

Consolidating Tools for Streamlined IT Workflows and Greater Efficiencies



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1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, innovation is the linchpin of progress. Small and Medium-sized Businesses (SMBs) and educational institutions find themselves at the cusp of a pivotal transformation. This shift is not merely a response to the increasing challenges posed by a complex digital environment—it is an opportunity to reimagine how IT workflows operate, how efficiencies are achieved, and how the potential for growth is realized.

The modern technological landscape is both a source of immense promise and undeniable challenges. As technology permeates every facet of

business, the phenomenon of tool proliferation has become a reality that requires careful consideration and strategic action.

For SMBs and educational institutions, challenges are diverse, spanning from the burden of technology overload to the intricacies of managing complexity, cost, and redundancy. Today, these challenges are providing a new catalyst for transformation-consolidation of tools. In the pages that follow, we delve into the heart of this strategy, exploring its significance in improving efficiency, enhancing security, driving cost savings, simplifying management and support, and most vitally, spurring innovation.

Designed as a comprehensive guide for IT professionals, this white paper seeks to demystify tool consolidation while linking it directly to operational success. We aim to illuminate the strategic milestones, expound on the overarching benefits, and introduce a practical solution—Splashtop Enterprise. This platform empowers you to consolidate your remote access technology to achieve unmatched efficiency.

This white paper is a roadmap to a new era of IT excellence, where complexity can be simplified by tools that ensure functionality and security, while seamlessly integrating with one another and operating across multiple platforms.







2. The Challenge

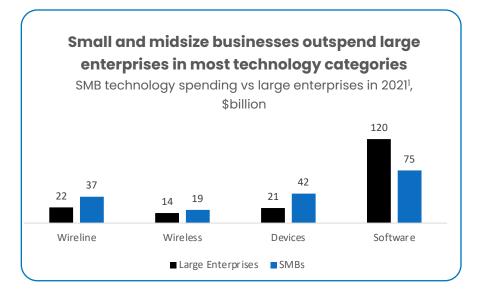
2.1 Tech Overload in SMBs and the Education Industry

In the modern business landscape, technology has become a vital enabler for SMBs. To remain agile and competitive, many of these businesses have opted to adopt digital tools and solutions. The pandemic-induced digital transformation further magnified the role of technology in enhancing operations, customer experiences, and growth.

In sectors such as telecom and electronic devices, SMBs outspent even the large-enterprise accounts that providers have historically pursued.¹

However, as the digital ecosystem evolves at an unprecedented pace, technology overload has surfaced as a major challenge for IT departments. The rapid adoption of diverse technologies, aimed at boosting productivity and flexibility has inadvertently led to fragmented IT environments and complex digital ecosystem. While these tools offer increased capabilities and flexibility, they also result in tech overload, and a costly landscape riddled with inefficiencies, fragmentation, and potential security gaps. In 2023, SMBs globally saw a significant surge in technology spending (+ 6.3% growth compared to 2022), collectively investing a staggering \$1.45 trillion USD in IT² (Americas 40%, EMEA 30%, APAC 30%).

As research shows, evolving priorities have steered SMBs towards as-a-service solutions, with investments in PaaS growing



¹ Large enterprises defined as business with 1,000 or more full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. SMBs defined as businesses with fewer than 1,000 FTEs. Source: Mario Allen Clement et al., "IDC's worldwide ICT spending guide by industry and company size taxonomy, 2022: Release V1, 2022", IDC, Apr 2022, US Small Business Administration.

McKinsey & Company

respectively by 18% and 22% during 2023. Cybersecurity investments also saw steady growth, from U\$\$69 billion in 2022 to U\$\$77 billion in 2023.

While the embrace of technology has proven beneficial, SMBs are now exploring avenues to achieve their objectives with a leaner technological landscape. The focus is shifting towards agility, as SMBs acknowledge its significance in supporting post-pandemic shifts, such as hybrid work models, interactive digital customer experiences, and bespoke product development. To achieve agility without overwhelming their systems, one in four SMBs expects to reduce its technology spending by up to 25% by the end of 2024.

The tech overload characterizing SMBs is also mirrored in the Education industry, where current

transformative shifts have led to a significant increase in technology stack.

