



Using Your iPad for Business Productivity



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Introduction

Over three million iPad owners already know the truth – that the iPad can be an invaluable tool for personal, school, and business use. Not only is it portable and relatively inexpensive – at least when compared to a laptop computer – but the iPad truly is one of the hippest ways to stay on top of your business tasks, correspondence, and more. Yes, not only is owning an iPad cool, but it can help you to get more done in your business, as well.



This short report will show you some of the ways you as a business owner can get the most out of your iPad investment. I'll introduce you to ways you can plan, execute, and track your business operations – from the road, your office, or a hammock on a tropical beach. Read on to learn how you can become a more effective business owner – at the touch of a fingertip!



Why Choose an iPad?



If you don't already have an iPad, you may be wondering why you need one, particularly if you already have a laptop or netbook. And if you already own an iPad for personal use, you may want to know how you can use it for your business. There are five main advantages that iPads bring to business computing:

Portability. iPads are significantly smaller and weigh less than even the smallest notebook computer, yet they're powerful computing machines. At 1.5 lbs. and half an inch thick, you can take them practically anywhere, with 3G wireless or Wi-Fi giving you immediate access to the Internet. Why not just use your cell phone? The iPad gives you a “big, beautiful Multi-Touch screen” as the Apple.com website describes. It gives you the perfect balance between using your laptop (more portable) versus your phone (bigger screen). They truly are the next generation in mobile computing.

Battery life. Because they are smaller than laptops or netbooks, they have a much longer battery life – up to ten hours, depending on the tasks you're performing. (Compared to most laptops which give you only 3-4 hours of use.) And should you need to recharge, you can do so quickly and easily from any standard electrical socket. You can also use a car adapter to keep charged on the road.

Cost. The entry-level Wi-Fi iPad costs \$499; the fully-loaded 3G version runs \$829. For less than the cost of the typical desktop computer, you can be up and running – literally – and managing your business from anywhere.

Flexibility. Many smaller pieces of personal electronic equipment were one-dimensional, performing just a single task. But with the iPad, you have everything from a calculator to a GPS system to a calendar to a word processing system right in your hands. If you try to compare the iPad with a Kindle or Nook – unless your only goal is to read books electronically, there's absolutely no comparison.

Software. With thousands of apps designed specifically for the iPad – and over 200,000 more for the iTouch and iPhone – you've got a world of software designers working round the clock to make your iPad even more useful, powerful, and just darned cool. Many apps are free, and most cost less than \$2.99 (compare that to the \$280 you'd pay for Microsoft Office 2010!).

Perhaps the best way to convince someone they need an iPad, though, is to simply put one in their hands. They'll immediately think of a million and one ways they can harness its power to streamline their business activities. But if you would like some ideas, read on...



Word Processing



If there's one task most business owners need their computing devices to perform, it's word processing. After all, you can send emails from your phone, but I definitely wouldn't want to compose a 500-word monthly report or blog post on that tiny screen.

Thankfully, there are several options so that you can use your iPad as a word processing dynamo. Here are my favorite selections:

- **Notes.** (Included on your iPad by default.) Notes is an app that provides you the ability to jot down thoughts, lists, ideas, and more using the iPad's built-in, touch-screen keypad. While not particularly robust (compare it to taking notes on a yellow legal pad, which is exactly what the screen looks like!) it is a quick and dirty way to capture written notes without a lot of extra bells and whistles. It's an easy-to-use, intuitive interface and is perfect to use when you just need to jot down a note and can't find pen or paper.
- **Pages.** (\$9.99) At the other end of the spectrum is the Pages app, available for download from the App Store for less than \$10. Want to create brochures, resumes, reports, and other graphic-intensive text documents? Pages is your answer! Most run-of-the-mill business owners may find it to offer more than they need, but if you do a lot of template-based documents, it may be just what you're looking for. Got Microsoft Word documents that you'd like to edit on the fly? You can import them into this program. Amazingly, this program not only allows you to import, but it will export your finished document in Microsoft Word or even in a PDF format. Wow. This app is so powerful it may even entice you to buy the Apple keyboard for iPad and make your iPad your main word processing tool.
- **CleanWriter.** (\$0.99) CleanWriter is just what the name says; a clean and simple approach to creating text documents. With just a few options (three font choices, two black-and-white color themes), CleanWriter will let you create bare-bones documents quickly and easily, and save them as .txt files. You can upload and download the .txt files when syncing your iPad via iTunes, and email portions of your documents as well. Their claim to fame is that their tool is so simple, minimalistic, and clutter-free that it allows you to focus on writing. The app page says "All features are hidden from sight, leaving you alone with your words." Classic.
- **Documents.** (\$0.99) If you want a middle-of-the-road solution, Documents may be what your heart desires. Advertised as a "full office and documents management suite," Documents allows you to create, edit, and manage spreadsheets and text files. One



