

ROUTE 422

BusinessAdvisor

Serving the Route 422, 100, 202, and Route 30 Corridors in Montgomery, Chester and Berks Counties.

*AI and Automation
from a name you trust*

PLUS⁺ONE
TECHNOLOGY



**Helping Businesses
Simplify Complicated Tech
and Improve Their Workflow**

Presorted
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pottstown, PA
Permit No. 95

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

P.O. Box 334
Pottstown, PA
19464-0334

GET IT ONLINE 422BIZMAG.COM



PHOTOS BY STEVE LADNER PHOTOGRAPHY

PLUS ONE

TECHNOLOGY

HELPING BUSINESSES SIMPLIFY COMPLICATED TECH AND IMPROVE THEIR WORKFLOW

Advances in the world of technology seem to happen in the blink of an eye. As a business owner, it can be hard to keep up with what tech to adopt and how best to use it in your workplace. Numerous articles and online forums claim to know the ideal tools for saving time and increasing profits. Broad in tone and advice, these sources never address your company's exact demands. So, how do you determine whether to add such innovations as artificial intelligence and automation to your business or if your current tech already meets your business needs? The answer — Seek out the expertise of Plus One Technology.



Located at 3277 West Ridge Pike in Suite B201, the Pottstown-based tech firm has been aiding small businesses in Pennsylvania, northern New Jersey, New York, and beyond since 2005. Between its founder Marc Umstead and director of operations Mike Ciano, Plus One Technology has over 50 years of tech experience.

Among the industries with which the team works are accountants, dentists, orthodontists, law firms, manufacturers, and small to mid-sized businesses. Its specialty is accounting firms, said Umstead, who is a member of the Accountant-Lawyer Alliance (ALA).

Plus One Technology is SOC2 compliant, meaning it follows the security framework set forth by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Only about 5 out of 100 IT companies have this designation. SOC2 specifies how organizations should protect customer data from unauthorized access, security incidents, and other vulnerabilities.

**“ At Plus 1
Technology, IT isn’t just
about fixing computers.
It’s about empowering your
team, protecting your data,
and supporting the way
your business runs
every day.”**

No matter from what field a client comes, the aim of Plus One Technology remains the same — to help businesses “simplify the complex, secure their systems, and improve the way they work.”

“We look at what we can do to improve the day-to-day functionality of your business,” Umstead said. “With all the talk of AI and automation, we help you approach technology in a way that will improve your business and its profitability without sacrificing security or your company’s resilience. We don’t do tech for tech’s sake.”

Supportive, expert service for a range of IT needs

When Umstead started his business over 20 years ago, he focused on software implementation and support. At that time, programs such as Microsoft Excel weren’t as common as they are today. As technology progressed, so did Plus One Technology’s offerings. Even so, Umstead and his team continue to perform migration and set-up for Microsoft 365. This platform contains such apps as Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneDrive, and Teams.

Currently, Plus One Technology offers IT support in a dozen areas, including IT consulting and managed IT services. With IT consulting, clients can obtain a fractional CIO (chief information officer) who will give strategic IT leadership on an as-needed basis. With fractional CIOs, businesses don’t need to invest in full-time executives to get feedback on their current system’s performance. With Plus One Technology, they receive reliable input when they need it and answers to such concerns as whether they should upgrade, redesign, or replace their computer system. They also get quarterly tech reviews and updates on regulatory and security requirements.

“It may sound generic, but we’re always trying to do the right thing,” Umstead said. “A lot of times that means when we onboard a new customer, we find that their infrastructure is extremely bloated. At the risk of undermining our own revenue, we will right-size their infrastructure solution so that they get a real return on their investment.”

Through managed IT services, Plus One’s customers can expect scalable solutions that increase the company’s efficiency and decrease its risk. They also get real-time alerts, threat detection, and live, on-demand support. Among the areas covered by IT managed services are 24/7 infrastructure monitoring, system maintenance and patching, document and asset tracking, vendor issues, and license applications and renewals.

“We try to keep open communication with our clients. We don’t hide behind ticketing systems, and I don’t hide behind my staff. Anyone can book an appointment with me through my online calendar, which is on our website,” Umstead said. “We’re very people-first, and we hire technicians who are friendly, empathetic, and able to communicate well. When people call us, they’re not always having their best day, so we put a lot of emphasis and training on how to be patient and a good human being.”

(Continued on page 8)





(Continued from page 7)

Another area that Plus One supports is cloud solutions. This centers on the cloud, internet servers that allow people to access, store, and manage data from various devices such as laptops, tablets, and phones. The cloud removes the need for costly hardware and hardware upgrades and enables increased performance, reliability, and security.

For businesses new to the cloud, Plus One will create a transition plan that minimizes disruptions and downtime while emphasizing security. It includes a risk assessment, step-by-step migration process, and backup strategy. Each plan is tailored to meet the customer's needs. Once a client has switched over to the cloud, Plus One will continue to monitor and manage this environment.

Rising interest in business process optimization

Over the past 18 months, Plus One Technology has seen companies develop an "almost fanatical" interest in business process optimization. Six Sigma defines process optimization as the "systematic refinement of business operations to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness. This method involves analyzing,

redesigning, and enhancing existing workflows to reduce waste, cut costs, and boost productivity. Business process optimization has become crucial for organizations aiming to maintain their competitive edge."

Umstead has a more approachable explanation. "Basically, business owners want to learn how to do what they do better."

