for working your way through *The End of Technophobia*. You will have a renewed sense of being in control of the tech in your business as opposed to being in fear of it. This control will translate into greater efficiency, improved profitability, stronger customer relationships, more customers and more time for you to do the things that matter in your business. And in the highly competitive world we live in, who doesn't want all of this?

If you invest the time to use this book wisely, I guarantee you will get great results – some expected, many unexpected. I think it's time to begin the journey and to put an end to technophobia, once and for all.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

I'm going to take a wild guess here: you picked up this book because you're overwhelmed by technology, or maybe you *just don't get it*. You suffer from Technophobia.

Whatever your reason, I'm mindful that the sheer size and weight of *The End of Technophobia* may in itself be adding to your stress levels. So, let me lessen those levels straight off the bat.

You don't need to read this book cover to cover.

I've designed it in such a way that you can flick to a chapter you'd like more information on and get what you need. You'll find each section stands on its own. If I do reference something which you're not familiar with I'll let you know the section – you'll be able to find background or additional information.

Everyone will come to this book with different priorities. That's perfectly okay. Focus on what you need and access the rest when you need it.

There's also a glossary at the back of the book to give you the really quick answer to your 'what the hell does that acronym mean?' questions. The glossary can also be found on my website, where it will remain updated as new information becomes available.

The main thing I'd like you to know about what you're going to read though is this: I've designed this book to be a practical and educational resource. Something, hopefully, you'll pick up over and over again to learn something new about how digitising your business can change the way you look at everything (including your personal life). The first thing you'll notice as you flick through the book is the inclusion of loads of screenshots. I have included these because I've found that images will often help us absorb information. These

screenshots have not been edited or changed in anyway (except to remove personal information where applicable).

The nature of this book means I'm going to suggest you pause and reflect as you finish each section. Take notes of things you need more information on. Create an action plan, so once you reach the end of the book you have your to-do list of the things to follow up, implement or change within your business.

My final thoughts ... Stay hydrated and chunk the reading down. If tech isn't your 'thing' then some of it might feel like I'm cracking your head open to pour information in. Staying hydrated will help you to take the information in, and allocating time to read a section at a time will mean you're more likely to absorb what you are reading.

Egon in the room alert



Meet Egon (named after the Harold Ramis character of the same name in *Ghostbusters*). Throughout the book you'll come across Egon whenever there is a need for an 'elephant in the room' alert. He'll appear when I think we're hitting on something that may seem bleedingly obvious but would otherwise be ignored ... Or, when we're about to cover something that may be controversial but needs to be stated.

The first elephant in the room I want to address is the fact that I've written *a book* about technology.

At first glance it kinda feels like an oxymoron. Shouldn't I have just put all this info onto a website, blogs, videos or a podcast?

Well, sure. I've got some of this information out on my website and other places, but here's the thing. Most of the folks reading this are completely overwhelmed by technology and unsure where to start. I felt giving them yet another piece of tech to deal with to solve their problems was just downright mean.

And so, I've collated my 30 years hanging around and working in tech and small business and put pen to paper. Hopefully you'll find this a much easier way to digest the information you need in a way that makes sense and is familiar.

I have created additional resources which you can access at any time by visiting my website. These will stay updated and allow you to work through some of the content at your own pace. I'll include the link or a QR code (Quick Response) to the resource page at the end of each section that has additional resources. To access the QR code simply open the camera on your phone and point it at the code, you'll then be redirected to the website page with all the information.

If you choose to only read this book though, and not access any additional resources, you'll still be much further down the digital road than you are now.

Good luck ... you got this.

Now, let's get started ...

1. UNDERSTANDING YOUR BUSINESS FIRST

The decision I made to write this book came down to a conversation I had with my business coach. We were chatting various things through (as you do) when I made a throwaway comment about Apple News now including a wide variety of magazines available to download each month for a small monthly subscription fee. I continued talking and noticed he was just staring at me.

