

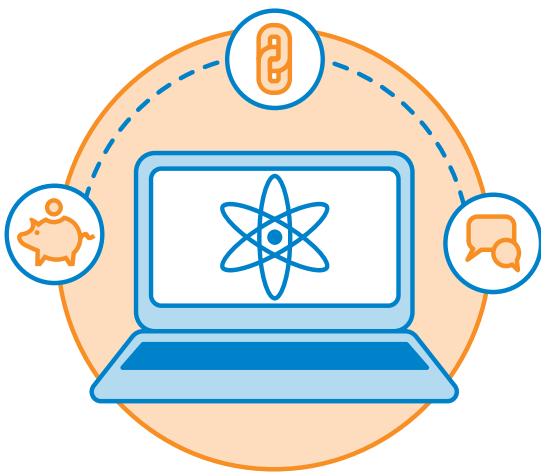
# WHERE'S YOUR BUSINESS BLIND SPOT?

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In business, as in anything else, you can't fix what you can't see. Small business owners need a field of vision that encompasses every facet of operations, without distracting them with unnecessary information. However, that field of vision often comes with blind spots where SMBs lose visibility into the true, real-time state of affairs – something founders often put off fixing due to more urgent demands on their time and budgets.

Real-time visibility, however, directly influences the long-term viability of any business, particularly SMBs where growth takes top priority. The better the view of your business' operations, the easier it becomes for the business to grow.

Typically, the tools which provide that wide-angle view: financial management, CRM, and business analytics platforms, have previously been a luxury only affordable by much larger enterprises, but SMBs can now access a range of options through cloud-based SaaS options without capital outlay.



1.

## CHECK YOUR CORE

Every SMB is different, but most can define their operations on three core disciplines: financials (including payroll), supply chain, and customer interactions.

The performance of the business in each function directly affects those of the others. Prompt payment of suppliers by finance, for example, typically ensures more on-time fulfilment and a better-stocked inventory, which in turn elevates the ability of sales and marketing teams to deliver on their promises (of same-day e-commerce delivery or fast returns, for example).

Financial management solutions can help SMB's drill down into data from each of these areas of operation. When selecting and configuring their choice of system, however, SMBs should make sure the one platform gives them visibility into all four disciplines so that they gain a single, holistic view of their business.

**2.**

## KEEP YOUR DATA ALIVE

The faster the market moves, the faster data from your operations becomes outdated. And working with dated data, even if just a few days old, can undermine the integrity of your decisions, especially when it comes to those involving a capital investment, like purchasing new inventory or ramping up marketing for a certain product. In other words, SMB owners need to not only see everything that's going on in their business, but be able to keep up with how quickly it changes.

The right financial management and analytics tools will not only provide real-time streams of data from the operations they monitor - but also consolidate those streams in dashboards that are easy to understand, and base decisions on. An SMB owner who can see the latest relative increase or decrease in sales, and quickly correlate it to both marketing and inventory levels, has a much higher chance of foreseeing an aspike in demand - or a gradual decline - before either can disrupt their operations.

**3.**

## STAY WATCHFUL ALL THE TIME

Real-time data can make a huge difference to decision-making, but it won't really help SMB owners unless they have 24/7 access to it. That's especially important for SMBs with plans to scale overseas, where time zones and operating hours may leave them with less-than-perfect insights into situations that may require their immediate attention.

The right choice of financial management platforms will provide the same dashboards and intelligence through any device, allowing them to get immediate updates on across-the-board performance anywhere, and at any time. This is where cloud-based financial management platforms particularly shine: their accessibility from any device or browser, coupled with strong security across all these channels, is making them the go-to for SMBs.

When you can see your entire business, in real-time, no matter where or when you need to, it becomes much easier to make decisions. That, in turn, gives many founders the confidence to spend less time rushing from detail to detail, and more time on higher priorities – whether they be planning for expansion or widening their product range. After all, starting your own business ought to give you more freedom in the long run, not less.

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