



5 things to look at when buying **A Rugged Smart Device**



Backplane
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Introduction

In our modern world technology is inescapable, and in no place is it more vital than industry. Be that in the manufacturing industry or in the transport industry, or any industry in-between or otherwise, technology both shapes and is the key to the future. And key to modern industry technology is the smart device—particularly the rugged smart device.

Whether it is a smart phone or tablet, smart devices are no doubt already in use in your industry. We're here today to talk about the five things you want to look out for as a smart buyer of a rugged smart device.

Here's what we believe are the five most important things to keep in mind when selecting the right smart device for your business:

1. THE DEVICE'S INTENDED ENVIRONMENT

Before you start thinking about device specs, you'll need to work out the environmental conditions in which it will be deployed. The temperature, humidity, and any other environmental factors unique to your needs must be considered during your choice.

For example, if you are involved in the food industry and one area of your business requires you to move stock in and out of freezers all day long, and you use a smart device to manage that inventory. That device will not only need to withstand the cold of the

freezer, it will also need to handle the rapid transition from that frigid environment to what could possibly be very hot and humid conditions outside.

However, if your device is to be used in areas where food preparation takes place instead, but the room temperature isn't anything out of the ordinary, then your focus will more likely be on the device's ability to resist water during cleaning and decontamination processes than it will be on the ability to withstand extreme temperature conditions.



2. BUILD QUALITY

A smart device's build quality is one of the most vital things to look for when you're selecting the right device for your business, and I believe there are two key points to consider.

Firstly, an IP rating—or the absence thereof. Any tech company can make a tablet or a PDA, but what you want to know as a business-owner is if they can make it rugged. A well-made device will come with an IP rating that lets you know exactly what degree of external environmental factors the device can withstand. Specifically, an IP rating measures a device's ability to resist water and dust, external intrusions that can hamper a device's ability to function well over time. IP ratings can measure from IP00 (no protection) to IP69 (highest protection), with the first digit relating to the level of dust protection (6 being completely dust-proof) and the second to water protection (8 being resistant to

powerful jetting and continuous immersion, and 9 being resistant to not only that, but also to high temperature steam). In short, the higher the IP number, the better.

Secondly, high screen quality. A smart device is entirely dependent on its screen, so once you've made sure the device has a high enough IP rating for your needs, you'll need to consider the quality of the screen. A high-quality device will support a resolution equal to or greater than 1920 x 1080, making the text easier to read and the images sharp. As an extra measure, you'll also want to look for an optically bonded screen—a screen that has been optically bonded will have the air gap between the touch screen digitiser and actual physical screen filled, making the screen stronger and eliminating the possibility of screen clouding.

3. EASE OF USE

When selecting the best device for your business, you'll need to consider how easily it can be integrated into your current working environment and process. Will there be information you need to transfer? Staff members less familiar with technology, who will therefore need training to use the device? Aim for a device designed with ease of use in mind, such as one based around the Android

mobile operating environment or the Windows 7 & 10 operating systems. These systems are intuitive, common, and easy for anyone to pick up and start using with little to no fuss. Stagnancy and resistance towards change can be major hurdles for a business to overcome, so finding a smart device designed to maximise ease of use is vital.

4. RELIABILITY

One of the, if not the *single*, most important factor when selecting the right smart device for your business is product reliability. A smart device may have high-end specifications and all the functions in the world, but if it is not reliable then it is simply not worth the time or money. Think about how easily you can replace the device, or swap out parts of the device

if something fails unexpectedly. Will this device function well at first, but rapidly deteriorate under the pressure of day-to-day work life? Consider buying from a well-established and trusted brand's range of smart devices, such as Winmate, to ensure you don't get the short end of the stick when it comes to long-term performance.

5. EXPANSION AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE FUTURE

Finally, as technology is always in a constant state of flux and improvement, with new products being released and new developments being made constantly, there are some important things to consider when it comes to planning for the future with your new smart device.

Firstly, how long has this product been around, and what about its EOL (End of Life) date? If you buy a product that has already been around for ten years, it may function well enough, but it's unlikely it will have much longer left in its lifetime with the manufacturer—they will be moving on to a newer and better product line soon enough, and you will be left with an outdated, uncompetitive, and unsupported device which cannot be re-

placed as it is no longer in production.

Secondly, what about the product's warranty? How long will it be supported? Inferior products with short lifetimes and planned obsolescence will often come with only a one year warranty. Beyond that time, the product will likely fail, forcing you to buy a brand new device at full cost. Look for a product that features a two year warranty or more. Here at Backplane Systems Technology, we will even offer an optional 5-year warranty upon request for long-term product support. If a company will not or cannot offer this level of support for a device that is supposed to endure harsh industry conditions, then the product is most likely not up to scratch, and not worth the investment.

