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# Building a Foundation for Success with Integrated Cloud Business Solutions

Authored by



Attracting and retaining customers, growing revenue and maximizing growth are perennial goals for small and medium businesses (SMBs). But, we all know that the means to achieve these goals is changing.

As technology accelerates, it's disrupting business practices, models and even entire industries. Digital technology puts information at customers' fingertips—shifting the balance of power from sellers to buyers. Customers expect the vendors they work with to deliver more ease, convenience and value—and can easily take their business elsewhere if vendors don't meet their expectations.

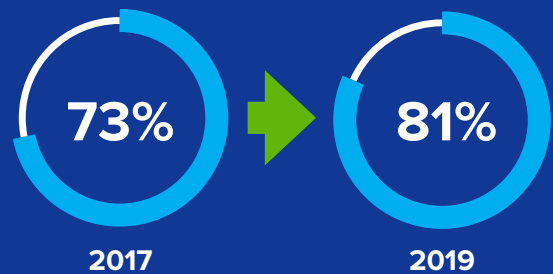
Today, taking a “business as usual” approach is quickly becoming a recipe for failure. To sustain and grow the business, it's essential that SMBs use technology solutions that can help them to streamline operations and keep up with customer requirements.



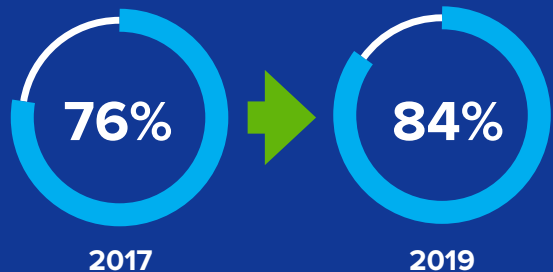
## FACING THE NEW BUSINESS REALITY

Most SMB leaders understand that using technology effectively is critical to business sustainability and growth. According to SMB Group's 2019 Digital Transformation Study, the percentage of SMB decision makers who agree or strongly agree that “technological changes are reshaping our business practices and/or business models” has jumped from 73% in 2017 to 81% in 2019. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree that “technological changes are reshaping our industry” rose from 76% in 2017 to 84% in 2019.

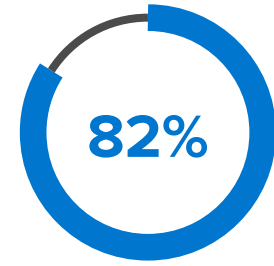
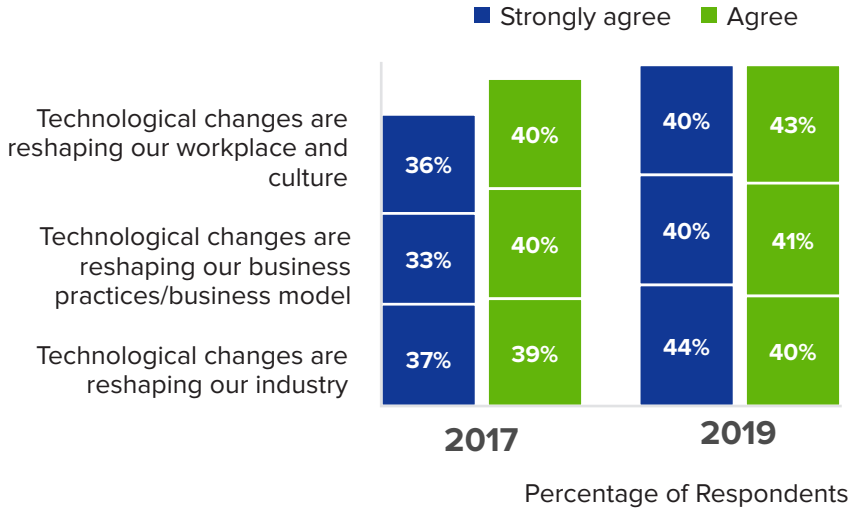
“**TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES ARE RESHAPING OUR BUSINESS PRACTICES AND/OR BUSINESS MODELS**”



“**TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES ARE RESHAPING OUR INDUSTRY**”



