



BEST PRACTICES ON ASSISTING SMEs WITH THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

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UEAPME

the European crafts and SME employers' organisation



UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing the interests of European crafts, trades and SMEs at EU level. UEAPME is a non-profit seeking and non-partisan organisation and is a recognised European Social Partner.

As the European SME umbrella organisation, UEAPME incorporates 67 member organisations from 34 countries consisting of national cross-sectorial SME federations, European branch federations and other associate members, which support the SME family. UEAPME represents about 12 million enterprises, which employ around 55 million people across Europe.

UEAPME has collected a number of best practices which were initiated and put into action by member organisations to assist SMEs with the digital transformation.

UEAPME and their member organisations have already taken up the change in business and society towards a digital transformation some time ago. With the rapid increase of the digital transformation, the actions and practices offered by UEAPME member organisations to SMEs in their countries and work fields grew not only in number but also in quality.

In this brochure UEAPME would like to present just a few of these best practices.

1	APCMA
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ABOUT: **Assembly of French Chambers of Crafts**

APCMA, through their network of local chambers of crafts, provides four services to allow their members to increase competitiveness, efficiency and proximity to their customers through digital technology. The four services focus on **digital training, digital diagnosis, creation of mobile applications (apps) and creation of innovation poles.**

Digital training delivered by consular networks

The network of chambers of crafts offers craft companies various **training courses** on digital tools in four main areas: computer, digital, internet and social networks. The aim is to teach companies how to create a website, do SEO, retouch a digital photo or use smartphones at their full potential. APCMA also puts efforts into making sure that future artisans are aware of the need to integrate digital tools, from the very start of the business to the administrative and commercial organisation of the company.

Digital diagnosis

Chambers of crafts offer personalised **digital diagnostics** for craft companies. In this context, a counsellor visits the company, **carries out a "digital inventory" and advise a digital strategy.** The format of this diagnosis and advice can vary according to the local chambers. For example, the Paris Chamber offers companies a digital inventory and formulates recommendations of evolution and investment through the development of an action plan.

Development of mobile applications (apps) to integrate small enterprises into the digital market

APCMA and the network of Chambers worked on the **development of different mobile applications** to bring together entrepreneurs and apprentices in the digital world. Moreover, APCMA created the application "Choose my craftsman" that lists the artisans based on the geolocation of the user. The local chamber CMA Aquitaine has created "Aqui artisan", an app that communicates relevant news to artisans of the region.

The creation of innovation poles for artisans

These **clusters are an interface between professional organisations, innovation support structures, centers and research laboratories.** They make it possible to develop synergies and cooperation, both on the digital front and on innovation in general.

Finally, APCMA has also contributed to the development of a handbook on digital practices in crafts:
« [Compendium of good digital practices in crafts](#) ».



ABOUT: National Confederation of Italian SMEs

CNA supports SMEs in the digital transformation by engaging in different actions, such as being a partner in specific portals, organising events on the subject and giving specific advice on support structures to small companies.

In the efforts to support SMEs in digitalisation, CNA has promoted a long-term project called **DIGITALY**. The project has the aim to connect small businesses, support them in digitalisation and encourage the transfer of knowledge and tools to spread digital culture. It has involved more than **3,000 companies from north to south in 2017**.

As part of the **National Plan for Industry 4.0**, CNA has also activated a project aimed at creating a **network of Digital Innovation Hubs** among the territorial realities of the Confederation. 55 provinces have already joined the project. They have initiated communication campaigns and information activities on the topic of Industry 4.0, reaching thousands of companies with different methods and communication tools.

Moreover, at local level CNA offices guide companies in understanding their technological needs, give advice on investment decisions, provide information on support tools and technical advice on the requirements to have access to the support structures that favour the digital transformation.

Over 70 conferences and seminars on digital issues have been organised at different levels, national, regional and provincial, involving over 2,500 companies.

CNA also reacted positively to the initiative of the **"Growing in digital"** launched by the Italian Ministry of Labour, activated to promote the employability of young people who do not study and do not work through the acquisition of digital skills, investing in their skills to empower businesses in the Internet world.

CNA is focusing its efforts on qualification and digital skills considering that **the human factor will be decisive within a 4.0 company in which the central element is the flexibility of production**. As small companies increasingly need to have appropriate trained workers with specific skills, CNA underlines the importance of technical, scientific and engineering courses, and promotes new forms of education such as alternation school – work in order to train the appropriate digital technical profiles.



ABOUT

Italian association representing SMEs and crafts.

