

## VIRTUAL 'CONSULTANT' HELPS BUSINESSES GROW ON A BUDGET



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Professional services rarely come cheap, which is why we've seen so many lower-budget alternatives emerge in recent years. Late last year we covered [PPT Salon](#), for example, and just recently we came across [iCanPilot](#), which aims to guide businesses through projects the way a consultant would, but without the associated hefty fee. Authored in conjunction with well-known business consultants including Kay Plantes and Mohan Sawhney, iCanPilot is consulting software that's designed to guide users step-by-step through a business growth project such as creating a new business plan or developing a value proposition. Users begin by downloading the iCanPilot software and conducting an initial work session with their team, following the guidance of the software. The software then takes the team through every subsequent step of their project, including assessment, brainstorming and creating a final blueprint for change. Assignments are given between project sessions using materials and templates provided, and if questions arise an online iCanPilot customer community is available for exchanging ideas. All in all, the process takes about the same amount of time as it would with a real-life consultant, Minnesota-based iCanPilot says, but at a fraction of the cost. Pricing is USD 950 per project. Whether through crowdsourcing approaches or simply lower-cost, tech-enabled alternatives, small and medium-sized businesses have increasing options for meeting their business needs. (Related: [Outsourcing beta invitations for web and desktop apps](#).) Spotted by: Tomasz Rudolf

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