## SMBS INCREASINGLY SEE TECHNOLOGY AS KEY TO BUSINESS VIABILITY

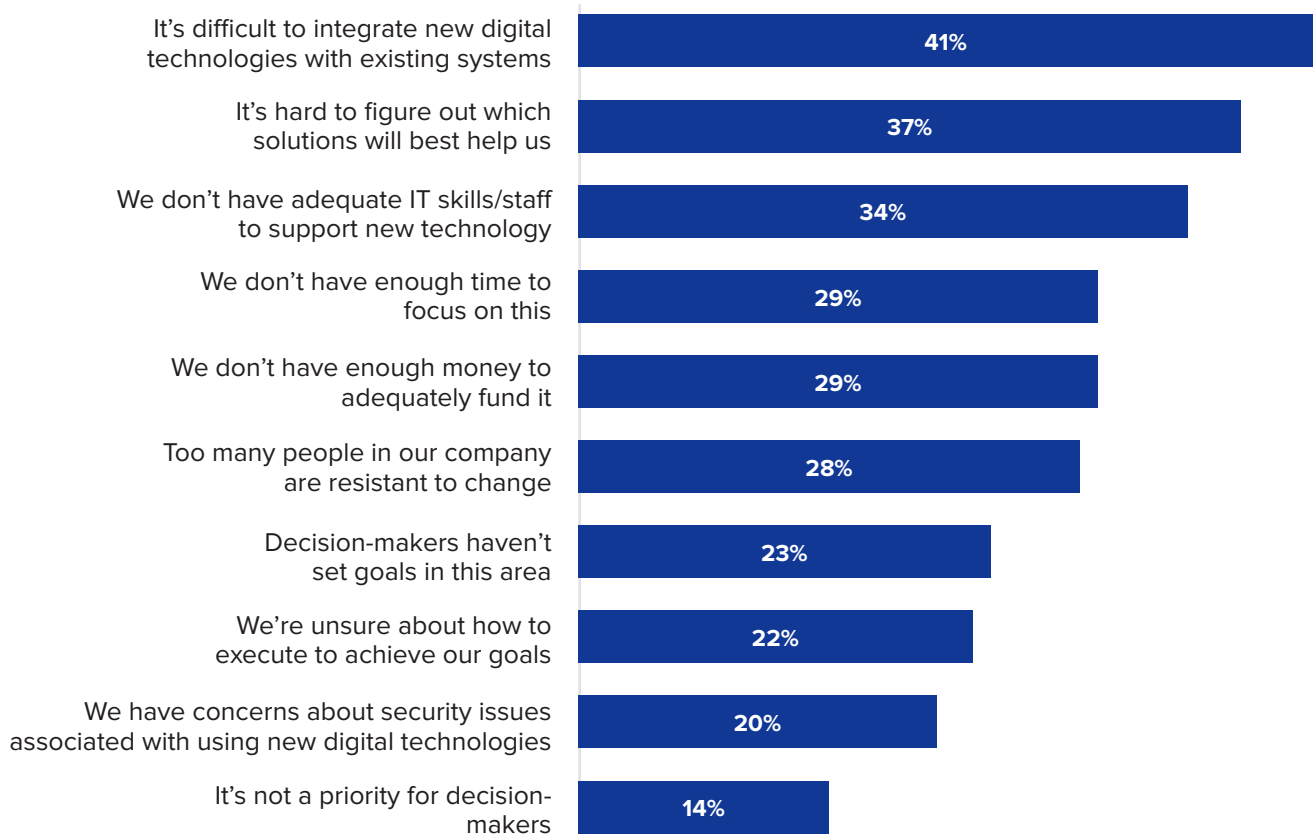


of SMBs now agree/strongly agree that using new technology effectively is key to business survival and growth

## OBSTACLES TO CHANGE

SMBs recognize that they need to put the right technology solutions to work to adapt and innovate—or they risk being pushed out of the market by more agile competitors. However, SMBs face many technology, business and cultural barriers as they attempt to prepare their businesses to stay viable and successful over the long term.

