your business

Inspiration | Advice | Opportunities

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Top tips for your website

MAXIMISE THIS POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL

How to:

- Build a buzz
- Lead from within
- Draft a JV contract
- Sidestep tech silos

THE FISH & CHIP CO
FRESH, HOT & A LOT

This Business In A Box franchise is the perfect catch for you!

Smart pricing strategies

SET YOUR PRICE-POINT FOR MAXIMUM PROFITS

The science of storytelling

Take your branding from *'meh'* to *YEAH!*

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP
START UP FOR UNDER 400K

CULTIVATE THE 'OWNER' MINDSET
EMPOWER YOUR EMPLOYEES

5 RISK TRENDS AFFECTING SMMEs
MAKE DECISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

BUSINESS BOOKS UP FOR GRABS!

APRIL/MAY 2021


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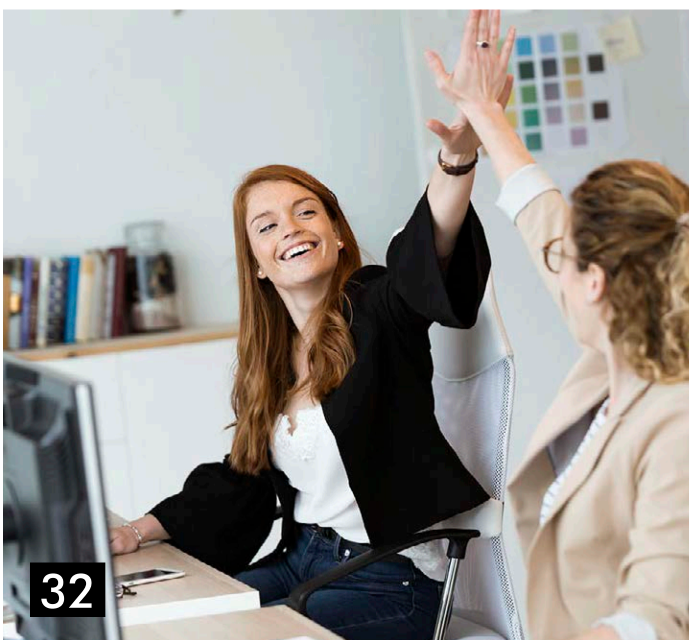
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Accelerating the African tech ecosystem

FinTech, InsureTech, AgriTech, eCommerce, HealthTech, and CleanTech are not only solving some of Africa's most pressing problems. African tech startups are also currently contributing about $180-billion to the continent's economy, and this is set to reach 5.2% of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2025.

To develop the potential of startups driving the Internet economy, Telecel Group, in collaboration with Startupbootcamp AfriTech, have launched the ASIP Accelerator Program - a three-month virtual initiative aimed at helping disruptive Pan-African tech startups scale. The program helps startups achieve 18-24 months of growth in just three months.

Ten startups will be selected to participate in the Program that will give them access to expert-led masterclasses covering scaling fundamentals; from the business model canvas, to lean methodology, to fundraising. They will also receive tailored mentorship, be connected with venture capitalists and angel investors from around the world and also get to meet the leading corporates in their industries for pilot projects and partnership opportunities.

The successful startups will receive €15 000 in cash and have access to over €500 000 in exclusive partner deals from leading technology providers such as Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud, HubSpot, and SendGrid, amongst others.

Twenty-nine startups completed the first Startupbootcamp AfriTech Program and 90% of participating startups are still operating and scaling at impressive rates. What's more, 40% have raised follow-on rounds of funding, with the average increase in valuation being 10x since their Demo Day.

The completely virtual, Pan-African Program kicks off in July 2021. Applications are now open and will remain so until 14 May. Read more at www.startupbootcamp.org/accelerator/afritech-asip/.

PayFast sees 412% growth in QR code payments

One year since the country entered a nationwide lockdown, digital payments have become the norm for convenient and safe transactions while shopping in person and online. Demonstrating this trend, online payment gateway PayFast saw a 412% increase in transactions made with Masterpass between March 2020 and February 2021.

The company processed an 83% increase in total payment volumes and registered over 40 000 new merchant accounts since the start of lockdown last year, compared to the same period in 2019.

"Our data indicates that the appetite for businesses to move online hasn't slowed down. Digital payments are increasingly becoming the standard for retail in our current climate, with almost seven million users on our payment engine over the past 12 months," says Jonathan Smit, Managing Director and Founder of PayFast. The company also reported a 143% increase in mobile payments as more consumers shop online using their smartphones.

Some of the fastest new growth industries include online alcohol sales, bakeries with home delivery services, and ecommerce stores catering for pet supplies and jewellery, all of which have grown by between 1 000 and 3 000%. This is based on the number of transactions from new merchants who signed up and started transacting for the first time over the lockdown period, compared to the previous year.

"More of these businesses are selling online directly to their consumers, due to lockdown restrictions and the limitations of using indirect distribution channels. Considering the growth we recorded last year, we are confident that we will continue to see the digitisation of payments across all industries," concludes Smit.

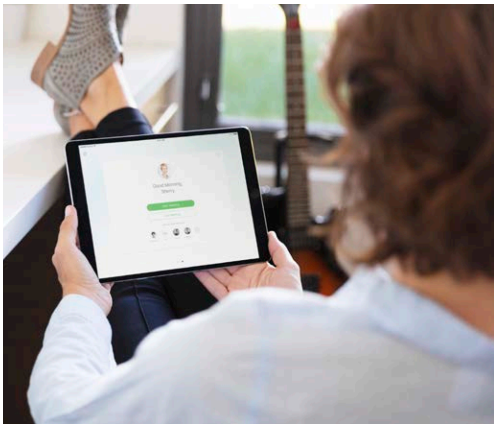
Build a workforce and workplace, that's ready for anything

Pay the way that best suits your business. Axiz and Cisco's business resiliency solutions enable you to adapt and thrive in that ever changing reality we call the future.

Rise to new levels of business resilience by enabling your workforce to get work done from anywhere. From field workers to developers, remote contact centre agents and executives, Cisco Secure Remote Workforce Solutions deliver the agility, security, and resiliency necessary to empower your organisation. Axiz can help you optimise each worker's unique experience for performance, cost, and security, by extending enterprise-class operations to the home.

Cisco Secure Remote Workforce Solutions are designed and built for change, at any scale, across your organisation. It's time to reimagine and redesign your workforce by transforming how you connect your people, secure your organisation and automate your processes. Our flexible payment options bring all solutions within reach, no matter your budget or needs.

Thriving in a distributed work model requires the right technology. Seamless collaboration makes it easy to get things done regardless of location. Smart technology that ensures worker safety and wellness in the workplace. And secure network connectivity that scales to serve thousands of users and devices.



Facilitate a safe return to the office and power a secure and seamless distributed-work model with Axiz and Cisco. From monitoring room capacity levels to zero-touch meetings, Cisco Trusted Workplace Solutions can help you safely connect your people, secure your organisation, and deliver operational consistency across your business.

Microsoft's Work Trend Index uncovers seven hybrid work trends

Microsoft announced the findings from its first-annual Work Trend Index, *The Next Great Disruption is Hybrid Work – Are We Ready?* The report uncovers seven hybrid work trends and outlines findings from a study of more than 30 000 people in 31 countries and analyses trillions of aggregate productivity and labour signals across Microsoft 365 and LinkedIn. It also includes perspectives from experts who have studied collaboration, social capital and space design at work for decades.

The report indicates that business leaders should resist the urge to see hybrid work as business as usual. It will require the rethinking of long-held assumptions.

"The choices you make today will impact your organisation for years to come. It's a moment that requires clear vision and a growth mindset," comments Jared Spataro, Corporate Vice President for Microsoft 365. "These decisions will impact everything from how you shape culture, to how you attract and retain talent, to how you can better foster collaboration and innovation."

The findings suggest that we are on the cusp of a workplace disruption:

- 73 percent of workers surveyed want flexible remote work options to continue.
- Remote job postings on LinkedIn increased more than 5X during the pandemic.
- Over 40% of the global workforce is considering leaving their employer this year and 46% are planning to move now that they can work remotely.

In short, addressing flexible work will impact who stays, who goes, and who joins a company.

The report uncovers these work trends as we enter this new era of work:

- Flexible work is here to stay.
- Leaders are out of touch with employees and need a wake-up call.
- High productivity is masking an exhausted workforce.
- Gen Z is at risk and will need to be re-energised.
- Shrinking networks are endangering innovation.
- Authenticity will spur productivity and wellbeing.
- Talent is everywhere in a hybrid work world.

In addition to uncovering what's at stake with the future of work, the Work Trend Index identifies five strategies for business leaders as they begin to make the necessary shift:

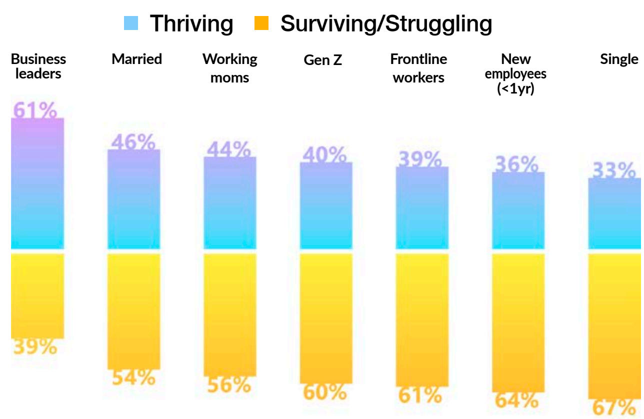
- Create a plan to empower people for extreme flexibility.
- Invest in space and technology to bridge the physical and digital worlds.
- Combat digital exhaustion from the top.
- Prioritise rebuilding social capital and culture.
- Rethink employee experience to compete for the best and most diverse talent.

"During this pandemic we've observed a swift acceleration of certain pre-COVID trends. But perhaps one of the most exciting trends is this rise in remote work. As opportunity is democratised with remote work and talent movement, we'll see a spread of skills across the country. This is the time for business leaders to take the opportunity to access to different skills and talent not previously available to them," concludes Karin Kimbrough, Chief Economist at LinkedIn.

66%
of leaders say they are considering redesigning office space for hybrid working.

73%
of employees want flexible remote work options to stay.

67%
of employees want more in-person work or collaboration post-pandemic.



JSE tops G20 for gender balance on boards

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) has the best gender balance on boards of any developing country in the G20, according to the "Stock Exchanges Gender Equality" analysis report released on International Women's Day on 8 March. Issued by the Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) Initiative, it looks at the boards from the top 100 companies by market capitalisation on each of the G20's major 22 stock exchanges.

"We are honoured to be recognised, and the JSE remains committed to promoting gender equality at all levels of the organisation. We should acknowledge, that while this is a step in the right direction, significant work remains to be done in the global quest for gender equality," says JSE Group CEO, Leila Fourie.

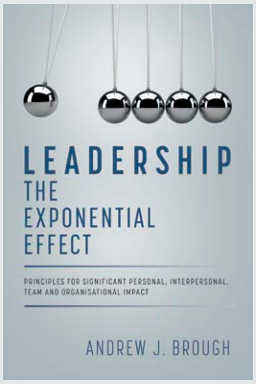
Other key findings include:

- Women hold 20% of board seats. Women hold 5.5% of Chair and 3.5% of CEO positions in G20 markets.
- Euronext Paris has the highest percentage of women on boards (44.3%).
- Shenzhen Stock Exchange has the most female CEOs (11 out of the top 100 companies) of any G20 market.
- Australian Stock Exchange has the most female Chair-persons (14 out of the top 100 companies).
- 6 out of 22 markets have rules requiring a mandatory minimum number of women on corporate boards.

"The SSE report highlights the high quality of female leadership across the world. In particular, South Africa is home to a number of highly regarded female leaders who actively support gender equality and represent our country at a very senior level," concludes Fourie.

ON OUR BOOKSHELF

Leadership: The Exponential Effect



Leadership: The Exponential Effect is Dr Andrew J Brough's cumulative expression of 25 years of experience working in the areas of leadership development in more than 80 countries. Brough is a global leadership and organisational development and e-learning specialist, professional speaker, lecturer, facilitator, and conference moderator. He is the founder of the Brough Leadership Institute and has worked with thousands of leaders in many Fortune 500 companies and businesses, governments, and non-profit organisations.

The leadership principles examined in this book apply equally in the business context, government and the not-for-profit sectors. It approaches leadership from the basis of strong academic research supported with interviews from corporate and organisational leaders who share their stories around the 12 leadership principles that are covered.

Leadership: The Exponential Effect explores the relationship between self-leadership (leading me), leading others (leading them), leading teams (leading us) and leading for results (developing solutions). The book is divided into four parts and attempts to answer the following key questions:

- What does effective leadership look like?
- What is the relationship between self-leadership, leading others, leading teams and leading for results?
- What do organisations need to do to create a sustainable, high-quality leadership development pipeline?

The book is available locally on www.publisher.co.za (paperback copies); theexponentialeffect.com and all good local bookstores, and also on Amazon (paperback and e-book). RRP R325 (in-store, South Africa); R295 via Publisher.co.za (courier costs excluded); $21.52 via Amazon (international users); $9.99 for the e-book via Amazon for South African and international shoppers (tax excluded).


Dr Andrew J Brough

2 Copies of *Leadership: The Exponential Effect* are up for grabs.

WIN

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► **Or email your name and contact number to competitions@bizmag.co.za with 'Leadership' in the subject line.**

Entries close 30 April 2021

Pricing tactics

Effective pricing is a combination of art and science.

Price is a section of business strategy that has a direct financial bearing on any business. Although other elements influence consumer choice, price is the ultimate factor facing consumers when choosing a product. Price is, therefore, the final barrier or motivation to purchase.

With its massive influence over consumer decision, price and pricing strategy are vital to any business. Pricing is also a critical element of the marketing mix that generates revenue, which means that costs and pricing strategy must remain flexible and ready to accommodate changes in the market if businesses want to maximise profit.

