

Small business software...Simplifyd



By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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Any romantic notion one may have when starting a business is soon quelled with the realisation that all responsibility - from ensuring deadlines are met, clients are invoiced, and your sales pipeline and contact lists are updated and managed - ultimately falls on you. Administrative tasks can require a surprising amount of attention and time - energy that could perhaps be better spent on big picture strategy. But the devil is in the details, lest we forget.



Sean Miller

Sean Miller and James Willard discovered this first-hand when setting up a creative agency. Though utilising various business software and services, they lacked one tool that could take care of everything; and thus Simplifyd was born. The Simplifyd team is based in the UK, where they have enjoyed success, but the software has also just been launched in South Africa. We got in touch with Sean Miller to discuss Simplifyd's design approach in the creation of simple software for small businesses.

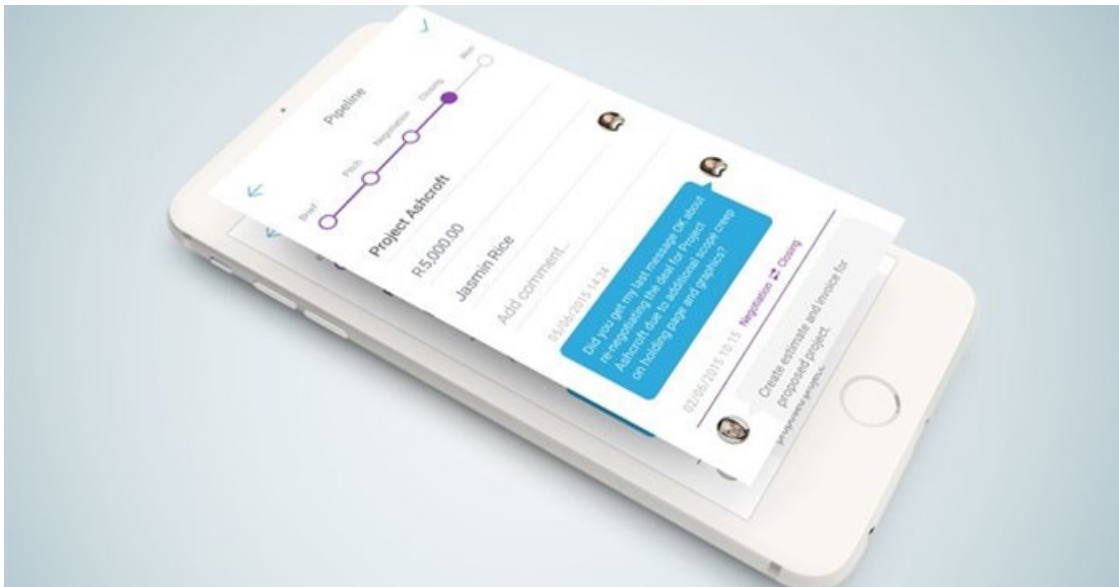
How was the idea for Simplifyd born?

Sean Miller: Setting up a new business is really challenging. It's a bold and brave move for a lot of people and a stressful time, especially with all the additional administration that goes into keeping your clients happy, generating new business and of course getting paid.

A few years ago when we were setting up our creative agency we faced all these challenges and more. So I decided to source a suite of niche products that would help us, Freshbooks, Stride App, Insightly to name a few. The problem was that we were only using 20-30% of each of these product's features, juggling between multiple logins the costs were adding up quickly. Especially at \$50 per product per month. We decided to build a product in-house that could do everything we needed, really simply, really quickly and team members could pick up instantly. The result was the first version of Simplifyd: beautifully simple software to manage your small business.

■ Why South Africa next?

Miller: I was born in Zimbabwe and lived in Cape Town for three years before moving to Spain and then London. Through my travels and visiting new cities around the world I've always enjoyed coming back to Southern Africa for either business or pleasure. I think entrepreneurship is naturally encouraged in South Africa and also very well received. Every time I come back I come across a new business or startup that has a product or service I enjoy using. The last was a prepaid parking app that saved me hours searching through my pockets for change or trying to get a well-used R10 note into the parking machine. Genius!



■ ***In your opinion, what are the fundamentals of great software design?***

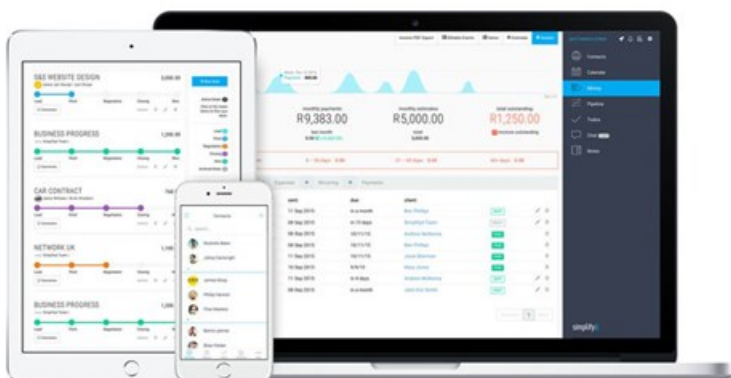
Miller: The key fundamentals of great software design and design in general stems from making something truly functional that solves genuine and relevant problems. Make it easy, make it fast, make it look good, in that order. Simplicity is key in the approach with the way users interact with your software.

■ ***What design features are incorporated to aid user experience?***

Miller: Getting the basics right from the start is always essential to form the foundation of a clean and well put together application. Early on we focused on ensuring typography is clean and legible, colour was used consistently to complement the information without getting in the way. Intuitive navigation, and a simple sleek functional design to ensure users with varying technical experience can get started straight away without being intimidated by the powerful combination of features available within Simplifyd.

We wanted to make sure the application was easy to use and worked across multiple devices. Focusing on making something that was fully responsive from the smaller mobile screens to large desktop monitors, Simplifyd is designed to work whenever wherever.

Ensuring the user flows through the app with ease, subtle use of animation is used through the software combined with powerful performance optimisation. Using Angular.js everything is loaded within a single view minimising load times.



Key processes have been a big focus for us in the way we approach design. How can we minimise the number of clicks needed for any action without overly cluttering the interface with too many items or buttons. Research and testing have played a key role in allowing us to prioritise our actions and identify any snagging points. The result means we end up with a very clean, clear and easy to use app without sacrificing on features.

We've also incorporated the use of simple graphical visual cues to represent progress and key data. We've incorporated animated progress indicators for Pipeline tracking which allows users to instantly gain an overview of their upcoming project process and update the progress of each with a single click. We are also rolling out dynamic progress indicators with our to-do lists' which update based on the number of completed tasks so far. This will also be extended to individual team members so you can instantly see progress of to-dos and progress of each member within your team. The use of interactive graphs has also played a key part in instantly providing users with a snapshot of their cash flow.

We are also in the process of exploring 3D touch within our native apps to further simplify processes and improved quick search and voice command to enable users to get straight to the information they need.

■ ■ ■ **What has the response been like thus far?**

Miller: Honestly it's been great. We work very closely with our users to develop and enhance our feature set constantly. We are really lucky to have such a broad user base from small two person cleaning companies to global sales teams for Apple Accessories.

To test drive the Simplifyd platform, go to www.simplifyd.io.

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