

## THE NEW 'MUST HAVE' LAPTOP FROM APPLE

Apple CEO Tim Cook took to the stage recently at the company's Spring Forward Apple Watch event to unveil the latest development in its laptop computer line-up, simply named the new MacBook to create an all-new notebook line, rather than MacBook Pro or MacBook Air.

The new device includes a high resolution Retina Display, a new touch-sensitive trackpad and a new port for data transfer and charging in a single connector. The new MacBook includes a 12-inch Retina Display, with just over 3.3 million pixels. It's also the first MacBook without a fan for cooling, which makes it quieter than conventional laptops. It uses Intel's new low-power Core M processor, which allows for longer battery life and a thinner design than past generations of similar Intel chips.

The device is 24 percent thinner than an 11-inch MacBook Air laptop, previously the company's thinnest laptop. It weighs 2 pounds and is 13.1 millimetres thick, compared to the 2.38 pound 11-inch MacBook Air. A 67 percent smaller logic board allows for more room for the battery, which now offers up to nine hours of wireless web browsing.

The trackpad has been upgraded to include touch response for the first time, using Apple's Force Touch technology, which can sense a range of pressure. These different types of clicks allow users to do different things. For example, a deep click - called a "force click" - on a word in a web browser will call up a connected Wikipedia page. Also, a new port, called USB-C, supports charging, video output and downloads from another device, such as the iPhone or iPad, all from a single connector. The USB-C port is also reversible, so can be plugged in with less hassle. The USB-C standard isn't specific to Apple, so it should appear in more devices in the future.

The backlit keyboard is thinner, and more precise and accurate, according to Apple. The device starts at £1,049 for the version with 256GB of flash storage with a 1.1 Ghz Intel Core M processor and 8GB of RAM. You can specify upgrades to the processor and storage. The MacBook is available to purchase from April 10 in three colours; silver, space grey and gold.



## GET MORE OUT OF YOUR NETWORKING

While satisfied customers may be your best sales force, they are not the only sales force. There are lots of other people out there who can send business your way if you make the effort to network with them and make it worth their while.

The concept of networking and word-of-mouth marketing is a very hot topic in business today for one simple reason: lots of people are starting small businesses that need to find other businesses they can work with for mutual benefit.

Your networking time needs to be marketing time. This means putting yourself in front of customers or people who will send customers your way. With that in mind, here are a few tips to help you to get more out of your networking:

### Competitors can be a networking opportunity

Just because you go head to head with other businesses does not mean that you can't work together sometimes (for mutual gain). Airlines have an agreement whereby they book business for each other in return for a fee. You may find it useful to work out such an agreement with some of your competitors. On the other hand, you may have an informal agreement whereby you refer one of your competitors to customers for no fee in the hope that they might reciprocate.

### Businesses that complement yours

If you put an accountant, a surveyor and a lawyer in the same room – you may have people who can refer clients to each other. When a customer buys from you, what other products and services are they likely to want? These businesses are the ones that you should consider networking with in order to build reciprocal referral links.

### Prepare in advance

Before going to any networking function, make sure that you are prepared. Have business cards, prepare your elevator pitch and read through the attendee list before you go. Try to identify at least 3 people on the list that you want to network with. After the event, make sure to follow up with your new contacts.

### Ask for referrals

That is why you are there. After describing your business to someone, ask, "who do you know who might need my services?" Take the time to describe your typical customer. Follow-up on leads as quickly as you can. Where possible, send business to your referrers. Reciprocity is the basis for all good relationships and it is especially true in business. When someone sends a customer to you, acknowledge it with at least a thank you. Keep in touch with your contacts and where possible, send them a referral.

