SAMSUNG GALAXY TAB S 8.4

The Galaxy S5 (and Samsung's newly launched flagship phone, the Galaxy S6) may be Samsung's premier products, packing in everything a top-end phone should, but if its screen just doesn't cut it for your email and web needs, perhaps you should have a look at the Galaxy Tab S 8.4.

This 8.4-inch tablet packs in a super high-resolution display, an eight-core processor and comes with the latest Android software. It is clearly a product of the same team behind the Galaxy S5, as it's easy to spot similarities between the two. Most notably is the back of the tablet, which has the same soft-touch, rubberised feel as the phone. The unit feels good to hold and is a definite improvement over the glossy, plastic exterior of previous models.

The Galaxy Tab S 8.4 is an extremely slender bit of kit, measuring only 6.6mm thick - that's slimmer than even the iPad Mini. Tucked into the tablet's edges are the volume and power buttons, the headphone jack, Micro-USB port and microSD card slot. The back panel has a couple of little buttons that push in to allow one of Samsung's proprietary covers to attach. The device comes in a choice of bronze or white colours, which stand out nicely from other tablets, most of which tend to just come in various shades of silver.

With the ever increasing number of Android apps available, this is a superb business tool. It won't replace your laptop but if you need internet access, email and a few tools on the go, it really ticks all the boxes. The only minor negative is that it comes with so much bundled software (from Samsung and third parties) that it may be confusing for first-time Android users.

As a business tool, with its slim design, fantastic screen and oodles of power, the Samsung Galaxy Tab S 8.4 is a superb smaller tablet, and a worthy competitor to the ever-popular iPad Mini. The Wi-Fi only model with 16GB of storage can be purchased directly from Samsung for £319. The 4G version costs £349 and it is definitely worth the extra cash in order to benefit from high speed data access no matter where you are.

MAKING YOUR CONTENT MORE 'SHAREABLE'

As social media has become more widely accepted as a marketing channel, many businesses are wondering how to make content more shareable.

Learn what works for other businesses
Monitor your competitors and a selection of other businesses that have a successful social media strategy. Look at what they are posting and learn from their successes (and mistakes). Consider who the key bloggers are in your industry sector and take the time to regularly read their posts. If certain things work for others, see how you can adapt their strategies for your business.

Write relatable content
People tend to respond to content that they can relate to on an "everyday" level. Food, relationships, family, lifestyles and home articles are some of the most popular articles out there. Business and tech articles, or standard news articles, only make up a small percentage of content that is shared. Essentially, people want to share with others something that touched them on a personal level.

Experiment
Don't be afraid to try new things. Make changes, try different approaches and monitor the effect on your web statistics. Track "shares" and "click-throughs" in order to determine what works.

Different social media networks
Just because something works on one social media network, it doesn't mean it will work on another. A video might go "viral" on YouTube but that doesn't mean it will be widely shared on LinkedIn. Recycling your content is fine, but make sure that you adapt it appropriately for different media. LinkedIn tends to be more business-focused, whereas Facebook is more home-orientated and isn't widely used for business. Twitter and YouTube tend to be used by both home and business users. Google+ is essentially an alternative to Facebook, and Pinterest is more for personal use than business. These are only broad guidelines - you need to decide which social media networks will work best for you.

MAXIMISING YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

In today's demanding workplace, business owners and managers are under more pressure than ever to maximise their productivity. Here are a few tips to help you to get the most out of your working day:

Focus on the interesting stuff

Find interesting aspects of your work and focus on them. A great way to stay motivated is to find interesting and meaningful aspects of your work. Interesting work doesn't just keep you going; it helps you to feel energised and satisfied.

Avoid multi-tasking

It's impossible to maintain productivity if you are constantly switching back-and-forth between different tasks. Your error rate goes up, and tasks can often take longer to complete. Very often, the most active multi-taskers tend to be the worst at multi-tasking.

Email management

Email can be hugely time consuming. Sometimes it is quicker to pick up the phone and have a conversation rather than spend hours emailing back and forth. It is often more efficient to allocate email time throughout your working day. Outside of these times you can focus fully on projects and tasks, and come back to catch up on email during specific times throughout the day. Finally, you can set up outlook folders and email rules in order to manage and prioritise your email.

Focus on your energy levels

Most work environments value attention, concentration and focus. In some businesses, those who sit back and think or take a break can sometimes be perceived as being lazy. However, taking regular breaks can increase your energy levels throughout the day and ensure that you are more engaged.

Allocate thinking time

When relaxing or thinking, going for a walk or taking a break, the brain does not slow down or stop. Downtime and sleep are needed to restore levels of attention and motivation, encourage productivity and creativity and to achieve high levels of performance. As such, you should allocate some relaxation and thinking time during your working day.

ALIGNING HR STRATEGY WITH THE GOALS OF YOUR BUSINESS

Aligning HR goals to the business's goals is no easy task. So, here are a few tips to make it a little bit easier.

Collaborate

At the outset, it is important for you to understand that aligning your HR strategy with your business goals involves a collaborative approach. If you use this process in a dictatorial fashion without the input of your employees, you will receive very little commitment.

You will need to collect a number of documents and plenty of information before you start the alignment process. Regardless of the type of business you run, there are generally four driving factors for businesses: making a profit, being efficient, saving time, and giving back (community involvement, donating time, material or money to the community). These should be the basis for the alignment of the business's goals to each employee's individual performance plan or objectives.

Understand the role of each employee

In order to align your team's goals with those of the business, you need everyone's job descriptions to hand. Make sure the job descriptions are up-to-date and cover all key tasks. It is also worth identifying the skills and experience necessary for the employee to be successful in a particular job. It is probably best to review the job description of each employee before setting goals for the business.

Setting objectives for the business

The management team needs to create short- and long- term business objectives for the firm. These should be SMART objectives – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.

Develop employee objectives

You can now cascade the objectives of the business down to employees. The goals for each employee need to be quantifiable, have a quality aspect to them and should be challenging, but doable.

Training and development

Finally, you need a training plan or development plan for your team. This essentially paves the way to achieving your business goals. These plans should focus on equipping your team with the skills to accomplish their objectives and the objectives of the business.

For each of the above steps it's important that your employees collaborate in the process. Aligning staff objectives to the goals of the business can help you to manage the expectations of your team and make it easier to build stronger business relationships across the whole firm.