The fundamentals of pricing strategy

As a strategy, businesses can optimise the price for short-term earnings (by discounting products to achieve rapid revenue growth) or carefully outline pricing for long-term purposes (by strengthening a brand reputation or evading a price war with your competition). When you are designing a price strategy, it is often far more complex than just testing prices to see what works.

■ ***Cost-based pricing***

Cost-based pricing consolidates the cost of all the elements required in production, distribution, sales, and support, with a mark-up. This pricing model needs to consider volume shifts (i.e., cost changes with volume), as they can dramatically influence the final product's actual cost. Often cost-based pricing relies on a basic mark-up without regarding the consumer's perception or positioning.

■ ***Competitor-based pricing***

The price point in competitor-based marketing is set based on what existing competitors charge. Businesses often use it in mass product categories or identify gaps in pricing ranges as potential segments (for example, there is soap on supermarket shelves at R5 and R15, so your price is R10). A danger in this form of pricing is that it can lead to marketing myopia, because the focus moves onto the competitors and not the consumer.

■ ***Value-based pricing***

Value-based pricing examines the product from a customer point of view. This pricing strategy tries to understand what customers feel is valuable and to align the cost accordingly. It is an ideal pricing strategy for differentiated products or new markets.

Managing price perception

Most consumers are not aware of how much something costs to produce. They anchor much of their decision-making in their perception of value and the cost/benefit equation in their minds. As consumer marketers, we must understand the power of perception and use it to build a robust pricing strategy.

Price is an emotional experience rather than a logical one, with factors like affordability, desire and fear clouding how consumers decide. Customers often rationalise purchase decisions after buying as justification, especially with first-time purchases. You, therefore, cannot explore a pricing strategy without taking the behavioural psychology of the consumer into account.

A business can also change customer perception of price with the pricing choices it shows them. By offering three options and indicating the best or most popular choice, our framing does two things: it reduces the amount of thinking when trying to make the decision, and provides the opportunity to move them to a slightly higher price-point by limiting the choices that they have available.

At its core, pricing is more complex and prone to variation than is possible to cover in one go, but it is a concept that is vital to understand the modern-day marketing landscape.

**Nevo Hadas is a Partner at dY/dX, a digital transformation consultancy.
www.dydx.digital**

MAKE A CLEAN START.
OPEN
GET #BACKTOBUSINESS.
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I like it, *but...*

When it comes to online retailing, the details will make or break you, especially with spending-conscious consumers who feel entitled to discounts or added value.

It was no surprise when Mr Price warned the industry in its January results announcement that South Africans are becoming more cautious about spending. Mirroring a worldwide trend, our local market is choosy about where their money goes, likely because of Covid-19 numbers and reduced household incomes. One concern is that online consumers by now feel entitled to some sort of a discount or value add, and retailers are still coming to terms with how consumer behaviour has changed over the course of the pandemic.

Online shopping and e-commerce have certainly become second nature for African consumers across the board. The industry has seen both specialist niche and more general retailers pivot in response to the pandemic. For example, Godiva is closing its bricks-and-mortar stores in the US (but keeping them open in most of Europe), while large local online retailers like Takealot are changing management structures and investing in new ventures to better position themselves to take advantage of the changes in consumer behaviour.

What can smaller online retailers do to keep the money coming in, while adapting to how their customers' behaviour is changing? Read on for five fundamental ecommerce tips:

Keep up with the zeitgeist

Whether it is a new TikTok dance fad or the much wider move towards more sustainable and "woke" products and services, be sure that you understand the broad trends across your market. This means paying special attention to how your products are photographed and presented online, and using a diverse team to check text and content, among other things, to ensure that you meet your customers' demand for ethical retailing. Diversity, compliance with labour laws, and excellent staff management all play into how consumers view your brand. They also influence consumers' shopping choices, and determine their continued loyalty. It almost goes without saying, then, that online retailers have to ensure the products they sell meet all ethical manufacturing and production guidelines, and that their suppliers also comply with conscience-driven customer sensitivities.

Understand your customer's journey

This point seems hackneyed by now, but it remains absolutely crucial for online businesses. Businesses' understanding (or lack thereof) of their customer's journey to finally purchasing an item remains a key differentiator between successful and less successful online retailers. Interrogate and understand what drives people to your site, what takes them beyond clicking on a product to wishlisting it, and what finally motivates them to place the order and make the payment (and all the steps in between, however tiny they seem at first glance). Use the data that is already being captured by your internal systems to identify where you're losing customers' interest, and work on ways around those hurdles – or remove the hurdles completely.

"Every element of a customer journey should be designed around three primary ingredients of customer experience: effectiveness, ease, and emotion. This will require a personalised knowledge of each customer and an understanding of how a typical customer interacts with the business. Throughout their journey, customers interact with a variety of channels and touchpoints, whether it be customer portals, a website or an app. Retailers should plan how all channels, traditional or digital, can work together with ease and effectiveness to deliver a strong feeling of satisfaction – ultimately resulting in a connected emotional customer experience," advises Greg Gatherer, account manager at Liferay Africa.

■ Sort out your payment gateways

Online retailing is about removing as many potential hurdles as possible to the final buying action. One key component in this regard is easily accessible payment gateways. Consumers prefer a brand they're familiar with, and want to know they're getting optimal protection for their card details and their privacy. As such, a range of reputable payment gateway options is more than helpful.

■ Pay attention to your delivery mechanisms

Few things undermine repeat business as effectively as a bad delivery experience. Double check that your delivery systems and staff are up to scratch, and make it almost impossible for human error to be the cause of unhappy customers. Do your drivers check the delivery instructions pointing out that a particular bell is out of order, and phone rather than hoot from the curbside? Are your collection points clean, with sufficient health measures in place to make people feel confident they will be safe when collecting their items? Is there clear and easily understood signage pointing customers to where they should go and how they can access special services? The answers to these questions can make a huge difference as to whether you'll see a customer again.

■ Choose your loss-leaders, discounts and special offers with your customers in mind

Loss-leaders (basic items made available at a much reduced price, intended to encourage customers to spend more while in-store) are an age-old retailing concept that seems to have fallen out of favour in the rush to get online. Yet, these can prove particularly useful as a way to encourage online shoppers back to your site, or to help them to find ways to spend more when they're already shopping. Online customers know they are already spending money on a delivery fee, and can be enticed to add one or two more items to their trolley to qualify for free shipping. Similarly, they may be keen to build a particular collection by tapping into your discount codes for the particular collection. Maybe they would prefer to earn cash backs or loyalty points? This is where the previous four points come together to deliver the "wow factor" that makes customers return.

As with so many things in online retailing, the broad concepts remain standard good business practices that apply whether you are an online or bricks-and-mortar retailer. More than ever before the devil is in the details, whether she's wearing Prada or buying socks online.

Jessica Boonstra, CEO and Founder of e-tailer Yebo Fresh, adds the following advice:

Adapt your shopping journey to your customer's needs

For example, despite the massive adoption of smartphones and rapid online transformation, many customers (in townships particularly) do not have access to vast amounts of data. Yebo Fresh has resolved that problem by allowing order taking via whatsapp, SMS, call-me-back and facebook light, in addition to the 'traditional' website shopping.

Also, because many YF customers prefer to see and touch the product to confirm its quality before payment, Yebo Fresh allows payment upon delivery which boosts the trust in the brand and the experience.

Find synergies with partners

In order to become successful online, you do not have to be an expert in every aspect of the journey, from marketing, to product master data management, warehousing to delivery and payment. Choose the elements of the business model that define your USP and make sure you 'own' them, while relying on outsourced or partner capabilities for the rest. Choosing your partners strategically will make all the difference in terms of offering, operational execution and cost levels.

5 Risk trends affecting SMMEs

Understanding the trends that are reshaping the world should inform the decisions that SMEs are making today about their future.

The Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) sector has faced more than its fair share of obstacles amidst a contracting economy and lockdown measures that reduced income streams to a trickle.

This sector, employing around 80% of the African continent's workforce, is also the sector that has been hardest hit by the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, making it crucial for SMMEs to identify the trends impacting their businesses and finding ways to leverage new opportunities.

Aon South Africa, risk advisors and insurance brokers, delves into the top five trends affecting the SMME sector:

1 Changing consumer buyer behaviour

The key factor in demographics is not just how the world's population will grow, but how consumer buyer behaviour is changing amidst an upended world. Failure to innovate and meet customer needs was one of the top ten risks, rated at number nine in Aon's 2019 Global Risk Management survey. The pandemic shifted the importance of this risk into top gear. Many companies had to scramble to reimagine their product delivery and consumer purchasing journey in a pronounced shift into a digital world that is likely to remain long after COVID-19 has abated. In fact, 86% of respondents in a PWC Global Consumer Insights Survey 2020 said they are likely to continue to shop online when social distancing measures are removed.

According to Clayton Ellary, from Aon's Commercial Risk Solutions Division, innovation is a necessity, not an option. "It also means that disruptive technologies, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain or the Internet of Things may be the key to transforming the current playing field. Start-up companies tend to be more agile in their efforts to meet the changing needs of consumers. The fine line between success and failure is defined by an organisation's ability to reinvent itself in an ever-changing market where disruption is fast becoming the norm."

2 Technological reliance

As companies become more reliant on technology, technological developments and increases in data and analytical power create unlimited opportunities for business; but also bring risks around cyber security and data privacy.

Cyberattacks on South African organisations show no signs of abating. "Whether a large or small business, a cyber breach has the potential to inflict enormous reputational damage, cause major interruption to normal business operations and income potential, and can also have legal ramifications if personal and financial information is compromised in the context

> "We currently find ourselves in a business environment where a shift is taking place from tangible to intangible assets, making it crucial for companies to identify what its value-producing assets are and to re-evaluate its risk and liability in this space."

of the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (ECT) and the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI)," says Clayton.

"South Africa will continue to see large-scale ransomware attacks that target administration credentials to gain access to and infect wider networks – often targeting SMMEs and contractors to gain access to larger client corporations. With the expected increase in ransomware attacks designed to spread through a network, organisations of all sizes and industry sectors need to take steps to protect their networks and ensure that their risk management and insurance programmes are fit for purpose to protect them in a worst-case scenario," urges Clayton.

3 The rise of Intellectual Property

A misalignment on the value of data, information and intangible assets, such as IP of a business could have dire consequences. "We currently find ourselves in a business environment where a huge shift is taking place from tangible to intangible assets, making it crucial for companies to identify what its value-producing assets are and to re-evaluate its risk and liability in this space," says Clayton.

4 The resilient workforce

In a world of work that has been largely affected by the COVID-19 crisis, ensuring that your people strategy enables employees to adapt to change, maintain motivation and face adversity now and in the future is imperative to business success. Wellbeing is critical, the difference between a business surviving and thriving, especially to SMMEs where the skillsets of its people are so intrinsically linked to the success of the business.

According to Aon's Rising Resilient report, businesses will need to recognise the impact the pandemic has had on their employees' physical, emotional and financial wellbeing. For employers that get wellbeing right, the effort can help their teams perform more effectively, productively, and foster resilience - bringing adaptability to change, a sense of belonging and the ability to reach one's full potential.

"Recognising the pandemic's various impacts on employees and helping address them should be part of any overall strategy for guiding an SMME through and beyond the crisis," says Clayton.

5 Liquidity

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major catalyst to a host of serious business challenges that led to greater levels of insecurity and business failures. SMMEs face risks if a major debtor defaults, if their balance sheets are not strong enough to pull them through a major and extended financial crisis. The question that trade credit insurance answers is whether you are dealing with a potential bad debtor, which is crucial in a financially strained environment. "SMME's should seriously consider having payment protection in place, given the tough trading conditions we find ourselves in at present," says Clayton.

The key premise of credit insurance is to protect your debtor's book, and in turn, ensure that cash flow remains in the case of bad debts. It also allows management to get a deeper understanding of their debtors' book due to the extensive credit vetting done by the insurer.

Understanding the trends

The trends that will reshape the world and business, should inform the decisions SMEs are making today about their future. A comprehensive risk assessment can establish how prominently new trends feature in your business, so that you can make informed decisions that will guide your business strategy," concludes Clayton.

**By Clayton Ellary,
Aon South Africa Commercial
Risk Solutions Division.**

A nation's favourite

Get your 'Business In A Box' franchise with THE FISH & CHIP CO

From a small business opening in 2009 comes the success story of The Fish & Chip Co that has grown into one of South Africa's favourite fish & chips franchise brands.

In 2012, the company traded under Taste Holdings, and then in 2019, it was acquired by Fiamme Holdings - an innovative franchise group with other lucrative restaurant brands such as Maxi's and CloudDine under its' management structure.

Over the past 10 years, The Fish & Chip Co has become market leaders within the fish QSR category in terms of their product, brand awareness, store footprint and consumer preference. They have built up a reputation for serving generous portions of quality fish and fresh-cut chips at affordable prices. This correlates with their 10 years of nourishing the nation's ISSALOT campaign.

The Fish & Chip Co is one of the fastest-growing and popular fast food businesses in South Africa. It has been nominated for the 5th consecutive year in the Top 10 Fast-Food Restaurant category in the Sunday Times Top Brands awards. Most recently in 2020, The Fish & Chip Co received two Readers' Choice awards for "The Best Fish & Chips franchise" category in the Pretoria News and The Star - a true testament to the popularity and consumer loyalty to the brand.

Today, the Fish & Chip Co has over 100 take-away franchise restaurants serving the freshest and tastiest fish and chips at affordable prices to thousands of happy consumers across South Africa every day.

'Business in a Box' franchise package - just launched and for a limited time only

For prospective franchisees looking for opportunities in the fast-food sector, The Fish & Chip Co is on a nationwide effort to recruit new franchisees to help create both business and employment opportunities, and in turn, help in the economic recovery.

To drive this campaign, The Fish & Chip Co has just launched an exciting and affordable "Business in a Box" franchise for just R599 000 including Vat. This substantial price drop is available nationwide for a limited time only.

The Fish & Chip Co serves every meal in a quality branded take-away box, hence the new concept of "Business in a Box" franchise package was born.

