Future Friday: How Technology Will Influence Business in the Future

As part of Innovations 4 Entrepreneurs (I4E) Tech Week, Comcast Business chatted on Twitter with small businesses, entrepreneurs and technology experts to get their thoughts on how technology will influence business in the future.

**Bauer Graphics** is a creatively led, full-service design studio.

**Beyond Computer Solutions** provides technology services to small- and medium-sized businesses in a wide variety of industries throughout the U.S.

**Carbonite** provides hybrid backup and discovery solutions for businesses.

**CTI Group** is a global provider of carrier-grade communications analytics.

**Fish Property Management** offers property management and leasing services.

**Original Runner Company** provides the world’s first, non-slip fabric aisle runners.

**Perez Technology** specializes in ensuring small businesses can benefit from the power and cost savings of IT solutions.

**RocketHub** is an online crowdfunding platform.

**Swiftpage** is a provider of contact and customer management software.

Additional participants included **Anamary Marquez**.
Comcast Business: Welcome to our #I4EChat! We’ve got a great group of entrepreneurs & experts to talk about how #tech will influence biz strategies in the future.

Comcast Business: What “future” technology do you have your eye on today?

Swiftpage: Predictive analytics! Solutions that become your “friendly guide” to close more biz, more efficiently.

Comcast Business: Swiftpage – how will #predictiveanalytics help #entrepreneurs close more business?

Swiftpage: Comcast Business – by providing guidance on proactive follow-up recommendations to help close more business, more efficiently.

Beyond Computer Solutions: 3D Printers.

Comcast Business: Beyond Computer Solutions - #3Dprinters are very cool! Are you seeing interest from your clients?

Beyond Computer Solutions: Comcast Business – not just yet, but we are trying to sort thru the options first so we will be ready.

Original Runner Company: Integrated solutions that allow all my technologies to work together. The theme of integration is vital.

Original Runner Company: We are seeing what used to be only commercially available tech now available for less $ to SB such as large scale printing tech.

RocketHub: We’re excited about new educational tech & programs that empower local business leaders.

Comcast Business: RocketHub – anything specific that you have your eye on?

RocketHub: Comcast Business – we’re big fans of what MakerBot is doing with MakerBot Academy.

Comcast Business: RocketHub – MakerBot and MakerBot Academy sound very cool.

Fish Property Management: Innovations in delivery like drones. Distributing parts and take pictures w/o being there can revolutionize building maintenance.
**Swiftpage**: Fish Property Management – agreed...amazing technology, can’t wait to see what comes of it!

**Comcast Business**: Fish Property Management – you mentioned #drones. Beyond Computer Solutions, you mentioned #3Dprinting. Will those have appeal to all biz?

**Beyond Computer Solutions**: 3D printing will have some appeal to manufacturing, but not so much for SMB professionals such as attorneys.

**Fish Property Management**: Smart buildings, WIFI connections to control building systems and diagnose problems even in a single home. More efficiency!

**Comcast Business**: Which technology that we rely on today will be obsolete in 5-10 years?

**Beyond Computer Solutions**: Traditional desktop computers. Laptops, tablets and other mobile devices with unified connectivity are replacing already.

**Carbonite**: Beyond Computer Solutions – completely agree! Mobile #technology, fueled by the evolution of #cloud, has changed the traditional workplace.

**Original Runner Company**: Hopefully fax machines finally! Wired printers, modems & extenders - really all wired devices will all be obsolete.

**Comcast Business**: Original Runner Company – that sentiment is shared by many!

**Swiftpage**: A lot of people think that the phone has become obsolete, but our research shows it one of the most important ways to follow up.

**CTI Group**: Swiftpage – voice still leads the way.

**RocketHub**: It may not be obsolete, but “paper cash” will be used less and less.

**Comcast Business**: RocketHub – that’s a great point. Mobile commerce apps like those from Square are quickly making that a reality.

**Fish Property Management**: Credit card processing, mobile payments that send money direct between bank accounts. Developing economies are paving that path!

**Comcast Business**: Where do you see technology bringing business in 5-10 years?

**RocketHub**: Tech can bring businesses and customers closer together in an authentic and transparent way.
**Swiftpage:** To a place that makes it easier for small businesses to grow so owners have more time to do what they really love.

**Beyond Computer Solutions:** I see a lot of SMBs with employees working from home with just a mailing address.

**Fish Property Management:** Tech reduces barriers to entry for entrepreneurs. I see smaller companies serving niches on the increase.

**Fish Property Management:** I see flexible pricing changing the way we do business, maximizing supply and demand cycles. E.g. Uber, airlines, hotels.

**Comcast Business:** What kind of technology would help move your small business or start-up to the next level?

**Carbonite:** #Cloud #technology provides #SMBs mobility and scalability depending on the type of growth they’re pursuing.

**Carbonite:** #Cloud is giving #SMBs the necessary edge to outpace competitors (via ITProPortal): [http://t.co/qnQuxdEFiY](http://t.co/qnQuxdEFiY).

**Beyond Computer Solutions:** Hosted desktop and server services. This cuts start-up costs and allows a business to scale.

**RocketHub:** Tech to streamline the operations and administration side, such as compliance, taxes, licenses, etc.

**Original Runner Company:** Production tech would take us to the next level. Tech to improve production time to create more in less time — efficiency.

**Perez Technology:** Cloud brings enterprise applications & services to SMBs at realistic costs & scalability.

**Comcast Business:** What impact will social media have on the way we do business in the future?

**Beyond Computer Solutions:** Social Media is especially important for B2C. B2B needs to be involved but not as focused in this area.

