

Getting your SMME investment ready

By [John Press](#)

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Television shows like *Dragon's Den* would have us believe that a halfway decent product and a charismatic founder are all that's needed for an SMME to attract investors. Real-world entrepreneurs know it's not quite that simple.



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Venture capitalists might be known for their “gut feeling” decisions when it comes to backing an SMME, but large corporates, commercial bankers and governments are unlikely to rely on such intangible aspects of entrepreneurship and tend to go straight for the facts and figures instead.

Any business's approach to technology needs to be designed for fluidity – the ability to rapidly shift your strategic direction in response to a volatile and fast-changing market. Before investing in your business, potential backers need to know that the right tools and processes are in place to future-proof your SMME for years into the future, and technology is one of the best ways to assure them that it is.

Mobility

When we talk about modern computing, mobility is increasingly referred to as one of the keys to true flexibility. Today's workers need to be equipped with a set of computing tools that is not only relevant to the function they are performing, but also accessible from the most logical place, and at the most logical time.

It has been estimated that up to a third of employees will be working mainly from home in just 10 years time – yet all evidence points to the fact that businesses are radically underprepared for this shift. A recent study by Upwork revealed that even though 63% of companies have remote workers, more than 50% do not have a formalised remote working policy in place.



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This might be among the many possible reasons that companies that do embrace the mobile workplace are having such mixed results, with decaying relationships among colleagues cited as a common consequence of sloppy remote workplace policy implementations.

Today, business success hinges more than ever on collaboration and communication – two aspects of work that always seem to fall by the wayside when employees begin to work from disparate locations. These must, therefore, be uppermost in any entrepreneur's mind when it comes to workplace mobility. Whether through Slack, Skype for Business, OneDrive or SharePoint, geographical distance between employees means that digital closeness must be encouraged even more emphatically.

Cloud

Cloud technology – already a prerequisite for the workplace mobility discussed above – has become an indispensable tool to businesses of all sizes. The cloud is a wholesaling model for the IT industry, delivering best-in-class products and centralised, expertly managed services affordable, even to small businesses on a shoestring budget.



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Thanks to the rise of the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) business model (and the even more recent rise of Device-as-a-Service), the gap between the tools accessible to SMMEs and those available to large, established corporates gets smaller with every passing year. For an SMME to remain relevant and competitive – and to demonstrate these qualities to potential investors – both apps and devices need to be built with cloud integration in mind, to optimise for today, and future-proof for tomorrow.

Security

Intimately linked with both the mobile workplace and the rise in cloud computing is the issue of security. And contrary to popular opinion, this isn't a function that can safely be put off until an SMME grows into an industry behemoth.



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The numbers don't lie – small businesses are just as likely to fall victim to cybercrime as large ones. The reason so many entrepreneurs think otherwise is that attacks on smaller businesses are rarely reported. The financial, reputational and operational risks of a successful cybercrime attack can cost a business not only its investment-worthiness but its very existence. A fluid, agile and responsive methodology must necessarily involve a strong focus on security if the risks associated with mobility and cloud computing are to be effectively mitigated.

The bottom line

These are just three of the key technologies that will become indispensable in an SMME's mission to attract investors, but there are many more, and they aren't as distinct and separate as they might appear from the outset. They work together in an ecosystem of efficiency. Each system builds on and enables the others around it, contributing to a workplace that runs lean in terms of expenses, and delivers more in terms of efficiency.

Having this ecosystem in place – even at a small scale – goes a long way to show investors that your business is ready to respond to its customers, its competitors, and the business landscape in general as it grows.

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