"Business in a Box" is a replica of the standard take-away franchise model. The Fish & Chip Co will offer the same great value tasty meals, exceptional marketing, and franchise support to all franchisees. Sites have already been earmarked in Gauteng and several other provinces for immediate roll-out.

"With every single person being affected by the pandemic, our main emphasis right now is to create job opportunities. We want to focus on our backyard, here in South Africa. By growing our franchise stores, we will be creating at least 8–10 jobs per store opening. This excludes the additional indirect employment across the whole supply chain from manufacturing to distribution. With our affordable new franchise offering, we believe this can happen," says Fiamme Holdings' Managing Director, Jan de Beer.

> "We want to focus on our backyard, here in South Africa. By growing our franchise stores, we will be creating at least 8-10 jobs per store opening."
>
> - Jan de Beer, Managing Director, Fiamme Holdings

Benefits to franchisees

A major benefit of buying into a franchise system is that you'll be taught all you need to know to run a successful operation, greatly increasing your chance of success. It is one of the safest ways of becoming a business owner as it is guided by tried-and-tested processes, underpinned by the ongoing support of the franchisor.

The Fish & Chip Co is a reputable franchise and accredited full member of The Franchise Association of South Africa (FASA).

Training and Support

To get off to a flying start, franchisees and staff undergo a comprehensive training programme to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of all aspects of the business. The franchisor provides full support, hand-holding and guidance to assist franchisees in building a successful and profitable business.

"Whilst we offer our franchisees all the training and guidance to build a sustainable business, the success of the business is in their hands. They must up the reigns of the business, drive it forward and ensure that their patrons keep coming back time and time again," advises de Beer.

Are you our next franchisee?

The Fish & Chip Co is looking for highly motivated hands-on franchisees that are passionate about the food industry, understand the importance of superior service delivery, and are willing to commit to a long-term plan that will yield results.

Prospective franchisees that are ready to invest in our dynamic, simple, and easy-to-run 'Business in a Box' franchise concept are welcome to call Michelle Voges at Head Office on 010 601 4910. Email: michelle@fiamme.co.za or visit: www.fishandchipco.co.za.

Fiamme Holdings has more investment opportunities for you to explore:

Maxi's Food and Restaurant Franchise

Originating in Pretoria in 1993, Maxi's is famous for its trendy, value-for-money, quick-service, sit-down family restaurant. Maxi's has received two Top 10 Sunday Times Family Sit-Down Category nominations in 2009 and 2013, and won FASA Franchisor of the year in 2010.

People who know Maxi's, love Maxi's for its varied menu, affordable prices, evolving promotions and consistently high standard of operations and product quality. Maxi's offers an extended casual dining menu, including breakfast, light meals, handcrafted 100% pure beef burgers, famous grills, desserts, kids' meals, and premium coffee. The meals are freshly prepared using quality ingredients, and the portions are always generous.

Families, friends and business associates enjoy the welcoming, fresh and contemporary store environment. Maxi's currently have four new-look stores, two in SA and two across the border.

In 2019 the Maxi's brand was acquired by Fiamme Holdings. Maxi's has honed in on its' 28 years' experience in the restaurant business and offers franchisees a well-tested, smooth running operational set-up.

The set-up cost to own your own Maxi's franchise is from R1.8m depending on the size of the site - an average store size is from $180m^2$ - $220m^2$. Royalties include a 6% management and 4% marketing fee. Franchisees undergo extensive business and franchise training in all aspects of the business.

Maxi's offers a passionate team dedicated to growing the brand and ensuring your success every step of the way – it's a great investment opportunity, and one to consider!

Visit: www.maxisfood.com

CloudDine: The first online Delivery-Only Restaurant Franchise of its kind

Launched during Covid-19, CloudDine is an innovative, delivery-only restaurant model with a centralised kitchen offering a wide and creative yet affordable menu with fresh, high-quality ingredients, and convenient delivery.

ORDER NOW

Harnessing the flexibility of the cloud or dark kitchen operation, CloudDine appeals to a wide audience. The menu offers a "one-stop shop" that allows families or groups of people to order according to their cravings, whilst maximising the convenience of one pick-up straight to their door. Everything from prep times, packaging and order accuracy is a priority which means customers get hot food fast.

Franchisees stand to benefit from lower set-up costs as there is only a kitchen and no customer area to be fitted out. The business model's efficient labour processes and outsourced delivery gives franchisees the opportunity to increase margins, lower their risk and manage the restaurant easily. Franchisees receive extensive business and franchise training and unlimited franchisee support to get their business up and running.

Franchise opportunities are now available. Prospective franchisees will have a solid support structure and dynamic management team to guide them. The brands have kept franchisees and customers happy with their sit-down and take-away restaurants for over 28 years. Now it's time to secure your future and join the movement to delivery-only brands.

Visit: www.clouddine.co.za

Prospective franchisees should be totally involved, understand the importance of superior service, and be willing to commit to a long-term plan that will yield results. If you are interested in investing in any of our franchise concepts, contact Michelle Voges. Email: michelle@fiamme.co.za, call 010 601 4910 or visit: www.fishandchipco.co.za.


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Ready to roll up its sleeves

The franchise sector is committed to assisting in economy recovery.

Following on the heels of the Budget Speech, the Franchise Association of South Africa (FASA) held its AGM and the board was able to take cognisance of government's proposed growth plans and dove-tail them to the strategic objectives set by the association for its members and the industry at large.

Pertunia Sibanyoni, CEO of InspectaCar, was also appointed as the new Chair of FASA for 2021/2022. With seventeen years' experience in franchising, twelve of them spent in the Oil and Energy sectors and the current four in Automotive and Financial Services, and with strong skills in strategy stakeholder management, sales, operations and marketing, Pertunia is well poised to steer FASA through the aftershocks of the pandemic and onto renewed growth in a sector that, in 2019, contributed an estimated turnover of R734 billion (or 13,9% of GDP), through its around 800 franchise systems, 48 000 franchised outlets and employing close to half a million people.

According to Sibanyoni, the franchise sector certainly took a serious knock during the height of the pandemic and will continue to do so until normality returns and the vaccine reaches all corners of the country. "But to franchising's credit, and thanks to its strong business principles and support structures, most franchisors took strong leadership steps, tweaked their franchised systems, were pro-active on financial support and put in place recovery plans. The association also welcomed seventeen new members to the fold over this period.

No other industry has contributed so extensively and continuously over the past fifty years to the country's GDP and brought together the winning elements of entrepreneurship, small business development and job creation. "And we are prepared to do more to help get South Africans get back to work and rebuild the economy."

Whilst acknowledging the measures announced by Minister Tito Mboweni to lower the tax rate for companies and give tax relief for lower and middle income earners, and establishing both a Tourism Equity and Small Business Fund, the Board of FASA believe that they can play a greater role in government's push to kick-start the economy. With National Treasury continuing to work with industry bodies to promote South Africa as an industry hub for Africa, FASA can act as a springboard for the many local and international brands that want to establish themselves in the country or across our borders.

"Whether it's picking up on new trends emanating from the pandemic, encouraging entrepreneurs and corporates to look at the benefits of franchising, to developing small business concepts in townships and rural areas through social and tandem franchising – the franchise sector has a lot to offer and we appeal to government to engage with us and tap into our tried and tested business formats that can assist in rolling out entrepreneurial endeavours that will ultimately bring about transformation and much-needed jobs."

FASA's strategic objectives going forward will be dove-tailed to the needs of the country and in assisting government in the restructuring and rebuilding of the economy. Key amongst them will be to:

- Continuously promote and enable responsible and ethical business practices.
- Pro-actively support and promote economic transformation.
- Collaborate with key stakeholders to drive economic growth and job creation.
- Prioritise innovation to increase awareness, training and development for the franchise industry through digitisation.

Franchising proved its mettle this past year and FASA salutes its members and the broader franchise community consisting of thousands of front-line workers that are ensuring the safety of staff and customers by adhering to Covid-19 safety regulations.

"Never underestimate an industry that has, over the years, showed innovative thinking and an unrelenting desire for success, to help kick-start the South African economy and get the wheels of job creation and consumerism moving again," concludes Sibanyoni.

Aanhouer wen!

Perseverance pays off, as the franchisor of 3@1 Business Centre can testify with their experience in opening their first outlet in Mauritius during lockdown...

"It was late February 2020, just before South Africa's first nationwide lockdown, when we received an invaluable franchise enquiry to open a 3@1 Business Centre in Mauritius.

By mid-March 2020 all had agreed on the way forward. We had previously opened 3@1 Business Centres successfully in Namibia, Zambia, and Uganda, so in our minds opening in Mauritius would be straightforward. Then, the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown kicked in and both South Africa and Mauritius shut down. The months flew by and everything was on hold.

However Ashleigh Erasmus, our tenacious prospective franchisee, would not give up. She was determined to open her 3@1 Business Centre franchise on the island come what may. Mauritius is a small island, so choice locations were difficult to find during the pandemic. After badgering local centre managers, a prime site was secured at Cascavelle Shopping Centre, on the West side of the island, with availability in November. The question was how we were going to train and build the store when our team had to spend 14 days in quarantine.

Bumpy ride...

Banking on some sort of return to normality in December, the idea was to manufacture the complete shop in kit form in South Africa, pack the components into a container and then ship it all to Mauritius. Our team would then fly out, fit and install the store and complete Ashleigh's training on-site. Well, this didn't go quite to plan as both countries closed their borders with no flights in or out.

At the end of November, the shop contents were ready and destined to leave Gauteng. On the day that the container was due to be loaded on a ship in Durban, we were informed that the ship had to undergo emergency repairs of at least three weeks, meaning that the container would now arrive in mid-January 2021. Unbeknownst to us, the container was loaded onto another ship and arrived in Port Louis on the 17th of December - earlier than expected.

After overcoming many obstacles and unforseen events, a determined Ashleigh Erasmus finally opened her 3@1 Business Centre franchise in Mauritius in early March 2021

We were astounded since business everywhere was closing for the 'season'. But determined as ever, our franchisee managed to find temporary storage space to off-load the container until the New Year.

As we were now under extreme pressure to meet the lease commencement date of 15th February, there was no choice but to inch forward, make alternate plans and make them fast.

The roll out...

Via Zoom and WhatsApp video calls, the 3@1 Project Manager devised a way in which local artisans could make sense of the pile of cut boards that would form the counters, front desk, and other shop-fitting and signage components to be assembled. Although the build-up process normally takes four days, the team managed to pull it off remotely in three weeks.

Ready for the next set-up and instalment phase, the 3@1 Operations manager spent many hours training Ashleigh remotely, meticulously going through the 3@1 Operations Manual, setting up the LAN and PC's and ensuring that everyone was competent to operate the equipment and serve their customers.

After a year of unforeseen events, much incentivising and fantastic support from everyone, we are proud to announce that the 3@1 Business Centre franchise opened its' doors at **Cascavelle Shopping Centre in Mauritius in early March 2021.**"

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3@1 Business Centres are a one-stop retail franchise offering a range of business and communication services from digital print solutions, Kodak photographic printing, courier services, internet stations and other essential services for businesses and individuals.

3@1 Business Centres operate throughout South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Uganda and Mauritius.

“We are very excited as we are getting the rural community connected. Apart from running a business for the obvious, making profit, we pride ourselves in bringing those much-needed services at a very low price. Our business is growing strength to strength every month...”

— Midas Chawane **3@1 Business Centre, Acornhoek**

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Surefire FRANCHISE DEVELOPMENTS

An affordable start

Low-cost franchise and business opportunities open avenues for entrepreneurs...

Always dreamed of having your own business, but lacked the capital to take the plunge? The good news is that there are several low-cost opportunities out there to get entrepreneurs invested, trained and set up.

Investing in a business should never be a decision that is taken lightly, whether the start-up cost is big or small. A value-for-money franchise or business opportunity may feel like a less risky investment or one that won't require hard work, but the reality can be very different.

Most successful business owners are those who realise from the outset that running a business is tough and that they need to be motivated, involved and organised. The success of their business will to a large extent be directly proportional to the effort they put in.

Choose your opportunity with care - ask the right questions

Whether the prospective business opportunity you're interested in is home-based, a distributorship, a licensee opportunity, a franchise or any other small business venture, there are four very important questions you must ask to ensure you choose just the right one for you:

1. What's their track record?

How long has the company been in business? What is their reputation? Are they individuals with integrity who have the necessary experience to be of benefit to you and/or train you? Will they provide referrals?

It's never a bad idea to have an accountant, attorney or some other trusted advisor delve into some of their financial information before you invest.

2. What knowledge, skills and abilities do you have?

You must align your competencies with the business you want to purchase. Is the product/service you're going to be selling something you know enough about to be successful? Is it something you feel confident that you can be trained to do well, and will the company train you appropriately?

Continued on the next page

3. Is it the right time and the right place?

You have no business getting into business unless you've done a thorough evaluation of the marketplace in which you intend to operate. Is there sufficient demand in the proposed area for the products/services your company will be providing? What does the competition look like, and how well are they doing? What do you intend to do differently that will set you apart?

4. Will this business realistically turn a profit, and when?

You may love the product or service you're selling, but will your potential customers? Common sense dictates that you know everything possible about the company you're buying into when it comes to finances. Ask the major players to show you the numbers. If the business has been demonstrably successful elsewhere and you believe that success can be replicated by you in your marketplace through your hard work and dedication, then you can calculate what should be a reasonable return on investment in what time frame.

You must examine what's been done before in the context of a given set of circumstances so that you can adequately predict your potential profitability. Only then will you have a true sense of what kind of working capital you'll need to sustain your business during those first critical years.

If you decide that you've answered all these questions positively, you're ready to make that all-important investment. Then it's just a case of looking for the right opportunity to come along...

Franchise vs. business opportunity

There are two key points of difference between a franchise and a business opportunity. Franchisees pay both upfront fees and ongoing royalties to their franchisor, while with a business opportunity the business is owned outright and can usually be operated under a name of your own choice.

