HOW TO FUTURE-PROOF YOUR SME'S TECH STACK

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FUTURE-PROOFING TECH

With the technology landscape constantly changing, ensuring that you won't require a complete tech overhaul a year from now becomes increasingly more complex each year.

Apart from strict documentation and frequent updates, developers and technology leaders can use a few strategies to better future-proof their design and engineering work. Here are nine ways to prepare your work - and your company - for the future.

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MOVE TO THE CLOUD

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STAY AGILE, SECURE & COMPETITVE

Moving towards a cloud-based service is a no-brainer as a secure, inexpensive storage tool. As well as reducing your IT investment costs on a month-to-month basis, its numerous benefits add to the mix of future-proofing methods you can use, too.

For a start, it allows you to leverage tools that help keep your operations agile, secure and competitive alongside any other IT investments you currently have. In addition, the retrieval and sharing of essential business data it's vital, especially since it can be done from any device, boosting employee productivity, efficiency and collaboration in the process.

If you have departments that tend to work on their own, the cloud can help connect their thinking, marshalling their skills to prepare them for oncoming changes in the world of IT.

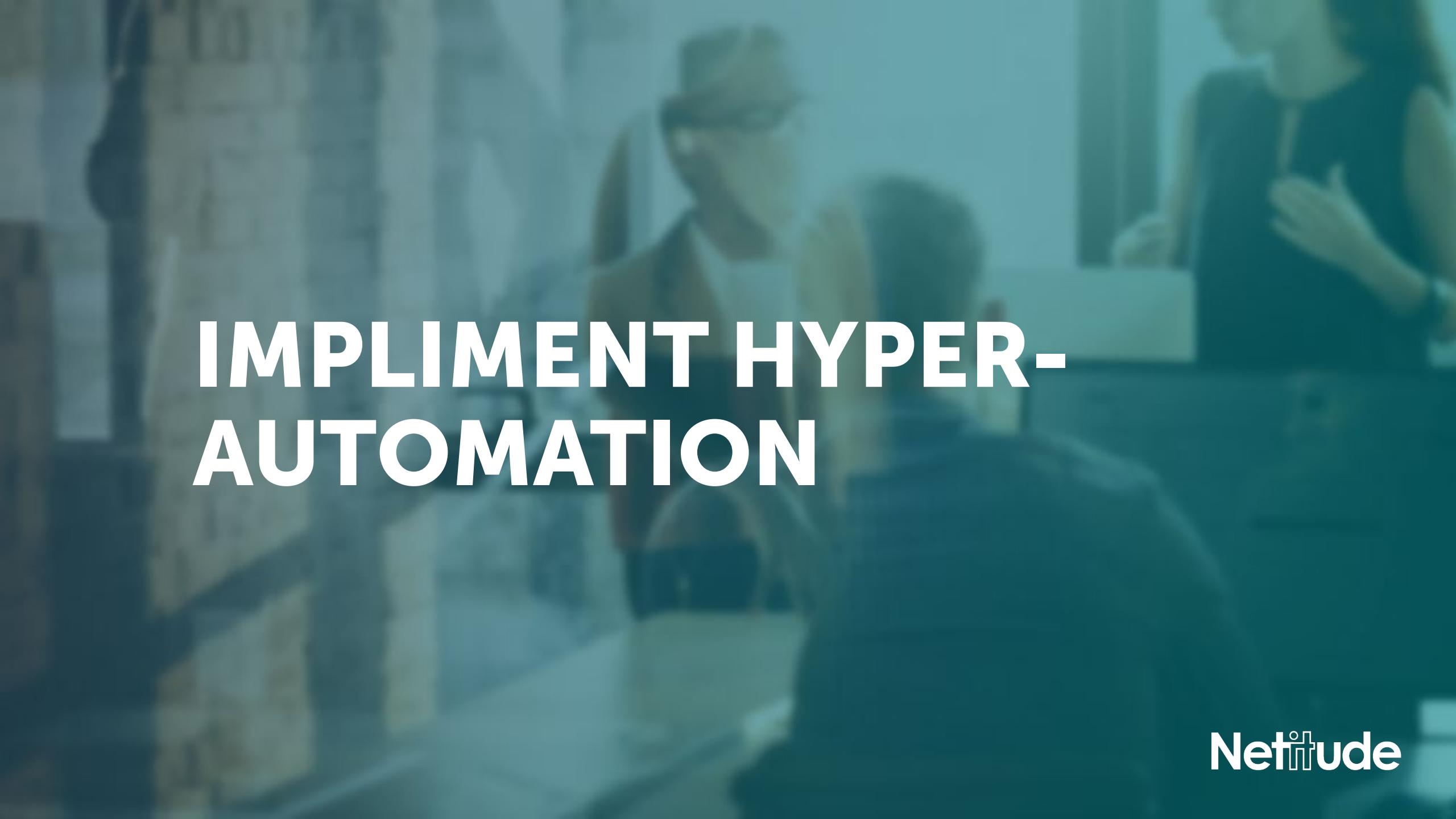# IMPROVE YOUR SCALABILITY

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ENABLE BUSINESS GROWTH

If you're planning to grow as a business, investing in tomorrow's technology isn't always possible. A scalable IT strategy can come in useful here; not only will it align with your current business needs, but it'll also document preparations for any future growth.

By highlighting the agile elements of your business, your company can quickly respond to change, which plays a significant role in maintaining your competitive advantage. Scalability also allows you to roll out new software and scale processes up and down depending on your needs with minimal disruption to the business.

When writing a strategy, it's important not to confine yourself. Going beyond the boundaries of your own experience is a hugely important part of future growth.
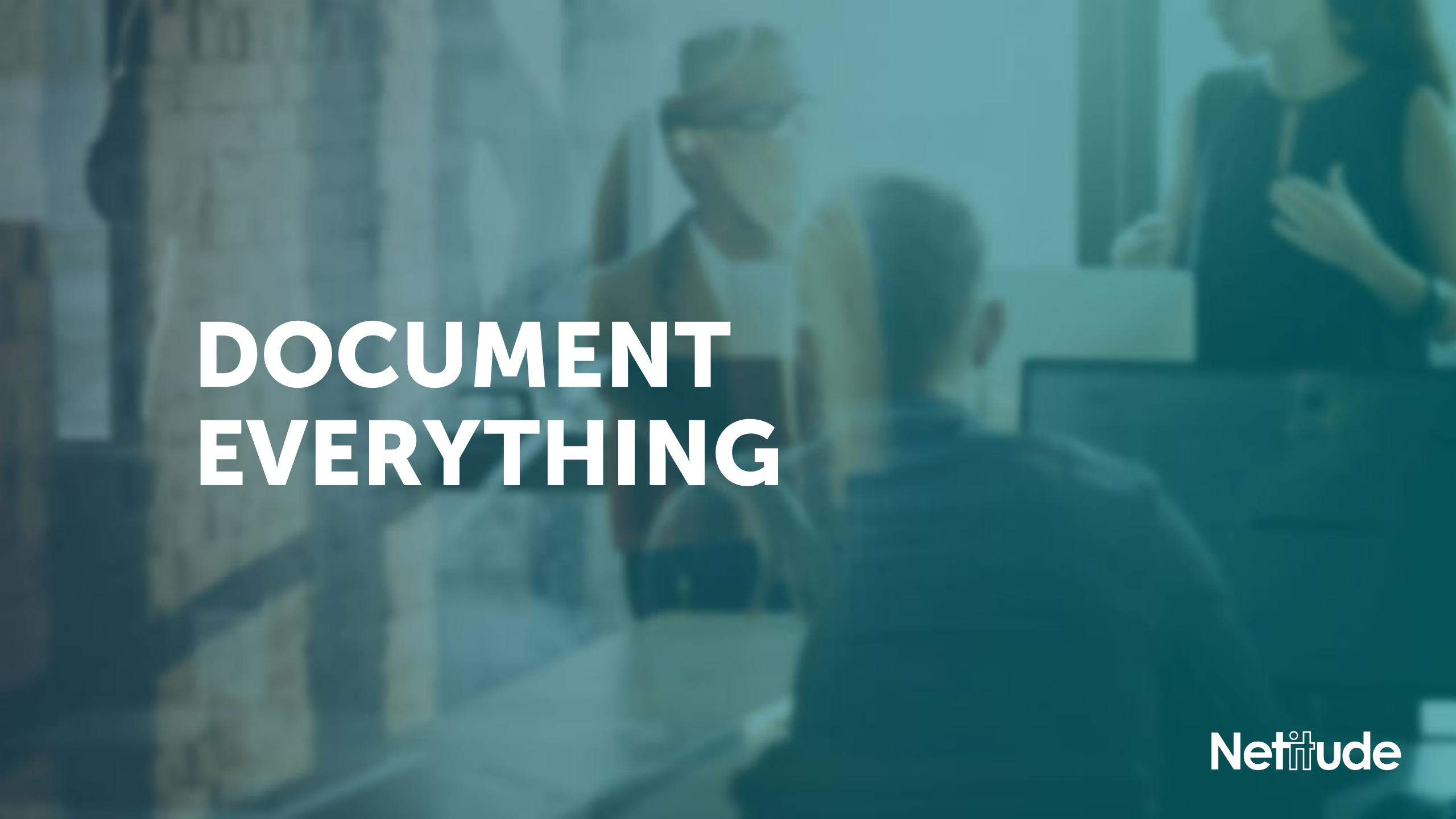
IMPLIMENT HYPER-AUTOMATION