‘Back up for a minute,’ he said, ‘What’s that about the magazines?’ I gave him a look that indicated my amusement that he didn’t already know about this, to which he replied, ‘You work in this area. You’re always reading, listening and watching the latest digital and tech updates. Most business owners have no idea about this stuff, and you take it for granted. You need to harness that info and share it with your community.’

I thought about that for a long time and realised it’s something we all do: downplay our own knowledge. We tend to think, ‘surely everyone already knows that’. I figured out in that one conversation though, they don’t, and so ... here we are.

In fact, I’ve found typically the digital landscape is something that creates a bit of a dividing camp for small business owners. You’re either all in, trialling every new app or software service that hits the airwaves or you’re someone who doesn’t typically update your laptop or smartphone until the chargers are no longer working and the response time is so slow you could chisel an email to your client quicker than your device will create it.

I clearly sit firmly on the side of the divide where devices are updated every 12 to 18 months, apps are constantly being downloaded and tested, and software is something I set aside to learn and integrate.

As with anything new I do have a few things I would urge you to consider before we dive headfirst into the digital world. It's important for you to pause and take stock of your own business... *all areas* of your business. You see, once you dive down the digital rabbit hole, you'll quickly learn that embracing technology can assist you across all areas of your business (and personal life). From productivity to HR, accounting to marketing, once you start down the path there are a multitude of areas you can branch off and explore. This can really quickly lead to overwhelm and time wasting, which is not the outcome we want for anyone.

The tech world (you'll notice I'll use digital and tech interchangeably throughout the book) is changing almost daily. The stuff I rely upon in my business is possibly irrelevant to what you do, and vice versa. The single biggest mistake I see business owners make when they start investigating some kind of digital solution is they don't actually understand the problem they are trying to solve with tech to begin with.

So, before you really start your journey, I'm going to challenge you to take a really good look at your business. Understand where you are, where you're going and what you're looking for as an end result. There are a plethora of tech solutions on offer that will do a multitude of different tasks, but if you don't know what you're looking to achieve you'll waste a tonne of time, a bucketload of cash and you'll end up frustrated and annoyed that tech didn't solve your problem.

To help you get a good handle on what I mean by understanding your business here's a few questions to kick you off.

Take your time to put some thought into the below – by answering these questions carefully now you will save yourself a lot of heartache over the coming weeks, months and years. It will also give you a really good idea of which part of the book you will get the most benefit from immediately.

- How long has your business been in operation?
- Who do you service?
- What are the products or services you offer?
- How do you deliver these products or services? Is it online? Face to face? A mix?
- Do you have a supply chain? How do you follow and update your team/clients about supply updates?
- Do you have staff? What are their roles? Are they 'virtual' or 'in person'?
- What software systems or other tools do they have to perform their roles?
- Do you have policies and procedures in place? If so, where do you store them? How often are they updated? Do your team know where and how to find them?
- Do you have premises you work from?
- How do you find new clients?
- Where are they typically based? City? Regional? Rural? Domestic? International?
- What does it cost you to acquire a new client? Time? Money? Both?
- What is a new client worth to your business, dollar wise?
- How long do you typically keep a client?
- What is the lifetime value of a client to you, dollar wise?
- How do you communicate with your clients? Email? Phone? Online? In Person? Newsletters? A mix?
- Do you have and use a CRM (Customer Relationship Manager)?
- Do you track any issues or complaints from your clients?
- How do you communicate with your team? What about suppliers?
- How frequently are you talking to your clients?

Okay, good job. Hopefully that wasn't too painful. Now you have a good idea of what makes your business tick. The next chapter about creating your digital baseline will make a lot more sense now.

Now, go grab a coffee... things are about to kick off.

2. YOUR DIGITAL BASELINE

Right. You've completed the questions from the first chapter (if you haven't, I strongly suggest you go back and do that first). Before we dive head-first into the world of technology or learn all about the latest cool app, it's important to get an understanding of what I call your 'digital baseline'.

