

How to start a business with a smartphone and no seed capital

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The smartphone has perhaps become one of the greatest gifts to an entrepreneur looking to launch a business on little to no seed capital. If its functionalities are maximised, it's not far-fetched that one could launch and run a business from it successfully.



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Now more than ever before, starting and running a business can be done with little to no seed funding. The digital age offers entrepreneurs the ability to launch and grow a business using a set of online platforms and tools that can be installed or accessed on your smartphone.

How to use a smartphone to launch a startup

Here are some ideas of how one could go about using a smartphone to launch a startup at little to no cost:

Business registration and certification

Entrepreneurs can register their businesses and apply for a business account on a bank's website. CIPC registration through a bank was launched by FNB in partnership with the DTI in 2012; it is now available through all major banks in South Africa at a minimal fee. This includes the creation of a company with the registrar of companies (CIPC) on your behalf.

Reserve a web domain and email address

One of the best ways to professionalise your business image from the start is to have a business website and business email address - it says that you are serious.

Registering a web domain address is relatively cheap and easy through companies such as Godaddy and Afrihost which also offer you the ability to set up an email account and even a website.

Cloud and app-based accounting software

With so many companies offering various software tools and solutions, it has never been easier to get yourself up and running so you can start invoicing and balancing your books right away. Many banks now even offer business customers accounting software as part of their value-added offering.

Social media

Never before has it been easier for a small business owner to compete with larger businesses in the digital marketing arena by creating and managing multiple digital campaigns right from their own smartphone.

With mature social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, there is a whole bouquet of tools available to create, track and monitor campaigns with incredible precision. What's more, is most of these platforms now even enable you to sell your products and services directly on their platforms.

Cloud services

By definition, this is any software service that is available to its users via the internet or “the cloud” on demand. Cloud services cut costs because the business doesn't need to own its own physical servers, meaning no direct technology costs of owning servers or physical storage.

For example, an entrepreneur can access web-based productivity software such as Microsoft Office 365 or Google Docs, or they can file and store all their documents online in the cloud and have access to them from anywhere with the likes of Dropbox, iCloud and OneDrive.

Website builders

The idea that a website has to cost a fortune isn't true; one can launch their own website online using an online website builder platform offered by many providers. Most platforms offer pre-created themes and templates either for free or at a minimal cost.

You can personalise a theme to suit your business aesthetics, image and needs, when you are happy with it, you can simply launch it under your web domain URL. Most of these platforms offer plug-ins that are built for e-commerce, meaning you can link it to your account and sell online. Examples include Shopify and Wix.

“ These platforms and tools, when used effectively, can empower you to take your product or service from an idea, to a huge online audience. The best part of it all is that these are easy platforms to master right from your smartphone. ”

An entrepreneur can also use the analytics tools built into most of these platforms to get deep insights into who their

customers are, allowing the entrepreneur an opportunity to improve and grow the quality of their offering.

It's a new digital business world out there, and by embracing the power of your smartphone, you can take full advantage of it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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