Franchisees, in turn, benefit from the marketing and branding undertaken by their franchisor, tried-and-tested business systems, training and support, while the seller of the business opportunity is less likely to offer ongoing support, marketing help, etc.

It is imperative that you make sound choices when investing in a franchise or business opportunity, and it is usually advisable to choose a compatible industry. This being said, it must be remembered that a dancer is not always the best option to run a dance school. Other skills and characteristics required to successfully run the business must be taken into account – the most important being business acumen and financial management skills.

Starting any business is not to be considered a "get rich quick scheme" – more like a get rich slowly scheme! The investment will take time to make returns, and you must be financially prepared for this. If you are over geared and had to use too much borrowed finance at the outset, it is going to be difficult to provide for the unforeseen. It is imperative that the business has a solid working capital base to ensure cash flow is sound. Sometimes it is better to keep it small and simple, rather than stretching yourself beyond your financial capabilities. Furthermore it is vital that you consult legal advice, financial advice and discuss it with your family.

As much as the franchisor may be choosing you... you are also choosing them, so make sure you request the Disclosure Document, Franchise Agreement and Operations Manual. This is usually after you have signed a confidentiality agreement as it gives a number of insights into the franchisor's business.

Questions to ask existing franchisees, licencees or operators:

The best referrals for a business is from those who have bought into it. Here are some questions to consider asking:

- Are they making a profit?
- Are they getting a good return on their investment?
- What unexpected capital was needed?
- How do they feel about the relationship that exists between franchisor and franchisee?
- Are they satisfied with the support being provided?
- If they knew then what they know now, would they still buy into the franchise or business opportunity?

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FASA THE FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA FULL MEMBER

Surefire FRANCHISE DEVELOPMENTS

myhomewatch
Peace of mind while you're away!

Carve your niche in the Property and Pet Care market

MY HOME WATCH is a one-of-a-kind franchise that's taken the industry by storm.

Originating in Australia, this winning concept offers a multitude of services to assist home owners, pet owners, real estate agents, Airbnb and property owners in taking care of their valuable and cherished possessions whilst they are away.

Now launched here in South Africa, My Home Watch is looking for franchise partners that share a passion for providing exceptional customer service.

Franchisees will be required to provide a range of services to care for and safeguard the owner's property inside and out. Services include home inspections, maintenance and emergency repair co-ordination, security, guest arrivals and departures, grocery purchases, linen changes, pet home care visits, and any other tasks requested by the home owner who wants 'peace-of-mind' knowing that everything is managed during their absence.

Are you a good fit and ready to join us?

R150 000 is all you need to start your own My Home Watch business. A two-week online training course is provided to teach you all aspects of running the business, both on-the-job and in the office. Training includes recruiting staff and how to manage their performance to increase your revenue. Using our innovative systems and technology you will have all the tools you need to hit the ground running. Your training and support will not stop there. As a Franchisee, you become part of the My Home Watch family as we all continue to train and learn as our business model evolves over time.

This franchise is best suited to self-motivated, well organised and caring individuals who have a desire to run their own business with pride and from their home. Your success is our success, which is why we're committed to sharing our experience and considerable market knowledge with you. Our job is to support you and work as a team!

Call: 083 308 9133 or email: jacques@myhomewatch.co.za.

Print your way to success!

JG Electronics offers entrepreneurs the opportunity to start-up or expand their print offering in the novelty and corporate gifting industry.

For over 31 years, JG Electronics has supplied print solutions to customers throughout South Africa, Africa and abroad. They are a one-stop-shop with a wide range of easy-to-operate print systems from small format sublimation, heat transfer vinyl's, full-colour printing, white toner and laser print systems as well as a variety of printable consumables. What the company does not manufacture itself, it imports from key manufacturers overseas. Adding to their impressive range, OKI has just announced its partnership with JG Electronics to supply its advanced textile printing solutions.

JG Electronics' product range gives customers access to professional print technology, allowing direct print onto just about any fabric, wood, metal, vinyl, plastic, leather, glass, marble and many other substrates. Unlike other conventional technologies, with JG Electronics systems, you can print smaller quantities of novelty and corporate gifts and/or a single on-demand item, e.g. you can print on 1 x personalized mug, cap, T-shirt, bottle, pen etc. quickly and cheaply, irrespective of the number of colours and complexity of the image, with no set-up costs.

All equipment purchased includes training at their offices in Johannesburg (Head Office), Cape Town, or Bloemfontein. Full instruction manuals and training videos are provided. As there are so many options on offer, JG Electronics is committed to giving professional advice to tailor specific needs, ensuring that investors only walk away with the equipment that will enable their business to achieve the best results.

Eager to get your own business started? Contact JG Electronics today on 011 789 6033 or visit www.jgelectronics.com.

Run your own 'showroom on wheels'

SNAP-ON is an establised industry leader for over 100 years, and is renowned for delivering personalised, professional service - right at the customer's place of work.

Snap-on Incorporated is a leading global innovator, manufacturer and marketer of tools, diagnostic and equipment solutions for professional tool users. Since 1920, when Snap-on first developed the interchangeable socket wrench, the name “Snap-on” has been recognised as the leader in providing the finest quality tools and equipment for the professional technician. Snap-on first entered the international arena in 1931 and today has a presence in over 130 countries around the globe.

During this time, Snap-on pioneered and perfected the idea of direct sales to technicians, right at their place of business, while providing credit programmes so they could purchase the tools that would build their business. The company still does that today, and as a leading marketer of tool and equipment solutions, Snap-on provides aspiring business owners with an opportunity to partner with a financially strong company with an outstanding reputation for quality, service and innovation.

If you are seriously considering an investment in a business, give yourself the benefit of starting with an established industry leader, and join the over 4500 dealers worldwide that represent the Snap-on brand of high-quality merchandise.

What's on offer

Snap-on dealers are offered the opportunity to purchase high-quality tools manufactured and distributed by Snap-on at a discount from suggested retail prices, and to re-sell those products at recommended prices. Dealers call on their customers each week within an allocated territory, which includes a wide variety of businesses such as auto dealerships, independent repair shops, auto-electricians, body shops and others. Dealers need to have a suitable van (approved by Snap-on Africa) with the Snap-on designed tool display area to encourage impulse buying. This “Showroom on wheels” also allows you to take products right to your customer’s place of business and deliver that personalised, professional service associated with the Snap-on brand. A successful Snap-on dealership requires hard work, planning and the development of personal relationships with customers. As a Snap-on dealer, you will enjoy a professional and respected position in the tool industry with good income potential.

The support to succeed

One of the most important steps in getting a new business off to a good start is training. After a rigorous week in the classroom learning the basics of the business, new dealers will be assigned a Sales Development Manager (SDM) and a Diagnostic Sales Developer (DSD). The SDM or DSD accompanies dealers on their route for an initial period of two to three weeks, to assist with training in the day-to-day aspects of the business. During this in-territory training period the SDM or DSD covers sales training, product knowledge, van display, credit programme management, policies and procedures and record keeping.

The good news is that the training doesn't stop there; the SDM &/or DSD continue with ongoing support, holding regular Field Group Meetings to discuss all aspects of the business; including new initiatives, promotional programmes, and developing product knowledge.

Getting the word out

Snap-on spends thousands of Rands each year to promote Snap-on products and the Snap-on brand through sales and marketing campaigns. However, unlike many companies that charge their dealers an additional fee for advertising, Snap-on provides advertising and promotions as part of its service. Some of the promotional arenas that the Snap-on marketing department is involved in includes media and trade publications, sales contests and promotions, promotional products, weekly promotions backed up by electronic marketing material and printed summaries of items on promotion once a month. These are all designed to help dealers grow their business; with Head Office realising that their own success as a company depends on the success of its dealers.

The investment cost of a Snap-on dealership depends on one's circumstances and there are a few options available. However, the minimum amount of cash available to invest must be no less than R150 000. Applicants must also have their own panel vans. A Sales Development Manager (SDM) will explain costs, panel van preferences, and options available at an initial meeting.

Buying a business is a serious undertaking and a decision that must not be rushed. That is why Snap-on makes no excuses for having a lengthy application programme that not only includes a number of meetings, but also a minimum of three days spent with existing dealers in their territories.

With many unique features that sets it apart from other opportunities on the market (including being an established company with a comprehensive product line, on-going training and assistance, financing and credit assistance programmes), a Snap-on mobile dealership is well worth investigating.

What type of person is a Snap-on Dealership suited to?

Like all owner-operated businesses, it requires a highly motivated individual to make a success of this opportunity, and although a person who is technically savvy and has sales experience could be better suited to this business, this is by no means a pre-requisite. Support in the form of a family member to assist with the everyday running of the business, and perhaps the book-keeping and reporting side would also be an advantage.

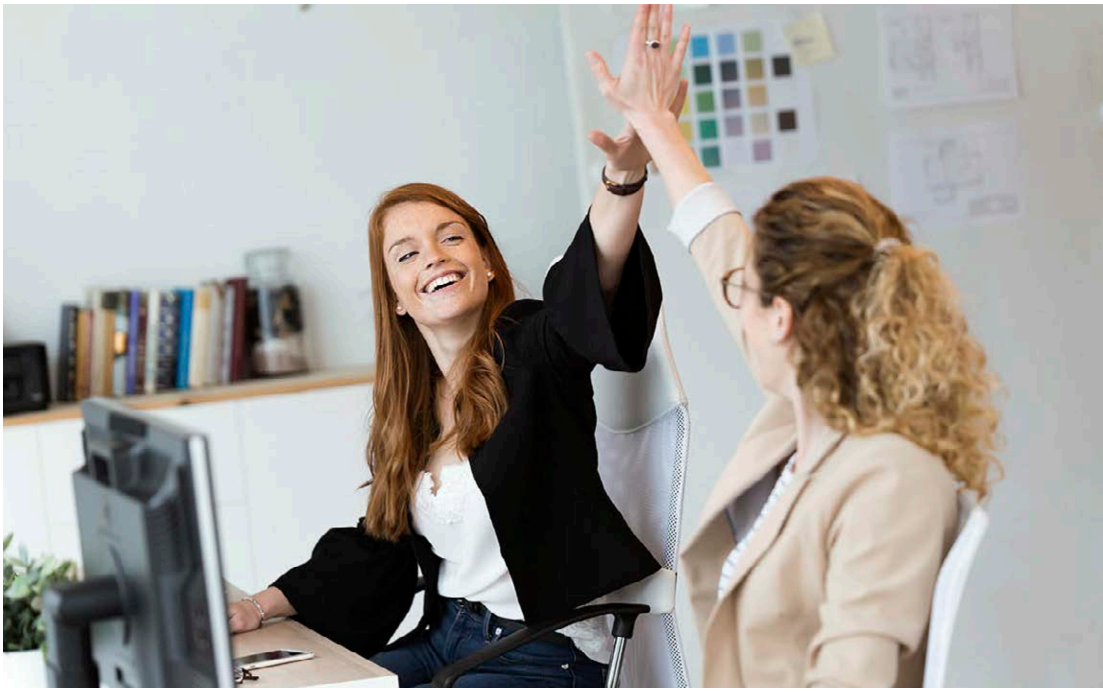
What expansion opportunities are available?

The owner of a successfully run Snap-on dealership can apply for a second territory. This is quite common in other countries where the dealership is well established. It is not uncommon for the original business owner to have invested in a second territory for a family member or sibling. This option would need to be considered very carefully and in collaboration and with final approval by Snap-on management.

Contact the Business Manager on 031 569 7637 or 082 4444 801, email: biz@snapon.co.za, or visit: www.snapon.co.za for more information.

Shaping a better future

These tenacious and inspiring female 'treps speak with the same voice: don't wait for the perfect time. Just start.



International Women's Day has a rich history. The first glimpse of it was in 1909 when the Socialist Party of America celebrated 15 000 women who protested long work hours, low pay, and the lack of voting rights in New York City.

Originally called National Woman's Day, the monumental annual celebration spread across the world (officially celebrated in 1911), but it was Russia who unknowingly set the March 8 trend. Although International Women's Day became an official holiday in Russia in 1913, women still experienced difficulties caused by WWI. Men were off at war, and women had to deal with food shortages and a government that wouldn't listen to them.

On March 8, 1917 (February 23 in the former Russian calendar), tens of thousands of Russian women took to the streets demanding change. The unified cry for help paved the way for Russian women to be granted voting rights soon after.

Following discussions, International Women's Day was agreed to be marked annually on March 8. In 1975, the United Nations officially recognised International Women's Day, and, in 1996, began to adopt an annual theme for every year.

The theme for 2021 is "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world", to celebrate the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here at home, we all realise the need to promote and encourage entrepreneurship to create a beneficial future for all. Our women play a big role in this, being often both caregivers and tenacious business owners.

In honour of our female 'treps, we chat to industrious ladies who are spotting opportunities and making it happen, whether as a side-hustle or full-time business. These ladies speak with the same voice: don't wait for the perfect time - there won't be one. Just start. And then continue! They share their start-up stories and top advice to inspire us all:

STEP UP FOR GROWTH

Durban-based entrepreneurs LIZ PAYNE and CALLY VAN BLERK launched their company, Silver Lining Gumboots, at the most appropriate of events – the Splashy Fen Music Festival in 2019.

Payne explains that, during a 10-year stay in the UK, she came to virtually live in her gumboots. On returning to South Africa, she couldn't find anything suitable to keep up with her outdoorsy lifestyle. Added to that was the fact that, with the exchange rate and a highly volatile rand, the average landed price of an imported equivalent was completely out of reach of the average local shoe shopper.

Both hailing from careers in social media, they decided it was time to take a completely different course and launch Silver Lining Gumboots, and so began their journey to source the right gumboot that was not only fashionable and functional, but also kind to the environment.

An easy option would have been to ship in a load of gumboots from China. But they decided that it was important to source a local supplier, not only as their contribution to local job creation and manufacturing, but also because they wanted to build a lasting relationship with a manufacturer that would enable them to ensure optimum quality and develop their range as their company grew.