## TOP CHALLENGES TO INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS



Source: SMB Group 2019 SMB Digital Transformation Study

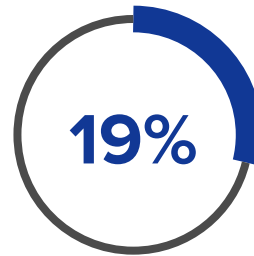
In the same study, SMBs ranked integrating new technologies with existing systems as their number-one challenge to using technology to support their business goals.

Too often, SMBs are using a muddle of disjointed point solutions that they've patched together over the years. And although the cloud has made it very easy to add new applications as required, it hasn't solved the problem of getting new solutions to work with existing ones. While point solutions can work when a business is very small, this approach becomes more unwieldy as it grows and the volume of transactions, customers, employees, products, services and channels multiply. It becomes harder to get a clear view across business units, workflows and customers—and to get the insights businesses need to make solid, proactive decisions.

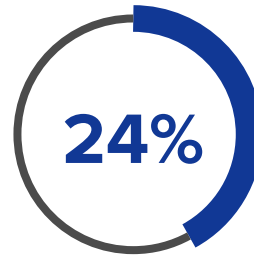
Figuring out which solutions will work best was reported to be the second most pressing obstacle for SMBs. And even when they do find the right solution, the integration problem can be compounded as they try to integrate yet another application with their existing systems. Limited IT expertise along with time and budget constraints further exacerbate the situation.