With the sudden introduction of remote learning during the pandemic and the ongoing consolidation of hybrid learning and teaching models, IT teams had to rapidly adopt a variety of technological solutions, from digital classrooms to administrative software, giving rise to tangled and vulnerable IT environments. Along with financial considerations, educators and administrators grapple with an array of tools, each presenting unique requirements, compatibility issues, and learning curves. Recent Splashtop research indicates that both K-12 and higher education institutions view infrastructure modernization and the lack of sufficient budget dedicated to IT as their biggest challenges5.



2.2 The Cost of Complexity

The convergence of these challenges with both SMBs and the Education sector depicts a landscape in transition. On the one hand, technology offers unprecedented opportunities for growth, engagement, innovation, and accessibility. On the other, the sheer volume and diversity of tools introduces a freshset of complexities that impact logistics, strategy, security postures, costs, and ultimately the well-being of employees and IT staff from increasing stress levels.

Splashtop⁵ research reveals that 87% of organizations require new IT tools and processes to support a wide range of device types, operating systems, and networks. Additionally, over 65% of IT staff admit to experiencing unsustainable stress levels. In terms of financial repercussions, a study by The Hackett Group⁶ identifies a 61% increase in operating costs due to high IT complexity, while companies with fewer applications per user exhibit a 58% lower operating cost.

2.3 The Need for Tool Consolidation

Today, tool consolidation emerges as a strategic response to these prevailing challenges. By focusing on alignment with core goals, compatibility, security, costeffectiveness, scalability, and user experience, SMBs and educational establishments can navigate the intricate maze of technological expansion.

Organizations that prioritize simplified, consolidate core systems and opt for more standardized solutions rather than heavily customized ones have proven to decrease their costs by 21%. Notably, such organizations resist pressures to build new applications on outdated platforms, maintaining 44% fewer applications per 1,000 end users and effectively combating the cost burden of technology overload.³

The need to consolidate multiple tools and modernize technological infrastructure is also strongly felt by IT departments in both K-12 and higher education.
Higher Education. A recent survey conducted by Splashtop revealed that – in addition to improving their security posture – IT departments are planning to direct their investments mostly towards tool consolidation (32% HE and 45% K-12) and technology infrastructure upgrades (53% for both).





87%

of organizations require new IT tools and processes



3. A Guide to Tool Consolidation: Navigating the Path to Efficiency

In the dynamic landscape of modern technology, IT professionals play a pivotal role in managing a complex and ever-expanding array of tools, systems, and applications. As organizations strive to stay competitive, enhance operational agility, and deliver exceptional user experiences, the strategic imperative to streamline and optimize IT operations has never been more pronounced.

This is where the concept of tool consolidation emerges as a beacon of efficiency. It promises to simplify the intricate web of software, improve resource allocation, and drive cost-effectiveness. The journey to tool consolidation is not merely an exercise in tidying up digital clutter; it is a strategic shift that holds the potential to reshape the very fabric of IT operations. The goal is to empower IT professionals with a leaner, more cohesive toolbox that aligns seamlessly with business objectives, accelerates problem-solving, and cultivates an environment conducive to innovation.

3.1 Tool Consolidation Criteria

When navigating the intricate terrain of tool consolidation, IT professionals face a myriad of choices that can significantly impact their organization's efficiency and productivity. The key to a successful consolidation lies in a strategic evaluation of various criteria. These criteria serve as guiding principles, enabling professionals to select the right technology to consolidate, thereby increasing efficiency and saving costs.

By carefully assessing the following criteria, IT experts can optimize their technological landscape, streamline processes, and drive cost-effectiveness:



Functionality and Overlap: Clearly identifying the functions of each tool and eliminating redundant ones with overlapping functionalities is paramount. It aids IT departments in reducing complexity and making choices that are aligned with organizational objectives.



Integration and Connectivity: Tools that integrate seamlessly within the existing ecosystem and facilitate smooth data flow allow for an effective reduction of operational complexity.



Scalability and Flexibility: Within the consolidation process, considering longterm business goals and viability is crucial. Technology should cater to current needs while also offering the flexibility required for future growth.



User Experience and Adaptability: The ease of adoption and adaptability of consolidated tools plays a significant role in ensuring a successful transition. IT departments are called to prioritize tools that require minimal training and with high user acceptance.



Total Cost of Ownership (TCO): It's essential to cost savings for IT leaders to consider the overall cost of owning and maintaining each tool, including licensing, support, and maintenance.



