# Bringing ERP to SMES

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Interview with Serdar Karliev, CEO of kpi.com



**Financial IT:** How would you describe kpi.com?

**Serdar Karliev:** We provide a comprehensive enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Our business management software is cloud-based and is offered on a subscription basis. We handle accounting, HR management, payroll, CRM, project management, KPIs, business intelligence, etc. The different modules of our product are fully integrated and can be purchased as a suite or used on a standalone basis.

**Financial IT:** What makes it different from other solutions in the market?

**Serdar Karliev:**Firstly, it is affordable. Cost is a big factor for SMEs and they typically are unable to afford expensive on-desk software that is available from SAP, Microsoft or Oracle. Secondly, we are an all-in-one solution with a full bundle of apps on one single platform: this is something that only a few providers worldwide in our market niche (such as Zoho and Odoo) deliver.

**Financial IT:** What are your current and target markets?

**Serdar Karliev:**Being a SaaS player we sell subscriptions online globally, and have customers in over 40 countries around the

world. Right now, the majority of our clients (over 60%) are based in the Middle East – United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait. Our HQ is in Dubai, which has long been a hub for innovation and technology. In addition, we recently opened two regional sales offices in Riyadh and Muscat. Next year, we have plans to add new territories like Eastern Europe and Central Asia. We are, obviously, keeping focus on the Middle East as our core market but have global ambitions.

**Financial IT:** How long does it take you to on-board a new client?

**Serdar Karliev:**We are very good at support and customer success, providing feedback in minutes, rather than hours or days. Usually, it takes us seconds to activate a new account in the system. However, we have cases when a client asks us to add customized templates or additional features: then, it normally takes no more than couple of weeks, depending on the scope and complexity of what is required. We also offer full implementation support, helping new customers to set up the system, import data and train users.

**Financial IT:** How secure is the system? Does the product comply with GDPR?

**Serdar Karliev:**The data is stored on AWS servers that are world-class in terms of security and uptime. The clients have complete control over their information. As we are planning to expand into Europe (and the UK in particular) we will be looking to make kpi.com compliant with the GDPR standards in the coming year. This is something that several of our clients have asked about. As yet, it is not clear what will be the extent to which the GDPR will apply in the UK if and when that country has left the European Union.

**Financial IT:** What does your product development roadmap looks like?

**Serdar Karliev:**Over the last few years, we have been mainly focused on developing a viable product, testing our market fit, and adding new apps and features. We have fully localized the product for GCC region. As a result, kpi.com has got some very good traction with our sales reps doubling the top line every year. In 2017, we have started working on a new more intuitive user interface and mobile versions of kpi.com that will be launched in 1Q18. Besides, two new apps are on the way which, I believe, customers will value a lot. I’d add that our product is cross-platform, device-agnostic and can easily be integrated with third-party solutions.

**Financial IT:** Tell us about your marketing priorities.

**Serdar Karliev:**So far, the digital advertising was mostly limited to the Middle East. From next year, we will expand the marketing efforts globally, including SEO, PPC, social media, trade events, reseller and referral programs. We are very proud that over the recent past, a lot of our new sales have come as a result of referrals from existing clients.

**Financial IT:** Please identify what you see as the big changes of the last year or so, and what you expect for the coming 12 months.

**Serdar Karliev:**I think there are several key trends we need to keep an eye on. One is that usage of B2B software will increase

dramatically among SMEs as applications become more user friendly and affordable. The second is that adoption for cloud and

mobile solutions will improve. Also, new regulatory and consumer demands will continue driving the innovation in our industry. Finally, competition and maturity of the SaaS market might soon lead to a period of consolidation in our space.

*Serdar Karliev joined the company as investor and senior executive in early 2017. He is former investment banker, venture capitalist and entrepreneur with experience in the UK, South Africa and Russia.* Original article: [FinancialIT](https://financialit.net/pdf/view/22286" \t "_blank) 