



Create the infrastructure your business needs

The processes, procedures and systems of your business together make up your business infrastructure. The right infrastructure in your business will help you achieve your business goals and improve your competitiveness by improving efficiency, allowing staff to work effectively, managing running costs, helping you offer a high quality integrated service and supporting internal and external communications.

This involves:

1. defining what infrastructure your business needs
2. consulting with others including staff and customers
3. evaluating infrastructure options
4. implementing infrastructure plans
5. making sure the infrastructure is working for your business and is not overly complex or costly

What you need to do

- define how you would like your business infrastructure to help you meet your business goals
- find out what your customers need from your business infrastructure
- define what you and your staff need your business infrastructure to achieve
- decide who needs to be consulted with or informed when planning infrastructure requirements
- seek any necessary advice from experts on the technical solutions that will help meet your needs
- research the options available that will help you create your business infrastructure
- decide how much resource you can commit to developing your business infrastructure
- assess the different infrastructure options
- decide on a suitable infrastructure that serves and supports your needs, your customer's needs and helps meet the goals of your business
- test the new infrastructure
- plan and monitor implementation
- keep your staff informed of progress while planning, developing and implementing the infrastructure
- organise appropriate training for your staff so they are able to work effectively with the new infrastructure



- seek and evaluate feedback from relevant people about your business infrastructure and use it to inform future developments

What you need to know and understand

Business focus

- what your business goals are and how your business infrastructure could help you meet them. (For example effective internal communication, efficient administration systems, and managing costs.)
- what the needs of your staff are and how your business infrastructure could help meet them. (For example improved communication, integrated IT system across different departments, ability to have up-to-date information on clients.)
- what the needs of your customers are and how your business infrastructure could help you meet them and improve customer service

Information and advice

- where to find professional advice on helping you develop a plan and appropriate technical solutions. (For example Business Link adviser, IT & communications specialist, or consultants.)

Consultation

- who you need to consult with in creating your business infrastructure, and how you will keep them informed of progress. (For example staff, customers, directors, suppliers, or investors.)

Infrastructure

- what resources you can commit to planning and implementation. (For example capital investment and on-going costs, staff time and expertise to manage the infrastructure.)
- how to develop an infrastructure plan, describing what you want to achieve, what resources are available, and what your priorities are
- what technical solutions are available, affordable and suitable for your business. (For example mobile phones, networked computers, integrated IT and communication systems.)



- how to evaluate the different infrastructure options taking into account suitability, staff skills, budget, and timescale of implementation
- how to develop an implementation plan including roles and responsibilities, timescales, budgets, and contingency planning
- how to effectively monitor progress of the plan. (For example regular project meetings, and clear reporting responsibilities.)
- how to get regular feedback from customers, staff and relevant other people on how they feel the infrastructure is benefiting your business and the service you provide
- how to use the feedback on the infrastructure to help you improve plans for future development

Development needs

- what training is required to enable staff to get the most out of your business infrastructure

