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# Three tech skills that will help small business growth in 2018



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Entrepreneurs and experts share the technological skills that will enable small businesses to grow this year.

Technology is now such an intrinsic part of business that even simple tasks require at least a basic understanding of it, says Coralie Petermann of digital advertising company, [Sublime Skinz](http://sublimeskinz.com/) (<http://sublimeskinz.com/>).

From marketing and selling to the way that staff collaborate on projects, a failure to keep up with the pace of technology could put even the most promising small business on the endangered species list.

But it can work the other way round, with a mastering of specific digital skills enabling a company to diversity its offering, appeal to new customers and open up new revenue streams.

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“A small firm may find that it has become a publisher in its own right by learning how to produce website content, improve its search engine optimisation (SEO) ranking, and even how to monetise it,” says Ms Petermann.

So what skills should business owners resolve to work on and hire in 2018?

## Video editing

Video has become a cornerstone of digital advertising.

According to a survey by Animoto, [64pc of consumers](https://animoto.com/blog/business/state-of-social-video-marketing-infographic/) (<https://animoto.com/blog/business/state-of-social-video-marketing-infographic/>) said that watching a marketing video on Facebook influenced their

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From webinars to testimonials and product demos, it's an essential skill to have for your promotional toolkit, explains Ms Husain, who adds that videos are not just a tool for selling; they can even help businesses produce effective training videos and tutorials for staff.

It's even possible to start small. "Using your smartphone and [free editing] apps, you can create videos with clever visual effects. This will get you thinking about the tone of your videos, how you want them to look and what you like and don't," she says.

Becoming familiar with the basics will help you to know the sort of thing that you will want from new or existing staff in this area.

When it comes to recruitment, Ms Husain suggests hiring people who are familiar with the social media platforms on which you plan to publish any video content. They should also understand your target audience.

Beware, however, people who don't ask a lot of questions during their interview. "In video, there are a lot of grey areas, and querying is crucial in order to understand the tone of the business, its objectives and your own expectations," says Ms Husain. "So a laissez-faire attitude is not the best approach."

She also advises discussing the processes for editing, deadlines and amendments with applicants in advance.

## Marketing with purpose

By now, most SMEs will have some grasp of digital marketing, but many will still be bashing out Facebook posts that don't get the intended engagement figures.

## "Well-written, original copy is the way forward"

Chloe Hall, Bumble and Bloom Media

Chloe Hall, managing director at marketing consultancy, [Bumble and Bloom Media](#)

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For in-house staff, she advises free training options such as Google's [Digital Garage](https://learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage/) (<https://learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage/>), and events at the Business and Intellectual Property Centre in [Newcastle](http://www.bipcnewcastle.co.uk/) (<http://www.bipcnewcastle.co.uk/>), and the [British Library](https://www.bl.uk/business-and-ip-centre) (<https://www.bl.uk/business-and-ip-centre>).

If hiring, look for initiative, as you will want marketers who can do things to help the business without being asked, she says.

## Coding

With most SMEs having a web and social media presence, coding is becoming an indispensable in-house skill, which has been the case for music tech start-up, [Filmstro](https://www.filmstro.com/) (<https://www.filmstro.com/>).

Being able to make quick changes to your website, app or software in-house without spending on agencies or freelancers can be the difference between speedy growth and stagnation, explains founder, Seb Jaeger.

These skills can be used to customise parts of a CRM (customer relationship management) system or website, and fix software bugs.

Hiring and upskilling an entry-level developer means not only that SMEs will be giving young people a career break, but it ensures that the business can guide its new hire to focus on the essential areas, says Mr Jaeger.

“They can learn the tinkering skills needed to ensure that all the moving parts of an SME work together smoothly.”

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