

Application economy creates opportunity for Africa

 By [Gary Lawrence](#)

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We all live in an application economy. Retail, news, entertainment, banking, education, government, communications - everything is driven by a connected, mobile, application-based world where customers are far more likely to experience brand and interact with an enterprise through a software application than a live person.

In order to thrive in this new reality all businesses - regardless of industry sector - are challenged by the need to develop and deliver superior user experiences that engage both customers and staff and are enabled by software.

This represents a huge opportunity for African businesses.



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Tangible pressures

Regardless of the size or maturity of the market, the pressures being created by the application economy, across the globe, are tangible to executives everywhere and in every business. These pressures translate into a need for appropriate investment, augmented by understanding of how to: acquire, motivate, and retain, technical talent. This is not an easy task in the African context.

In business terms, the application economy provides something of a level playing field as it promotes competition. With the right applications and technology infrastructure, African businesses will not only be able to serve their existing markets better, but also to compete with international players both at home and abroad. Cloud computing and

software as a service (SaaS) brings the latest technology within the grasp of even the smallest company, without the expense, delay and risk of investment.

What African businesses need to get right first

African businesses can become part of this emerging economic world, but one thing they need to get right first is a solid platform for IT management, including mobile. The application economy allows a company to redefine its business and even its industry, no matter where it's situated. All that's needed is access to the right technology backed by the right vision.

Africa's up-take of mobile solutions - which has enabled the continent to leapfrog to the latest communications technologies - is a real example of this principle in action. The same thing is possible in preparing for the application economy where a stable, secured and managed IT platform is the ticket to a game where the currency - in this new economic order - is data.

ABOUT GARY LAWRENCE

Gary Lawrence is MD of CA Southern Africa. He is an IT industry veteran, having more than 20 years' experience in creating, building and managing software businesses in the Southern African market. Prior to joining CA Gary was country manager of Business Objects and Baan, for sub-Saharan Africa. He was also founder and CEO of Softworx; a software and services business in the ERP, business intelligence and supply chain space.

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