Fueling SME Businesses with Investment & Advice for global success

Concept to Exit
SME GROWTH SPECIALISTS

Funding & Advising SMEs from Concept to Exit

Capital Investment
Capital / Business Planning
Advisory Services
Business Training
Virtual Services
Facilitation
Accessing Grants

We have the courage for the tough conversations and a reputation for powerful insights...

Our ethos is one of pragmatism and action. No theories, just people that have done the hard yards growing businesses.

We love people and business but we think/act like shareholders – if it does not add value we will not do it.
Transform your business or idea…

Creating and growing emerging companies with aspirations of global success is difficult; it requires specialist business expertise and investment by people who have “been there and done that” before.

Sparkbox has an established track record as an advisor and investor in SMEs that can make global expansion a reality.

Sparkbox Venture Group (Sparkbox) is NZ’s premier early stage investor, with an enviable record of success in its broad portfolio of more than 35 companies that it has invested in since 2001.

In addition to managing its investment portfolio, Sparkbox also offers a diverse and complete range of investment and business advisory services targeted at all levels of SME businesses across a broad range of sectors.

Unlike other advisory companies, we invest in SME companies.

Whether we are investing or advising, our focus is on helping you in growing and realising shareholder wealth. No big theories, just pragmatic advice that adds value.

Global capital for global potential companies…

Sparkbox invests in early stage companies, predominantly in: information technology, mobile, materials science, clean-tech, communications, medical and diagnostic technology and the Internet.

Stop Wasting Time and Money. Get clarity and focus in your Business / Capital Planning…

De-risk your business and accelerate your shareholder wealth creation; with inspired strategy and effective financing of your growth plans

Our pragmatic approach to planning and follow up support, based on hands on experience, will focus you, creating greater shareholder wealth for you.

Sparkbox services are dedicated to SMEs, servicing most sectors from start-up to $20M turnover.

Talk to us about: investment, advisory boards, strategy review, business / capital planning, opening doors to deals (capital, grants and partnerships), training or facilitating your next strategy day.

Give your business the benefit of the same rigour and inspiration that NZ’s premier SME investor gives to its own 35+ high growth companies.

Sparkbox is an NZTE registered service provider for the Business Capability Voucher Scheme.

The Sparkbox team are proud of their pragmatic, action-oriented approach and dedicated to smart shareholder wealth creation. Behind the serious nature of their business – the Sparkbox team are “good old down to earth Kiwis”, and very passionate about taking innovative NZ businesses to the world stage.

Equinox House, Shed 20, 139 Quay St, Auckland
www.sparkboxventures.com
Advisory Services

Sparkbox offers a complete suite of advisory service products targeted at growing SMEs from concept - $20M turnover. Our most popular services are:

Business Planning For Growth Workshop

Find out “what you don’t know” first.

Too many businesses invest in professional services with poor briefs and often end up wasting money and time.

To avoid this, we recommend companies invest in a strategic insight workshop with us – where we will devote up to 2 days to getting to know your business well enough to give you new insights and create clarity in the path ahead, ensuring you maximise an investment of services for the maximum gain.

Capital Planning – Investment Ready Service

Before raising capital, develop how you can maximise your shareholder wealth creation with a more effective growth strategy and evaluate the different options you have to fund this growth.

Strategic Deals – Rain Making

Opening doors to major strategic deals is a specialist area that requires experienced business development skills. Sparkbox assists companies analyse which doors to open, then leverage its extensive network to get you access to the right people.

Advisory Boards

Our team and associates are available to provide new insight and challenge to growing companies.

Meeting Facilitation

Maximise your strategy days with professional facilitators that understand the SME world and “tease out” all the key issues.

Grant Applications

The NZ government is keen to support/invest in high growth companies, particularly those with intellectual property and global markets.

Sparkbox has extensive experience in government grants and can assist you with vital knowledge on how to create and submit the best possible application.

