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or money – to waste**

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software**

**A new generation
of small
business tools**

**SMEs
dream of data**

**Which solutions should SMEs consider
when connecting their employees?**

**Marching
towards mobility**

**How to manage mobile
workers and mobile consumers**



Applications

Cloud, SaaS, managed services

Security

Encryption, social media controls

Communications

VOIP, PBXes, data services, social networks

Helping SMEs overcome their most critical business challenges



Kevin Jacobson | GM: enterprise marketing, MTN Business

The globalised, digital economy means that business challenges are business challenges, no matter the size of the organisation involved. However, each segment of the market faces its own unique set of trials, and none more so than those in the SME space.

Kevin Jacobson, GM: enterprise marketing at MTN Business, says that the company has identified four real challenges facing this sector. The first and most prominent of these is cash flow, closely followed by cost containment. In addition, he adds, marketing is a very critical challenge for most small businesses, while labour laws continue to impact the decisions these entities make regarding the employment of human resources.

“At MTN Business, we try to find solutions to help our SME customers overcome these challenges. Our advice is always that when purchasing technology, what they buy must adhere to three criteria, namely it must save them money, time and optimise their productivity,” he says.

“Our four key solutions - connectivity, mobility, cloud and managed services - speak directly to these three components. Furthermore, since MTN Business has restructured its own business model to provide a genuine one-stop-shop to customers, we offer another key benefit in the form of accountability. We have brought our fixed and mobile offerings together under a single roof, providing SMEs

with a single point of contact, a vital advantage for the often overburdened SME owner.”

In addition, explains Jacobson, MTN Business assists SMEs with a roadmap for their company, designed to address the specific requirements they have at the time. It works with other vendors to deliver the best offerings in the market, delivering solutions that grow with the SME.

“It is a fact that some 96% of SMEs fail within the first three to five years of operation, due to the simple reason that when someone launches such a business, they seldom understand every aspect necessary to make it successful. Understanding this, MTN Business has put together the MTN SME ProPack, which is a combination of business-related services.”

Included in these services, he says, are membership to the National Small Business Chamber (NSBC) and access to a business networking portal that assists SMEs with support and advice around a range of issues - such as tax queries or human resource matters - that may impact the company.

“Furthermore, large corporates are able to post tenders on the platform, allowing SMEs to individually or collectively tender for these. From an MTN Business perspective, our aim is to create an environment for consistent growth and business development amongst SMEs. For us, it is ultimately about assisting them to grow beyond the crucial three- to five-year period, enabling us to build genuinely long-term relationships with them,” he concludes. 