Just like starting at a new gym, chances are your PT will want to check a few basic measurements before getting you on the treadmill. What's your weight, your height, your fat percentage? And so on.

Doing these basic measurements at the start of your journey is a great way to show your progression in real time. They are the hard measurements you can look back on in one month, three months, twelve months to see the real results of your hard work.

Leaning into the digital landscape is no different. Often when we adopt a new software application or download a new app for our phones it feels like nothing has been gained. Having a few basic benchmarks to measure your digital progress can provide you with the boost to keep going when it feels like you're wasting your time, money or energy.

But how do you choose what to measure?

It's a great question. I have found over the years just like your own physical fitness there are a few basic indicators every business owner can track to ensure they're headed in the right direction.

Take a stocktake of what technology you currently have in place. Do you own a laptop? A desktop computer? What about a smartphone? A tablet? Make a list of everything you have and put a date (or year) of purchase beside each item. It's true that technology outdates itself pretty quickly, so having a running inventory of what you have and when you got it can be the first (and biggest) wakeup call your business has.

The next is to check in with the biggest pain point your business has currently. Is it onboarding new staff? Maybe it's having no way to track conversations with clients... Whatever it is, I guarantee you have one area in your business you've been wanting to overhaul or set up for a while. Now is the perfect time to check back in with the questions you answered in chapter one and give yourself a rating out of ten for each. Don't worry, unlike your PT, no one is going to be hovering over your shoulder asking you to dig deep for the last few questions. But if you really want to see tangible changes in your business you may as well be brutally honest with yourself. Look at any 12-step program and you'll see the idiom 'we can't change what we don't acknowledge'.

The third area you'll be checking in with is your business growth priorities. Hopefully you have an idea of the area(s) you'd like your business to grow. The 'how' might be a little fuzzy (and that's okay), but having a clear idea of where you want your business to get to will be one of those areas you'll be able to quickly check in with in months to come and assess your progress.

The final area I'd like you to review is your overarching business strategy. How are you documenting this? Are you working with anyone to help you achieve your goals? What mechanisms have you got in place to track your goals, successes, obstacles and pain points.

Over the years working with clients and taking them through various ways to track and capture information I've discovered people have a variety of coping mechanisms. Everything from 'I hold it all in my head' to sticky notes strewn across the office, to notes kept in old diaries or on a phone. Even audio files and whiteboards. The point is to identify how you're capturing and tracking the key metrics within your business so we can identify and implement strategies

to streamline those areas within your business that require your attention.

There's no judgement here – just admiration that you're ready to end your technophobia.

I'll leave you to it. Once you've done this, you're ready to move on to the next chapter.

3. START WITH THE END IN MIND

A number of years ago, way before I went into business for myself, a friend gave me a copy of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey. I'm not over exaggerating to say that book shaped the way I looked at life from that moment on. One principle in particular – 'Starting with the end in mind' – created a paradigm shift.

There is something so beautifully simple in the concept, so when you actually implement it into your thinking you immediately see a shift in thinking and actions.

That's why the next step on your digital journey is for you to 'Start with the end in mind'. Where does this exploration and adaptation of technology take you? Imagine it's 12 months from now, we're catching up for a coffee: how are things different in your business now compared to 12 months ago?

What about in five years' time? How is your business looking now? Are you capturing information about your clients, your numbers, your strategies the same way? What's changed? How are you feeling about technology now?

Having a clear end goal might seem a little like daydreaming, but having a clear vision and the ability to articulate it will assist you in many of the decisions you'll need to make around which pieces of technology to implement at what points and, almost as importantly, which pieces you can pass on altogether.

Take a moment now to put some thoughts to paper around what your business looks like in five years.

