

ADVERTORIAL: Five tips to help you overcome a fear of digital and grow your business

Leanne Miller is Digital Programme Manager at the Innovation SuperNetwork

The presence of digital in our daily lives has grown at an incredible pace over the last decade. Your mobile phone, smart lighting or heating, your car, the till point in your local supermarket – in modern life, digital really is inescapable.

For some businesses the leap to adopt digital is difficult – but digital innovation doesn't have to be scary. Here are five things we encourage businesses to consider when looking at adopting digital.

1. Understand your market

It's important to understand your market and take inspiration from others. You don't need to invest huge sums of money in market research to understand who is doing well in your sector. Take to the internet, look up peers on LinkedIn, and read news stories or [case studies](#) from competitors.

2. Create serendipity

At the SuperNetwork, peer learning opportunities are one the strongest tools in our support offer. By taking advantage of opportunities that can drive serendipitous connections, you could uncover a business, freelancer, consultant, graduate – or other – who might be able to help you. Get out there and attend as many events as you can!



3. Adapt and adopt

Adapting great ideas in a new way can bring untold benefits to a business.

One of my favourite examples of a regional business who has successfully done this is Alnwick-based [Drone Ag](#). They've taken drone technology to a new level in the farming sector to support crop management, de-risking that leap of faith by accessing grant funding through the [North of Tyne Innovation Recovery Grant](#) and going on to leverage significant equity investment for their idea.

4. Collaboration is king

Recognise that you don't have to go on this journey alone.

Through [Digital Cluster North of Tyne](#), we're not only working with businesses to provide support, we're enabling

collaboration in a number of ways by bringing the digital sector together and creating a connected environment. Our team can help you tap into regional research facilities, explore opportunities in new sectors, refine your ideas and and get your legal, finance and intellectual property in good shape.

5. Seek out funding

Accessing appropriate funding for your project can be a challenge. There is a range of finance open to businesses and our experts can help you figure out what's right for you. If you're based in Newcastle, Northumberland or North Tyneside the [Innovation Recovery Grant](#) is a significant fund from the [North of Tyne Combined Authority](#) offering grants of up to £10k for projects totalling up to £20k.

The North of Tyne Innovation Recovery Grant is delivered on behalf of the North of Tyne Combined Authority by the Innovation [SuperNetwork](#) and experienced grant fund providers [NBSL](#).

Funded through the North of Tyne Recovery Innovation Fund, the Innovation Recovery Grant was launched in June 2021 and has been extended to support more businesses. It is designed to help businesses grow by adopting innovative practice or by bringing innovative products or services to market.

Leanne Miller is Digital Programme Manager at the Innovation [SuperNetwork](#), heading up a new package of activity funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority as part of their wider Digital Programme.