Conclusion

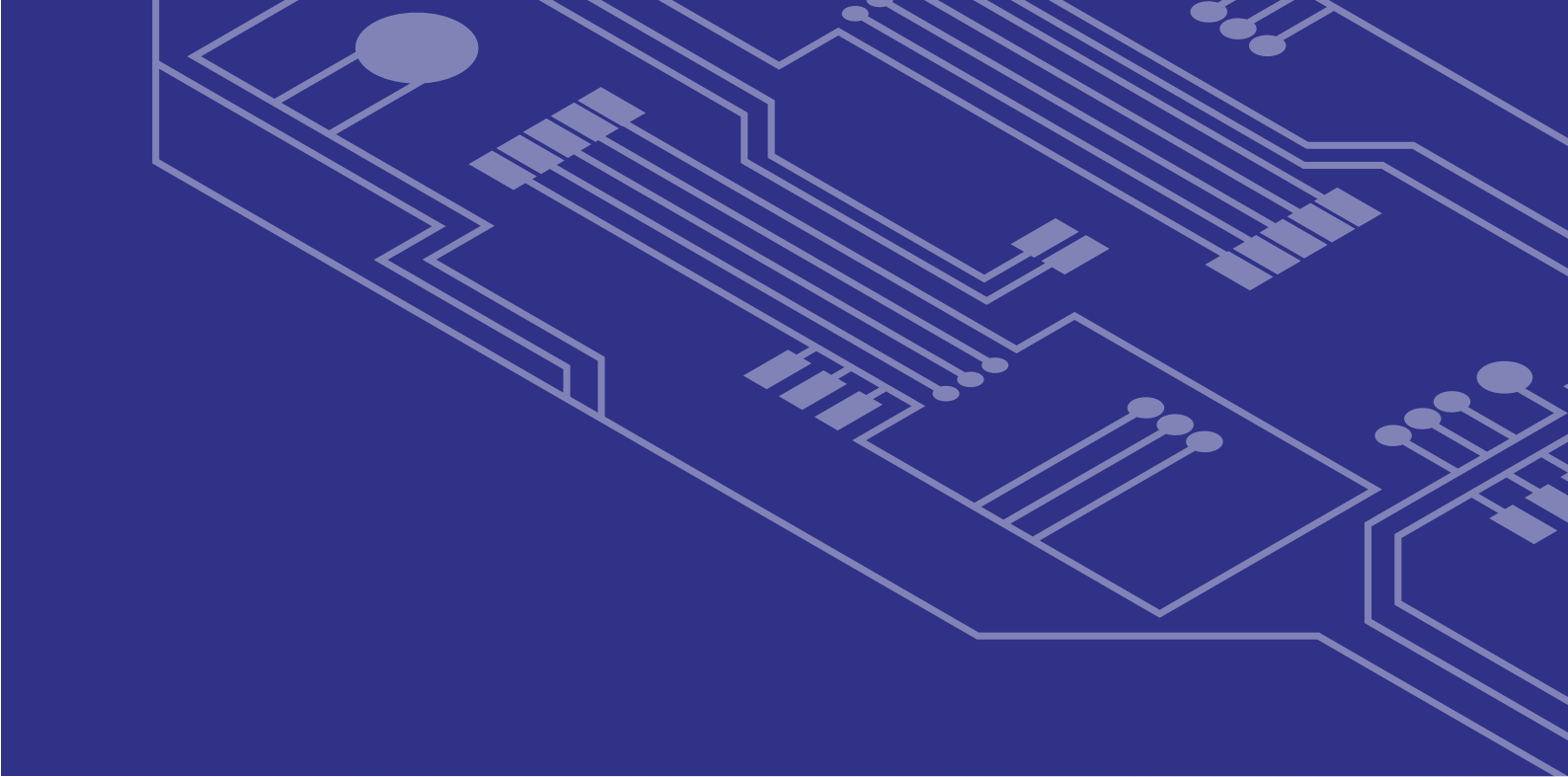
When you select your rugged smart device, make sure you keep the above five points in mind. They are some of the most important things to consider for your business, your co-workers, and you.

If you need more help choosing

the right product, the well-trained staff here at Backplane Systems Technology are more than happy to assist. We have a wide range of rugged smart devices, and will be glad to give any guidance you need in the selection of the right one for your business.



If you have any questions or queries, do not hesitate to contact us by email at sales@backplane.com.au or by phone at 02 9457 6400.



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