They started with a range of six different boots with a limited number of sizes (five, six and seven) and have adjusted designs and styles as they have received feedback from customers. With sustainability being important, their black boots are made from 100 percent recycled PVC, and they also use locally and sustainably sourced leather straps and tassels. An orthopaedic insole is inserted for comfort and good fit, making these boots nothing like the standard, clumpy versions which can be found in local hardware stores.

The gumboot styles have been named after special places in KwaZulu Natal - everything from Howick to Shongweni to Umhlanga. The latest addition to collection is a bright yellow ankle boot called Mauritius, and a mid-calf version called Cape Town gumboot, both of which can be recycled once its walked its last mile. These names reflect the fact that Silver Lining Gumboots has spread its wings out of its home province.

Since their debut, the partners have recorded an average growth of 200% percent. Key to this healthy growth has been developing their business under the watchful eye of Trevor Clark of ActionCOACH Business Coaching, who has helped them put the business basics into place and build a strong foundation with clear goals.

"As both Cally and I came from corporate backgrounds and did not have hands-on experience in the day-to-day running of a business, it made sense to engage a business coach who has navigated the waters before

"Sometimes you have an inkling that something might work, and you just need to lean into that and stick to your vision and trust your intuition." - Liz Payne & Cally van Blerk

us countless times in various industries," says Payne. "Getting a coach on board has been invaluable; from implementing systems to knowing and understanding one's financials, and how making small changes impacts the bottom line. Whether you are a seasoned entrepreneur or just finding your sea legs like we were, the value gained will pay itself back tenfold. We learnt how to work '*on*' your business as well as '*in*' your business."

"It took us almost two years from conception to delivery, and what a trip it has been. We are so happy with the final product. My greatest lesson has been to trust my intuition and vision. Sometimes you have an inkling that something might work and you just need to lean into that and stick to your vision and trust your intuition," Payne points out.

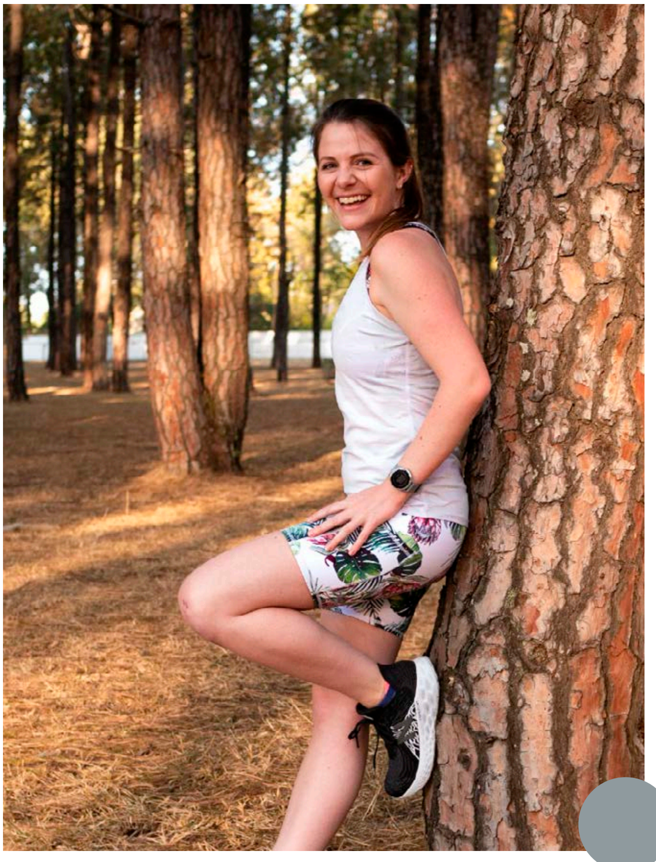
Van Blerk adds: "With Silver Lining Gumboots, we've really learnt that every cloud has a silver lining. You just put on your gumboots and go for it! The biggest lesson that I've learnt along the way is that, no matter what situation or circumstance that you're in, you should never forget the reason why you started. You must also focus on future goals. Stay in your lane, work hard and just keep swimming."

GRAB THE OPPORTUNITY

KAY NTSHULANA-BHENGU is the founder of Glacier Gang SA, a mobile ice bar that began operations in 2019 to provide ice at live events in Durban, Pietermaritzburg, and Johannesburg. Ntshulana-Bhengu came up with her side-hustle idea when she attended events where the bars always ran out of ice, and it's now a successful business. She shares her top tips for fellow 'hustlers':

- Don't just hone in on what you enjoy. Find something that you're good at, because the two are often connected.
- Don't wait until you've got enough capital - you might wait forever. Start with what you've got and keep going.
- If you've got an idea that requires production, advertise it and take pre-paid orders. That way, you know how many to make, and won't waste.
- Don't be scared of the unknown - you'll only know if your business idea will work once you've put it out there to the public.
- Advertising has never been easier or cost less. There are many sites, like Gumtree, that have been set up with small businesses and side hustles in mind. The truth is, the biggest investment in a side hustle is time.

"Step boldly out of your comfort zone and into uncertainty - that space of discomfort is where you'll grow." - Kay Ntshulana-Bhengu



"Do it for yourself. People are not just attracted to products, they're also attracted to what a brand stands for." - Michelle Kahn

HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

"The only way to find out if something will work, is to try it," says MICHELLE KAHN, the founder of Running for Cake, a programme that helps beginner runners go from their couch to running 5km and beyond.

Kahn reckons that one of the reasons people are scared to start something new is that they perceive there to be saturation in their sector, and they worry that they'll have nothing new to offer. But she started her side-hustle after an overwhelmingly positive response from a community Facebook group.

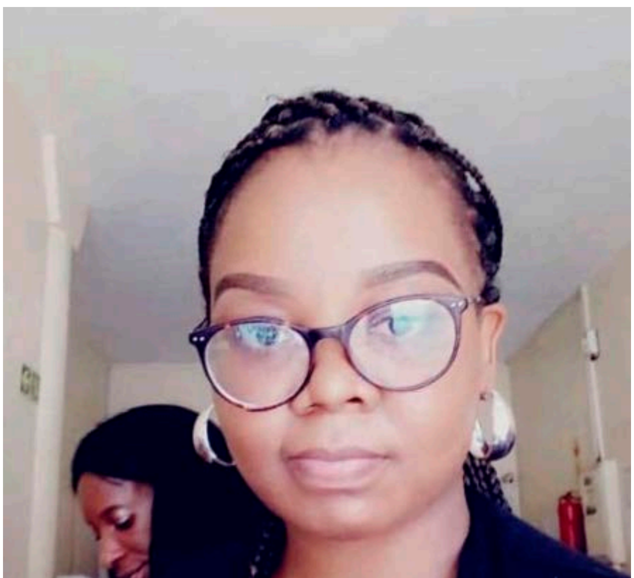
"Listen to what your target market wants. While there are loads of couch-to-5km apps, my community wanted a place to connect in real life, run with like-minded people, and where they could take their dogs too!" she says. "Doing something that helps others makes your side-hustle even more meaningful."

While Kahn still works full time, the extra money she's made from Running for Cake has been vital. For instance, when an apartment she owned stood vacant for two months because her tenant gave notice sooner than anticipated, she had the money to carry on paying the bond until she found a replacement.

"Do it for yourself. People are not just attracted to products, they're also attracted to what a brand stands for," she concludes.

FIND YOUR EDGE

KHOMOTSO DISOLWANE has always been passionate about entrepreneurship and innovative ideas that push boundaries. At twenty years of age in 2011 she founded a micro lending company with her friends whilst studying Marketing via Unisa. And then, in 2018, she started her first solo business, Azora Beverage.



"Add personality to your product, because there can only be one of you - and that is your edge. Constantly be a learner and focus on your vision and its execution, rather than on the competition."
- Khomotso Disolwane

"At that time, there was a lot of awareness being raised to promote the reduction of plastic waste. Other beverage companies were introducing 30% or 50% recyclable bottles. Well, I thought to myself; why not introduce an alternative packaging for the most consumed product: water? Packaging that is eco-friendly, 100% recyclable and uses less energy to recycle. That's when Azora Water was conceptualised. Other countries had introduced water in a can, but Africa as a whole was lagging behind. We are proud and excited to be one of the first in South Africa to introduce water in a can."

The startup journey to the Azora Beverage business of today has been one of sacrifice, with most of it being funded with her salary from her job.

"I drew up a vision board where I had my personal and my business goals, and every month I made sure to knock off one or two goals. I had to make a lot of sacrifices to be able to maximise my salary to fuel my business. I had to move out of the apartment I was renting, and move to a commune where I occupied one of the rooms, and had to take my son back home to live with my parents. I cut down on everything that I used to overspend on like takeaways, entertainment, etc. It meant restructuring my finances and keeping a tight and strict budget," she says.

"Nobody cares about your excuses. You have to be self-motivated and passionate about your product. You need to step outside of your comfort zone and hunt down clients and opportunities. It gets tough, but your passion and persistence will get you through." She also advises other startups not to hire staff too soon, and rather outsource most services that you may need.

Azora now offers still and sparkling water, tonic water and a range of flavoured water in a can. They are able to produce unique flavours by buying freshly produced ingredients and raw materials from local producers as a way of supporting businesses in the local economy. Disolwane's vision is to see Azora distributed in all hotel chains in South Africa and branching into other African countries.

"Add personality to your product because there can only be one of you - and that is your edge. Constantly be a learner and focus on your vision and its execution, rather than on the competition," is her parting advice.

The BeyondCovid Survey found that 26% of SMMEs reported being forced to close their doors, 7% permanently between July 2020 and March 2021.

Our current VUCA world (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) is demanding that we acquire, hone and practice a myriad of self-leadership techniques and tools to ensure that we flatten our own curve of chaos, and optimise our efficiency and effectiveness despite the uncertainty and volatility of the external environment.

The collective stress levels of the human race are at an all time high, and the possibility of the effects of the pandemic being far reaching on the global economy for an extended period of time, up to 12 years, are huge. Even if we survived 2020, it is way too soon to gloat at our own brilliance and sit back and relax, despite our bodies, souls and minds being in desperate need of timeout and time off of the Ferris wheel.

The demands for us to lead those who are in a state of despair and desperation, and who do not have their own well-developed internal compass, has increased and our leadership is under pressure. We know that in this new dispensation our old ways won't cut it.

How can one lead another, if one cannot lead oneself?

Self-leadership is the ability to influence oneself in a positive direction through mental awareness, emotional intelligence and intentional behaviour towards achieving one's goals and vision in alignment with one's purpose and in a manner which is compassionate and empathetic.

As everything begins in our belief system which drives our thoughts and thought processes, becoming aware of our overriding thoughts is an essential step towards self-leadership. This can be achieved through the practise of self-observation. Meditation is an excellent place to observe how the mind tends to wander off, often into a place of doom and gloom, fraught with worry, doubt, fear and regret. More and more companies are seeing the benefit of wellness programmes where such methods are used to induce a state of calm which leads to an improvement in focus, productivity and even happiness. For those who are not ready to drop onto a yoga mat anytime soon, a simple pause at intervals during the day whilst holding the question, 'What is the dominant thought in my mind?' can deliver similar results. Awareness is the first step to an awakening of any kind. By observing our thoughts, we get information about ourselves which allows us to make decisions in alignment with our purpose and our goals.

We may not like the information we receive once we become aware of it, and default to a state of denial, finding ourselves distracted and unable to focus. We disguise this as productivity or busyness, but it is not a healthy form of self-leadership.

Self-leadership starts with knowing oneself. An easy place to embark on this journey of self-discovery is through the use of assessment tools such as the Enneagram, a highly sophisticated personality profile or the Personal Success Profile, a simpler behavioural assessment. There are many other such tools available and are best done together with a coach or therapist who can debrief one as to one's strengths, growth opportunities, and more importantly, blind-spots.

Ultimately, we are responsible for our own growth and development. Simply having a growth mindset already opens one up to new opportunities. As business leaders we are required to think out the box, but once we embark on a journey of personal discovery, we can start living out of the box, as we are no longer as restricted by faulty beliefs, self-doubt or debilitating high levels of stress. A sense of calm and inner control returns, allowing us to engage with the world of opportunity and possibility. We are able to make better choices aligned with our purpose, while also having empathy for those we are working towards achieving that vision.

By Melody Tomlinson, Business coach and owner of Performance Booster (Pty) Ltd.

3 Tips on building a winning mindset

There's a Cherokee story about two wolves, and it serves as an excellent metaphor for life. There is a good wolf and the bad wolf, and the moral of the story is that the one you choose to feed will always be the strongest.

Jacqueline Raw, Owner and Founder of Ycagel, explains that when you apply this story to the realm of mindset, it's not as black and white as the wolf you choose to feed. "A lot of what we think about is on autopilot and as a result, the narrative we play in our minds is just below the surface of focused awareness which means that we don't even know we're feeding the bad wolf."

She adds that it's no surprise that so many people are battling to create a winning momentum, "We put in all the effort and reap none of the rewards, because we unknowingly sabotage ourselves with a narrative that creates a monster-sized wolf that keeps us firmly rooted where we are."

This, however, according to Jacqui, is reversible. "Once you become aware of the fact that you're the one sabotaging yourself, you can do something about it." She offers three tips on how to 'feed' the good wolf and 'muzzle' the bad one:

1 Become aware of the narrative

Spend time examining your internal narrative (thoughts) and realign those negative thoughts to comply with the vision for your life, so that you become highly tuned to any negative self-talk. When you get here, it's much easier to lose the negativity and keep combating self-defeating talk with empowering language that grows you!

2 10 minutes a day - every day

To 'grow' the good wolf (which in this case is a winning mindset) you're going to need to supplement its diet. The only way to supplement a winning mindset is to invest in it through purposeful personal development. There are so many powerful, free resources - from YouTube videos, podcasts, eBooks and free online masterclasses - the list is endless. Commit to spending 10 minutes a day supplementing your mindset with thinking from powerful leaders from whichever walk of life you relate to.

3 Encourage someone else

The most powerful thing you can do to build a winning mindset is to encourage others to do the same. The more time you spend investing in growing other people, the more capacity will be created within you. It's the best-kept secret amongst the elite. Find someone, encourage them, grow them, give of yourself and see the impact that it has in your life and in your career.