Given these realities, it's not surprising that just 24% of SMBs are currently executing on a digital transformation strategy, and only 19% strongly agree that their company has a well-defined digital business strategy.

## MOST SMBs ARE UNDER-PREPARED FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



of SMBs strongly agree that “our company has a well-defined digital strategy



of SMBs say their company is “currently executing on a digital transformation strategy

Source: SMB Group 2019 SMB Digital Transformation Study

## FROM DIGITAL ASPIRATION TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

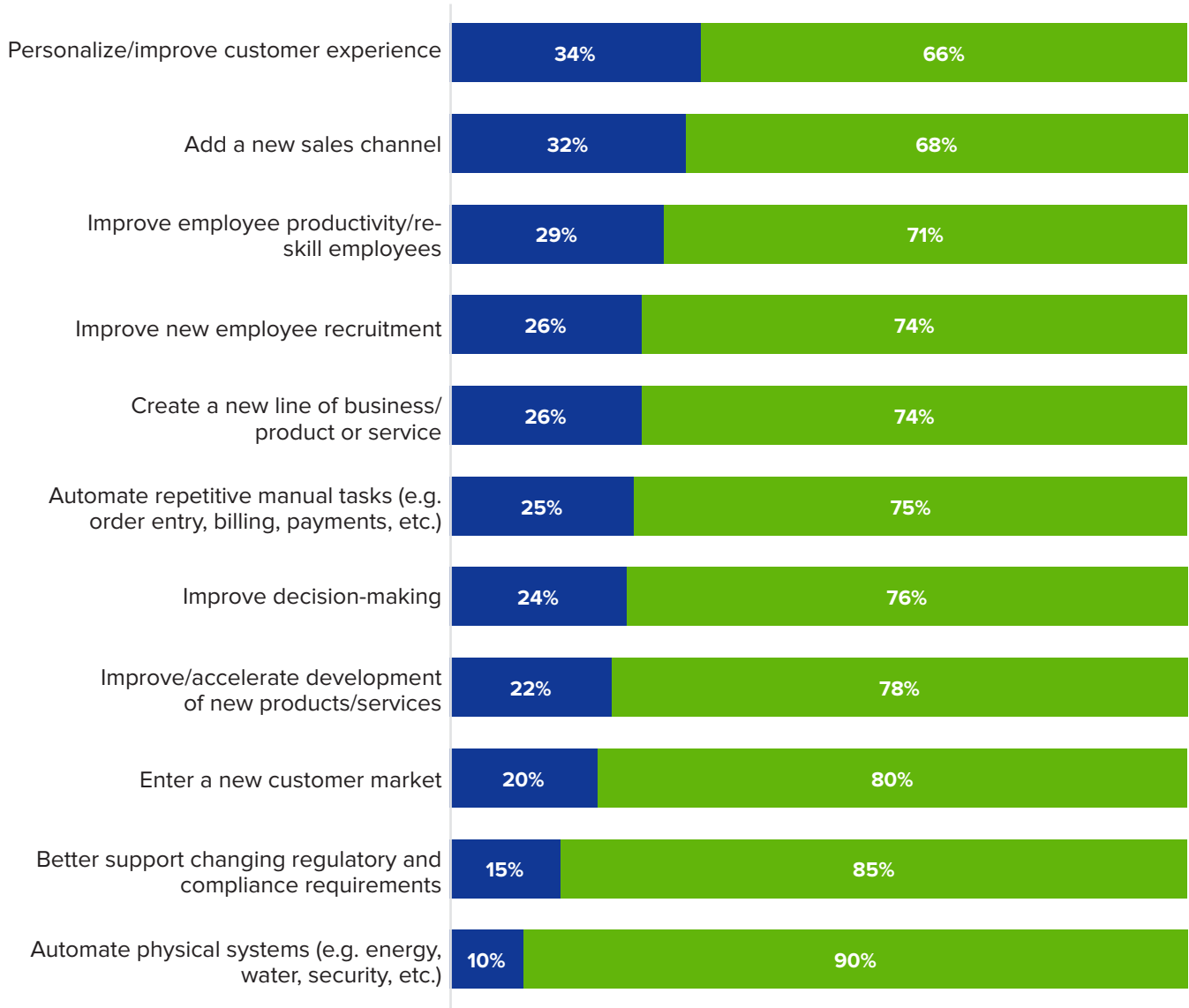
If you put an addition onto a cracked or sagging building foundation, you know you'll run into problems. The same holds true for a business. Companies want to expand, but piling new, disconnected applications on top of existing solutions will increasingly drag down the business. Change is always hard, but it's vital to put a flexible technology foundation in place to remove friction, streamline operations, improve productivity and keep up with changing customer and competitive trends.