The first step in learning about business process optimization or any other Plus One Technology service is to schedule a consultation. This can be done by phoning 610.792.5660, emailing sales@plus1technology.com, or filling out an online form at <https://plus1technology.com/contact/>. The first consulting call is free.

During the initial discussion, a Plus One process consultant will go through the prospective client's process, explaining how to document a business process if the client isn't familiar with this. An automation engineer then determines whether implementing AI or automation will improve the process. After this, the team figures out what course of action would best suit the business and creates a proposal that includes the upfront

"We provide tailored IT solutions for small and midsize companies in accounting, manufacturing, legal, dental, and beyond."

price and, if applicable, a nominal monthly fee for running automation. Note that Plus One has a full-time automation and AI specialist on staff.

Automation and AI aren't always part of the conversation. Occasionally, improvements come not from adding more technology, but from making better choices around workflow.

"When business owners walk through it and figure out how something really works in their business, they realize that the way they're doing things may not be the best way to do it," Umstead said. "If there is technology or an automation tool involved in their optimization, we'll create that solution for them. As we're building the solution, we may be able to offer some turnkey tools."

"Because many clients come from the accounting industry and face the same or similar issues, they may benefit from tools that Plus One has created for a previous client. Often, these turnkey solutions can be put into operation within a week", Umstead said.



SUPPORTING CLIENTS IN EVERY WAY

Whether your business requires new computers or wants to move to the cloud, Plus One Technology can take care of these needs and more. It offers a long list of services including:

- backup and business continuity services such as risk assessments, secure storage, testing, and rapid recovery of lost data;
- business process optimization to evaluate workflow and increase productivity, efficiency, and revenue;
- cloud solutions tailored to a business's specific goals and workflows;
- compliance assessments and gap analysis to ensure that your business meets IT compliance requirements;
- computer sales and services to assist you with choosing the right machines, setting them up, and keeping them running with proactive care;
- cybersecurity services including Next-gen antivirus and anti-malware, endpoint detection and response (EDR), and AI-powered threat identification and isolation;
- IT consulting for such issues as IT planning, budgeting, implementation, migrations, and management, and a fractional CIO;
- managed IT services featuring 24/7 monitoring, support, system maintenance and patching, document and asset tracking, vendor issues, and license applications and renewals;
- Microsoft 365 services that help you deploy, secure, and optimize Microsoft 365 so that your team can work securely and stay connected from anywhere;
- network infrastructure services that include infrastructure assessment, redesign, maintenance, and monitoring, installation and management of Cat5e, Cat6, and fiber cables, secure network setup, and scalable architecture with modular hardware and cloud integration so that your system can grow with your business; up
- smart surveillance systems that are custom designed and possess remote access and mobile monitoring, secure data handling and audit trails, firmware and software upgrades, and the option of 4K and night-vision cameras; a
- VoIP (voice over internet protocol) services for cloud-based phone systems that are scalable, manageable, and rich with options.

Practical approach to new technologies

Umstead pointed out that, sometimes, clients will reach out with a vision for what they want, but the technology doesn't exist, yet, to make it happen. Other times, clients may need to update their existing practices and procedures before they contemplate introducing cutting-edge tools. As an example, Umstead described a wholesale customer who wants to be able to walk through a warehouse wearing AI-powered glasses that count everything in the warehouse and indicate whether anything is missing and automatically order replacements. Meanwhile, that customer still handles purchase orders on pieces of paper instead managing them on a computer.

"We get a lot of people who want to skip a lot steps," he said. "We always tell people that their first go-around in automation and AI shouldn't be a grandiose vision or some major change within their company. Pick one process that doesn't work and start with that. You need to walk before you can run. The more grandiose you get, the less you'll understand how these systems work, the more disappointed you're going to be."

When asked about possible first tasks for automation, Umstead cited invoicing problems or wanting to move contract data safely from one system to another. If a business has never used automation or AI, start small and keep it simple, he advised. That way, everyone can understand the process, see what, if any, errors arise, and decide how to fix those issues.

"People get caught up in the news and think that they'll get rid of half their staff next week and everything will be run by robots. That's just not how it works," Umstead said. "They shouldn't try to change their whole company overnight."

Helping customers understand changing technology

As Umstead pointed out, people's understanding and expectations of technology may require a little adjustment and enrichment. With this in mind, Plus One Technology has an assortment of complimentary, informative materials on its site (<https://plus1technology.com>), all of which aim to educate consumers about tech. Anyone interested in learning more about cloud solutions can access the free guide "Everything You Need to Know About Cloud Service." The firm's "16 Questions to Ask Before Choosing a New IT Provider" assists businesses in asking the right questions about IT onboarding, pricing, and disaster recovery. Other free PDFs include "An Executive's Guide to Cybersecurity" and "6 Reasons to Make the Switch to VoIP!"

Another way that the firm helps consumers navigate technology is through its online library of videos. This ongoing project began as "One AI prompt per day for 100 days," where Umstead posted an AI prompt and related video on the firm's Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn accounts, and YouTube channel, @plus1technology. Recent videos

have covered such topics as integration blueprints, designing one-page dashboards, securing passwords, and combining articles and blog posts into a guide. Those videos can be found here: <https://plus1technology.com/ai-tips/>

For additional information about Plus One Technology or to schedule an initial consultation, please visit the website <https://plus1technology.com/> or call 610.792.5660.

"Whether you need a fully managed IT partnership or support for a specific project, we deliver technology that drives better results."