"The reason the story of the two wolves is so powerful is because it's true and applies to most challenges in life; good vs evil, positive vs negative, success vs failure. The common denominator in the outcome of each application in the story is what you choose to focus on and invest in.

The ball will always be in your court. So, how will 2021 be different for you?" Jacqui concludes.

By Jacqueline Raw, founder of Ycagel, a Marketing consulting and services firm.

Drafting a **Joint Venture (JV) contract**

Crucial clauses and aspects to consider.

Many entrepreneurs have enjoyed long-term success with a Joint venture (JV) strategy. These partnerships can enable businesses to grow faster without having to borrow funds or rely on external investors. The classic definition of a JV is the arrangement of two or more companies to pool and combine resources on a product or service. The parties involved then typically agree on a fair split of the profits and value generated by the partnership. Some of the world's most successful JV's include Samsung and Spotify, SABMiller and Molson Coors Brewing Company, and Starbucks and Barnes & Nobles.

For a small business wanting to increase market share, a well-structured partnership with a larger more established company offers access to wider marketing and distribution resources, thereby saving time and money in selling the product or service.

With increasing globalisation, the rise of advanced technology, and generally declining economies, there is a growing opportunity for entities to join forces for mutual interest.

However, as appealing as a JV might be, for a business partnership to be a success, it's critical to note that both parties need to agree to clear time-specific objectives, sharing of profits/loss, and day-to-day management of the venture. This begins with structuring an iron-clad contract. A joint venture that endures years of success is only possible if all your ducks are in a row.

Tamasen Bluett, Attorney and co-founder of LegitLaw, highlights the crucial clauses and aspects to cover when considering a joint venture contract.

Below Bluett lists eight priority questions to ask:

- **How will finances be handled?**
Will both parties split the initial start-up costs 50/50? What happens if one of the parties invests only time instead of money? How will that factor into things?

- **What will each party bring to the joint venture?**
It is vital to know how the work and capital investment will be split between the relevant parties. Who is bringing what to the table, and what can each person expect from the other? The more detail added here, the clearer the roles and expectations of either party will be.

• Who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the venture?
The everyday stuff like managing the mailing list, handling customer service, making payments, and keeping track of the overall finances is essential for a business to prosper.

• What is the term of the arrangement?
Is there an end date? What happens if one or both parties want out of the joint venture? Can the one buy the other out for example, and at what price?

Deadlines are always important, but especially in joint ventures. When does the development need to be completed?

> It's critical to note that both parties need to agree to clear time-specific objectives, sharing of profits/loss, and day-to-day management of the venture. This begins with structuring an iron-clad contract.

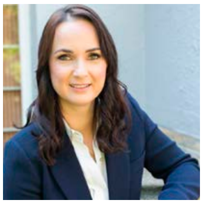
• Who owns what?
Does each party own equal shares of the resulting intellectual property, or will the percentages vary? How does "sweat equity" or investment through time and effort (instead of money) factor into the ownership of the intellectual property?

• Can either of the parties use the brands, or products and/or services created in terms of the joint venture to be used outside of the joint venture?
E.g., either party takes the product you both developed and sells it by themselves?

• What happens if one person can't perform their duties?
Can someone else from that person's team or a colleague perhaps step into the party's shoes? What role and ownership will the loved ones of the party have in respect of the joint venture in such a scenario, e.g., will the joint venture go on, and in what manner?

• What's the plan if the parties disagree and the conflict can't be resolved? Will you consult a neutral third party, such as a mediator, to help you resolve the issue? Or have the option to go straight to court?

Tamasen Bluett is the co-founder of LegitLaw together with Elaine Bergenthuin. The platform offers online legal contract services to SME's, entrepreneurs, and innovators. Visit www.legitlaw.co.za



From '*meh*' to 'YEAH!'

The science of storytelling...

Have you ever had your virtual hand up in an online meeting, ready to make a brilliant suggestion or ask a pertinent question? As time ticks away and a cacophony of voices drown out your chance to shine, you eventually concede to those who are louder and more persistent.

In this scenario, you, my overlooked friend, are your brand. With a bevvy of voices jostling for attention in the digital space, how do you get your brand to speak loud enough for your audience to hear you, and most importantly, take action? Or will big brash budgets always win?

Enter the Science of Storytelling.

The history of storytelling dates back thousands of years with some of the earliest narrative found on African rock art. Whether through cave paintings, wall carvings, papyrus drawings or myths and legends shared around the campfire, our ancestors shared their values, beliefs, and experiences.

Storytelling is the reason novels like, "Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe is prescribed reading in African schools and around the world. In its pages we see ourselves and in the folklore from ancestors in Igbo culture, we recognise a common thread of humanity that extends to countless other cultures. It is also the reason a seemingly innocent Marvel movie like "Black Panther" gave rise to a counter-cultural movement of pride in Africa, its abilities and heritage.

Brands have woken up to the fact that customers and prospects no longer want to know why their brand is the best "BUY, BUY, BUY, BUY, BUY". But, if they can communicate their value proposition in a narrative format, their audience is much more likely to stop and listen.

When we share our brand purpose through a story, we are doing it in a way that is natural to us and the receiver.

What does this mean?

We know when we're being sold to, and we don't like it. But should a brand, instead of trying to sell you a high-quality couch, tell you the story of the mom taking naps with her colicky newborn on the couch, you may just pay attention. And, if they then show you how the same woman, as a grandmother, sends her granddaughter off to college with the same couch, you may just be hooked.

Why?

The experience of hearing and seeing a human narrative allows us to place ourselves inside the story which

> We know when we're being sold to, and we don't like it. But should a brand, instead of trying to sell you a high-quality couch, tell you the story of the mom taking naps with her colicky newborn on the couch, you may just pay attention. And, if they then show you how the same woman, as a grandmother, sends her granddaughter off to college with the same couch, you may just be hooked.

increases our oxytocin levels (the "feel-good chemical) and, therefore, empathy. The hearer also literally gets on the same wavelength as the storyteller, as their brain patterns mimic that of the storyteller. Stories persuade, while advertising bombards. Stories remove barriers, while advertising has to work extra hard to scale the obvious hurdle of self-interest before the customer will engage.

Who cares? YOU should.

When you're building your brand, a logo, a vision, a mission statement and shiny CI is not enough to tell people who you are. Through storytelling, people will get to know what your brand stands for: your values, beliefs, and experiences.

People buy from people - not from a Pantone colour. We'd like to twist Theodore Roosevelt's famous quote a little and say, *"People don't care what you sell until they know how much you care."*

As Scott Bredbury, a former Nike and Starbucks CMO said: "A brand is a story that connects with something very deep. Companies that manifest this sensibility invoke something immensely powerful".

Sharing your authentic purpose binds you with your customer during certain life stages and even for life. But how do you share your brand story without drowning in the crowded digital public pool?

Let's get practical.

If we go back to the history of stories, there's a reason why these tales and lessons handed down from our ancestors evoke such significant emotions and memories. It's about community, belonging and knowing where we come from. It's also tactile. We remember the hum of their voice, Gogo's pillowy lap, the smoke from the fire and the occasional jolts of surprise.

Digital storytelling requires a multi-pronged approach to draw customers in. Let's take a look at the practicalities:

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

SEO is the performance marketing practice of connecting the audience to your message. When you know what your ideal audience is searching for, you start to build a picture of who they are.

To produce an effective SEO strategy, consider partnering with a company that has the digital analysis and MarTech capabilities that can look at which topics are trending and how your target audience uses words to connect to your brand.

An SEO Specialist will look at how best to use content and the website to connect your story to your audience online. This helps you speak to your customer in a consistent authentic tone across all touchpoints about issues that matter to them and sows the seeds of brand love.

Website

You only have 3 seconds to capture your reader's attention while they decide whether to click away. Instead of "BUY, BUY, BUY" messaging, why not 'sell' them the lifestyle that could accompany those items. Help them escape. Talk about the "why" behind what you do. If you create jobs locally or source sustainable materials, it should be on your webpage.

With your content - whether visual, written or video - think 'best friend' rather than the salesperson with the brown suit and briefcase.

Video

81% of businesses use video as a marketing tool.
By 2022, online videos will make up over 82% of all consumer internet traffic - 15 times higher than it was in 2017. Viewers keep 95% of a message when they watch it in a video, compared to 10% when reading it in text. Video is no longer just for big brands. We have some exceptional talent locally who create world-class video affordably. Is it time to dust off your stale corporate video or newsletters, and go live with your CEO on social?

Employees

The people who work for you are often the forgotten superfans. Apart from your digital assets, you have these real, live storytellers who can share your brand story out there. But charity begins at home, and the way you communicate with your employees will guide how they share that message in the digital world. Spend the time to take your employees through your brand story and purpose or, even better, live it. They will quickly tell you whether you're full of it and not living up to your portrayal of yourself.

Experiences

This has become a little tricky during the pandemic as social distancing curbs in-store activation. VR, AR and Smartcodes are a safer way for customers to experience your brand without having to leave their home.
How could you serve them where they are even by entertaining them? How could you show you care?

Customers are suffering from digital messaging fatigue. We all are! To cut through the clutter, you need to show up as a real, likeable 'human', wherever your fans live online and in the actual world. Brands need to go back to the storytelling basics or face banishment to the "unsubscribe" and "unfollow" zone.

By Yaw Dwomoh, CEO of Idea Hive, a Digital Brand Storytelling agency in Johannesburg.

Leverage your **personal brand** to tell your story

Branding has come to the forefront due to digital acceleration that is breaking geographical borders. Businesses that continue to thrive are those that have nailed their branding - and here we are not just talking about an eye-catching logo. These businesses have communicated a solid *why or purpose*, authentically tapped into storytelling, chose a side of the fence when it comes to topical issues and kept delivering beyond their promise. It's these businesses that pull our heartstrings that continue to have the hearts of our bank cards.

After specialising in branding in my undergraduate degree and now in my experience working through the branding-module with tech entrepreneurs at the Future Females Business School, I realise that many startups struggle to understand the connection between building their business brands and their personal brands. The reality is that the latter will influence the former, because oftentimes, the impact that you made in your industry over the years before deciding to fly solo and start your own venture, is what gets some of your clientele from corporate moving across with you. How you made them feel over the years contributed towards them supporting you in your new chapter into the unknown. That is exactly what branding is, ***how*** you make others feel. So, how exactly can you start defining both your personal and business brand as you build your business? How can you leverage your personal brand as a small business owner?

Get feedback on what you do really well

A few weeks ago, I got challenged to embark on an interesting exercise; asking the people in my circle for feedback on what my strengths are. This is quite a change from the 'usual' survey where your aim is to identify your weaknesses and areas of improvement.

It felt strange and uncomfortable, but was very rewarding indeed, and this is an exercise that I suggest you try. Get feedback on what you do really well. Why do your clients keep coming back, or why did they follow you from your corporate job? What are you consistently known for, and what do you want to be known for?

Identify patterns in the responses - as these are mainly tied to your personal brand - and use that to start defining your business' values and culture. Instead of stressing over cloning yourself to satisfy your customers, start defining the "way of working" for your business and employees based on what your clients have identified as your strengths. Whatever it is that your clients like, do more of it and have that run in the veins of the people who are part of your business.

Formalise the values you embody and build them into your onboarding programmes for new employees. You might learn that your clients appreciate the personalised call you make, the SMS that you send on their birthday or that you remember that their child is moving to Grade 3 next year. This could potentially become a standard for all your account managers; have them own a "client book" based on facts outside the client's business activities and diarise communication going forward.

Form your unique voice

When forming your unique voice in your industry, take the time to acknowledge how your paying audience generally speaks. Are they casual or formal? While embarking on your competitor research, find out if there is space for you to own the tone that you have identified. You don't want to start a chicken fast food outlet and try to sound like Nando's. Pick a lane that resonates with your paying customers and stick to it, be consistent. Document this and all the other related elements, then use that as your brand guide as you are building your venture. You want your tone and content to be consistent, and not based on a team members' mood of the day.

These are just thought starters that I hope will inspire you to start working on brand building. Take the right steps and tap into reputable content and material freely available online that can help guide you – it's worth the time and effort as your business begins to take off!

By Amantle Mokubung, Marketing Strategist, Co-founder at Makgarebe A Mahikeng, Business Coach at Future Females Business School and radio content contributor.

5 Top tips for your business website

With digital initiatives being accelerated, your website remains one of the most powerful marketing tools for your business.

The opening move for a business to make a great first impression online is through a powerfully designed website. So, whether you are a business owner who is just getting started on your official website, or you are currently updating your site and would like a refresher on general best practices, here are five tips for you to keep in mind:

1 Make your copy prospect-oriented and benefit-driven

When prospects visit your site, they want to know one thing: how your solution or product adds value to their personal lives or their line of work. That said, an objective listing of basic features, however well-written, might not do the trick. Features are only material facts about your product; they are not prospect-oriented information.

Relaying the business or individual benefits along with product features transforms your copy into meaningful inputs for prospects. Say you are creating a website for an event management software. One of the product features is that there are 100+ built-in event layout templates. An event manager visiting the site will be intrigued by the feature when your copy also informs him or her that the digital templates expedite floor plan decisions by cutting back 40% of time spent on manual layout designing, not to mention quicker collaboration through contextual email integrations. It's always the value outcomes that catch the prospect's eye.

2 Offer social proof wherever you can

Social proof is the psychological phenomenon in which people look to the collective opinion of people to determine the best way to act in a given situation. As a business owner, the most powerful form of social proof you can display for the prospects are customer testimonials. Video or written customer success stories send a strong message to visitors. There are also awards, media mentions, positive analyst reviews and endorsements.

Try positioning testimonials at friction points, i.e. places where a prospect is likely to encounter resistance to conversion. Some of these include the pricing page, checkout page, or by any of your Call to Action (CTA) buttons.

3 Make your visitors' journey clear and their next steps easy

When you have a prospect's attention, the next crucial step to retain it is through clear call-to-action (CTA) buttons. Take your homepage, for example. The point is to offer calls-to-action for visitors who arrive on the

page with different levels of commitment and different levels of readiness to purchase.