Do you still have staff or contractors? If so, how do you communicate with them? Do you incorporate software like Zoom or Skype (now known as Microsoft Teams)? Do you use collaboration tools that allow you to simultaneously work on the same project?

What about your client base? Has it grown? How are you finding new clients? Are you utilising platforms like Google AdWords or social media to attract new clients? Are you communicating with them on a regular basis through automatic sequences of content?

If I asked you what your average client was worth to your business and how long they typically stayed as a client – could you find that information easily? Could you share a dashboard of your current cash position? What about your debtors?

Where are you working from these days? Is it in a cafe by the beach on your terms, or are you overseeing a number of offices and working a 'regular' work week? What about your productivity? Do you feel like you're achieving everything that you'd set out to do, or are you still running from project to project putting out fires?

There are no right or wrong answers. Just what's right for you and where you'd like your business and personal life to be within five years. I realise I've given you a lot of the heavy thinking to do before we get into the juicy stuff that you really came here for so again; I want to recognise the effort you're putting in up front. I promise you it will make the remainder of the book more valuable to you as well as being immediately transferable to your business.

So, find yourself a journal and a pen (this won't be the only time through the book that I'll ask you to make some notes or jot your thoughts down). Your task now is to go for a walk outside. Find a beach, a river, a park somewhere away from your day to day and just sit. Stare out at your surroundings and allow your mind to think, dream and picture the five-year plan. You've earned a good dose of daydreaming.

Give yourself a good 30 to 60 minutes, at which point grab your journal and note down everything your brain came up with during

your 'down time'. Don't judge it, just write down whatever comes up for you.

You'll be referring back to those dreams and 'end plans' throughout the book.

It's not forever

One of the most frequent fears raised when I start working with any business owner around adapting technology into their business or personal life is the concern they will get it 'wrong'.

What if I pick the wrong system? The wrong phone? The wrong piece of software? The wrong app? What if I lose a bunch of time doing stuff and it's not 'right'?

Well, I've got some good news and bad news for you.

The nature of the digital landscape is transient. Things are changing, adapting and growing every day (pretty much) so there will be times when you will make a misstep. There will be times you'll choose a piece of software and then discover it doesn't quite do what you thought it would, or, more likely, you'll figure out you needed it to do something slightly more or different than what you first thought. And that's okay.

The good news is, you'll reach a tipping point where you realise that the apps you've downloaded or that piece of software you've implemented has saved you (or the business) hours of time, has made a process better for your clients or the team, or saved you a bunch of cash.

Either way, by sticking with the process you will start to see little signposts along the way that you're on the right tech track

Your digital audit

This is all about getting a good understanding of where you're starting from. To have any hope of later measuring what you've learned, implemented or altered in your business as a result of the book, we need to know what's already in place.

You'll find the full audit available as a free downloadable from the website; for now though we're going to consider each of the sections in the book and review what you have in place as of today.

Systems

What are you using... Apple or PC?

- Have you got a tablet or a smartphone?
- On a scale of 1 – 10, how well do you think you're using everything?

Productivity

- Do you listen to podcasts or audiobooks on your commute?
- On a scale of 1 – 10 how productive do you think you are day to day?
- On a scale of 1 – 10 how productive is your team?
- Are there areas where you feel you could be more productive?
 - If so, where?

Security

- On a scale of 1 – 10, how well do you understand online security implications in your business?
- What is your plan if your computer is hacked?
- Do you use two-factor authentications on your software?
- Do you use a password manager?

Organising your life

- On a scale of 1 – 10 how organised do you feel in your business?
- On a scale of 1 – 10 how organised do you feel at home?
- Do you use a calendar?
- Does your family have a shared calendar for capturing everything?
- Can work access calendars for ease of team tracking?

Money

- Have you got accounting software in place for your business?
- Do you have a process for capturing receipts and bills?
- Have you got a process for reimbursing expenses?