killer point: You can sync files to your Google Docs account which is very cool. Once saved, files can be opened by MS Word and Excel, Open Office, and all major office suites. So, if you need spreadsheet capability and total integration with Microsoft Office or Open Office, this one might be the one that works best for you.

Because the price points on these applications are so low, we suggest that you try a few to see which best fits your needs and which interface fits your working style. If none of these does it for you, keep checking the App Store, as new programs are being developed all the time.

Contacts and Appointments

Remember the days when you had to carry around a stack of business cards to keep all your numbers handy? Then came the 90's when we could enter them into our PDAs... and tote THEM around. Not anymore! Now, your iPad can serve as your virtual phone book – but a heck of a lot less bulky and a lot more fun.

- **Contacts app.** (Included on your iPad by default.) The Contacts app stores names, numbers, email addresses, and more so you can get the goods on your lunch date before you sit down at the table. It'll even allow you to store a picture and notes, too. The notes feature is ideal for storing kids' names, favorite foods, last order volume, and more, so you can impress them with your encyclopedic knowledge. And when you enter an address, you can even tap the screen to automatically open Google Maps and get door-to-door directions.



If you're looking for something more robust, there are a number of different apps in the App Store to check out, including:

- **Contacts Journal.** (\$5.99) This is a high-end personal Contacts Relationship Management (CRM) system. More than a phone book, it's more like a "to do" list that you can associate with each contact, along with a filtering option, export capability, and more. This tool is ideal for someone who interacts with a large number of people on an ongoing basis – perfect for sales professionals. This app was featured on Mashable.com as one of the "5 Useful iPhone Apps for Business Networking". It was also featured on Forbes.com as one of the "10 Best iPhone Apps for Business Networkers". So, obviously this is an impressive tool.
- **ContactsP HD.** (\$2.99) This is the basic Contacts app with added features. It has more customization options, including a revved-up graphical user interface, lots of search options, and ability to set groups.
- **Contacts Pro for iPad.** (\$1.99) This app allows you to input and password-protect a large number of data, such as credit card info, website/email log-in, etc. This is a useful app if you're concerned about the security of your contacts being compromised.

On the calendar front, boy, does the iPad have you covered!



- **Calendar.** (Included on your iPad by default.) The basic Calendar app is a super-cool journal-look calendar, to which you can easily add recurring or standalone appointments. View it as a day, week, month, or list, and interface with your desktop.

And of course there are other options if you prefer a more specialized calendar:

- **CalenGoo** (\$6.99) The best feature of this app is that it syncs with your Google Calendar – and it looks just like your Google Calendar screen, too. Includes an integrated task list called Google Tasks; tasks with due dates are automatically displayed on your calendar. They've really done a nice job on this. It can be used when you don't have an internet connection, as well. (For instance, if you're not near a Wi-Fi hot spot.) The changes you make to your calendar will upload the next time you're connected to the internet.
- **PocketInformant** (\$14.99) This app is more calendar than most people need. But if you like to be organized to a "T" check it out. You can tag events, group tasks, send appointment meeting requests, set icons for events and tasks, and filter and search your calendar and tasks – as well as perform all the ordinary calendar functions.