Your homepage can offer more than the main menu to get users started, like a free downloadable report to cater to them in the *awareness stage* - a “Learn more about our business”. Likewise have a CTA for the *consideration stage*, and a “Browse our services” or “Request a quote” CTA for the *decision stage*.

Your homepage has to also couple dynamic CTAs with subtle design to ensure your prospects feel enlightened at every stage and not stifled by the options.

4 Make sure users can reach you on the other side

Remember to keep your official contact information on the header or footer of every page on your site, and/or offer features such as live chat. Today, live online chats are important for the Gen-Z customers who demand mobile-first and instant communication methods.

Moreover, regardless of the speed at which business technology advances, people are still drawn to doing business with people, not with interfaces, and the last thing you want is to lose a prospective customer because they had a question and didn’t know where to turn.

5 Go visual...and multimedia

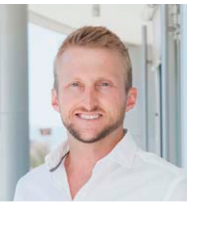
Multimedia content can enhance your copy by offering your visitors a deeper impression of who you are as a business and engaging with them at an artistic level.

- Concepts (like where you fit in your industry) might be more easily explained through an infographic.
- Instructions (like how to use a product or how to return or exchange a product) can be simply illustrated through screenshots.
- Processes (like how your product is made, or how to assemble your product) might be better demonstrated through videos.
- Portfolio (like videos or images of your finished product/service and of customers using them) will help prospects get an aesthetic sense of your offering.

A business website is a perpetual work-in-progress in terms of SEO and user experience. In an ocean of information out there, an intelligent SEO strategy is the beacon of relevance that helps prospects discover your site. Once they land on your website, an insightful user experience is the anchor that holds their attention until they reach the end of the purchase funnel.

A religious best practice-approach is imperative to get both these aspects right over time and turn your website into one of the most powerful marketing tools for your business.

By Andrew Bourne, Business Development Manager, Africa at Zoho Corporation.



Simply unreal: Welcome to extended reality

Just as brands are coming to terms with the various realities that is AR (augmented reality), VR (virtual reality) and MR (mixed reality), extended reality - or XR - has joined the mix to keep us on our toes.

While AR, VR and MR are no longer novel "tech terms", but an integrated part of how we experience the world (particularly as it is applied to problem solving in businesses) it is pertinent to ask what XR is likely to mean for brand enhancement. Is it essential for brands to adopt this new reality and if yes - how? And what's in it for them?

So what actually is XR?

Referenced from Wikipedia, and in summary, XR is a combination of a mixed reality environment. Simply put, it is the umbrella term used to describe a fusion of AR, VR and MR. While the term is much to digest, the important bit to unpack and understand is its potential for unlocking a business' value through the optimisation of various organisational functions.

XR boasts an improved customer journey, better employee performance and productivity, and the potential to create new content and services among its capabilities. Ikea uses XR to allow customers to see what furniture would look like in their home, through their phones. This try-before-you-buy option further enhances the Swedish homeware brand's reputation for customer-centric solutions.

Does this mean all brands should recruit an XR expert as soon as possible?

The experience element

If there is a universal truth in the martech (marketing technology) space currently, it is that marketers need to be prepared to innovate at every turn, and not be afraid of embracing disruptive tools and technologies to elevate their campaigns and enhance the customer experience.

We've seen what AR filters on Snapchat, Google Cardboard and 360-degree videos on YouTube have brought to the consumer experience. Testament to the success of these technologies is the hunger for close brand engagement from a consumer standpoint. As marketers, we need to explore alternate mediums to promote intimate brand engagement and XR affords brands this very real opportunity to do so.

The power of XR lies in how it takes complex content and information and turns it into a format and experience that is easier to understand and pleasant to experience. In its current guise it is an important learning tool thanks to this ability to "represent[ing] complex content in interactive, tactile and emotionally resonant ways that [further] differentiate the brand's offering", according to a South China Morning Post article.

XR is particularly powerful when it comes to training in high-risk industries, such as complex machinery training, fire safety training and driver simulation. Not only does XR provide realistic skills practice, but it also helps to reduce the number of learner mistakes, protects property and assets, and helps to ensure long-term knowledge retention.

And while video might have killed the radio star, XR may well exterminate video. Video content has enjoyed a meteoric rise in the last decade. Current stats suggest that 300 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube every minute, but video is a linear format that lacks engagement. XR, on the other hand, is interactive, immerse, engaging and thus far likelier to leave a lasting impression.

The efficiency element

While the experience element of XR plays an important role in building brand appeal and equity, the business case for the adoption of a new technology needs to be carefully considered. In the case of XR the question to ask is how can it help to drive operational efficiencies, increase productivity, and drive relevance by adapting to all user behaviour on digital platforms?

The potential of XR extends far beyond the advertising and marketing sector. Sectors likely to extract the most benefit from the tech are healthcare, engineering, real estate and retail. The potential for the healthcare sector is particularly exciting. In fact, a Harvard Business Review article reckons XR has the potential to be as ubiquitous in healthcare as the stethoscope, specifically in the way that it allows for surgeons, for example, to see digital images directly overlaid on their field of view.

Beyond the customer experience, XR has shown to improve internal communication and collaboration, simplify training and, significantly, allow for the more efficient analysis of data.

As the real and virtual world continue to converge, the possibilities for brands are indeed endless.

By Shaune Jordaan, co-founder & chief commercial officer, Hoorah Digital.

There are many practical applications of XR for different sectors, such as:

Retail: Use XR to give customers the ability to try-before-they-buy. For example, watch maker Rolex has an app that allows you to try their watches on your actual wrist.

Training: XR can provide training tools that are hyper-realistic to teach healthcare professionals, pilots, astronauts, chemists, etc, to find solutions to problems and how to respond to dangerous circumstances without putting their lives or anyone else's at risk.

Remote work: Workers can connect to the home office or with professionals located around the world in a way that makes both sides feel like they are in the same room.

Marketing: The possibilities to engage with prospective customers through XR will have marketing professionals pondering all the potential for their company's benefit.

Real estate: Finding buyers or tenants might be easier if individuals can "walk through" spaces to decide if they want it - no matter where they are.

Entertainment: As an early adopter, the entertainment industry will continue to find new ways of utilising immersive technologies.

5 Simple ways to build *buzz*

If potential customers do not know about your services or products, you can become the worst kept secret.

One of the keys to creating sales is reaching end-users with the information that you have solutions to meet their needs. As a company with independent distributors worldwide, we have a front-row seat to learning how our top entrepreneurial distributors creatively and cost-effectively build the buzz to increase their sales.

The following are five critical elements that many of our successful independent distributors use to grow their brand, reputation, and business.

1 Connect to a larger community

You most likely live in a community that will value your products or services. It may be rudimentary to sell locally and to those you know with a knock on the door, an email sent, or a text. But many distributors expand their reach and grow a successful business by leveraging digital tools. Take stalk of online communities – this can range from your LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat, to industry groups. Whether starting your business or jump-starting your marketing efforts, begin by reaching out to the people you know and those in your local community through multiple digital platforms, and encourage them to share their positive experience with others.

Importantly, make your content easily shareable and interesting, while addressing current widespread consumer issues that your product may tackle.

2 Engage your audience in an authentic way

Not everything is a one-size-fits-all approach. The content you share with your audience should be truly engaging, allowing for your customer's input along with the ability to share ideas. This exchange can be valuable when you're deciding on new product launches or creating a promotion. Social media offers so many ways to engage such as polling, quizzes, asking questions, and reactions. Use these tools to learn what excites your customers and consider letting them have input on what your next move is in your business - you're catering to their needs after all!

3 Create word-of-mouth connections

All customers are valuable, but those who become advocates of your products can be especially valuable. A satisfied customer expounding your virtues to their family and friends is a powerful tool. Be sure to thank these gracious customers for their support. If possible, and with their approval, use their quotes on your website or social media.

Don't forget to ask them to write a review on one of the many online review sites. Happy customers build the best buzz because they are doing it from their heart. Reviews today are one of the biggest influences of purchase.

4 Incentivise referrals

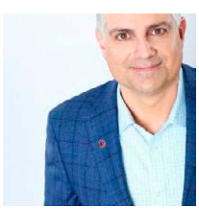
Another powerful method to encourage shareable feedback from satisfied customers is to incentivise referrals. You can provide a discount for every referral shared for your services. Encouraging referrals can be done informally, or you can set up a formalised system for acknowledging and rewarding these recommendations.

5 Give back

While entrepreneurs are focused on building their business, they also need to connect and be active in their community. Whether coaching a sports team, volunteering at a local pet shelter, or sponsoring a booth at a health fair, being an active and visible member of your town or city builds your connections. These community activities allow you to meet new people in a low-pressure environment. Your ability to connect over a shared passion or cause creates an opportunity to provide support without a heavy sales motive.

Having outstanding products or services to sell is just the start of a successful small business. Creating deep connections with your community, growing that group, positioning yourself as an expert and building relationships in meaningful ways allow you to expand the opportunities for people to learn about you, your business, and your products.

Building buzz for your business takes time, energy and grit. But many successful entrepreneurs have reaped excellent rewards by growing a network of satisfied customers and advocates.



By John DeSimone, President of Herbalife Nutrition.

Market your retail business - from the inside out

In retail, there is no better time to build your business than when your customers are in your store. Whether your goals are to build repeat business or to increase the spend per customer, you can promote and sell within your four walls in ways that are affordable, effective and yield a reasonable return on expense and effort.

Think about how some businesses market themselves on the premises. When you're buying a movie ticket, you are often given a discount for the sweets counter. "Coming attractions" could interest you to return to the theatre at a date in the future. In a hotel room, a tent card may show the availability of "in-room" pizza delivery.

As the porter walks you to your room, he may include a pitch for the restaurant or spa. In a department store, a sales person will try to get you to experience the latest perfume, hoping to turn you into a buyer.

New businesses may be wise to start their marketing efforts within the four "or more" walls of their own businesses. If you think of your business as a marketing laboratory for your efforts, you can see what works and what doesn't before you take bolder steps in the outside world.

Internal marketing is more controllable, more easily changeable and most likely, less expensive. The customer is already there - at your front door or inside your shop, and maybe even ready to spend more money.

Some further examples of what internal marketing can do are:

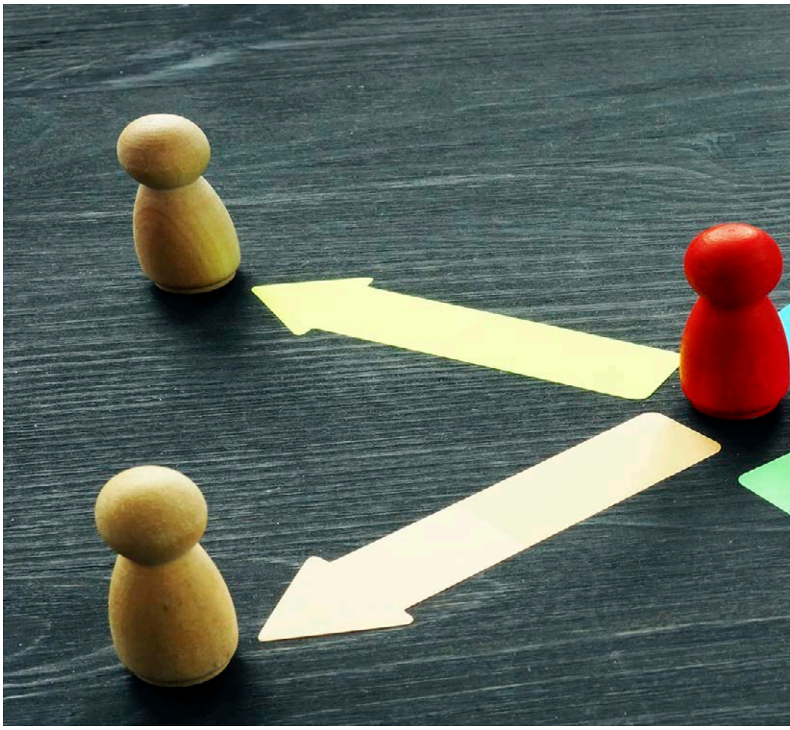
- A travel agency can publicise upcoming holiday tours (after COVID).
- Get names and contact information for your database (with their permission of course).
- To research your customer opinions.
- To give existing customers, during a busy month such as December, a voucher to return to your store in January, redeemable only in the month of January.

So now think, how can you promote and sell within your four walls?

By Basil O'Hagan Marketing, serving businesses through proven customer service, customer experience and neighbourhood marketing solutions. Visit: www.bohmarketing.co.za

ESOPs and Phantom Share

Unpacking two employee incentivisation schemes.

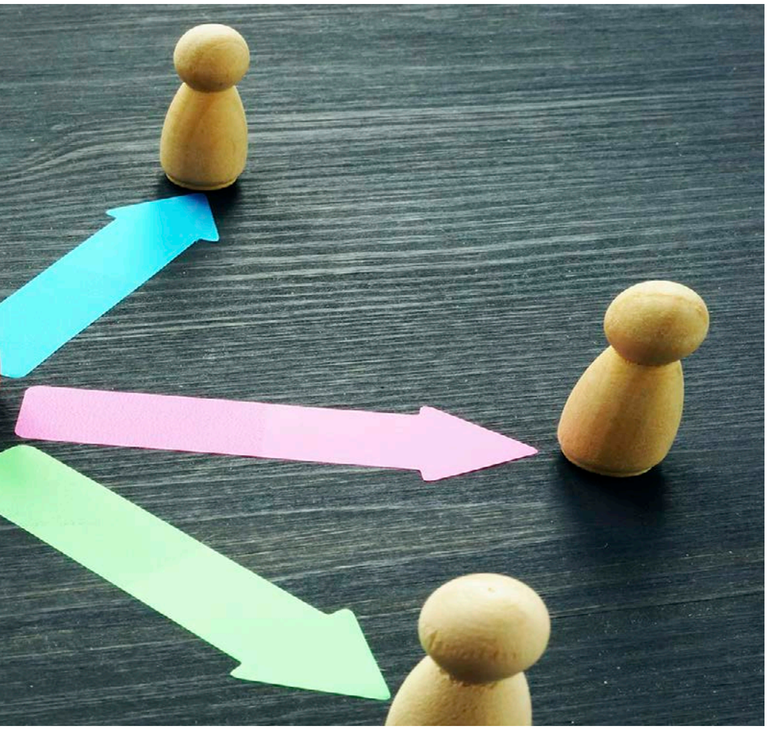


Employee incentivisation often goes further than the remuneration an employer pays their employees for their job performance. Two incentives we often see are a direct **employee share ownership plan (ESOP)** and a **phantom share** scheme. Both of these are valuable tools to enhance the company's ability to recruit and retain top talent, and creates an incentive for employees to remain committed to building and growing the company, and for the employee to share in that growth.