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CONTACT DETAILS

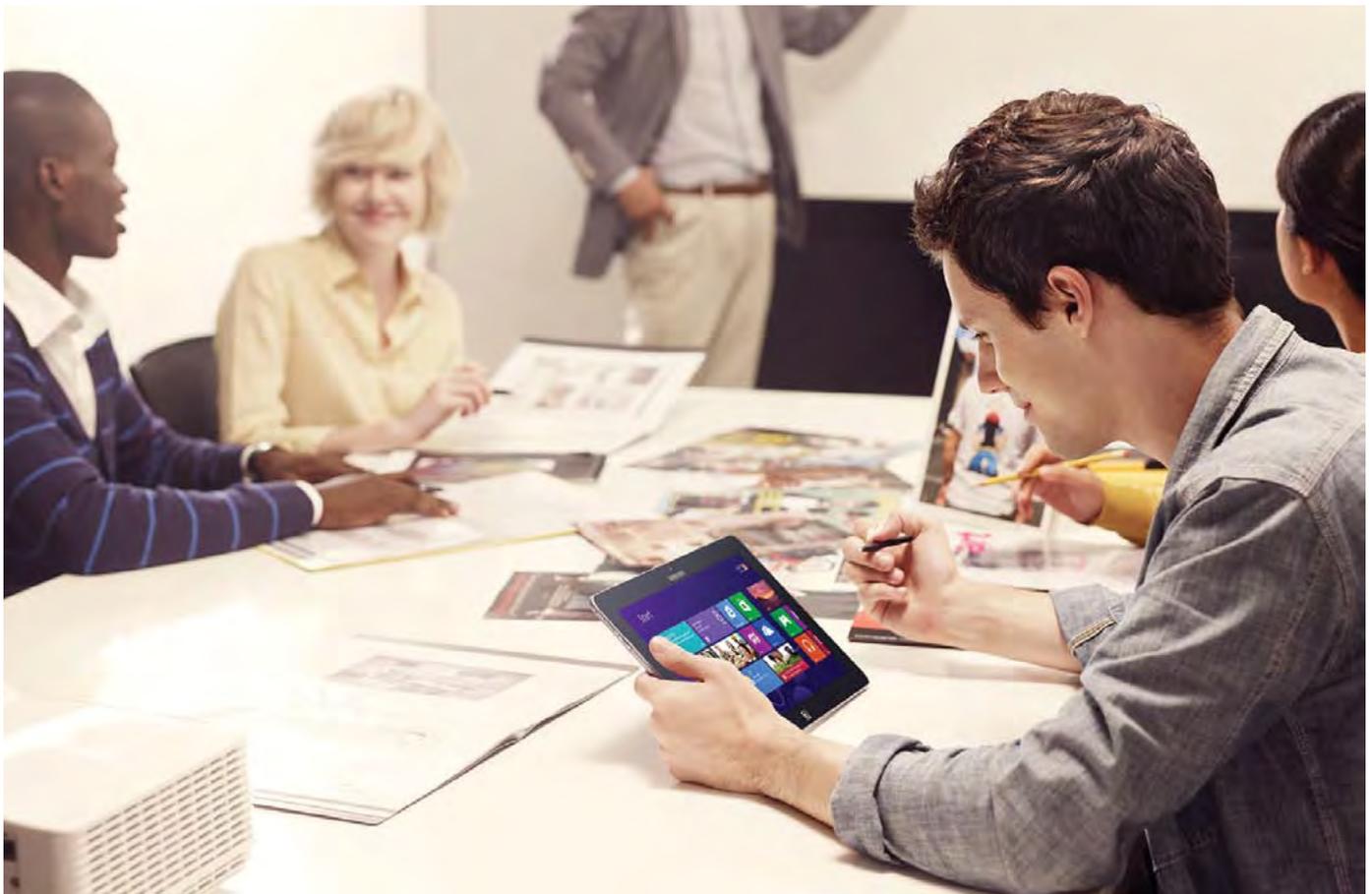
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It's a bold new digital world for small businesses

And MTN Business is right there with you



Today, business competitiveness is no longer based on the size of the enterprise, which is one of the reasons why the SME sector is so successful. In fact, entrepreneurs are considered the driving hub of SA, fuelled by innovation and passion and are considered to be indispensable contributors to the future viability of the country. However, many small businesses face enormous challenges. MTN Business understands these challenges and the complexities of running a small business, as well as the support required to do so. It is for this reason that MTN Business continues to place a strong focus on aiding this market.

We are able to offer ICT infrastructure and connectivity capabilities equivalent to a corporate giant, at a fraction of the cost to such a market. What's more, we are committed to delivering solutions that drastically improve any SME's competitiveness, productivity and service delivery without the

exorbitant capital investments typically associated with this infrastructure.

Sponsoring a platform such as the Big Break Legacy TV show adds to this commitment and allowed us the opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to local SMEs – driving a platform that fosters a new generation of successful South African entrepreneurs.

After a successful first season, MTN Business sponsored the second season of the Big Break Legacy – once again offering local entrepreneurs a once in a lifetime opportunity to make their dreams come true, as they competed for the prize value of R5 million. Together with the support of leading corporations, the show targeted existing business ventures in need of capitalisation for growth as well as high impact business ideas that require startup capital. During the journey, contestants had the opportunity to engage



The winner of *Big Break Legacy* season 2 was **Sanele Makinane** and was announced at a prestigious gala dinner in Johannesburg, walking away with a whopping R5-million investment.

MTN Business, driving a bold new digital world.

with sponsors, such as MTN Business. This allowed the contestants and viewers to really discover how technology and solutions such as MTN ProPack could improve and empower their business – from products and services, to networking options, support and loyalty points.