Pitch Development

Whether it’s getting the ear of investors or simply refining your product collateral or website. Sparkbox are experts in getting your elevator pitch sorted. Get us in before you create your next website, or your next major pitch.

Virtual Services

If you are not ready to employ a full time specialist executive team yet, we can complement your team with part time Executive, Marketing, Finance, Business Development and Sales talent.

Business Training / Professional Speaking

Our suite of training / speaking topics include: Business Planning, Pitching, Investment Ready, Capital Planning and Start-up Boot Camps.
Sparkbox invests its own funds in companies, manages funds for other investors, and arranges and manages capital raising requirements of companies via its extended network of local and international investors.

Nothing is too early for us to look at for investment. If we see value in what you have, we can help you to increase your chances of raising money. We will look at all the options available to appropriately fund the growth of your business.

Sparkbox is unique in the NZ market place in funding early stage business ideas from concept stage.

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**Global From Day One Programme (GD1)**

GD1 invests up to $220K in business ideas that “have the potential to access global markets”. This funding primarily covers activities such as market validation, scoping, and proof of concept development.

Qualifying companies will:

- Have defendable intellectual property or strong sustainable market advantage
- Accept a pre money valuation of up to $600K
- Founders that want to work with outside advice

Sparkbox is a founding significant shareholder in GD1 alongside K1W1, NZVIF and NZ Angel investors. Sparkbox is contracted to manage the screening and fund management process for this investment programme. [http://www.globaldayone.com/](http://www.globaldayone.com/)

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**Sparkbox Investment … More than money**

Sparkbox invests in early stage companies, predominantly in: information technology, mobile, materials science, clean-tech, communications, medical and diagnostic technology, and the internet.

“Investing and achieving superior returns with young emerging companies operating in global markets is difficult; it requires smart and detailed due diligence pre the investment, and very active post investment management and specialist business expertise”

Sparkbox has an existing portfolio of 35+ companies, for example Booktrack (music for e-books), Big Little Bang (child’s entertainment/ education game) and Mesynthes (medical wound care). Have a look at our website to learn more.

**Capital Raising Service**

If you need a hand in preparing for investment or would like us to lead your capital raising program, we provide a full service for companies that fit the Sparkbox investment sectors.

**Liquidity Planning / Execution**

Sparkbox offers a full service for those looking to realise shareholder wealth.

**NZVIF Partner**

Sparkbox is an approved NZVIF partner as part of their Seed Co-Investment Program (SCIF) and through this can access co-funding from SCIF alongside other angel investment.
Meet the team...

The Sparkbox team pride themselves on being down to earth kiwi blokes with international experience and a great mix of tenacity and pragmatism to get the job done.

We have the courage for the tough conversations and reputation for powerful insights...

Our ethos is one of pragmatism and action. No big theories, MBAs or PhDs, just people that have done the hard yards growing technology businesses.

We love people and business, but we think/act like shareholders — if it does not add value we will not do it.

Greg Sitters
Venture Principal and CEO
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“Greg has a great eye for growth potential in businesses. He is known for cutting to the chase, asking the tough questions, and getting to the key commercialisation issues quickly”.

Mark Robotham
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“A great talent for seeing the bigger picture and shaping businesses for growth with effective succinct strategy and business communications”.

Edwin Darlow
Venture Senior
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Talent Spotter - Investment screening, analysis and positioning

Dave Husselmann
Venture Principal (Chief Operating Officer)
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“Dave has an amazing ability to process vast amounts of information and create meaning from it in an intelligent manner”

Nigel Lawry
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Rainmaker Extraordinaire

“True business development and sales talent is rare, hard to find and in many cases unaffordable for SMEs”.

Nick Hornstein
Venture Associate
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Business Analyst
Greg Sitters
Venture Principal and CEO

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Professional early stage investor, funds manager and professional director.

