Let your start-up grow without worrying about IT

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The number of new businesses is a significant barometer of a country's economy and society. When more people choose to become an entrepreneur, it means that there is confidence in the future. The year 2018 marked a significant milestone for Belgian entrepreneurs, with 100,000 starting businesses[1]. A record for our country, which now counts more than 1.1 million self-employed people , almost 10% of the total population. Unfortunately, 35% of these start-ups do not survive the first five years. Why is that? What are the challenges they encounter? And even more importantly: how can these barriers be overcome?

Converting challenges into opportunities: a recognisable scenario for Belgian start-ups

The following scenario will probably sound familiar to you. As a new start-up you have a mission: you work towards a goal that you have in mind. Perhaps you started working on this challenge on your own or collaborated with a co-founder, most likely in a space that has been made available to you and that you have gradually turned into an office thanks to the resources you already have at your disposal. You work on a laptop that you also use at home. The printer comes from someone's home, and your documents are stored in Dropbox or Google Drive.

Over the months, your plan is starting to take shape and extra hands and talents are needed to get the job done. As a result, new employees get involved in the project, and everyone brings their own laptop with them. As the founder of the business, you make sure that the right software is available and that the employees are enabled to use it with their laptops. So, you join forces to optimise performance. Does that sound familiar?

Barriers to growth appear together with successes, and may jeopardise your business

Something you have probably not thought about, and that you did not think would be necessary, is the IT ecosystem. Because everyone up to now has been working on their own laptops, storage often takes place in the cloud and there are no rules on IT, there is no clear IT structure. This will ensure that you will encounter several barriers in the area of hardware and software.

In the field of hardware, you can ask yourself the following questions: what happens when an employee needs a new laptop or the co-founder's laptop suddenly only shows a blue screen? Who can give you technical support? Is there budget available for new laptops? If so, you will very likely go to Media Markt or Bol.com, because you are familiar with these companies, but can these sales points provide you with the right advice?

In addition, the purchase of new hardware is often combined with a software package, and this can mean paying twice for services that offer the same thing. In terms of software, it is also important to examine where the business data is stored, most likely on different laptops and in different clouds. All questions and challenges that you may face, and many start-ups do not know that an IT reseller can provide tailored advice, on hardware, software and other solutions.

How do you take your start-up successfully to the next level thanks to a future-proof IT ecosystem?

Our customer range from multinationals to Belgian SMEs. We can now also add start-ups to this list. The challenges that businesses face in these different categories are often the same, although we find that among start-ups there are questions that are not yet answered and that impede their growth.

Based on our vision Believe that you can change the world, we have given thought to how we can tackle and overcome these challenges encountered by start-ups. In our view the key to growth consists of various steps, namely:

1. Make an inventory of the current IT ecosystem
2. Analyse what kind of profiles are active in your organisation
3. Work out what hardware and software needs there are within the business and among the employees
4. Then devise a strategy to professionalise the IT ecosystem

Professionalising the IT system means that you receive tailored IT advice, which will greatly reduce present-day costs and raise the efficiency of employees.

Survey what profiles are active within the organisation

> Employees can be divided into **four groups**: everyone has different needs when it comes to the necessary technology.

The workplace and the employees have an impact on the growth of your start-up. The office of today looks completely different from that of a few years ago. Because many new talents are probably added in a relatively short period of time, it is important to think in advance about, for example, flex desks and open workplaces, but also working from home.

These are decisions that must be taken quickly and that may have a significant impact on the motivation of the staff, interactions between employees, efficiency, productivity and so on. You can save a lot of time and money by thinking about this. We believe that when you create a working environment that is based on activity-based working the employees become more productive. That will obviously be of benefit to the goal you have in mind with your start-up, don't you think?

