

5 WAYS MID-MARKET COMPANIES CAN USE TECHNOLOGY TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE

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As mid-market companies gear up for the challenges and opportunities that 2024 brings, the ever-evolving technology landscape continues to shape their strategies, with a significant focus on automation and cybersecurity. To remain competitive in the year ahead, businesses should aim to find value through technology integration, as it can be a key differentiator across sectors.

Here are the five priorities for businesses in 2024.

1. Ransomware Resurgence and Cloud

Ransomware attacks extorted at least \$449.1 million globally during the first half of 2023, and it's projected that 2024 will be their second most profitable year, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Threat Assessment 2024.

With expanding digital footprints and an ongoing cybersecurity talent shortage, these companies

should turn to cloud solutions and managed services as a shelter for the evolving threats.

2. Regulatory Environment Driving Blockchain and IoT Adoption

Small and medium businesses in heavily regulated industries, particularly the food and pharmaceutical sectors, will expand their digital footprints to better comply with increasingly stringent requirements in 2024.

As they expand their reach, they find themselves sitting on larger data volumes. In the coming year, this sector should expect the widespread adoption of blockchain and IoT technologies to achieve end-to-end traceability. This move will ensure compliance regulations and position these growing companies as leaders in leveraging technology for enhanced transparency and accountability.

3. Mobile Technologies and AI

Addressing Labor Shortages

In today's evolving landscape, small and mid-market businesses proactively seek innovative solutions to navigate labor shortages and bolster their capabilities. Emerging from the pandemic, these firms are struggling to find and hire employees due to a shortage in the labor market. In response, they should turn to technology, incorporate AI into business processes, and adopt mobile adoption to streamline operations.

Persistent labor shortages, likely to continue through 2024, will propel mid-market companies to accelerate automation across various business functions, from warehouses to field or office operations. Tools such as RF guns and mobile tools, particularly Android-based devices, can play a crucial role in tasks like order scanning and picking in warehouses and overall workforce expansion. Automation will help tackle labor shortages and



enhance efficiency in repetitive tasks. Integrating tools and automation facilitates the training and onboarding process.

4. Data Governance

Challenges Amidst Data Boom

According to Gartner, worldwide IT spending is projected to reach \$5.1 trillion in 2024, an increase of 8% from 2023, with investment in AI driving overall IT spending growth. The challenge lies in determining who has access to data, who can modify it, and how to ensure robust protection against external threats.

Amid these complexities, mid-market companies find themselves encountering the challenge of incorporating AI into their operational framework. As it's the early days of AI, a clear path or roadmap is yet to exist, leaving many firms of all sizes navigating

the early stages of understanding and implementing AI applications.

5. Security as a Key Indicator for Growth

Recognizing security as a cornerstone for tech-driven success will drive mid-market companies to strengthen their cybersecurity position actively. The adoption of predictive analytics, AI, and other emerging technologies will be driven by results-driven approaches, focusing on the total cost of ownership (TCO) and business value. To address the challenges at hand, companies should anticipate seeking partnerships with experienced data governance providers, recognizing the need for robust data management practices. In navigating this landscape, partnerships with managed service providers will be key in building and maintaining resilience against

cyber threats, especially as the use of AI in operations continues to evolve.

As the industry prepares for an even more dynamic landscape in 2024, mid-market companies stand at the intersection of technological innovation and security. As such, they must embrace automation, fortify cybersecurity, leverage predictive AI, and optimize data management for businesses to remain secure and profitable. The integration of predictive analytics into inventory management and purchase forecasting directly enhanced these efforts by contributing to generating business value. Taking early action and a proactive approach to address labor shortages, embracing technology, and forming strategic partnerships will determine companies' success in the coming year.