



SharePoint brings much to business, like managing information overload, overcoming out-dated business process, uniting fragmented and mobile workforces, and improving regulation and compliance. Implementing it in the right way is critical to its success, so if you're investing in SharePoint or looking to upgrade, look beyond the technology.

But what to look for? How to decide? To help you make the best choices we've compiled our top ten tips for any business seeking to maximise the possibility of SharePoint.

1
Think business first, technology second.

SharePoint works hardest when it's shaped to the specific needs of your business, start with these and stick to what you want to achieve. Think clearly about your objectives such as a framework to make business data more accessible, automating routine business process like expenses or improving workforce collaboration. Don't be distracted by the possibilities of SharePoint, always remember what you set out to achieve.

2
Don't look at SharePoint as the single answer, look to integrate.

SharePoint is highly flexible – see SharePoint as a delivery platform to meet business needs, integrate it with line of business systems or use it to provide a single information access point – avoiding the expense of complete systems overhaul. Look to the growing range of technologies that increase its capabilities in workflow, archiving, backup and social.

3
Forget a distributor, seek a partner.

SharePoint is in wide distribution. But look for a partner not a distributor. And look for a partner with huge experience; expert consultancy and support credentials; an integrator of best-in-class technologies and the highest Microsoft accreditation (they'll know SharePoint, its future road map and be able to access the right people within Microsoft).

4 **Build a bulletproof business case.**

Start with a clear vision of SharePoint's business contribution. Identify tight business objectives and benefits and be tough (make them measurable, attainable, relevant and time-limited). Consider all costs as well as TCO, payback period and cost/employee. And above all, have a clear roadmap.

5 **Be forensic about RoI.**

Demand real returns from your SharePoint investment. Start with the tangible ones like reduced storage or retrieval, reduced IT costs, reduced operational costs. Then get to the soft ones like improved efficiency, better collaboration, greater employee satisfaction, increased home/remote working.

6 **Consider the user at every point in your decision-making.**

The bottom line to SharePoint success is user adoption, so maximise the value your solution is bringing to your users. Engage with users early, identify advocates and get them involved, and continue engagement throughout the implementation. But more than anything set realistic expectations.

7 **Elevate compliance, governance & risk mitigation in decision-making.**

Factor in the increasing importance of compliance and don't play down the importance of risk mitigation. The Freedom of Information Act, retention and disposal, disaster recovery, business continuity and reputational savings must become key watchwords. As should governance.

8 **Embed high security, but don't over-engineer it.**

Security around the use of SharePoint is important, but too often tight security equals great complexity. Keep security simple. Over-engineered, it will become too hard and users will revert to old ways of working. Too user-restricted and collaboration will diminish. And if security levels are too great, bottlenecks will be created. Seek effective security.

9 **Plan, plan and plan.**

Take the time to rigorously create the right solution. Choose a partner who understands your business challenges, who sets the right goals, who delivers solutions to problems and adds value. Demand short user-lead development cycles, working software prototypes. The advantages will be huge later.

10 **Don't launch and abandon.**

Your SharePoint solution is just the start. Embrace the operational changes needed to make sure SharePoint thrives. Don't look at support packages and user adoption tools as after-thoughts, but critical to RoI. And push your SharePoint partner to deliver the highest levels of service at all times.

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