Greg is an original member of Sparkbox Venture Group (Sparkbox). Over the last 8 years, he has been key in assisting Sparkbox earn its reputation as NZ’s premier early stage Investment Group.

“Greg has a great eye for growth potential in businesses. He is known for cutting to the chase, asking the tough questions, and getting to the key commercialisation issues quickly”.

Greg’s career has ranged from sales, through to executive management, executive consulting and directorships. He is the recipient of many sales awards, both national and international.

Greg has more than 30 years executive experience, with a particular focus on technology companies and has worked in New Zealand, Australia, Asia and the USA.

He has been involved in setting up and running the ANZ operations of two large Nasdaq listed US computer companies, led major corporate strategic planning programs resulting in major changes to business direction of many companies.

He has an established reputation as an outstanding people manager, with strong business, sales and management skills. He is well known in the Information Technology industry and key industry sectors of Government, Telecommunications, and Banking and Finance.

Also an entrepreneur, he has founded, several consulting and software companies.

Outside business, Greg’s interests are: church and orchestral music, various sporting activities and business reading.

Sparkbox Ventures is New Zealand’s premier early stage investor and advisory business, with an enviable record of success in its broad portfolio of more than 35 companies that it has invested in since 2001. In addition to its investment portfolio, Sparkbox also offers a diverse range of advisory services servicing all levels and ranges of SME businesses.
Dave Husselmann
Venture Principal (Chief Operating Officer)

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Advisor, funding specialist and information systems engineer

Dave is a senior member of the Sparkbox Ventures team.

Dave is an Information Engineer with an extensive IT and executive experience both in NZ and South Africa, including managing project teams of 150 people and budgets in excess of $10M.

He has been involved in a number of business solutions including corporates, high growth franchising (0 -184 outlets), business turnarounds, acquisitions and exits.

“Dave has an amazing ability to process vast amounts of information and create meaning from it in an intelligent manner.”

Along with his advisory responsibilities, Dave heads up the business analysis and research unit for Sparkbox. He has extensive knowledge of NZ technology business and the NZ government Grants eco-systems, which are available to assist NZ businesses.

His breadth of domain expertise includes: biotechnology, medical, engineering, electronic, electrical, structural, ICT, building industry, and manufacturing.

Prior to emigrating to NZ from South Africa, he has over time managed a number of major companies, divisions and branches notably the NCR Corporation (Cape, Natal and Namibia).

He has served on a range of advisory boards and acted as an advisor to the South African Government and various Chambers of Commerce on small business affairs.

In New Zealand he has held consulting, technical, development management and CEO roles.

Prior to joining Sparkbox, he spent 8 years building his own consultancy practice, that concentrated on business support services, including: investment and related functions, information technology, governance, administration, general mentoring and troubleshooting/turnaround work for around 200 clients.

Outside work Dave’s interest include: archery, automation, photography and the arts.

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Mark Robotham
Venture Principle

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Facilitator, Investment and Business Advisor, “simplifying business for success”

Mark is senior member of the Sparkbox Ventures team.

“A great talent for seeing the bigger picture and shaping businesses for growth with effective succinct strategy and business communications”.

Mark brings a balance of capabilities in business, marketing and technical skills that enable him to quickly identify key issues enhancing business growth and stimulating transformational change.

With 18 years executive experience in high growth technology companies, Mark is a well-experienced change agent.

He has extensive hands on experience in growing companies. His career has spanned electronic and software design, through to corporate management, international marketing, business consulting, capital raising and professional speaking.

His career began in electronic product design and manufacture, with thousands of the petrol pumps and POS systems designed by Mark still in use 20 years later. Other key achievements of his career include taking a product from creation to $32M per year revenue, $1.3M turnaround of a failing product line and inspiring 1000’s of business owners with his business workshops.

Prior to joining Sparkbox, he founded a successful consultancy practice targeting high growth companies. These services included: business advisory, business planning, preparation for capital raising and effective marketing in the B2B environment.