Following the decision of the Italian government to launch the programme “Industry 4.0” to invest in digital development, Confartigianato Imprese also decided to develop a **programme of information, education and service providing to their members**. The programme could take advantage of the right momentum as the incentives scheme set out in “Industry 4.0” have convinced some SMEs that were more reluctant to start the process of digitalisation. The President for Digital Affairs and a newly created Steering Committee composed by artisans and Confartigianato staff members oversee the whole programme.

Within the framework of this new programme, Confartigianato created an [online portal](#) aimed at regrouping all the information and initiatives.

One of the initiatives within this programme is the setting up of **Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH)** that act as a first contact point for SMEs that want to acquire new skills, information, and advice on how to digitalise their business, and know the possibilities of “Industry 4.0”. DIHs are run at local level by experts able to give advice on where to find the most suited competences and solutions.

The most noteworthy example of such investments is Confartigianato Varese - ASARVA, that three years ago opened Faberlab within the premises of the association. Faberlab has performed a crucial role in providing **education to schools and companies** in all the aspect of digital transformation, with a particular focus of **digital fabrication**. In addition to local and regional hubs, local offices of Confartigianato also give direct assistance on e-commerce and organised ad hoc courses on digital transformation and specific services in addition to development of educational material.

Moreover, Confartigianato contributed to the production of **ad hoc Guides** to be distributed to local associations and associates, for example the published “Practical guide to Industry 4.0 for artisans and SMEs” in collaboration with the University of Brescia and a “Practical guide for Industry 4.0 compliance” in collaboration with Conforma (The Italian Association of Certification Bodies). In addition, a national road show took place in 2017 through the organisation of 50 public events at local level to discuss the benefits of Industry 4.0 and digital transformation with member companies, by giving direct examples.

Finally, Confartigianato Imprese continues to **collaborate with institutional actors** and bodies to ensure the proper resources and instruments, easy to implement, in order to favour SMEs in the taking up of the digital opportunities.



ABOUT

French confederation of small and medium-sized enterprises.

CPME contributes to helping their members' digitalisation through three different actions: **online tools, specific internal working groups and dedicated information, institutional collaboration.**

Concerning **online tools**, CPME launched [EvalNumPME](#) to help business owners assess their digital maturity. It is an online, free self-diagnosis to assess the numerical maturity of a company.

Fourteen questions allow business owners to know in a few clicks their margin of progress in the digitalisation of their business. These questions, based on the uses, are divided by topic (customer relationship, offer, management of the company, models of value creation).

Moreover, CPME is the co-founder of the platform www.cybermalveillance.gouv.fr that gives information on how to protect from cybercrime acts and how to help victims from these cybercrime acts. On the platforms, more general tools and guides are also available.

CPME is also member of the platform [EducNum](#) which has the objective of educating young people about digitalisation.

When it comes to **internal specific forums and useful information**, CPME has created the following:

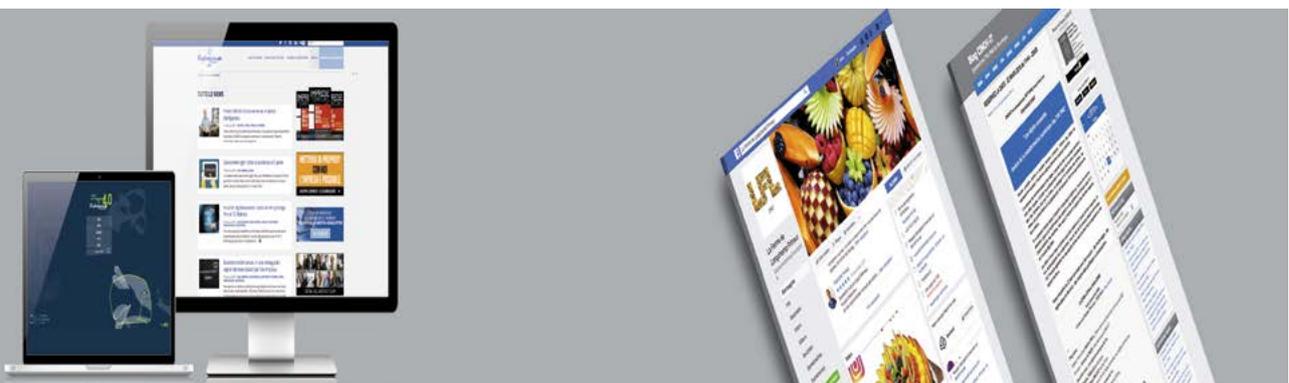
- a sub-committee "digital economy" with three working groups on digital transition, cybersecurity and startup;
- a dedicated website : <http://cien.cpme.fr/>
- two co-written handbooks on digitalisation: [guide on how to choose a telecom offer](#) & [guide on best practices in digitalisation](#).

