Smart products make your business grow

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*Digital technologies play an increasingly important role in our society. Smart, connected products pave the way for innovative solutions for companies and users. But what is the definition of a smart, connected product? We have identified **three essential elements**: the product should be connected, smart and create added value.*

A connected product

A smart product relies on connectivity to exchange information with other products, as well as with related digital services or an external data source. Connectivity also allows information to be exchanged with users. This can be the end user, the product's creator or a maintenance technician. In that case, the information is exchanged though a mobile device or computer.

Connectivity extends a product's functionality beyond its physical boundaries. This does not mean that connectivity has to be wireless, although wireless connectivity obviously has inherent advantages. **Wireless connectivity** increases autonomy and flexibility and is cost-efficient.

A smart product

Smart products pack plenty of smart features, which adapt to the changing context and users. These features help a product function with autonomy, **flexibly adapt** itself and work better together with other products or with users.

While this is due in part to connectivity, **software** is the key element of a successful smart product. The software can be found in three places. Firstly, there is the software in the electronics of the physical product. Then there is the software of the products and mobile devices the smart product works with, as well as the software that is installed on the internet, in the cloud.

Obviously, not every smart product will have every possible feature or exhibit all features to the same extent. The more the developers **leverage the potential of digital technology**, the 'smarter' and more useful a product will be.

A product that creates value

A smart product leverages digital technology to create **added value for users**.

Digital technologies, like the internet, apps and mobile devices, are a staple of daily life. That is why it is important for a product to seamlessly interact with other technologies. A technological innovation is only successful when it **responds to a specific need** of the people who use it.

A smart product creates **value in line with your business**. Digital technology plays a pivotal role in the implementation of a business model. By uniting the user, the business and the technology, a smart product creates **value**. It solves a specific issue or reduces a specific cost.

Finally, digital technology contributes to the scalability of product-related services, which paves the way for new integrated solutions. As such, smart products enable **new business models**.

Benefits of smart, connected products

In the case of a leased photocopier with automatic toner ordering, for example, smart, connected technology enables product builders to capitalise on this with **new business models**.

By providing digital support for product-related services, these can be **rolled out and personalised** efficiently and **on a large scale**. Just think of troubleshooting or remote custom configuration of connected products. Capturing and analysing the user data of smart, connected products results in new solutions and services that offer the highest value for users. This in turn enables companies to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

Do you want more information about smart, connected products? Do you have a specific question? **Get in touch or consult our web page***!*

Being a product builder, smart products can take you in many valuable directions, but which idea does your company want to invest in? And how do you avoid a situation where your smart product innovation costs more than it delivers? In the masterclass 'Turn your business idea into a smart product' on 25 November, we will explain an approach to come up with a business idea that fits your company and your target market (in Dutch). Click **here** for more information.

(Source picture above: Shutterstock)

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