



Could a side business give your funds a cash injection?

# Tradies are the latest to benefit from the disruption of the sharing economy

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WHEN builder Shaun Denton had a job that needed a forklift, he was faced with a choice: buy a second hand one for \$7000, even though he would only need it once a year, or pay \$25,000 in labour hire to get the job done.

He chose the cheaper option, but was then lumped with a piece of machinery that would cost a packet to be kept in storage.

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That was when he came across Mobilise, a business-to-business marketplace where peers could hire out equipment to each other; similar to an Airbnb for tradies.

“I listed my forklift to earn money from a machine that I had no use for at the time,” Mr Denton said. “Within a week I had hired it out for \$700 per week ... a return on investment of 10 per cent.”

A residential builder since 1986, Mr Denton had accumulated plenty of equipment and hand tools over time, much of which sat idly in storage.

Mobilise launched this year with the goal of monetising assets that were lying around, said general manager Rob Rattray.

“We started with tools and machinery ... there is a propensity to rent these kinds of assets,” he said. “Some of the most popular items like road plates and diggers are versatile and robust. Ladders are very popular too.”

Mobilise aims to be around 20 to 30 per cent cheaper than established hire companies, while also establishing trust.



📷 Shaun Denton covered 10 per cent of the cost of his forklift in one week.

“We’ve built into the platform ways to monitor declarations and license requirements,” Mr Rattray said. “Owners need to declare when a listing needs a license or other qualification and our rental process then requires the renter to enter a license number.”

Mr Rattray said insurance also covers theft or damage up to a limit of \$50,000 and the platform does not deal in roadbound vehicles.

Small business owner Wes Quick was the renter who hired Mr Denton’s forklift. Mr Quick’s business Expella imports and sells ventilation products and he was preparing for a major delivery period that would require an extra piece of machinery.

“This was by far our biggest product launch,” Mr Quick said. “Spending \$770 on a fork lift for a week when several containers are delivered is a small price to pay to ensure the business runs smoothly.”

Business to business equipment hire is just one of many industries being disrupted by the sharing economy, according to co-founder of The Sharing Hub Justin Hales.

“I’ve seen farming equipment, where farmers don’t use their tractors all the time so share them instead; in education, people are providing services to teach or train their peers,” he said. “Anywhere under-utilised assets can be shared effectively for income.”



📷 Wes Quick hired the forklift to help ease pressure during a busy product launch.

Mr Hales’ own company Camplify provides campervans for domestic travellers wanting flexible holidays. He recognised the opportunity when planning a roadtrip several years ago and finding nothing suited his needs.

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“The sharing economy goes beyond just utilising equipment and spaces,” he said. “Anywhere big corporates have a hold on a market for a long time and aren’t able to service their customers at a level they need are ripe for disruption.”