Mark has established a strong reputation and following as a professional speaker and business commentator. He has shared many of the key product marketing and planning disciplines missing in NZ businesses on his blog www.succinct.co.nz as well as commenting on topical issues inhibiting growth of NZ companies going global.

Mark has gained a great insight into what makes companies successful or not after screening and working with thousands of companies during his two years as an incubator general manager (Creative HQ Wellington) and four years as general manager of Escalator – NZ National Investment Ready Service. Escalator was a previous government funded programme to prepare companies for investment and raise capital.

Outside work, Mark’s interests are centred on his collection of bicycles and keeping fit.

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Nigel Lawry

Venture Principle

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Rainmaker Extraordinaire

Professional Business Development,
Salesman and Creative Deal Maker-strategist.

“True business development and sales talent is rare, hard to find and in many cases unaffordable for SMEs”.

Nigel is a senior member of the Sparkbox Ventures team.

Nigel is Sparkbox's sales – deal sniper, the “secret weapon of choice” for knocking doors down and closing transformational deals for clients. He is a master at leveraging networks and getting results. Nigel is a born salesman – rainmaker. At twenty something, he was already winning his company millions of dollars worth of sales, happy to live on commission only. Twenty or so years later, Nigel has built a solid track record of helping companies large and small open doors, find and close deals. His experience has ranged from the FMCG world through to technology companies. Intertwoven with

his assignments working for major advertising agencies, such as Saatchi & Saatchi, Nigel has established and sold a variety of start-up ventures.

Through his own sales and marketing companies he pioneered integration of technology and advertising in airports, selling leading edge technology. He also sold and rolled out technology-media solutions into major retailer outlets across Australasia.

Another of Nigel's accomplishments was the establishment and growth of E-phone Ltd to become a $20M+ turnover company that listed on the ASX.

More recently, he has created transformational beachhead sales for start-up companies. An example of this was the closure of a million dollar plus deal with Vodafone for Next Window Ltd, providing them a launch pad for global growth. Next Window is one of NZ’s recent technology success stories, developing and selling gesture recognition technology globally, none of which would be possible without early big sales.

As a true seasoned serial entrepreneur, he has experienced the highs and lows of emerging businesses, with the odd “bloodied nose” to his name. His execution methods are pragmatic and based on real world experience.

In his spare time Nigel is active in the community and serves as a board member for Stepping Stones Recovery Trust (a not for profit focused on drug and alcohol rehabilitation). He is also a top cricket and rugby coach for 7/8 year olds.

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Edwin Darlow
Venture Senior

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Talent Spotter

Investment screening, analysis and positioning

Edwin brings structure, process and humility to the investment process.

Edwin is an “entrepreneurs advocate”, aiding businesses to put their best case forward for investment.

He has a talent for interpreting investment applications and people, uncovering true entrepreneurial potential.

His previous roles include: Consulting Analyst at Deloitte Consulting and President at Otago University Students’ Association (a $3.2M operation with 42 FTE).

In addition to his Sparkbox responsibilities, Edwin is also the co-founder and chairman of EyeDentify Ltd, an award winning online database of known shoplifters used to protect retailers and retail communities.

His logical business analysis skills are balanced out with his human side, refined through his BSc (psychology) and multiple seasons as a professional ski instructor in both the USA and Canada.

Nick Hornstein
Venture Associate

+64 21 112 8089

Business Analyst

Nick is a key support person to the Sparkbox team, providing key market and business analysis; underpinning transformational change in Sparkbox clients businesses and boost client grant applications. He works closely with Callaghan Innovation and Trade & Enterprise around technology grants and training/coaching vouchers.

Nick has a BCom (finance) and LLB (laws) with previous work experience at Chapman Trip - Mergers and Acquisitions team.

He also has experience in “Hawkeye” automated line calling technology, working with the Olympic Organising Committee and international broadcasters.

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