

SAP helps SMEs keep pace with business innovation

With the introduction of SAP Business ByDesign, SAP has expanded its cloud-based enterprise resource planning (ERP) and business management software to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), providing them with sophisticated software to boost profitability and efficiency while reducing IT infrastructure complexity that often stifles SMEs.



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The challenge faced by many smaller to mid-sized firms is that their IT systems operate in silos that seldom communicate with one another. Not only can this affect their responsiveness and overall competitiveness, but it also consumes more resources, reduces efficiency and their ability to respond quickly to customer needs. As these businesses evolve, processes become more complex, often with no solution to overcome the problem.

It is critical for SMEs to rethink strategies

"With cloud-based ERP and business management software for midsize companies, it is now possible to run your entire company on a single, cloud-based business management suite. SAP Business ByDesign is ideally suited to medium-sized businesses and subsidiaries of large corporations," said Chris Willcocks, director of general business and partner operations at SAP Africa.

"Not only is SAP Business ByDesign our suite in the cloud for the midsize market, but it is also an important and integral component of our product portfolio. This software-as-a-service (SaaS) offering covers everything from ERP to CRM, procurement, supply chain management, and also offers complete functionality for financial, human resources, marketing sales, service, supply chain, procurement and project management processes. We are incredibly excited to bring it to Africa," he added.

According to an Oxford Economics study, 61% of SMEs in South Africa are forming business networks outside their borders to strengthen relationships and diversify their offerings, which is due to shifting customer expectations. The same study suggests that cloud computing and business analytics are expected to see the highest adoption rate across EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa). It is therefore critical for SMEs to rethink their strategies to capitalise on growth opportunities expanding markets or to enter new markets outside their home countries.

The primary benefits of SAP Business ByDesign are:

- Streamlined end-to-end processes that boost efficiency across the entire organisation;

- Timely business insights with integrated analytics and reporting powered by SAP HANA;
- Access business functionality and analytics anytime, anywhere, on almost any mobile device; and
- Highly secure data centres managed, monitored and maintained by SAP experts.

Incorporating SAP's latest innovations, Business ByDesign runs on SAP's real-time, in-memory database platform HANA, which allows the transactional and analytical solutions to use the same data platform. This provides users with a real-time view of their entire operation.

A need for agile and flexible systems

"Many mid-sized companies look for systems that are as agile and flexible as their business processes have to be to ensure they're able to respond to changing market conditions and taking advantage of new opportunities. As the pace of business increases and global competition continues to disrupt the market, complexity is the key obstacle for SMEs to respond with agility to regain their competitive advantage," said Rainer Zinow, senior vice president, SAP Business ByDesign.

SAP's partners continue to make a significant contribution by developing new application functions as add-ons to SAP Business ByDesign. More than 50% of SAP's customer base uses add-ons developed by partners. This underlines the importance of partners with relevant industry expertise, which benefits from additional market potential and growth opportunities.

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