Vendor Relationship: Tool consolidation offers a chance to strengthen vendor partnerships, potentially leading to better pricing and support. Therefore, businesses should assess vendors' pricing and contract policies, as well as their ability to provide direct support when needed.



Security and Compliance: Centralizing data and processes is essential to maintaining consistent security measures. Consolidated tools must meet security and compliance standards, maintaining data integrity.



Performance and Reliability: The sustained performance and reliability of tools contribute significantly to the operational stability of the consolidated ecosystem. For this reason, IT is called to select tools that consistently deliver optimal results and minimize downtime.



3.2 Strategic Steps to Tool Consolidation for SMBs and EduTech Professionals

Step 1

Identify and Align with Organizational Goals:

This step focuses on understanding the organization's core objectives and aligning tool consolidation

The purpose of this first step is to develop a tool consolidation strategy that enables long-term plans, and consequently, a roadmap with clear timelines and milestones.

Step 2

Evaluate Compatibility and Integration Needs: It's critical to assess existing tools and their compatibility and integration needs.

During this phase, IT teams should evaluate their options by comparing and testing different tools in order to deliver a complete rollout strategy with a phased implementation plan.

Step 3

Ensure Security and Compliance:

Regardless of the industry, security and compliance are top priorities.

During this phase, IT is called to review the existing industry regulations in terms of data privacy and cybersecurity and perform a security audit of both their existing technology and the tools they seek to integrate. Integrating and optimizing the tools for peak performance ensures that they not only function together but thrive as a cohesive, secure system.

Step 4

Monitor Cost-effectiveness and Scalability:
Ongoing monitoring ensures the continued alignment of consolidated tools with organizational objectives, taking into account cost effectiveness and scalability.

During this phase, IT departments should evaluate cost and assess tools' ability to accommodate business growth. Continuous monitoring with consistent processes and regular maintenance schedules are essential to ensure streamlined and effective IT workflows.

Step 5

Prioritize User Experience:

The needs and experiences of end-users are central to any technology strategy.

Within any tool consolidation process, IT leaders need to evaluate users' needs and preferences, as well as the level of complexity of each solution. User-friendly and intuitive interfaces require less training for both IT professionals and end-users, giving rise to more immediate adoption and less support requests.











4. Impacts and Benefits of Tool Consolidation

The journey of tool consolidation is not merely a technological reshuffle; it's a strategic transformation that touches every aspect of an organization, reshaping how it functions and thrives. This journey requires a clear understanding of a business' challenges and long-term goals, with the aim of streamlining software and systems to a select few integrated solutions that collectively address operational needs.

Rather than juggling a multitude of standalone applications, tool consolidation offers a unified and cohesive approach. This is especially relevant for SMBs and the Education Industry, where resources and budgets are often limited, and the need to maximize efficiency is paramount.

The ripple effects of this transformation manifest in efficiency, security, cost-effectiveness, management, and innovation.

30%

decrease in administrative tasks and a rise in faculty productivity





4.1 Improved Efficiency and Productivity

With a centralized IT system, employees spend less time navigating between different tools. This allows them to focus more on core tasks and productivity. In fact, the International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction highlighted that frequent task switching can cause up to a 40% drop in productivity. Tool consolidation reduces this by enabling employees to focus on tasks without disruption. This streamlined approach minimizes the learning curve for new tools and reduces the demand for on-demand IT support.

The impact of tool consolidation on productivity is also seen in quicker access to information. Centralizing data makes it effortlessly accessible and retrievable. Research by the McKinsey Global Institute showed that employees spend nearly 20% of their workweek searching for and aggregating information. Reducing information retrieval time means more time for value–generating activities.

The increase in productivity and efficiency isn't limited to businesses. Educational institutions that opt for integrated EdTech platforms also see enhanced engagement and productivity. For instance, the University of Southern Mississippi consolidated multiple systems into a single Learning Management System (LMS), resulting in a 30% decrease in administrative tasks and a rise in faculty productivity.



