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and SaaS this, and web-based that, technology hardware remains an essential component of any modern business. Yet, while the obvious core components of desktops, laptops, monitors, printers and even phones may immediately come to many people's minds when they hear the term "hardware," there are many specialty gadgets that can help businesses maximize their mobile mojo, empower their productivity, energize their efficiency and boost their bottom line.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Aug. 09, 2011



Even with all the talk about the productivity-boosting effects of going to the cloud ... and SaaS this, and web-based that, technology hardware remains an essential component of any modern business. Yet, while the obvious core components of desktops, laptops, monitors, printers and even phones may immediately come to

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types of material, legal and services businesses. Whether two, three or even more, research shows that multiple monitors help increase productivity by giving users the ability to have several programs viewable in full-size or minimized simultaneously. Yet for professionals whose work often takes them on the road, having to even temporarily work from a single (smaller) monitor can be more than an inconvenience; it can actually cause a decrease in efficiency. Lugging around an extra monitor isn't an option, though. Or is it?

The **Field Monitor Pro** was created for accountants and designed to be mobile-friendly and easily portable. It includes a pivoting base that looks like a notebook PC but actually offers a full-size 10-key, a USB video connector, extra USB connections and a compact, built-in stand that allows for landscape or portrait configuration. For on-the-go professionals who often find themselves in the netherworld of single-screen, cramped-keyboard purgatory, especially auditors in the field, the Field Monitor Pro offers a well-deserved reprieve. The 15.4-inch monitors cost \$289, can work with PCs and Macs, weigh only four pounds, and easily fit alongside laptops in travel bags. Watch a video to learn more at www.CPAPracticeAdvisor.com/10297419.

Novatel Wireless — MiFi

www.novatelwireless.com/mifi

Even in an age when almost everything is web-enabled, not everything has built-in connectivity, which means you still may need a wireless network to use or have full internet access with your laptop, iPad, gaming devices, MP3 players or other Wi-Fi capable devices. That's fine when you're around the office or in an urban setting where there's always a network to be found, but when you're in the middle of nowhere on a road trip with colleagues, friends or family, that just isn't an option, and adding 3G/4G packages to each of those items can get pricey.

That's where the **MiFi** can be an essential tool that lets you share a personal wireless

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Square Inc. — Square Credit Card Reader

www.squareup.com

More and more businesses are either mobile or their workers are, and for service-based companies, this can present a challenge when it comes to accepting the preferred manner of payment these days: credit and debit cards. Checks are risky and cash can be a hassle, but plastic is convenient for everyone. Unfortunately, many small businesses think of credit card processing and merchant account services as difficult and expensive. The good news is, it's neither.

With a simple gadget-and-app combination called Square, all the business owner or staff member has to do is swipe a customer's card, enter in some pricing and cardholder details. The transaction is instantly processed, and the funds are transferred into the business' bank account. The business simply needs to create an account on Square's secure servers and attach the quarter-sized swipe card reader to their smartphone. Square also offers customers email and text receipts, management features for frequent customers, and reporting tools.

Square works with iPhones, iPads and Android devices, and is a great tool for mobile services such as plumbers, electricians, mobile vendors and consultants. Pricing for the system is based on use, with each transaction processed by swipe having a 2.7% fee. If credit card numbers are entered manually, the charge is 3.5% plus 15 cents per transaction. The swipe card reader gadget and the app are free, and there are no setup or management fees.

Fujitsu — ScanSnap S1100

<http://scanners.fcpa.fujitsu.com/scansnap11/s1100.html>

For professional accountants, scanning documents has become an essential

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on the market, the S1100 offers optical character recognition to create searchable and interactive PDFs, and to pull information from documents and business cards. It then synchs that data into Outlook and other contact management systems. It can save scanned documents and cards to image, Microsoft Word and Excel files, as well as directly to cloud-based services like Evernote and Google Docs.

The pocked-sized S1100 (11"x2" and only 12 ounces) offers continuous feed detection, full-color scanning and a 7.5 second scan speed. It doesn't even need a power cord, since it draws juice from the computer to which it's attached via USB. The ScanSnap S1100 costs \$199 and can be used with Macs or PCs.

Sutus, Inc. — Sutus Business Central

www.sutus.com

Every business has varying needs when it comes to their phone systems, data servers, email servers, routers and wireless networking. And unless they are in the IT business themselves, figuring the what and how of those components is a mountainous challenge.

The Sutus Business Central system integrates all of these parts of a business' data, production and communication needs, including firewalls and other security protocols, to help ensure maximized productivity. The systems can also tie into point-of-sale systems, accounting programs, and scanners and printers, and supports users across multiple offices and remote locations. Even more convenient, the Business Central system combines all of these needs into a single IT appliance that simplifies managing these systems and helps reduce the total cost of ownership, from purchase and training, through maintenance and support.

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