The good news is that modern cloud ERP platforms, which are built using open standards and application programming interfaces (APIs), offer a clear path forward for SMBs that want to be able to move quickly and prepare for the future. This is critically important, as SMBs that are investing in projects to transform themselves for the digital era are much more likely to be augmenting existing solutions instead of investing in entirely new ones.



## NEW VS. AUGMENTED INVESTMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY TO ACHIEVE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION GOALS

■ Investing in an entirely new solution    
 ■ Augmenting an existing solution with new technology



Source: SMB Group 2019 SMB Digital Transformation Study

Cloud platforms can help SMBs to automate business processes and gain real-time visibility into the business, as well as provide the flexibility necessary to deploy new capabilities as they are needed. These platforms deliver a clear, unified view of real-time customer and business data to help smooth workflows and to facilitate collaboration and decision making.

Modern, flexible ERP platforms also serve as a gateway to new capabilities that SMBs can

leverage as they grow. Open APIs and strong developer ecosystems make it easier, more cost effective and faster to integrate new solutions into the platform compared to using older, more brittle ERP systems or a patchwork of point solutions. In addition, many ERP platform vendors are embedding new artificial intelligence, machine learning and natural language processing capabilities right into their solutions, so SMBs don't have to figure out how to bolt them on.

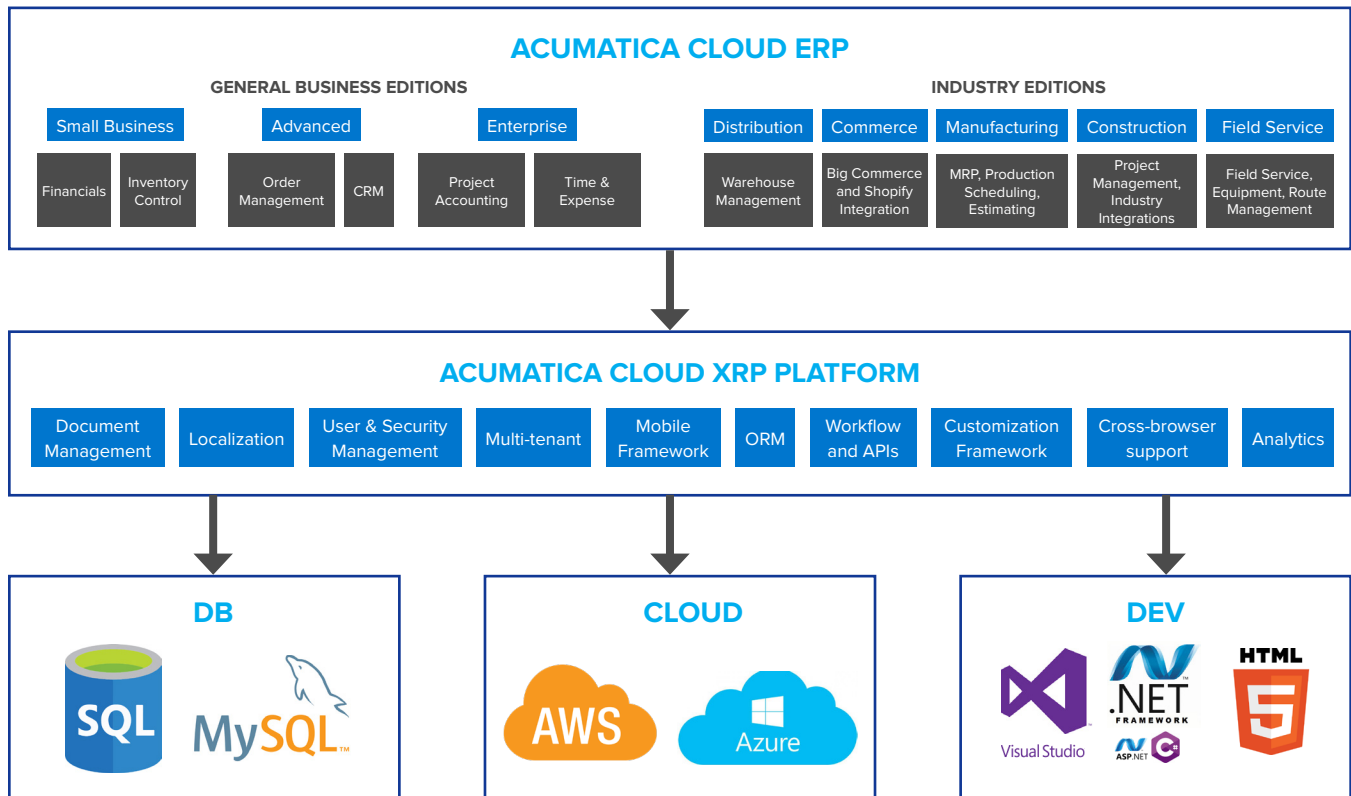
## ACUMATICA'S CLOUD ERP

Acumatica was designed for the cloud and for flexibility. Built on its xRP Cloud platform, Acumatica provides a suite of fully integrated business management applications—including financials, distribution, inventory management, CRM and project accounting—to deliver unified workflows across the business.

All processes share the same data and run on a unified database—with native mobile capabilities so everyone can access the same data anywhere and anytime—to deliver complete, up-to-date

views of the business. Real-time dashboards help SMBs to understand trends and take proactive actions to capitalize on new opportunities and avoid risks.

The “x” in “Acumatica xRP” designates that all companies—regardless of size, industry or geography—can tailor the vendor’s solutions to meet their specific requirements. Built on open, standard web technologies and development languages, developers can use Acumatica’s xRP platform and its tools to build new applications, modify business logic and add customizations tailored to different business needs.



This development environment helps Acumatica customers deploy and integrate the applications they need now—and the ones they’ll need in the future—quickly, easily and cost effectively. It has also enabled Acumatica to deliver specialized industry solutions for construction, manufacturing, commerce, field service and distribution on the same platform. In addition, 175 third-party developer partners now offer more than 200 applications integrated with Acumatica’s platform.