To work according to an *activity-based working* method and to provide the employees with the right software, we work with what are known as *user profiles*. This helps us to determine employees' needs. Employees can be broadly divided into four groups:

1. **The core performer** – this could be the founder or the administrative roles, who need a device for basic tasks such as Office applications and reading e-mails.
2. **The mobile performer** – a sales manager who often works in different locations, such as a coffee bar, on the way to or at a customer. The perfect machine is light and mobile, without sacrificing performance or security.
3. **The number cruncher** – a business analyst or data scientist who works with big data and is unwilling to compromise on power and performance. This requires a high-end machine with lightning-fast performance, even for the heaviest tasks.
4. **The creative** – a graphic designer needs a powerful machine with an advanced graphics card so that his or her creativity is not hampered by the machine.

Each group has different needs when it comes to the machine that it uses day-to-day. These groups also have needs for different workspaces, maybe a desk is now available for someone who is actually always travelling, or the graphic designer works on a laptop that is not suited for this purpose.

HP is the ideal partner to support and guide you in the growth of your start-up

Our expertise is in hardware, we know what requirements products must meet to respond both to the needs of employees and the requirements of businesses, for example an extremely high level of security. In addition, we have a strong network of resellers, businesses that can advise you on services and applications that must ideally be implemented within your start-up.
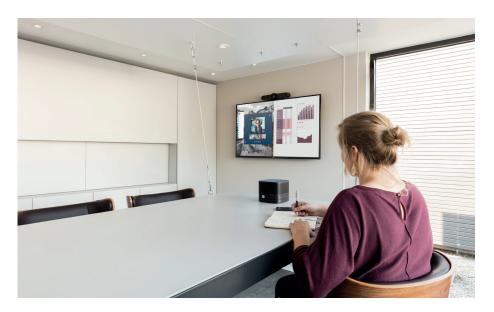

An IT reseller can offer more than just hardware and software. A significant asset of a reseller is the possibility of leasing the equipment for your start-up, instead of buying it yourself, which means that as a start-up you do not face large cost when new laptops have to be acquired. In that way you can use your financial resources as well as possible without sacrificing efficiency and productivity. This combination, of a hardware partner and strong network of resellers, makes it possible to work towards tailored advice for your IT ecosystem. Together with you and our partners, we will analyse and identify what the best solutions are for your start-up, in order to contribute to the growth of your business.

> The HP products comply with the present-day security standard, so that you can do your work everywhere and at all times without having to worry about onlookers.

One-stop solution for your IT needs

HP can be a *one-stop solution* for you, together with a reseller who focuses on IT services your IT ecosystem can be professionalised. This means less frustration, no duplicated costs, and the correct equipment and services in your organisation. These products are selected on the basis of the profiles of the employees, in other words the tasks they are concerned with daily.

In addition, the HP hardware complies with the present-day security standard, so that you can do your work everywhere and at all times without having to worry about onlookers. Protect yourself against onlookers with the integrated HP Sure View privacy screen, with a press of the button your screen becomes unreadable to the person next to you. In addition, the laptops are equipped with hardware security features and various layers of protection, which offer proactive protection against threats and by which the system can be quickly restored after any security breach. But it is also important to think about the security of your files. Have you ever thought about what happens when an employee stops working for you and leaves with his laptop, on which he still has access to the Dropbox or Google Drive?

Finally, HP can help you when thinking about the *'workplace of the future'*. Because of the rapid growth of your business, it may be that the transformation of the workplace has an impact on the way you work. How do you tackle this as a start-up, and what factors must you take into account?

Our ambition to let start-ups grow to scale-ups in the long term

We believe that start-ups are the businesses of tomorrow, and we therefore want to show you the route to growth quickly. So that you can continue to focus on your mission and core business. As a partner, we can take the lead on the working environment and the IT ecosystem. We can ensure that the hardware and software are seamlessly matched to the employees' needs. Together with an IT reseller we create an IT ecosystem so that you no longer encounter barriers and can grow further to become a scale-up. Is this not the added value you expect from a reliable partner?

