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Six Business Trends in 2016 Executives Must Acknowledge and Understand

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The way businesses get work done in the new year is changing. Strong client relationships and valuable service offerings are still at the heart of successful organizations. Yet the best of the best organizations and individuals remain those who adopt change early. There are six key business trends in 2016 that will affect every industry profoundly. Here they are. Keep

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reading to learn the most relevant trends, what each means for the economy, and what each means for you.

1. Internet of Things (IoT)

The Internet of Things (IoT) represents the billions of devices — as many as 50 billion by 2020, [according to Cisco](#) — that collect and transmit data through sensors. These smart devices will bring incomprehensible amounts of Big Data to organizations, which can then mine the data for opportunities. Not only will you personally be connected to your professional and social networks wherever you go — thanks to wearables, mobile devices, and hotspots — but you will also be able to use the vast data the IoT collects in your business endeavors. Expect to see more Big Data vendors and makers of COTS solutions that offer to make valuable use of this data. Careful selection of value-adding

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business intelligence (BI) solutions and Big Data from the IoT can add significant insights to your sales efforts, workflows, and bottom line.

2. Cybersecurity

The IoT connotes what we all feel: the increasing omnipresence of technology, connectivity, and devices. This affects personal and professional daily tasks, which in turn makes cybersecurity more important than ever. In 2015, major companies were hacked, including Ebay, Target, the U.S. Military, JPMorgan Chase, Anthem, Home Depot, AOL, UPS, and scores more ([source](#)). Your clients rely on and will expect you to provide secure information access to the details of their business deals, corporate objectives, proprietary information, intellectual property, organizational roles, and much more. Luckily, technology is keeping pace with the demand for stronger security. In the services you both use and provide, be sure you can

identify multiple levels of proven security.

3. The Vernacular of Analytics

In past decades, data crunching belonged to a few specific people with advanced spreadsheet skills within an organization. Now, thanks to dashboards and automated reporting, analytics are exposed to the masses. Everyone from project managers and collaborators to executives and boards of directors can use simple interfaces to build rich custom reports, within mere seconds. This is the natural evolution of so much rich data flowing through the departmental systems of our organizations. In 2016, look for [business intelligence](#) (BI) and reporting tools that simplify manual calculations, enable quick custom report builds, and put the power of analytics into a language everyone in your organization can understand and act on.

4. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

Employees, contractors, clients, and additional stakeholders are no longer wary of accessing professional information from personal devices. In fact, organizations are starting to allow and sometimes encourage use of personal devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets) for work. In 2016, you'll see more apps like Okta Verify, which have emerged to vet login credentials and secure information on any device. If your employees bring personal devices to work, ensure you have established applications, like Okta Verify, and workflows, like two-step verification, so that your organizational and client information stays secure.

5. Virtual Networks

The economy has become global. Your networks are international and multi-time-zone. Your employees, clients, and contractors work from various locations. To get everyone on the same page, you will need tools that

manage collaboration, establish workflows, and carefully monitor performance metrics. As this global networking trend continues, look for cloud services that aim to translate the traditional, brick-and-mortar work environment into a virtual workspace. You can also expect trends to shift toward clients and vendors more openly embracing this leaner working model.

6. Flawless User Experience

How many apps have you downloaded and not used? In 2016, user experience will be understood to be held to high standards, or users will go elsewhere. Apps are flooding the market, so there is no shortage of competing apps. Test the products you consider purchasing before you invest in the full cost of their technology; if you are in a position to roll out a new platform across your organization, make sure the user interface is easy for your employees to adopt and/or comes with adequate training. By contrast, if

you provide a product with a user interface, ensure the experience exceeds industry standard, so users select your product over the competition.

Now that you know the trends, you can motivate your teams to become high performers in a dynamic economy. For quick supplementary team motivation, [share these 52 inspirational quotes for every week of 2016](#) with your colleagues.

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