DemGen Inc.
WE **GROW** COMPANIES

Tools to Organize and Grow Your Business

You've decided on a product or service, researched your market and written a simple business plan. You want your business to be mainly web-based with costs for software and tools kept to a minimum and you want the best that's out there. With so many options to choose from, you need a simple list of essentials that will get you up and running, keep you organized and grow with your business. What's best about this list is that the tools work just as well outside of your business as they do in it.

The Essentials

Organization and Scheduling

Google Calendar

For organizing your schedule and sharing events with a team, Google calendar has the most options. It can be accessed by phone or your computer and set up with alerts and reminders. Google calendar can also by synced with desktop applications you may use, such as Outlook, and published to your website or blog once you have it up and running.

Evernote

Evernote will help you keep track of every idea, list or necessity for your business. See something on the web you think may work for your business? Clip it or grab a screenshot. Add tags and organize your notes into workbooks. Everything is made searchable by keywords, titles and tags. Keep photos and images separate from your files. Keep records and minutes of meetings. Leave voice memos and create notes from Twitter. Evernote works with your computer and your phone. Get everything organized in one place before your start your business.

Contact and Project Management

37 Signals

37 signals has created a group of web-based applications for project management and collaboration, aimed at small businesses.

Basecamp, a project management collaboration tool, centralizes tasks, files, deadlines and other details in one place for easy access.

Backpack is a web-based archive for your business. Keep all of your files and documents, schedules and notes in one place. Create pages of to-dos, files, photos and lists, all organized for your team.

Highrise is for tracking your contacts, addresses and leads. Your notes for each contact can be kept together with follow- ups scheduled. Emails can be forwarded or copied directly into Highrise.

Campfire is a great tool for remote workers and groups. Chat and instant message with your team and clients, all within a secure environment. Share files and save text for updating your notes at a later time. Campfire is also compatible with your iPhone.

Invoicing and Billing

FreshBooks

One of the easiest to use and most convenient billing, time tracking and invoicing systems is FreshBooks. With the ability to brand your invoices with your own logo, integrate with Basecamp and invite contractors to join your team and track time on projects, it covers all the bases. FreshBooks has a professional look and feel and many options for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Collect online payments, use multiple currencies and set up recurring invoices - simple, safe and secure.

Communication

Grasshopper

Grasshopper is a virtual phone system for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Customize your greeting and forward your calls to any phone number. Receive your voicemail via email or read it. Grasshopper has unlimited call handling and many more options.

MyFax

Send and receive faxes by email. MyFax is perfect for your home office because it is always online. With a real fax number, online storage and cover pages, MyFax eliminates your having to purchase a separate fax machine.

Skype

Though not available as an online web app, Skype is a useful IM tool for remote workers and virtual assistants. Calls, video calls and instant messaging are available via your computer, landline or mobile.

Office Suites

Google Docs

Create and share presentations, spreadsheets and documents online. Google Docs also lets you upload your existing files, organize them into folders and keep them safely stored.

Zoho

Zoho offers a complete collaboration and productivity suite as well as email, chat, notebook and more. Completely online, it's a great all-in-one group of applications if you like to keep everything in one place.

File Sharing, Storage and Remote Access

ShareFile

There will be times when you will have to send large files to clients or business associates. With ShareFile you can securely transfer and exchange files online for your projects.

drop.io

Drop.io can be used to store and share files on the internet. Each drop can be filled with documents, audio, video or photos. Accessible anywhere, drop.io is a useful tool for web workers who are on the go a lot.

LogMeIn

Access your home or work computer anywhere there is internet access. LogMeIn is an invaluable tool for working away from home. It works with Windows PCs, Macs and smartphones, including BlackBerry devices. LogMeIn can also be used to view another computer for support purposes.

While there are many alternatives to the applications listed above and many more useful tools for the new entrepreneur, these are the basics that you will need to get your business started in an organized way.