

# Best SME Technology Solutions Firm 2020

The right technological solution can make an extraordinary difference to a firm’s operations, but is not always easy to come by. Fortunately, Steve Hodges of Astro Technology Group knows just what businesses need. With the firm boasting a history of exceptional technical solutions to business challenges over the last three decades, and extraordinary success in SME News’ Southern Enterprise Awards 2020, we caught up with Steve to see what he and his team have to offer.

Since 1984, Astro has been a key part of many business’ approaches to technology. This IT managed service and networking company and an independent Internet Service Provider has remained at the forefront of an industry that is constantly evolving. Indeed, Astro has managed to thrive in a world that has become more dependant on what the team has to offer, while also offering new and more complex challenges. Steve Hodges has a long track record of success in the technological sector, and is CEO of Astro.

**SME News: Hello Steve. To start with, can you give our readers a brief insight into what Astro is and does?**

Steve: Astro is an IT managed service and networking company and an independent Internet Service Provider. We have been delivering technical solutions to business challenges for over 3 decades. Our mission to be deliver IT services in a friendly, communicative, engaging and helpful way. One of our core strengths is that while our industry has changed dramatically over the years, our core values of technical credibility, customer focus, transparency, value for money and professional integrity have remained the same.

**SME News: There are lots of options when it comes to technological solutions. What allows you to stand apart from the competition?**

Steve: With the greatest of respect to our market, IT companies are usually dismissive, almost arrogant, sometimes condescending and certainly not very communicative. As a business which is wholly focused on the customer experience and secondarily on the actually flashing lights, cables and whirring fans, we arrive at the same – if not

slightly better – level of technical resolution but in a much more engaging way.

**SME News: As you’ve said, the industry has changed dramatically over the years. What trends are you seeing at the moment?**

Steve: What we are seeing, which is excellent, is the transition of IT in businesses from being the domain of the super-geek with an basic level of communication to being a board level position where business leaders who understand the tech are rising to the top. For us this is perfect because we are very much about engagement and looking at the needs of a business and applying the use of the correct technology to help rather than just having a bag of ‘things to sell’ and trying to tyre-leaver them into a company with a sales force.

**SME News: Given that so much has changed in the last twelve months, and so much could happen in the next twelve, where do you think Astro is heading for the foreseeable future?**

Steve: IT is a funny business. It’s constantly evolving and constantly developing, with new skills to learn, new technologies to understand and new practices to adhere to. But at its heart Astro are a service business. No one buys technology for the sake of technology. They’re bought to achieve an outcome for users or customers or both. By taking an approach that is about the benefit to the person or the outcome of the application of technology we behave differently, think differently and get far better outcomes than many in this field.

This isn’t meant to sound arrogant at all. In fact, I’m hopeful that we’re just at the front of this curve and the whole sector is going the same way. If people could engage with technology and technologists in a way that felt comfortable



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and collaborative, then things would run a lot more smoothly for organisations. It is us, the geek squad, who have the responsibility for making that happen. That is what Astro stands for. It’s an approach that is clearly working. Long may it continue!

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