**RocketHub:** Social media is the foundation that supports crowdfunding. It enables "raving fan customers" to share ideas they love.
**Swiftpage:** It will continue to have a huge impact, but in business, social media is only as valuable as the content.

**Carbonite:** Swiftpage – that's a great point.

**Swiftpage:** Carbonite – thanks!

**CTI Group:** It's beyond social. It's the increasing number of interactions & they all need to be captured for QoS & compliance.

**Fish Property Management:** Reputation management becomes more challenging with social media so we will all be focused on the customer experience.

**Original Runner Company:** Again, it comes down to integration. Social media will be better for biz once there is integration with the various outlets.

**Anamaria Marquez:** #SocialMedia will change how businesses tell their story, both B2C & B2B, since it highlights the importance to listen.

**Comcast Business:** Which industries will be most impacted by future technology?

**RocketHub:** Any company that specializes in commerce, content, & connectivity will be greatly impacted by the tech wave.

**Original Runner Company:** Mobile devices, wearables, communication tech, manufacturing with computer & robotic technology.

**Beyond Computer Solutions:** Customer Service professionals. With more automation, employees who interact with customers need to be more creative.

**Swiftpage:** We've only scratched the surface in enabling micro & small biz to take advantage of tech that converts leads & retains customers.

**Fish Property Management:** Healthcare, finance, supply chain logistics.

**Comcast Business:** Are there industries that could benefit more than others from technological development?

**Beyond Computer Solutions:** Yes. A good example would be manufacturing/product sales.

**Swiftpage:** Most technologies targeted at #smallbiz are still far too complex. Critical that developers make things easier, not harder.
**Fish Property Management**: Swiftpage – AGREED! New technologies for SB are often complex and don't sync with others so we waste time with workarounds.

**Bauer Graphics**: There is a great opportunity for local governments to take advantage of technology even for things like crisis communications.

**Bauer Graphics**: (local government agencies and departments)

**RocketHub**: Bauer Graphics – great point on local government. We’re powering the U.S. Department of State’s crowdfunding initiatives [http://t.co/9DnQX0nwkl](http://t.co/9DnQX0nwkl).

**Comcast Business**: RocketHub – that is interesting!

**Swiftpage**: Comcast Business, RocketHub – it’s exciting stuff!

**RocketHub**: Science, bio-tech, education & healthcare are being turbo-charged by tech. Lots of opportunity for entrepreneurs there.

**Comcast Business**: How will the “Internet of Things” (IoT) influence start-ups and small business?

**Beyond Computer Solutions**: It will make it easier for start-ups to shop on price and order almost anything quickly.

**Comcast Business**: Beyond Computer Solutions, #IoT/#M2M will be a significant time saver for #startups and #SMBs.

**Bauer Graphics**: To echo Beyond Computer Solution’s comments, it will aid in determining competition, targeting leads, pricing. Essentially everything!

**Swiftpage**: By its sheer potential - can’t wait to see what creative new ideas come from it!

**Comcast Business**: Swiftpage – agreed!

**Comcast Business**: If you could have one piece of tech that doesn’t currently exist, what would it be?

**RocketHub**: Beam me up, Scotty!

**Comcast Business**: RocketHub – awesome.

**Bauer Graphics**: I am personally looking forward to how wearable tech will evolve over the next few years and really look forward to having my…
Bauer Graphics: …phone relegated to my pocket as an on-person CPU. Recent Bluetooth 4 announcements are exciting to say the least.

Beyond Computer Solutions: With so much evolving so quickly, I would rather focus on what is available today and let many SMBs know.

Swiftpage: We're really big fans of the "easy" button ;)

Bauer Graphics: As for business related tech, something we could use is a better way of separating email wheat from junk mail chaff.

Bauer Graphics: As automated personal digital assistants get more and more evolved, we’re looking forward to getting more 'human' work done.

Bauer Graphics: It will further integrate us into our clients business. As the emissaries of understanding, we are the coolest nerds in town.

Comcast Business: Last question on this #FutureFriday: How will your customers’ use of future technology affect your business?

Carbonite: #SMBs will need to embrace #cloud even more as staff looks to work from home or use #mobile devices.

RocketHub: Carbonite – sounds like we’re in total agreement on mobile. It's the key to the future.

Swiftpage: RocketHub – absolutely!

Swiftpage: The world is increasingly mobile. We expect this to accelerate which means everything we do needs to put mobile first.

Original Runner Company: Swiftpage – love your answers! Great insight.

Carbonite: Carbonite continues to further develop #cloud and hybrid #backup solutions for #SMBs, while ensuring security for #data.

CTI Group: Couldn’t agree with Swiftpage more. Mobile isn’t a perk anymore. It's expected.

Beyond Computer Solutions: We are already focusing more on managing customers who use cloud service providers and offer value around that.

Perez Technology: SMB owners need to understand the power of #cloudcomputing & its impact on their future.
**Beyond Computer Solutions:** This has been great. I hope everyone has benefited from these talks. Thanks, Comcast!

**Comcast Business:** Beyond Computer Solutions – thank YOU!

**Carbonite:** Thanks, @comcastbusiness for hosting #I4EChat this week--it’s been great providing #tech insights to #SMBs.

**Comcast Business:** Thank you all for another great discussion, and for participating in #I4ETechWeek.

**RocketHub:** Comcast Business – thank you for having us. This was fun!