In addition, CPME has organised several events about digitalisation.

Concerning the **institutional dimension**, CPME works closely with administrations and authorities as DGE, ANSSI, ARCEP, "Conseil national du numérique" to ensure adequate tools, resources and policy for SMEs.

Through its trophies "SMEs, succeed with the digital!", rewarding companies that have successfully completed their digital transition, CPME proves that **digital technology is not only a prerogative of tech companies but of all kind of SMEs too.**

Indeed, one of the winners has been La Ferme de Longchamp, a seller of fruit and local products that increased its activity, thanks to its presence in social media and its offer for customers to order through Facebook.



5	ESEE
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ABOUT

Greek SME association representing entrepreneurs in the commercial sector.

ESEE makes several contributions to help its members with digitalisation. These actions include the **'FeelSafe' initiative regarding the security of online transactions**, as well as the provision of **access to their free website builder**.

The **FeelSafe@e-commerce** project is a cooperative effort between ESEE, the Greek Police, the Department of Electronic Crime, and the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. The objective of this programme is for these organisations to come together for the systematic, scientific study of online risks. This platform informs both entrepreneurs and consumers about risks of online transactions, and how to perform these transactions safely. There is a **FeelSafe app**, providing instructions on preventing electronic fraud based on three axes: electronic entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs, electronic entrepreneurship and employees, and electronic commerce. There is also a complaints hotline to the Contemporary Internet Threats Management Centre, for which specialised officers of the Cyber Crime Unit provide information and handle cases/threats that the citizens and enterprises face in electronic commerce.

The **free website builder** gives entrepreneurs much needed help in enhancing their crucial online presence. ESEE cooperated with Industry Disruptors-Game Changers (ID-GC) to create this website builder, which also provides a **step-by-step guide for retailers looking to go online**. The builder takes into account not only the basic necessities of website building, but also elements of branding and marketing. This ensures an effective and aesthetically appealing website for entrepreneurs looking to build an online presence. This service is completely free-of-charge and users can rely on training manuals and ESEE's collaborators.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Czu48xQrTpg>



6	OZS
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ABOUT Chamber of crafts and small businesses of Slovenia

OZS engaged in the digital transformation by participating in the [Slovenian Digital Coalition](#). The coalition comprises stakeholders from trade and industry, science, education, public administration, public sector, local government and civil society in view of collectively supporting Slovenia's development and the implementation of the Digital Slovenia 2020 strategy. Within the coalition, OZS is part of the partnership for digitalisation of economy. The main activities of OZS are **promotion, training and raising competences of SMEs in the field of digitalisation**.

In addition to this, OZS complements its work by following the **institutional dimension**. In its contact with the government, OZS asks for the proper financial measures and incentives to help SMEs digitalise and guarantee a more effective digitalisation of small companies. Initiatives such as digital credit or digital voucher, following also the example of other European countries, have been proposed.



ABOUT

Employer organisation representing SMES and self-employed in Catalonia.

PIMEC is undertaking and supporting many initiatives in the field of digitalisation. For instance, the organisation offers different technological services to its SMEs such as **pimefactura**, **digital certificates**, **online IT management**, and **PIMEC cybersecurity**.

As for **digital certificates**, PIMEC has been the first employer's organisation in Spain certified for issuing digital certificates. This service consists of creating the online identity of the company. **The PIMEC certificates are handled in secure formats or cryptographic tokens.**

