

SA's matchmaking app for the freelance economy

 By [Lauren Hartzberg](#)

26 Sep 2016

For many, the office-based, 9am to 5pm corporate workplace has lost its lustre, resulting in a move towards freelance or project work. But the freelance economy is not without its challenges, as operating in isolation with a lack of resources can make for tricky circumstances when the need to source talented individuals and service providers arises.



Sanjay Varma

With this in mind, a new SA-born skills marketplace app has been launched, to provide those working in this new environment with the tools they need to thrive. [Kalido](#) is the brainchild of Ashvin Sologar, former McKinsey & Company executive, and Sanjay Varma, former number three at Chinese internet giant Alibaba.

The app functions as an ecosystem that enables skilled professionals and clients to connect with each other by matching users according to their goals (who they want to meet, and what kinds of services they can provide), as well as social and geographic proximity. It's been designed to enable individuals to instantly find each other for business or social activities, whether this involves searching for a web designer, yoga teacher, tax adviser or running buddy.

We got in touch with Varma, Kalido's CEO and co-founder, to find out more.

How was the idea for Kalido born?

I started my previous company with limited capital. Like many entrepreneurs can attest, searching for the right people was really hard. I spent ages trying to find the perfect accountants, lawyers, mentors, designers, and so on. It was fairly easy to find companies – I could just use Google – but the experience was a painful one. Some of them were too expensive, some were not interested and some were just not great.

But the kind of individuals I was looking for... they were really difficult to find. This was partly because they were struggling to look in the right places for customers as well. So everyone was spending so much time looking for the right people, but we were often looking in completely the wrong places.

While I was going through this process, I always wondered whether those around me could be the exact people to help me – I had no way of knowing! Is the right person near me at this airport, at that trade fair I attended, at a particular conference, university or coffee shop? And if the right person is nearby, how awesome would it be to magically match with them? This is how Kalido was born.



▄ **Briefly explain how the app works...**

All that a user has to do is fill in their profile and goal(s). This involves letting the app know what service you can provide, or what sort of people you want to meet. These can be business and non-business related. In fact, it should be that you can find whatever set of skills or services you need on Kalido.

Once you have entered your goals, Kalido uses an algorithm to serve you match cards showing matches you have made of people that would want your service, for example. The point of the app is to find you the services that you need and, particularly, the person that you would work together with best. The more info you add to your profile, the better Kalido can serve you. In addition to your goals, the app uses your contacts, your networks, your interests and your location to find you the person who fits with you best.

▄ **Why the focus on freelancers and SMMEs?**

Looking at trends in the workplace, we see a world that is changing and moving away from the traditional corporate world to one where people create their own workspace and dictate their own schedule. And this is exhilarating. But these people also face considerable resource-constraints.

We don't think that people should be prevented from doing the work that they're passionate about because they can't find the right talent for their business, and can't afford or aren't able to justify expensive advertising campaigns. On Kalido, SMMEs and freelancers can find the services they need – whether it be clients, suppliers or collaborators – and grow their businesses without having to invest in big marketing campaigns. And because Kalido uses your existing contacts and networks, it can help SMMEs, freelancers, and entrepreneurs make trustworthy connections.

▄ **Who is responsible for the app's development?**

The app has been developed in South Africa, by South Africans. We have an incredible team of developers and designers based in Johannesburg.

▄ **Tell us about your plans to roll out the app in other countries.**

We plan to roll Kalido out to all of South Africa, and then we'll look at other African countries. Over the next few weeks, we will be looking to start establishing ourselves in India, and Australia is also in the plans.



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The Kalido app is available for download from [Google Play](#) and the [Apple iStore](#).

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