As with any App (or software program, for that matter), figure out what you need your program to do before you go buy one. Don't assume you "need" the biggest and best, when the default free version might do everything you need in a simple and easy-to-use manner.



RSS Feeds and Bookmarking: Keep Up with your Favorite Sites on the Go



If you've got an Internet-based business, I bet you're spending most of your working time online – probably in front of a desktop computer. This is understandable for many tasks, but it gets frustrating when you're feeling stuck at your desk unnecessarily. As mentioned previously, one of the biggest advantages of the iPad is its portability to take your business on the go.

There are certain tasks that are easy to do on your iPad, while others are more difficult. For instance, you may decide you don't want to code an entire website on your iPad (and who would), but you can't argue that the perfect tool for catching up with your favorite business blogs and websites. No longer will you have to waste those random ten minutes here and there in line at the post office or at the doctor's waiting room. Instead you can use the time to catch up on your reading!

So here are some quick and easy ways to optimize your iPad for easy Internet surfing. My two favorites are bookmarks and RSS feeds. Here's what you need to know about each:

Bookmarks. Just like on your computer, you can save often-frequented websites for quick retrieval. You don't have to type in your horrendously long WordPress dashboard URL; just add it once, then use the bookmark function to save it for the future.

- Click on the Safari icon from your main iPad page.
- Open and view the webpage that you'd like to bookmark in Safari.
- Tap the Plus (“+”) icon at the top of the page.

A drop-down menu will appear and ask if you want to add a bookmark, add the site to your home screen, or mail the link to that page. Follow the prompts to save your URL for future visits. (Bonus: You can sync your bookmarks with your computer Internet browser.)

RSS Feeds. You're likely already familiar with RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feeds for reading blogs and other websites. If you're using your iPad as a way to keep up on your blog reading while on the go, you will want to configure your favorite RSS feeds to be delivered right to your iPad.

Setting up RSS feeds is, as the name promises, real simple! Here's how:

- Open Safari and navigate to your favorite blog or website.
- When the site opens, look for the RSS feed icon and tap on it.



- This will open the web-based RSS reader, showing all the latest posts in the feed.
- Then just bookmark the feed as you would any other site, using the steps above.

Using these steps will ensure that you're ready to get to work, keeping up on the latest and greatest, whenever you have a spare minute.

If you'd prefer to use an app news reader, there are several that are rated highly. My favorite is:

- **Pulse News Reader.** (Free.) Pulse is a gorgeous app and it lets you add all of your favorite blogs to it. Praise for this app includes "The iPad Pulse Reader Scales the Charts" - NYTimes. This reader also allows you to quickly share articles on facebook and twitter, too.



Email Management



I've found that I tend to use my iPad for what I call “bits and pieces” tasks, in other words, things I can do with little bits of time because they don't require a long, concentrated period of attention. I've already mentioned how great the iPad is for Internet surfing, but another fantastic productivity boost came when I started to use it to manage my email while away from my desk.

If you're like me, you get a lot of important but not critical email messages. You know, stuff that you need to read and maybe even want to respond to, but it doesn't contribute to your bottom line or your customer care. Now, instead of using my precious desk-time for that task, I save those emails for when I have a few minutes here and there.

- **Email app.** (Included on your iPad by default.) I've found the email app on my iPad to be perfectly adequate for handling all my needs.

Here are some of the basics:

You can connect easily with a variety of email services. It's plug-and-play when it comes to accessing your email accounts from your iPad. You can access Gmail, Yahoo, AOL, as well as others. You just need to enter your email account name, password, and maybe the server, and you're good to go. Want to adjust the settings? Simple. Go back to your main screen and click on “Settings” then “Mail, Contacts, Calendar” and you can adjust a number of features – including how many email messages you want to see at a time and the time periods for checking for new messages.

You can connect with multiple email accounts. Got a customer support email account, a new orders account, and a private account? No worries! Your iPad will allow you to add multiple accounts and view them all in the same screen or separately. You can also set one default account to keep things simple.