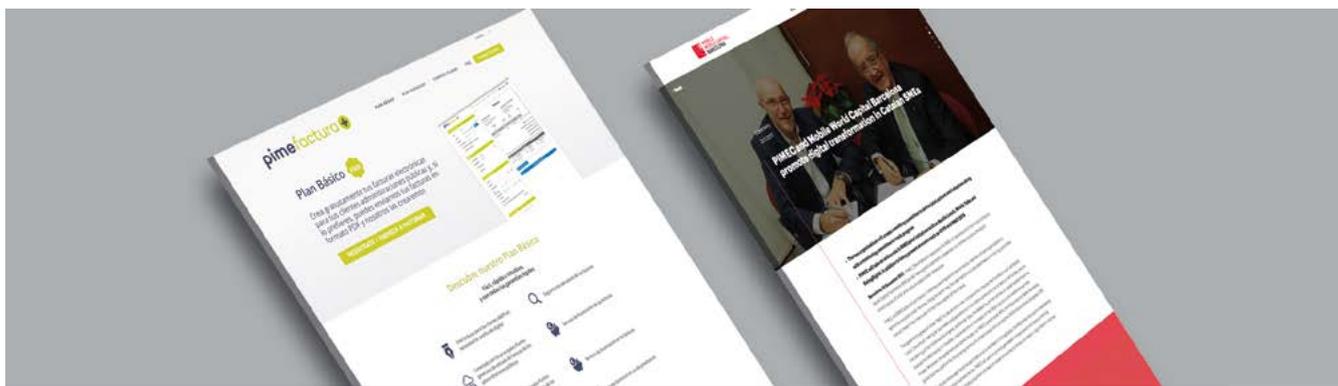
With regard to **PIMEC Cyber security**, PIMEC is offering its SMEs the possibility to contact the first 'cyber-alarm', adapted to the needs of SMEs and self-employed and connected 24/7.

With regard to **Pimefactura**, PIMEC promotes the digital invoice and offers its member companies a free basic package and another advance package, for which companies have to pay. This last one offers an unlimited number of digital invoices as well as the technical support from experts. Pimefactura is a shared Project between PIMEC and a technological company **ValidatedID**, specialised in solutions of digital identity.

Another service that PIMEC offers to its SMEs is **the Digital Transformation Programme**. This consists first of all in carrying out an audit in order to assess the degree of digitalisation of the company. Secondly, the design of a suitable digital project adapted to the needs of the SMEs. Last but not least, the experts assist the SMEs in the implementation of the project. The aim of the Digital Transformation Programme is to facilitate the digital transformation of the SMEs.

In December 2017, PIMEC signed a **cooperation agreement** with the Foundation Mobile World Capital Barcelona in order to help digitalise SMEs.

The agreement opens the door to PIMEC's presence in global business platforms, such as '4 Years From Now' (4YFN, the start-up business platform) and 'Mobile World Capital Barcelona' (enabling start-ups, investors and corporations to connect and launch new ventures together). PIMEC will also encourage the active participation of its members in GoingDigital, the MWCcapital educational experience programme aimed at business owners. PIMEC will use the content generated in these sessions to develop training courses with the aim of introducing SMEs to the key concepts in digitalisation and new business models.





ABOUT

Belgian SMEs association in Flanders and Brussels.

In terms of assisting SMEs with **digitalisation**, UNIZO implements a variety of practices. These practices include, in addition to events planning and traditional local consulting, the **UNIZO Ondernemers Forum**, **retail outreaches** and a **comprehensive 'Future Forward' plan for SMEs**.

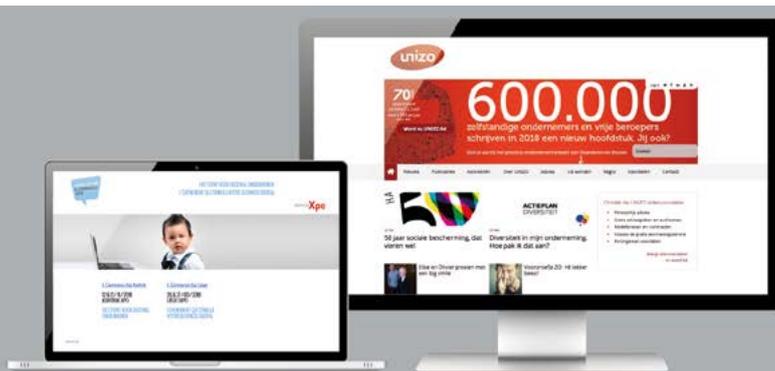
The **UNIZO Ondernemers Forum** allows small groups of entrepreneurs to come together and discuss topics related to digitalisation. These topics include digital marketing, e-commerce, data & privacy, content marketing, video marketing, e-recruitment, social selling.

UNIZO's retail department actively works on making SME-retailers ready for e-commerce and multichannel selling. This is achieved by providing expert and individual advice using three formats:

- Expert days for short advice sessions.
- 'Commercial inspiration' for more intense and thorough guidance. Through individual coaching, entrepreneurs were encouraged to reflect on the future of their physical business, the impact of digital innovations and social trends.
- **E-Commerce Expo**: a business fair focused on digital entrepreneurship for retailers.