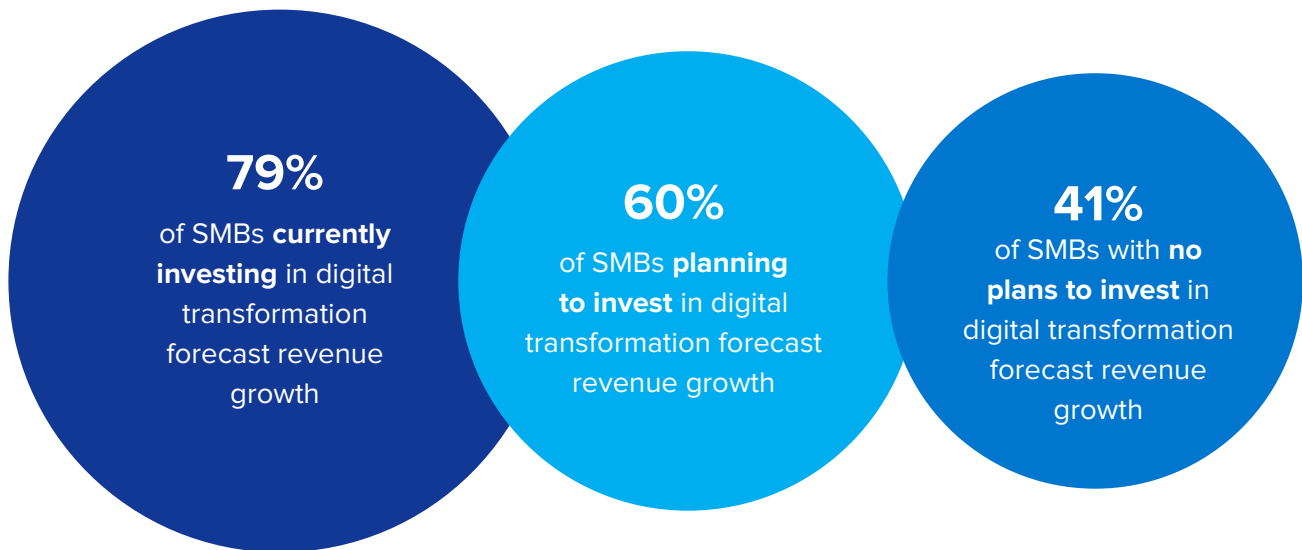


## SUMMARY AND PERSPECTIVE

No one can entirely predict the future. However, it's a safe bet that in today's technology-fueled world, success will increasingly rely on a company's ability to put technology to work to achieve efficiencies, better serve customers and keep pace with market and competitive trends. And it's just as certain that if companies stick with

outdated, disconnected, inflexible solutions, they'll eventually bog down the business and stifle its ability to grow. In fact, SMB Group's 2019 SMB Digital Transformation Study shows that 79% of SMBs that are investing in digital transformation are forecasting revenue growth, compared to just 41% of SMBs that have no plans to invest in digital transformation.

### SMBS INVESTING IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ARE MORE LIKELY TO FORECAST REVENUE GROWTH



Source: SMB Group 2019 SMB Digital Transformation Study

Modern, open, cloud ERP platforms help SMBs to unify business processes and add new applications and capabilities more easily. They also offer the flexibility companies will need to evolve the business as future requirements unfold.

integrated suite of business solutions, a modern and open technology platform, and a strong partner ecosystem can provide SMBs with the capabilities necessary to prosper both today and in the future.

Although there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution, Acumatica's combination of an





### **ABOUT ACUMATICA**

*Acumatica* Cloud ERP provides the best business management solution for transforming your company to thrive in the new digital economy. Built on a future-proof platform with open architecture for rapid integrations, scalability, and ease of use, Acumatica delivers unparalleled value to small and midmarket organizations. Connected Business. Delivered.

For more information, visit [www.acumatica.com](http://www.acumatica.com).



### **ABOUT SMB GROUP**

*SMB Group* is an industry research, analysis and consulting firm focused on technology adoption and trends in the small and medium business (SMB) market. Founded in 2009, SMB Group helps clients to understand and segment the SMB market, identify and act on trends and opportunities, develop more compelling messaging, and more effectively serve SMB customers.