You can compose, read, delete, forward, and perform all the standard email functions on your iPad. Pretty much anything you can do on your regular email browser can be done on your iPad.

You might choose to create an iPad-only email account. Just in case you want an account just for on the go, or maybe to connect with your VA while you're travelling.



You can create a custom iPad signature. Although many people like the default “Sent from my iPad” because it shows how cool you are, you can change your default. Just go to Settings → Mail, Contacts, Calendar → Signature.

You'll soon find that working your email on your iPad is just like using a laptop or desktop. It's really that simple!



Storing and Accessing Files

If there is a limitation on the iPad, it's the ability to store and retrieve files. Fortunately, there are apps in the App Store to address that problem. (Let's face it; there are apps in the App Store for just about everything!)

If you're on the go (and we've already decided you are), then you need an easy way to access and store files, documents, and other data, for retrieval from any computing device, whether it be your iPad or your desktop. Here are just a few of the options you have available to you:

- **Google Docs.** (Web based.) Google Docs is part of the Google suite of office applications. A server-based application, it allows you to store files of up to 1GB in size for free. You can access your files from your mobile devices (including your iPad) as well as any computer with an internet access. You can save them to your device or computer in a variety of file formats, including ODF, HTML, PDF, RTF, Text, and Word. You can share access with other users, work collaboratively, and tag and archive your documents.
- **Dropbox.** (Free app.) Dropbox is a popular file backup, storage, and sharing service that has free and paid versions, up to storage of 100GB. There's a free iPad app that allows you to view photos, videos, documents, and presentations from your Dropbox on your iPad, share and send files via email, and export Dropbox files to open in other iPad apps.
- **MobileMe.** MobileMe is a service offered by Apple that will allow you to sync your desktop, laptop, iPhone, and iPad information (contacts, email, calendar, and files) together. Using the MobileMe iDisk, you can store your files online and access and download them anywhere, as long as you have internet access. You can also access and share files with other MobileMe users. With intuitive Mac interface, MobileMe is easy to use and quick to set up, but may not be the answer if you want to share with other, non-MobileMe users. \$99 per year for 20GB of storage and 200GB of monthly data transfer.



If you're already using a file sharing/backup service, chances are, there's a way to use it on your iPad, and that's a great place to start. Why reinvent the wheel when you already have something that's working? Just do a quick search at the App Store and you'll see if there's a way to incorporate your iPad into your current systems. If not, check out one of the solutions above.





Recording Audio



Your iPad isn't just limited to word processing and web surfing. You can turn it into a product creation machine as well by using it as a way to record audio. Now you can create a podcast, audio course or seminar wherever you are, without toting along your laptop or other equipment. While the internal microphone won't give the same sound quality as a \$100 external mike, it can get the job done when you're traveling light.

Before choosing an audio recording app, ask yourself the following questions:

- What am I going to use the audio for? Is it for products, for updating my blog, for podcasts?
- In what file format do I need to be able to export my audios?
- Do I want to send directly to iTunes?
- Do I want to use just what comes with my iPad, or do I want to plug in an external microphone?
- Do I want to be able to edit my recordings or just record and send?
- How long will my recordings be? Less than five minutes, or significantly longer?
- How much time do I want to invest in learning the software?

Once you've answered those questions, there's a selection of audio recording and editing software for you to check out:

- **VC Audio Pro.** (\$5.99 from the App Store.) This app is self-described as “a recording studio in the palm of your hand”. It enables audio recording and editing on the iPad (and on the iPhone and iPod Touch as well). You record with an external microphone that you plug into the headphone jack. Then save and upload to your preferred site for podcasting, products, audio blogs, and more, as .WAV, or M4A formats. CBS has used VC Audio Pro for professional-level broadcasts, however, reviews on this app are mixed.
- **AudioBoo.** (Free.) This is an app that lets you record and share your voice or audio recordings of up to 5 minutes, and post to your account on the Web, and then share via Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks. While it's not great for paid products, it could be perfect for quick audio updates to your followers. It's more of a social networking app than a product creation app.
- **AudioMemos2.** (\$0.99) The Voice Recorder offers a simple, easy-to-navigate interface to record audio and export it via iTunes. There are a number of add-ons, such as voice activation, recording compression, and trim recordings that will make your podcasts or audio blogs even more professional.