We know that SMEs require affordable solutions, self service tools, advice from professionals when required and the flexibility to control their spending. Our unwavering commitment to the SME market and tailored solutions such as MTN ProPack provide all the tools and services SMEs need to run their business the way they want to – without the hassle. This means that they can focus on starting, growing or expanding their business, with MTN Business there, every step of the way.

Samsung, which provided some of its latest technology to the contestants to utilise during tasks, has a likeminded perspective. Samsung understands that it is the smaller entrepreneurial companies that are bringing change and progress to the market and therefore, has developed a range of solutions that provide all the tools that a startup entrepreneur will need to remain completely mobile and

“IT IS THIS TYPE OF TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT DEFINITELY PLACES THE ENTREPRENEUR AT THE CENTRE OF THE BUSINESS, WITHOUT GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATIONS.”

ensure that they are brought closer to their customers – to better share, collaborate and discover new opportunities and in turn, increase business efficiency and functionality.

To this end, Samsung believes that technology is a prerequisite within any new startup or existing business and therefore, aims at providing the competitive edge where it is needed most. This said, however, Samsung also understands that businesses of all sizes are faced with budget constraints and as a result, develops solutions that are cost effective yet optimised for the mobile workforce – secure, manageable enterprise mobility platforms. In fact, Samsung’s platform solution for the SME market is made up of 40 different offerings in the form of security, messaging, virtualisation, collaboration and business applications.

It is this type of technology infrastructure that definitely places the entrepreneur at the centre of the business, without geographical limitations by creating a virtual office that supports connectivity, increases decision-making speed and the ability to service clients with minimised delay. Samsung ascribes to the business principle that a smarter environment should be available to all. By developing collaborative technologies that are produced in response to both predicted and actual customer needs, the company is able to offer different devices with varied form factors, screen sizes and operating systems to really drive an all-encompassing solution, customised for the specific environment. 

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SMEs embracing the connected world



With technology evolving at an increasingly rapid rate, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) need to carefully manage their limited budgets while avoiding the temptation of implementing solutions that do not meet their business requirements, says Kevin Jacobson, GM: enterprise marketing at MTN Business.

Employees are more mobile than ever. Smartphones and tablets have become essential business tools. Having access to information at the touch of a button is critical for success. One of the reasons for this can be attributed to the growing influence social networking is having on people's lives. Now responding to a customer query is not a 'next-day' thing but a 'same hour' thing. And if you are not fast enough, people are more than willing to voice their dissatisfaction online.

But while some might argue that being constantly connected is a bad thing, there are several benefits to it.

Following global trends, South African employees, and even business owners, are better able to balance their business and home lives by working wherever they find themselves. It makes sense for some employees, especially those in the sales environment, to be able to work remotely.

Work everywhere

In fact, it is not an unusual sight to see parents working on their mobile devices while sitting at the sidelines of one of the sporting activities of their children.

With this mobile lifestyle comes improved cost efficiencies. For example, solutions being able to scale according to the needs of the SME, means decision-makers can better budget for growth and can meet the needs of a constantly changing market faster.

Working with a solutions provider that can offer this flexibility will be key for the success of any SME. Business owners no longer have to be satisfied with an 'all or nothing' approach. They can specify what their exact requirements are and the solutions provider needs to be able to meet those needs. Never before has the saying 'the customer is always right' been as true as in the connected world today.

Being flexible

Flexibility and customisation are the most important terms today. SMEs demand this flexibility and the providers need to be ready to provide for this. It is therefore important for an SME to work with a provider that offers more than just a contract of services to be rendered.

True partnership is needed as the provider has to understand the business of the SME and the issues that it might face. In turn, the SME has the advantage of working with a provider who has already solved many of those issues with other clients or has the technical capacity to address them as needed.

Just as the SME is trying to be innovative in its space, so too must the provider be innovative in offering unique solutions, leveraging today's connected world.

So what does this mean for SMEs in South Africa? Should they embrace a mobile-only approach to survive? A mobile-first thinking from SMEs is important in order to have differentiation over competitors. And having the benefit of an experienced service provider such as MTN Business means that decision-makers can focus on driving the business forward, while we take care of their connectivity and mobile solutions requirements. 

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