CASE STUDY

Enhanced Efficiency and Productivity
Through Consolidation: Paniceus Remote
Support Transformation

- Paniceus Systems was tasked with supporting 1,000+ endpoints across 46 Peter Pane restaurants with unique support needs.
- They successfully streamlined their remote support efforts through tool consolidation, by adopting Splashtop Enterprise as their primary solution which yielded several benefits.
- Paniceus Systems achieved simplified remote support processes, the ability to support various device types within a single platform, and augmented reality (AR) support for visual remote troubleshooting. Furthermore, Paniceus Systems streamlined configuration through Group Policy Object (GPO) settings.
- Paniceus systems made significant savings and efficiency gains, reducing device downtime by 50%.

"I would recommend Splashtop to anyone.
I encourage you to try it out, so you can
experience how easy it is to use and how great
the customer support is. Splashtop made it easy
to control everything about the registry, group
policies and related items. This allowed us to
rapidly implement Splashtop in our environment."

- Björn Runge, Head of IT for Paniceus





CASE STUDY

Tool Consolidation for Secure and Customized Remote Support at Monitor ERP

- Monitor ERP, serving over 5,000 global customers and 300,000 daily users in more than 30 countries with diverse ERP deployments, faced the challenge of enhancing the security and control of their remote support while customizing the experience to individual customer needs.
- By consolidating their remote support efforts with Splashtop On-Prem, Monitor ERP achieved comprehensive control, robust security, efficient consultant network support, and detailed logging capabilities.
- The consolidation improved not only the quality and security of remote support but also led to a 50% reduction in support costs for Monitor ERP, demonstrating the transformative power of tool consolidation in their IT support strategy.

"It's the combined aspects of security and control over how we want to deploy remote support to different groups. The policies and groupings within Splashtop are truly powerful."

– Christopher Hagman, Team Manager of IT and Cloud at Monitor ERP

4.2 Enhanced Security Posture

Tool consolidation coupled with security creates a robust defense against vulnerabilities, especially for SMBs and educational institutes. Implementing tools with strong security measures that comply with international standards allows for unified security policies. This ensures consistent security measure enforcement across the organization, reducing exploitable gaps.

Reducing technology and tools limits the attack surface for cybercriminals. A study by the Ponemon Institute reported that 53% of cyberattacks succeed due to a lack of endpoint visibility. Tool consolidation minimizes this risk by reducing potential entry points and vulnerabilities, thus diminishing the avenues for cybercriminals.

Fewer tools also mean enhanced monitoring and detection. According to the Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report⁴, it takes about 280 days on average to detect and contain a data breach. Integrated security tools, available through consolidation, enable better monitoring, real-time threat detection, and faster incident response, reducing the dwell time of attackers within the system.

For the Education sector, this is even more crucial. In 2022, the acceleration in digital transformation led to a 44% increase in cyberattacks, impacting numerous universities, colleges, and U.S. school districts. New edtech solutions such as student-tracking systems, in-class collaboration tools and distance learning, have strongly contributed to fragmented environments with unclear security measures. Consequently, in 2022, two major data breaches from edtech vendors exposed sensitive data of nearly 20M students across four U.S.



4.3 Cost Savings

At its core, tool consolidation is a financial strategy. Both businesses and educational institutions strongly benefit from the tangible savings that arise from a leaner and more efficient IT infrastructure. According to the International Data Corporation⁵, managing various tools can lead to a 21% rise in operational costs. Consolidating tools reduces the need for multiple licenses, allowing organizations to cut unnecessary expenses. Gartner found that organizations could save up to 30% on software costs by optimizing licenses and subscriptions⁶.

Less software also leads to lower maintenance and support costs. IDC research shows that businesses spend an average of 20-25% of their IT budgets on maintenance and support.

Similarly, the Ponemon Institute discovered that companies squander about 38% of their IT budgets on inefficient practices⁷.

By consolidating tools, organizations can simplify IT management, eliminating redundancies, optimizing workflows, and reducing time spent on tool management.



CASE STUDY

Cost Savings in Action: Beyond Digital Solutions' Journey with Splashtop

- Beyond Digital Solutions, a communications agency managing 7,000 digital screens across Europe, the US, and Canada, sought to consolidate their remote access and support efforts for various digital signage software used in their campaigns.
- Beyond Digital Solutions successfully consolidated various remote access and support needs by instituting Splashtop Enterprise as their principal solution.
- Splashtop Enterprise streamlined multiple use cases for Beyond Digital Solutions, including enabling remote work to high-end workstations and programs, service desk capabilities to support over 200 machines daily, endpoint monitoring and management, and providing efficient on-demand IT support to clients and employees.
- Splashtop allowed Beyond Digital Solutions to fix up to 90% of issues remotely, reducing costs related to onsite visits. This resulted in an average saving of 15,000 miles spent on the road and roughly 4 tons of CO2 emissions per client in the first year for Beyond Digital Solutions, contributing to environmental sustainability.