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGY

Use hyper-automation to perform end-to-end business processes. The "bots" that perform tasks will learn the most efficient way to complete the job and continuously collect, read and manage any structured process.

Implement hyper-automation to ensure its business processes are efficient, secure, and intelligent. It can also predict how businesses can be strategically efficient to deliver the most value possible. This will help the business prepare for and adapt to any outlook the future may hold.

DOCUMENT EVERYTHING

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DOCUMENTATION IS KEY

You won't remember your initial thought processes six months, one year or two years from now. However, careful documentation of how you approach, implement and maintain your work will significantly extend its viability in the future. Aside from documentation, abstraction layers are necessary to allow your work to be modularly improved and iterated upon in the future.

FOLLOW THE CROWD

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LET SOMEONE ELSE DO THE TESTING

It may sound counterintuitive but don't rush to implement the latest technology. Future-proofing means thinking long term. New technologies pop up all the time, and many will fail. So let others be the guinea pigs, find the flaws, and undergo the cost of redesigning to use another system. The early adopters will start to gravitate to a clear market leader that will stand the test of time.

CYBERSECURITY PRACTICES

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BUILD YOUR DEFENSE STRATEGY

Distributed and remote workforces are at an increased risk of phishing and security threats. To reduce threat risk and potential financial loss, equip the team with technology to prevent cyberattacks before they happen. For example, install updated antivirus and antispyware software on all devices, implement a firewall for the internet connection, monitor software updates, require two-factor password authentication, and provide regular employee cybersecurity training.

A fully functional cyberdefense strategy expands both inside and outside of the office. Cybersecurity strategies should include antivirus, encryption, software updates and vulnerability scanning on mobile devices, and mobile-specific security awareness training for relevant employees.

FOLLOW BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS

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THERE ARE BEST PRACTICES FOR A REASON

Best practices help businesses improve services, products, security, and productivity while maximising the value of investments. Integrating best practices into your business can be a complex process, but doing so comes with significant savings on time and money, plus additional benefits like:

✓ Increased efficiency and productivity
✓ More satisfied and loyal customers
✓ Intentional innovation

Best practices are different within every IT field, meaning that a project manager will have a different set of best practices than a developer working on the mainframe, for example. But, that doesn't mean that they don't have significant overlap.

Finding the best practices for you is vital for your business success—and for your clients and customers to maximise value from the services you offer.

TEST DRIVE YOUR DEVELOPMENT

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TEST, TEST AND TEST AGAIN

The last thing you want to do is implement a change without testing it first; it could cause all sorts of problems if things don't work as expected.

When you develop tests to know that your product is working first, you ensure that future changes will be tested and work as expected. Then, run the suite of tests for every commit to ensure that the new changes will not break any existing functionality. While it's not an easy practice, and there's never enough time to do it, it will save headaches in the future.

CREATE A CULTURE THAT EMBRACES CHANGE

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CHANGE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE FEARED

Too often, we're afraid to take risks and welcome change with open arms. It's our natural tendency as humans to shy away from the unfamiliar, but the workplace can be an excellent place to alter this way of thinking. Learning about and adopting new methods, challenging the norm, and discovering it's okay to try and fail should be part and parcel of your office environment.

If you want to future-proof your IT department, you need to future-proof yourself so others can learn from a leader. Be open to ideas that stray from traditional processes but keep your company moving forward and be sure to foster this thinking throughout the department.

IS YOUR IT STRATEGY UP TO SCRATCH?

What defines an effective IT strategy? Download our infographic!

If you'd like to discuss any of the points highlighted, click here to book a meeting with our Business Development Manager.

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