Working remotely

- On a scale of 1 – 10, how ready was your business to work remotely when COVID hit?
- Could you pick up tomorrow and work from anywhere?
- Where's your favourite place to work if you're not in the office?

Marketing

- On a scale of 1 – 10 how happy are you with your current marketing efforts?
- Have you got a digital marketing strategy in place?
- Do you understand your client personas? (While we go into a little more detail about these in the marketing section of the book, for now it might be useful to know that a client or buyer persona is a representation or archetype of a large section of your clients. Personas often include information like age, gender, location, as well as social and psychological information)
- Have you got a content plan in place?
- Do you have Google Analytics in place?
- Are you reading insights on your social media?
- Have you got a CRM in place?
 - Are you using it?

Sales

- What does your sales process look like?
- Have you mapped your pipeline in your CRM?
- How long does an average sale take?
- How do you track it from lead to conversion?

Customer experience

- Have you segmented your data?
- What ways do you offer clients to connect?
- Are you collecting customer reviews?

Health and wellness

- Do you use any technology to track your health?
- Do you track your sleep?
- Do you monitor your daily steps or activity?

Remember, the full audit is available on the website; hopefully though these questions will get you thinking about what you currently have in place.

You'll hear me mention in the book that data is knowledge and knowledge is power. It's my aim that by the end of this book you'll be armed with considerable knowledge and understanding of how to use, implement and leverage technology in your business to really take control over the direction you want your business (and your life) to go.

Choosing your systems

In the '60s (I'm told) you were either a Beatles fan or a Rolling Stones fan. Sure, you could like both, but when push came to shove you pretty well came down on one side or the other.

As I was growing up it became a *Star Wars* vs *Star Trek* debate (in case you're interested, while I enjoy both, Jean-Luc Picard will always be my captain). My point is, one of the first big decisions you'll need to make for your business is whether you're going to fall into the Apple or the PC camp.

I'll state my allegiances up front. I'm firmly ensconced in the Apple camp. Our house is completely Apple, and I struggle to know how to navigate a PC, it's been that long since I used one (2009, when I left my corporate life).

It can become a passionate debate when chatting to people from either side of the technological divide, as they fervently put forward their best arguments as to why you should operate in one system over the other.

Both have their merits.

Potentially Apple has fewer security threats. It's a fact that there are fewer Malware programs designed with Mac in mind. In part (I think) because they hold the reins so tightly over their allowed componentry and what is allowed into their App store. The flip side of this depends on your industry; you may find software solutions more difficult to access for Mac, although this is becoming less and less of a concern as everything moves to cloud-based and SAAS (software as a service) based models.

If your business is design- or arts-based, then chances are you will fall naturally into the Mac camp. Apple has become synonymous over the years with the design world. So, if you're looking to do a lot of design work, editing (video or audio), CAD work, etc. then Mac is probably the solution for you.

The PC world remains more customisable than Mac and significantly cheaper. You can pick up a PC laptop now for under \$500 without really trying. If you're looking to kit out an office or a team of people, it's hard to go past PC in terms of value for money.

Ultimately what I see often determines people's allegiances is their choice of phone. If you're an iPhone or iPad user, then connecting and integrating your life becomes significantly easier if you are connecting directly to a Mac laptop or desktop.

If you're a Samsung Galaxy, Windows Android or any of the other android phone users then you'll probably naturally gravitate towards the PC camp.

And then in recent years we've had the emergence of the Google camp. Google Pixel users will swear by the Google Chromebook. To me there remain too many limitations with the Chromebook to consider it as a worthy opponent (yet) to the age-old PC vs Mac debate... but the thing with technology is it's fluid. Who knows what Google will come out with in the foreseeable future... It could turn everything on its head.

As we move more and more towards cloud-based computing solutions the debate over Mac or PC is becoming somewhat more redundant. You will notice throughout the book (and you follow me on YouTube or Facebook) that my default is to talk about stuff as it appears in Apple.