"Splashtop ticked all our boxes. With one scalable solution, we could remotely control our screens everywhere and support a wide variety of devices for clients and internal staff. All with a non-invasive and secure software that could be activated on-demand."

- Michael Thompson, Digital Architect and Digital Signage Expert





CASE STUDY

Streamlining Remote Work and Support -Tool Consolidation at Warner Bros. New Zealand

- Warner Bros. New Zealand needed to facilitate remote work for its post-production team.
- Warner Bros successfully consolidated various remote access and support needs by adopting Splashtop Enterprise as their primary solution.
- This consolidation streamlined multiple use cases, including enabling remote work, endpoint monitoring and management, security and compliance, and providing efficient on-demand IT support.
- Splashtop Enterprise became the cornerstone of their remote work infrastructure, showcasing the power of tool consolidation in ensuring business continuity and enabling work flexibility.

"After using Splashtop, users' feedback was that the frame rate was far better, and they had a more responsive experience. With Splashtop, our editors experience little or no lag, just as if they were in the office"

- Mike Marsh, IT Manager at WBITVP New Zealand

4.4 Streamlined Management and Support

Tool consolidation simplifies the management of multiple systems, rendering updates, maintenance, and troubleshooting. The reduction in complexity derived from a unified ecosystem makes it easier for IT professionals to manage the software and tools in use, and to deploy them to their fullest potential.

By reducing the number of tools in use, IT professionals can focus on what truly mattersproviding seamless, reliable, and timely support to the entire organization. Recent research by Gartner found that organizations lose an average of \$5,600 per minute of downtime. To make matters worse, the widespread adoption of BYOD policies for either work or study has dramatically increased the need for technology that can be deployed on multiple devices. In the current landscape, 83% of companies have a BYOD policy and 75% of employees use their personal cell phones for work. The situation is similar in the education industry, where research shows that higher education students use an average of 2 devices for academic purposes, including smartphones.8

In such an overpopulated tech environment, IT leaders are called to consolidate tools that allow for seamless integration with other software in use, such as existing ticketing systems, and can operate across multiple platforms. The ability to streamline workflows around on-demand support, as well as unattended endpoint management leads to minimized downtime, greater efficiency and less stress for IT helpdesk and employees.





4.5 Scalability and Innovation

As IT professionals steer their organizations toward growth, tool consolidation emerges as a potent strategy to ensure innovation and scalability. By consolidating tools, these professionals empower SMBs and educational institutes to seamlessly navigate expansion, adapt to changing circumstances, and confidently embrace new opportunities.

Beyond its operational benefits, tool consolidation has the potential to usher in a new era of innovation for businesses and organizations in general, transforming how they approach technological advancement.

Research by McKinsey & Company suggests that a significant portion of IT budgets is often spent on managing disparate tools and systems⁹. Tool consolidation frees up resources that can be redirected toward innovation initiatives, allowing SMBs and educational institutes to invest in groundbreaking projects.

Besides the availability of more budget, tool consolidation can also significantly expedite innovation cycles. According to a study by Deloitte, organizations with complex and fragmented IT environments often struggle with efficient software development and testing. The reduction in tools used ultimately leads to the use of more cohesive platforms, enables IT professionals to guide their organizations towards the future.

Beyond boosting innovation, tool consolidation plays a pivotal role in enabling SMBs and educational institutes to scale their operations, services, and systems effectively.

A survey by PwC revealed that 93% of companies face challenges in scaling, often due to complex and fragmented IT environments¹¹. By consolidating the right tools, businesses as well as education institutions can reduce growing pains, leveraging technology to scale operations both in terms of footprint and volume, in order to accommodate the demands of the market in real time.

An analysis by Cisco indicates that 70% of SMBs consider flexibility an essential characteristic of their IT infrastructure¹². Tool consolidation fosters an adaptable technological foundation that can accommodate increased demands, evolving business models, and emerging needs.



