

3 ways technology can help maintain your business

By [Heinrich de Leeuw](#)

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An effective value proposition tells the ideal customer why they should buy from a specific business and not from the competition. However, in today's challenging economic environment, it will not create sales by itself. Competing on price is not smart as it can lead a business to bankruptcy very quickly.



Heinrich de Leeuw, managing director at Seidor Africa. | Source: Supplied

What companies need to focus on now is differentiation that will enable them to outgrow their competitors and to remain relevant in the marketplace.

Yet, standing out from the competition is one of the biggest challenges businesses continue to face. And that's where up-to-date technology can make all the difference.

Differentiation is the most important in the three main areas - customers and prospects, internal processes and supplier management.

1. Customers and prospects

The most obvious way to differentiate when it comes to engaging with customers and prospects is to improve their experience. Technology has the power to modernise interactions from the first engagement through to post-delivery support and service.

Fully integrated CRM and ERP system unlocks valuable information from customer data, so that the sales team can plan the right strategy for targeting the right customer. Encompassing all the processes involved in the customer lifecycle, from end to end, gives teams access to all the details of a customer at any point in their journey through the pipeline, so that they always have contextual data at their fingerprints.



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An integrated offers efficiency and order placing, electronic processing and signing documents though digital acceptance, integrated order placement and e-commerce portals, automated communications on open and pending orders (as well as accurate lead-times), quality control to ensure customers receive products free from defects, sign on glass technology that provides transparency and efficiency on deliveries and site visits, accurate warrantee tracking and automated product and pricing updates for recurring customers.

Each of these features plays an important role in creating the ideal customer journey and singling out a business from the competition.

2. Internal processes

The primary internal processes involve operations, sales, finance, three areas that require real-time information for accurate decision making and planning. Integration of operations, financial, statutory reporting with business intelligence delivers reliable and auditable information. This results in the death of month end processing, back-capturing, reactive reporting, due it being replaced with real-time relational data processing and reporting.

The benefits to the business can include faster analysis, increased organisational efficiency, data-driven business decisions, improved customer experience, improved employee satisfaction, the availability of trusted and governed data. This allows leaders and managers to make forward-looking decisions based on historic and business cycles.

Employees can do real-talk stock management and planning, they have operational and reporting mobility and the business can benefit from reduced customer acquisition costs because of integrated CRM and ecommerce platforms that add efficiency and accuracy to every process and interaction.



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An important benefit that may be discounted, is that modern technology leads to a happier workforce and greater employee satisfaction. Employees interact more effectively with clients, suppliers are treated better and relations on the production

line go more smoothly, thanks to streamlined processes.

Cloud-based technologies enable employees to choose hybrid or remote working, which is crucial at this time, provides them with relational, real-time data access for a more efficient and rewarding work experience.

Fully integrated Human Capital Management (HCM) solutions can make employees lives easier when it comes to things like performance and KPI management, improved worker efficiency, avoiding cuts, layoffs and retaining top staff. It is all about technology that allows people to trust and believe in the system.

3. Supplier management

One component of next-level differentiation that a great many businesses ignore, is their relationship with suppliers. Companies failing to establish robust supplier management expose themselves to financial consequences, compliance concerns, and damaged reputations.

Integration to third-party supplier systems allows for order placements, product, order, service tracking, as well as warrantee tracking and pricing updates. Synchronising and integrating data with suppliers eases collaboration, improves speed-to-market times, enables implementation of best practices and standardised processes.



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Advanced procurement to pay solutions integrated into an ERP system allow for price sourcing, comparison between multiple suppliers prior to order placement and for bulk order management.

Having great relationships with suppliers as a result of sophisticated technology improves both service to customers as well as business efficiency, which is good news for everyone.

In conclusion, technology is not only essential for day-to-day business operations when used correctly, it can also assist businesses in achieving growth and success. Technology isn't just used to automate procedures in successful firms, it is also used to offer up new and better ways of doing business and keeping your customers happy.

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