

Technology is a friend to small business

In simple terms, business is all about identifying a product or service to sell and then finding the right market to sell it to.

The first part of that may still be a challenge but technology has absolutely revolutionised the second bit. Ebay alone has created an opportunity for millions of entrepreneurs worldwide to distribute their products to an audience that could only be dreamt of a generation ago.

It has created an online marketplace that has almost limitless potential.

And the same, of course, is true of the internet in general.

Today, if you have an idea for a new business, you no longer need bricks and mortar or high initial overheads. You can get a website up and running for less than a £1,000, work from home whilst you develop your business idea and your customers need not be any the wiser.



Phone calls can be taken on, or diverted to a mobile which could be anywhere in the world. Email allows you to communicate with your customers 24/7 and in your own time.

You can "work" seven days a week but still dip in and out of your emails as and when you choose. You can be abroad on holiday and no one need know.

Mothers with small children can



work late at night and still communicate with their clients on a regular basis.

Digital images and video clips allow you to showcase your business and create a more personal relationship with your customers.

Blackberries and iPhones mean your office is with you whenever you want it to be.

Small businesses can become big very quickly without the need for

years of steady evolution.

You can harness the resources of staff in India or China and operate at a fraction of the cost of a similar business years ago.

The cost of communications are coming down all the time and once "big business" technologies like video conferencing are becoming much more affordable and mainstream.

Technology is the modern liberator and makes business faster, more efficient and therefore more profitable.

Never has there been a better time to be an entrepreneur and the opportunities for young people are greater than ever before – all you need now is the right idea. Why not "Google" a few and see what you can come up with?

■ Peter Davies is chairman of Breakwater IT and one of the EDP Future50 judges.