CASE STUDY

The Innovation Engine - Splashtop Powers Boxel Studio's Flexible Remote Work and IT Support

- Boxel Studio embarked on creating a flexible workplace to improve work-life balance and productivity, consolidating various remote access and support needs by implementing Splashtop Enterprise as their foremost solution.
- Splashtop Enterprise streamlined multiple use cases for Boxel Studio, including enabling remote work for artists to access high-end workstations remotely, endpoint monitoring and management, support for Wacom tablets, security and compliance, and providing an efficient robust IT support platform thereby reducing manual tasks by 80%.
- Splashtop solidified its position as a transformative solution for Boxel Studio's flexible workplace initiative.

"We deployed Splashtop and immediately we're getting emails from our artists – Wow, this is great, now I can really work, I can really get my job done. So, you start getting that user satisfaction.

-Andres Reyes, Chief Technology Officer



5. Conclusions: Embracing Tool Consolidation for Futureready Excellence

In the complex and rapidly evolving landscape of technology, where SMBs and educational institutions strive for operational excellence, the need for innovative solutions has never been more critical. IT professionals have to ensure cost and operational efficiency while grappling with technology overload.

As businesses and organizations strive to compete in increasingly demanding markets, it has become clear that embracing this strategic approach is not just a choice, but a necessity for IT professionals seeking to lead their organizations toward future-ready excellence.



The diverse tools in use for work and learning purposes, although individually beneficial, create a tangled web of complexity that ultimately hinders operational agility, affects user experience, and creates vulnerabilities from a security standpoint.

Tool consolidation emerges as a beacon of simplicity, aligning organizational goals, enhancing compatibility, ensuring security, and streamlining operations—all while prioritizing the user experience.

Tool consolidation is not just a cost-effective strategy; it's a pathway to unlocking untapped potential and gain a competitive advantage.

By consolidating technology that ensures highperformance and maximum security, while integrating with other systems, IT departments can play a pivotal role in enhancing overall business efficiency and reducing unnecessary costs.

In a world where agility, resilience, and forward thinking define success, IT leaders are the vanguards of transformation. By leading the charge toward tool consolidation, they harness the potential to reshape operations, elevate security, optimize costs, and drive innovation—a comprehensive revolution that transcends mere tools to redefine the very essence of technological advancement.

In conclusion, the impact and benefits of tool consolidation are undeniable, and the call to action resounds clearly: It's time to embrace tool consolidation as a cornerstone of your IT strategy. Through this strategic lens, the challenges that once loomed large are transformed into opportunities for growth, efficiency, and excellence. It's time to consolidate, innovate, and lead your organization into a future where technology becomes a seamless conduit to success.



6. Splashtop Enterprise: The Solution to Consolidate for Greater Efficiency

High performance, secure remote access, and remote support in one unified solution.

Splashtop Enterprise provides an all-in-one secure remote access and support solution that enables IT departments to consolidate their tech stack, streamline workflows, strengthen security, and boost productivity.

Enable productivity from anywhere

Thanks to high-performing remote access capabilities, Splashtop Enterprise offers efficient and secure hybrid work or learning. Employees can work anywhere, anytime on any device, while students and faculty can remotely access on-campus computer labs and resources, just as they would in-person.

Transform your IT support

Our all-in-one remote support platform seamlessly integrates with existing IT systems and technician workflows, allowing IT to streamline processes and increase efficiency. With service desk capabilities, remote monitoring & management, remote camera sharing using augmented reality, and other support features, it enables IT and helpdesk teams to remotely access, support, and manage both unattended and attended devices.

Enhance your security posture

Security is at the heart of Splashtop's operations and architecture. Splashtop's comprehensive security framework enhances your organization's security posture. Features like Single Sign-On (SSO), granular permission controls, activity logging, endpoint monitoring, Splashtop's Antivirus powered by Bitdefender, and IP whitelisting work in harmony. Secure connections are established with SSL/AES 256-bit encryption and are compliant with ISO 27001, GDPR, SOC 2, and support HIPAA, FERPA, PCI, and other industry standards and regulations.











 $\textbf{1} \, \textbf{Mckinsey} \, \& \, \textbf{Company - https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunication} \\$ tions/our-insights/winning-the-smb-tech-market-in-a-challenging-economy #/

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