Are you curious to find out what else can help your start-up grow? Take a look at **www.hp.be/startups** for more information.
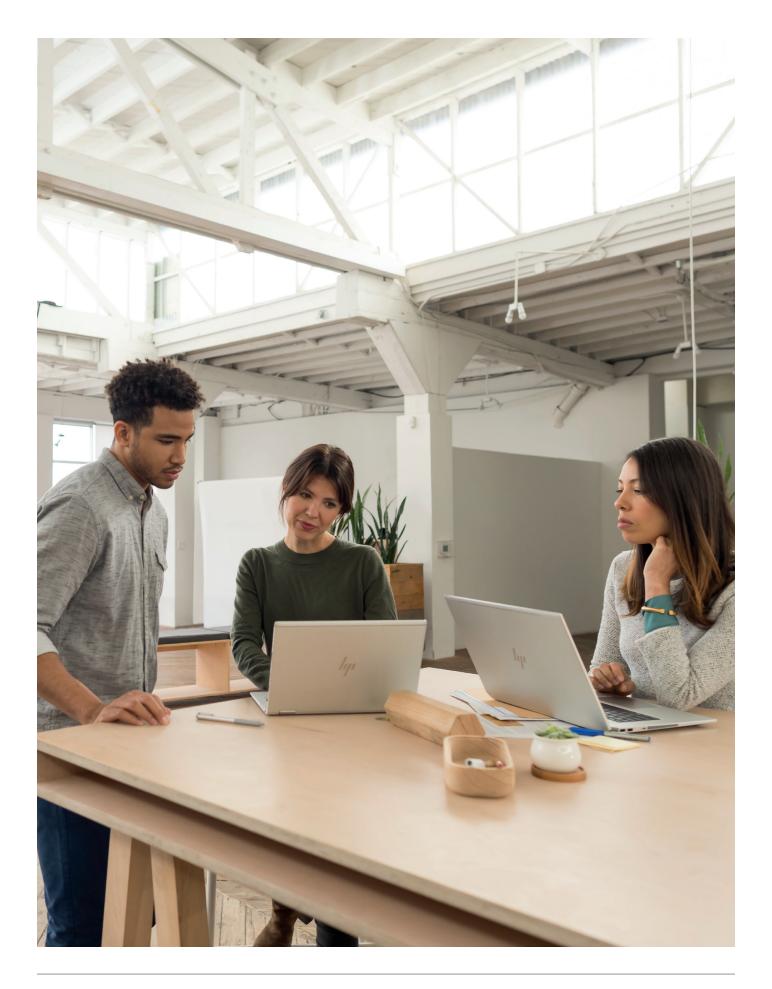
Gil Dejonghe, Managing Partner at CityCubes

"During our contacts with VanRoey.be it soon became clear that we needed more than one type of machine in our office. It is thanks to them and the people at HP that we have started looking at computers with a more graphic design, computers with a more administrative design, and that we have also been offered a separate type of machine for each function. So today we are working with several types of computer, depending on what the job exactly needs."

How does this work precisely in real life? An example from Belgian soil – CityCubes

An example of a Belgian start-up whose growth was hampered because insufficient thought had been given to the IT ecosystem is CityCubes, an independent marketing agency specialising in pop-up marketing and brand activation. Not a single piece of equipment in the office was the same, the same software was paid for twice and no thought had been given to the type of machine that best matched to the employee's function. To gain an insight into the present-day state of affairs, HP and VanRoey.be joined forces and itemised and analysed the IT ecosystem.

CITYCUBES
WE ACTIVATE BRANDS

1. UNIZO, Graydon Belgium, UCM, Startersatlas 2019
2. The National Institute for the Social Security of the Self-employed (RSVZ), Het RSVZ viert 50 jaar sociale zekerheid voor zelfstandigen (The RSVZ celebrates 50 years of social security for the self-employed), 20 June 2019.
3. Activity-based working is offering different zones that fit in which the different activities during the day, for example focus rooms, informal meeting rooms, or flexible workplaces.