Accessorizing your iPad



As with most technological investments, you can spend more on the accessories than you do on the original item. But there really are several fun and useful iPad extras that will make you even more productive (and hopefully profitable). Here are a few of my favorites:

1. **Wireless keyboard.** While the on-screen keyboard is pretty darned close to full-size, if you do a lot of word processing, you may want to invest in a wireless keyboard to accompany your iPad. It turns your iPad into an almost full-powered laptop, particularly if you combine it with a case that allows you to prop up your iPad in the landscape orientation (see “cases” below). Apple's version runs \$69.

- **Screen protector.** Screen protectors are such a critical tool to protect your investment that I think all iPads and iPhones should be sold with them already on. But they don't, so you'll have to spring for the \$5-\$10 and buy one yourself. Applying the thin, clear plastic shield to your iPad should be the very first thing you do when you take it out of the box.
- **Case.** Depending on your main uses for your iPad, there are a number of case options, from hardshell to soft-sided, from portfolios to flip-tops. There are tons of colors, logos, and styles, so you're sure to find one that fits your lifestyle. Before you invest in a case, though, figure out how you use your iPad the most, then find a case that supports that usage. Cases run from \$20 and up.
- **Camera connection kit.** If you blog from your iPad and don't want to go through the hassle of emailing photos from your camera to yourself and downloading them to your iPad, you can connect your digital camera directly to your iPad. \$29 from Apple.
- **Car charger.** Although the charge on the iPad battery is quite long compared to a laptop, you still might find your battery is low at the most inopportune time. How can you say you're an on-the-go mobile entrepreneur if you can't work from the driver's seat of your Chevy? Well, now you can! A cigarette adapter will have you up and running from Route 66 or the Autobahn (though I can't guarantee what the Wi-Fi reception is like in Germany). Around \$25.

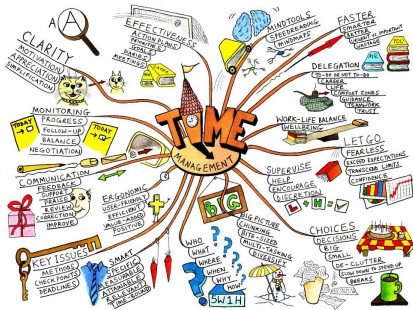
You probably already have a good idea of what accessories will make your life easier; just take a look at what you use for your current laptop computing needs and look for an iPad equivalent. One word of warning: avoid buying something just because it's there and it's cool.



Instead, only purchase things that are going to make it easier to get your work done. Now THAT'S cool.



Brainstorming, Mind Mapping, and More



Now that you've got the basics covered and you're no longer tethered to your desk, you're going to want a way to capture all of the fabulous ideas that pop into your brain when you're out and about, whether you're hiking the Appalachian Trail or just lounging, iPad in hand, on your back deck. Fortunately, the iPad seems to be custom-made for brainstorming. As it's been said before... There's an app for that! In fact, there are several mind mapping and/or brainstorming apps that are worth checking out, even if you're a linear-type. Here are a few apps that caught my eye:

- **iBrainstorm.** (Free) Think of a huge corkboard with the ability to free-hand draw, stick on Post-It notes (in different colors, of course!), move, edit, and more... then you've got a good idea of what iBrainstorm enables. It's perfect for visual thinkers who like the ability to group ideas together, freely move and edit, and send the results via email.
- **iBrainstorm Companion.** This is the coolest collaboration brainstorming app I've seen. You can work with up to four folks with iPhones to brainstorm ideas via iBrainstorm and “flick” them to the iPad for compiling, saving, and sharing.
- **Popplet** (\$8.99, free “lite” version available.) This is my mindmapper of choice. I love the ability to create flow charts and linked visual representations, including photos, text, and more. The linear bubbles and automatically linked bubbles appeal to my Type-A personality. And it's fun to change colors! Oh, of course you can email it to yourself.
- **Ideate.** (\$3.99) Ideate offers a ton of pre-designed templates, so whether you're designing a t-shirt, writing music, or planning the big defense for your five-year-old's basketball team, you've got a context to work within. You then free-hand sketch your ideas on the template, or on a blank screen, adding color, lines, text, and more. You can add clips saved from the Internet or sent via email to your iPad. And then you can share the results via email, the Ideate Flickr group, etc.
- **WhiteboardHD.** (\$4.99) Add free-form drawings or pre-made shapes and lines quickly and easily to this virtual whiteboard. Grid or lined backgrounds available, and colors and type styles add flexibility. A good basic brainstorming program.
- **Trout.** (\$1.99) If you're an advanced visual mapper, you may quickly adore Trout. You can capture your ideas in tons of colors, add icons and images, and record audio notes to your evolving creation. Then you can export as an image or PDF.

The Best Free Apps



Isn't it nice to know that there are plenty of goodies you can get for free on you iPad? Sure, often these are "lite" versions of a larger, more expensive program, but it's an amazing way to test-drive the app for free before you invest a whopping \$8.99 in something that may not work for you. After all, there are plenty of other things you can do with that \$8.99 – like get two lattes from your favorite coffee shop.

All joking aside, here are some of the best small biz free apps I've found for the iPad. I haven't included ones I've mentioned in previous sections, just to avoid repeating myself:

- **HootSuite Lite for Twitter.** A scaled-down version of the paid version, HootSuite will have you tweeting and RTing to your heart's delight. Send and schedule tweets and Facebook status updates, track clicks, and set up columns to manage custom searches. You can manage up to three accounts in the lite version.
- **Google Mobile.** If you use any of Google's office suite (Calendar, Docs, Maps, etc.) get Google Mobile to easily view and access the desired info. You'll love the one-stop, one-click access.
- **Kindle for iPad.** You know how every time you log into Amazon, it seems like the prices on their Kindles just keep dropping and dropping? Yeah, that's because of the iPad. The iPad does everything the Kindle does (pretty much) but you don't have to carry another device with you. All you have to do is download the free app and you're ready to read that stack of business books that had been piling up on your bedside table. (If you prefer Barnes and Noble – grab the Nook app instead. You can read free in store.)
- **FeedReader RSS Reader for iPad.** If you're already used to reading RSS feeds in Google Reader, now you can access your account from your iPad. Fast and highly customizable, you'll never be far away from your favorite internet marketing blogs again!
- **PaperDesk Lite for iPad.** If you're a multi-dimensional thinker, PaperDesk may be just what you've been looking for in order to keep track of your scribbles, typed words, and mumblings. You create notebooks with text, hand-drawn notes, and audio, and then you can email them to yourself as a PDF. This "lite" version restricts you to three pages per notebook.



- **Calculator for the iPad+.** In the years that I've been out of school, I've forgotten all but the basics of math – thank goodness! No need to pull out the old algebra textbooks; I can handle nearly any mathematical need with my iPad+ calculator. In portrait orientation, it's a simple calculator, but let me just turn the screen on its side, and I'll be forcing even the most nasty differential equation into submission in no time!



Conclusion

We've only begun to tap the entire power of the iPad. Already, developers are working on video recording, streaming, and more, and by the time you read this report, there will be thousands of new apps in the App Store for your pleasure and productivity. Don't wait to "know it all" before you start using your iPad for business. The way things are constantly evolving and changing, no one is an expert. But you ARE an expert on your business, so figure out in which areas your iPad can help you streamline and get more done. Start there, and then expand as your comfort level grows.

Today, you may be just answering a few emails. But tomorrow, you may be running a multi-million-dollar empire, all from a 1.5-pound iPad.