Ten reasons your business needs a strategy now to capitalize on the Internet of Things

The Internet of Things (IoT) is not a futuristic trend; it's the first step toward becoming a truly digital business and it starts with your things – your line-of-business assets and the data they produce, your cloud services, and your business intelligence tools. That's the Internet of *Your* Things, and with it you no longer must settle for the status quo. With an IoT strategy in place you can make your business thrive.

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1. ## Start with your things.

   IoT doesn't have to be overwhelming. Instead of being bewildered by a seemingly endless universe of things, made up of billions of assets, think of it as the Internet of *Your Things*. Focus on the areas of business that provide the quickest return. Imagine, for example, starting with operations—connecting systems and line-of-business assets to deliver better performance visibility, drive toward predictive maintenance and help reduce downtime. IDC forecasts that by 2018, 60 percent of Global 1000 companies will have integrated their information and operational technologies, in order to achieve such benefits through their IoT investments.[1]

2. ## Get more out of your existing assets.

   Start with the IT assets you already have and build upon them. Add a few new assets as well. Regardless of device type or operating system, you can connect them to the Microsoft Azure IoT Suite and the cloud, where they can talk to each other, to your employees, and to your customers. Use business intelligence tools, to make the best use of the data you already have and gain a deeper insight into what your customers and employees want and need.

3. ## Make small changes, see a big impact

   IoT starts with identifying the one process, product line, or location that matters most, then making small changes for big impact: Improve uptime by connecting robots on the factory floor with performance monitoring systems. Save thousands of dollars in wasted medications by adding expiration dates to the data set for pharmaceutical inventory management systems. Offer real-time customer service on the sales floor with one handheld device connected to your inventory system. With pre-configured solutions in the Azure IoT Suite, you can accelerate completion of these and other IoT projects, giving your company an edge on the competition.

4. ## Improve efficiency

   By 2018, Gartner forecasts that the total cost of ownership for business operations will be reduced by *30 percent through smart machines and industrialized services.[2] When you use Azure IoT Suite to easily connect and monitor the health of your assets, you can track the condition and performance of those assets over time. Rules and alerts notify the right team or department in your business when you need to take action, so you can improve business processes and efficiencies.

5. ## Know the status and health of your assets.

   Connect to your line-of-business assets with Azure IoT Suite to gain better visibility into their status, trigger automatic alerts and actions, and avoid system shutdowns during peak production.

6. ## Proactively maintain your business assets.

   Take action earlier on emerging trends, streamline processes and avoid costly downtime by connecting to your existing devices and services. Use the data from these assets to identify upcoming maintenance needs or create new business opportunities altogether. For example, by gathering data from new or existing sensors and systems, companies can go beyond preventative maintenance to offer predictive and even preemptive maintenance to avoid costly downtime.

7. ## Increase agility.

   Spend less time wondering and more time taking action. With IoT, data insights can help you respond more quickly to competition, supply chain changes, customer demand and shifting market conditions. Collecting and analyzing data gives you quick insight into developing trends, so you can change your production activity, fine-tune your maintenance schedule, or find less expensive materials.

8. ## Redefine what's possible.

   New ideas are born when you work with new partners, new technologies, new assets, and new data streams. Suddenly, your employees can use technology in ways never before imagined. New data opportunities enable you to shift from repairing assets when they break down to using predictive maintenance to fine-tune their performance over the long term. You can compare results across different locations to identify the most successful services. Then scale them out nationwide. With IoT, you can quickly capitalize on the smallest data point and take action across the company.

9. ## Transform your business.

   With breakthroughs in advanced analytics and machine learnings, your employees can discover insights not previously possible. Your company can benefit from enhanced decision-making, more effective innovations, and the ability to identify new business models and revenue streams, all because previously untapped data is now creating new insights.

10. ## Choose an enterprise-proven IoT partner.

    Microsoft is a trusted technology company you already work with for your own company's infrastructure. The Azure IoT Suite empowers you to transform the raw data from your things into actionable insights and business results. Microsoft and its partners can help put the Internet of Your Things to work in your business today, so you stop just running your business, and start making it thrive.

[1]IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Internet of Things 2016 Predictions; Doc # 259856, IDC, November 4, 2015.
[2]Gartner, Mobility Support Technology Continues to Drive Lower Cost and Increased Usage, 19 October 2015

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Put Microsoft and its partners to work creating the Internet of Your Things today.

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