UNIZO's 'Future Forward' Plan aims to create a "future-proof" form of entrepreneurship. This programme emphasizes a focus on three pillars of entrepreneurship: purpose, people, and performance. The four actions for this plan include:

- **Future Forward Events**, planned to inspire and connect entrepreneurs. Pioneers and experts from various domains will pitch innovations and be available for networking.
- **Future labs**, for which entrepreneurs from various sectors will be brought together in groups to learn from each other's best practices and to develop possible future scenarios for their type of business or on specific business-related topics.
- **The Future Forward Scan**, an online scan giving entrepreneurs a good idea of the current status of their business on various aspects of future forward entrepreneurship. It will provide them with a list of priorities to help them strengthen and innovate the company's business strategy, management and performance.
- **Future Forward consultation meetings**, the entrepreneurs' results of the scan will be analysed by UNIZO's local advisors. During a one-on-one conversation, the entrepreneurs can discuss a number of extra aspects after which a short personal roadmap will be provided for further follow-up by focused experts. UNIZO aims to connect with external companies, advisors, consultants that can help entrepreneurs reach their "future forward" goals in the most efficient and effective way possible.



ABOUT

Austrian federal economic chamber representing the Austrian SMEs and crafts sector.

WKÖ launched “SME DIGITAL”, a new **digitalisation programme** in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs that provides support to SMEs in grasping and using the business opportunities arising from digital transformation.

Firstly, “SME DIGITAL” offers the possibility to do an “online status check”, to determine how digital the business is. With this **online analysis tool**, companies can carry out a quick first status check to identify their respective digital starting position.

Moreover, the programme includes **financial support, consulting services, events, webinars, analysis tools and training programmes**. “SME DIGITAL” covers a vast array of digital topics such as:

- online-shops, social media and electronic commerce;
- smart products, service design, electronic invoices, production 4.0, 3-D printing, use of big data, crowd sourcing and crowd funding;
- CRM-tools, electronic recruiting, Near Field Communication, electronic banking, Data security, IT security, cybercrime.

The entry-level **consulting service** analyses digital trends, opportunities and risks for a company. Topics that have not yet been the focus of the company, but which are relevant, are addressed. The outcome is summarised in a digitalisation map. At the end of the analysis, the company gets an overview of possible ways for implementation. The analysis of potential is conducted by certified digitalisation consultants and especially recommended for smaller companies for which the service is free of charge. Companies can also apply for financial support.

Given the absolute importance of digital expertise, the programme financially supports **training** and further education to increase **digital skills** of entrepreneurs and employees alike.

The total project volume is 7 million EUR for 2017-2018 and the operational implementation started in September 2017.



ABOUT German Federation of Skilled Crafts

ZDH is responsible for several practices helping SMEs with digitalisation. These include being responsible for the coordination between the government and craft organisations for the **Skilled Craft IT Competence Centre**, acting as a **partner in the Global Design Thinking Week**, and also cooperating with Germany's Federal Office for **Security in Information Technology (BSI)** on protecting SMEs in cyberspace.

The Skilled Craft IT Competence Centre, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs (BMWi), is a national network of competence centres providing local craft companies with access to IT know-how specifically tailored to their needs. From each of the four regions, a craft organisation acts as the 'IT showcase leader'. These leaders make use of both on-site walkthroughs of IT topics for interested companies, as well as transferring competencies into the region to allow the skills to filter down in other transfer structures.

They also play a leadership role in promoting the five subject-matter focuses, which include:

- expanding a company's offerings through IT-based business models,
- process management as a way of professionalising company processes,
- using new production and automation technologies within a company,
- using new forms of ICT within a company,
- possibilities to digitalise in the construction sector with a special focus on "Building Information Modelling (BIM)".

The Global Design Thinking Week is an initiative taking place at the Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI) School of Design Thinking. This event brings together students from 20 countries to work out digitalisation issues specific to craft sectors. Teams are multidisciplinary, allowing them to have a broad range of ideas which will be able to creatively help SMEs and crafts. Students propose solutions which are tailored to the users and provide help in a variety of different put forward. This event has eight co-partners, including ZDH and the Competence Centre for Digital Crafts, an organisation which supports economic and technical potentials of the craft industry during the digitalisation transformation.

ZDH's cooperation with the Security in Information Technology (BSI) is meant to support SMEs in defending themselves against cyber-attacks, to create cyber-safety awareness and organise specific events. The cooperation also resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. With this platform, ZDH will be able to introduce the SME perspective in cyber security. Additionally, the BSI will now be able to more effectively support SMEs and crafts in cyber security competencies.







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