This, at first, may cause you some confusion, but you'll soon realise what I show you on an Apple can be replicated on PC... you may just need to do a little clicking around to figure out the solution. There simply aren't enough pages in a book (or personal PC knowledge) for me to explain everything in both operating systems.

So... If you're at the point where you're considering Apple or Mac here are a few things to consider.

Security

If security is a big concern for you then Mac still gets the nod as the system of choice. That's not to say it's impenetrable, but there are less designed security threats aimed at Mac.

Gaming

If, after hours of course, you like to indulge in a little online gaming then PC is the way to go. Hands down, Mac doesn't even come close for this.

Software

Less of a concern these days as most things are available as cloud-based solutions.

Ecosystem

What sort of phone and/or tablet do you run? This could be the deciding factor in your solution

Maintenance

If you have any issue with a Mac you have one only place to turn, Apple. In saying that, their level of after-sales service is a sight to behold. If you have any issues with a PC, you can choose from dozens of folks probably operating in the same suburb as you to lean on for support.

Whichever way you decide to go, you really can't lose. There are some excellent choices available to business owners now and it really is just about deciding which camp you want to land in.

* * *

Needs and wants

As you move through the book beware of the 'bright, shiny' digital options put before you. We can all easily get caught up in the thought of something saving us hundreds of hours or making us thousands of dollars.

Before you make any snap decisions though. Stop. Ask yourself, is this a need or a want? Have I got something in place in the business

now that (kinda) does the same thing? If so, dust it off and give it a decent crack before you hand over your credit card for something new.

One of my roles as the digital guide is to try out a lot of these software solutions, apps and various other bibs and bobs. Every time you commit to purchasing a new piece of software or downloading an app, remember you're committing to hours and hours of learning and implementing.

Now learning new stuff is great... but go in with your eyes open.

Remember your digital audit. Think about what you already have in place, consider whether it's actually being used to its full potential, and ask yourself whether you're considering this as a distraction from doing other things in the business or whether it will actually serve a purpose. If you see a purpose for it, you also need to consider will it be scalable and could it potentially do away with something else to streamline a process? Your technology should always be pushing your business to greater things not wasting your time trying to make something fit where it doesn't belong.

Contrary to what you may think, while I do love my technology, I love it when it serves a purpose and has a very clear reason for me installing, learning and embedding it.

Don't get caught up in the bright-and-shiny digital objects throughout the book because there are bound to be a lot of them.

Final thought ...

Egon in the room



As we prepare our descent into the digital rabbit hole, it's worth mentioning that we will be chatting about terms that may all seem a little like jargon ('cause let's face it, they are jargon). While I do my best to keep things as easy to understand as I can there may be times when it feels like you need a babel fish (or, interpreter: a little joke for my fellow Douglas Adams and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* fans) to understand. If that happens, you'll find a glossary of all the terms and jargon located at the back of the book. The glossary will also be located (and updated as new stuff comes on board) on my website. You can lean on this any time you need.

The last thing which you're probably thinking at this stage is, how long is it going to take to digitise my business?

That one is a little trickier to answer. I tend to liken it to when you start back at the gym after a long absence. You go to a pump class and sweat your a*se off for an hour in the hopes your jeans are a little less tight. You do the same thing week in and week out for six weeks and still don't feel like there's progress. But one day you put those jeans on and suddenly realise you're not sucking it all in to get them done up... Digitising your business is kinda like that.

It's a process. Sometimes you'll feel like you're getting nowhere, or you may even feel as though things are going backward. Don't despair – one day not too long from now you'll look up from your smartphone and realise that things are humming in the business and you finally get what all the fuss was about.

Stick with it... I promise we'll get you there.

* * *

Okay... this is your final chance. Once you turn the page you can no longer refer to yourself as a luddite or a technophobe. There will be no more eye rolling at technology and you must dive in with eyes wide open.

Best get yourself a drink of some description for this... it's going to be one hell of a ride.