Very briefly, a direct ESOP awards actual shares of the company to employees (meaning that the employees become shareholders). A phantom share is effectively a cash bonus scheme where the employee's bonus is linked to and based on the value of the company, and what the employee would have received if he/she were a shareholder.

Key features of the ESOP and phantom share schemes:

ESOP	Phantom Scheme
Employees usually hold actual shares in the company and are shareholders.	Notional shares are issued to employees - they are not real shares, but are linked to the real shares of the company.
Employee shareholders are reflected on the company's cap table/share register.	A separate participation register is maintained - participants aren't recorded on the cap table.
The ESOP rules are adopted as part of the MOI and may require shareholder approval.	The phantom share scheme rules are usually adopted by the board as a company policy.
Voting rights of ESOP shareholders are usually limited (by creating a separate class of shares for the ESOP shares).	Participants do not have any voting rights at shareholder level as they are not shareholders.
The ESOP shares will be subject to the shareholders' agreement of the company, the memorandum of incorporation, the ESOP rules and participation agreement.	Phantom shares are not subject to the shareholders' agreement, but will be subject to the scheme rules and participation agreement.
ESOP shares will generally be restricted equity instruments in terms of the Income Tax Act.	The value received from the phantom shares (the cash bonus) will be taxable as income as it is received as a result of employment.



Key concepts applicable:

- **Vesting provisions**

Vesting means that the shares are 'earned' over a period of time, and the person will own the full amount of the equity only when the full period has lapsed, usually after 3 or 4 years. So although the employee is the owner of the shares, the economic benefit to the shares is delayed. This is referred to as the "vesting" period. Both ESOP shares and phantom shares can be subject to vesting provisions.

An example to illustrate: shares will vest over a 4 year period, with 25% of the shares vesting at the end of the first year, and the remaining 75% vesting monthly over the following 3 years. This means that 25% will vest 12 months after they are issued, and the remaining 75% will vest monthly over 36 months. Therefore, at the end of 2 years, 50% of the shares will have vested and the employee will be entitled to the economic benefit of 50% of his shares (subject of course to the terms of the incentivisation scheme).

(For the tax buffs out there, here, vesting refers to the right to the economic benefit of the shares and not the typical tax 'vesting' in section 8C when the share 'vests' once the restrictions on that share are lifted – this 'vesting' is discussed in the next point on restrictions.)

- **Restriction of the share**

If shares are restricted, they are not free to be dealt with by the employee until the shares become unrestricted. The employee, therefore, cannot sell the shares to other shareholders or third parties, and the shares cannot be encumbered (used as security) until they have become unrestricted – even after the shares may have vested as referred to under point 1 (i.e. after the 4 year period has passed).

The restriction of the shares is important for 3 reasons:

(1) the restriction postpones the tax liability that the employee will experience until the employee disposes of the shares and receives cash to pay that tax liability;

(2) in line with the first reason, the restriction serves to avoid the employee being required to pay income tax on the gain experienced on the shares when the restrictions are lifted before the employee disposes of the shares; and;

(3) the restriction 'controls' what the employee may do with the shares (i.e. preventing the employee from selling the shares or encumbering them).

- **Effect of termination of employment**

ESOPs and Phantom Share Schemes generally differ on this point:

The ESOP: ESOPs generally provide that no employee may retain their shares after their employment with the company terminates. This means that the shares must be sold by the employee and are either repurchased by the company or purchased by the other shareholders of the company.

When an employee's employment with the company terminates, the employee will be deemed to offer all his/her shares to the company – regardless of whether the shares have vested or not. The unvested shares will be offered to the company at the same nominal price that the employee paid for the shares. The price at which the vested shares are offered to the company will be determined by whether the employee is a "good or bad leaver" (the ESOP rules will define these).

Where the employee is a "good leaver", the shares will be offered to the company at fair market value, and in the case of a "bad leaver", the shares will be offered at the nominal price that was paid for the shares (or a percentage of the fair market value of the shares depending on the circumstances of the termination of employment).

The Phantom Share Scheme: As with ESOP shares, an employee is generally required to sell their vested phantom shares to the company on termination of employment, and whether they are a good or bad leaver will determine the value at which those vested phantom shares are purchased by the company. Any unvested phantom shares of a good leaver, and all the phantom shares of a bad leaver (both vested and unvested), will lapse on termination of employment – the company does not purchase those phantom shares from the employee, and the rights attached to the shares expire.

An alternative to the above scenario (where the vested phantom shares of a good leaver are purchased by the company), could be that all phantom shares (vested and unvested) of all employees (good and bad leavers) lapse on termination of employment, and that phantom shares only participate in the value of the company when there is a liquidity event. For example, the majority of the shareholders of the company exit and sell their shares; the company merges with an acquirer; or the company sells the majority of its assets. In this case, only participating employees who are still in the employ of the company on a liquidity event will receive a cash bonus in respect of their phantom shares (and nothing on termination of employment).

- **Good and bad leaver concepts**

This refers to the circumstances of the employee's termination of employment, and different definitions of good and bad leavers can be applied.

A good leaver is typically an employee that is retiring, resigning (on good terms/not to avoid being fired), has passed away, is being retrenched etc. The terms of the termination of employment are good.

A bad leaver is where the employee's employment is terminated, and the employee is not a good leaver. This generally includes where the termination is a result of misconduct, breach of contract, conviction of fraud or criminal offence that implicates the company, poor performance, and/or resignation on terms not mutually agreed with the company (which generally includes where the employee resigns to avoid a likely dismissal on grounds of misconduct, breach of contract and/or poor performance).

Conclusion

The terms of an ESOP and Phantom Share Scheme can be tailored to the employer's specific requirements and the above information just sets out some of the general options that are available for an employee incentive scheme. There are of course various other structures that an employee incentivisation scheme can take (for example, an option scheme or making use of a trust), which we are happy to advise on, and the format of your scheme will need to be considered by the board and discussed with your shareholders.

Important to remember: A key point to remember when incentivising employees (whether through an ESOP, a phantom scheme or any other incentivisation method) is that any award that an employee receives as a result of their employment is likely to fall within the ambit of income in terms of the Income Tax Act and therefore be subject to personal income tax – in other words, the employee is likely going to pay income tax (PAYE) on the gain that he/she receives from that incentive.

The employee will be taxed on the gain that they have experienced in respect of their shares, which is calculated as the difference between the price paid for the shares and the amount received for those shares on disposal, and the tax payable is usually income tax (PAYE) because the shares were acquired by the employee as a result of their employment.

Other versions of incentive schemes may attach different taxation obligations, however, tax in one form or another will be payable on the incentive that the employee receives.

Jessica Paterson is an associate at Dommisse Attorneys with a focus on revenue generation, operational agreements, corporate structuring and shareholder relationships.
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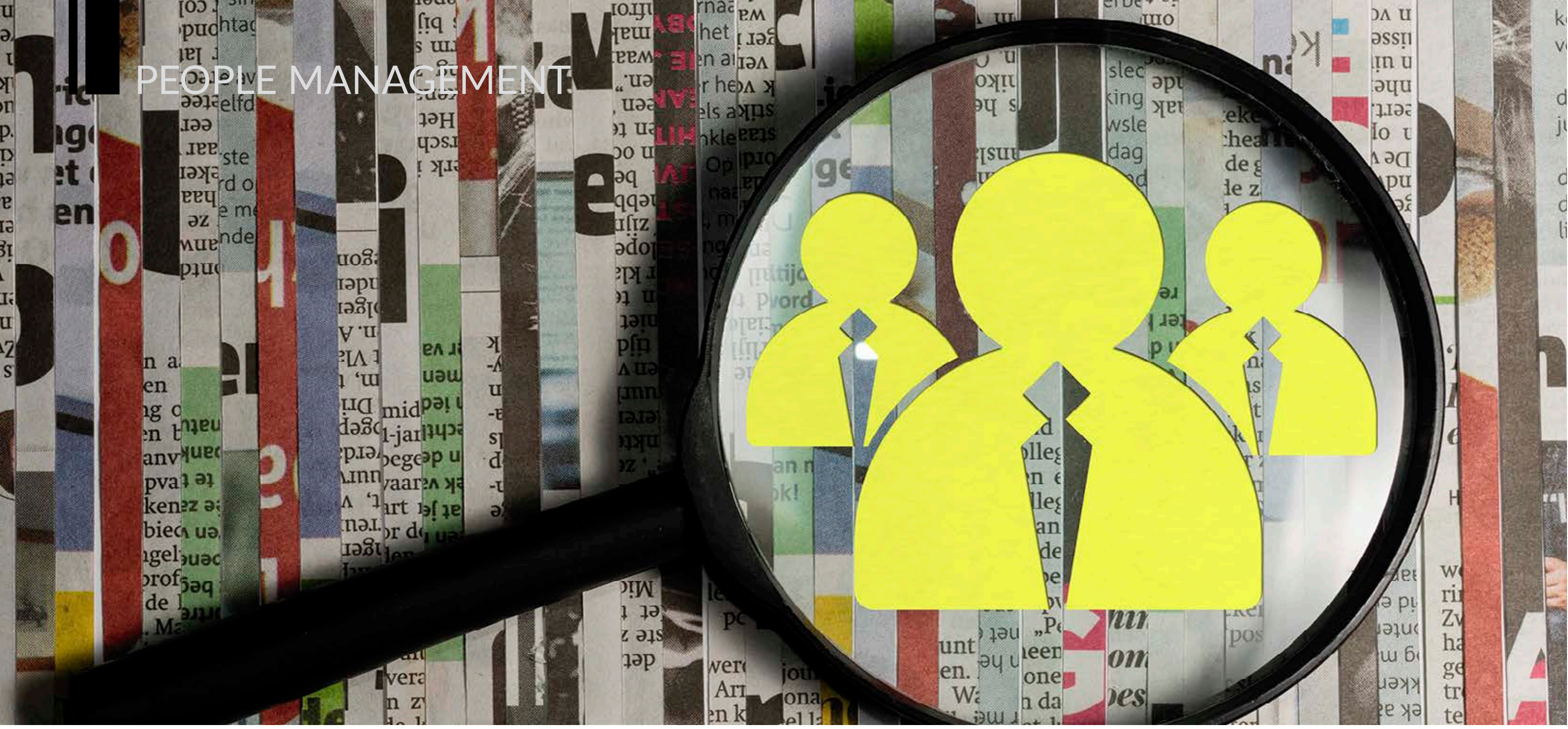


Owner vs employee mindset

There is a fundamental shift in attitude between being 'just an employee' or the 'owner of your job'.

"I have the privilege of working for a specialist consulting business where I have been able to see the impact on careers where employees have exhibited the *owner mindset*. This is of course only possible if they are given the opportunity to thrive, to innovate, to make mistakes and to be supported by a leadership culture that encourages learning and development. In my experience it is, without doubt, those employees who have cultivated the owner mindset who have excelled and gone on to greater successes," says Craig Raath Executive Director at 21st Century. He explains and unpacks this concept.

WHAT IS AN OWNER MINDSET?

"An owner mindset is one where employees are personally invested in the fortunes of the organisation. Their drive comes more from an alignment of values than from the financial reward attributed to the job itself. It is a mindset that drives decision making, where sustainability, cost reduction and big picture thinking are all included in the process, especially when no-one is "looking over their shoulder".

OWNERSHIP

For some organisations, creating the owner mindset is easy. What better way to align employee and shareholder interests and create an ownership culture than to make employees shareholders themselves? Having skin in the game helps to drive innovation and alignment to the business itself. In our business, culture and value alignment are key and one of the ways that we have created that culture is to make everyone an owner and the results have been remarkable.

For the majority of organisations, however, making everyone a shareholder is neither practical nor desirable, so what else is key to improving shareholder alignment and creating an environment where the owner mindset can thrive?

COMPANY IMPERATIVES:

- **Actively seek out recognition opportunities**

Let your high potentials know they are being noticed. I would wager that the leading reason for employees getting stuck is that they don't recognise their own potential. Many of these employees, although they possibly don't have a proven track record, may be exhibiting the appropriate competencies to you. These competencies need to be encouraged and resulting actions celebrated by letting them know the strengths that you see in them.

- **Empower employees**

Firstly, there is little doubt that employees looking for success emulate their superiors to some extent, so ensure that you live the values that you wish to be embraced. That said, it is imperative to empower employees to build their own successes. Set the bar at a reasonable height and allow employees to get their wins before inching the bar up. Realise that making mistakes is part of any growth journey.

- **Career conversations**

For many years we have been running culture surveys, and "Career Pathing" always features as a top driver of employee engagement. In my experience, the number one lever in getting employees to full advocacy and company alignment is co-designing a career path aligned to their competencies.

- **Embrace feedback**

Allowing ideas to formulate in employees' minds and encouraging avenues for them to be expressed means that organisations need to be able to embrace diverse thinking. This is challenging with a top-down "my way or the highway" approach to managing a business. By being receptive to feedback that may be different to your own perspective, you are encouraging employees to think like an owner and challenge the status quo. If you are brave enough to do this, you will be surprised at how much "richer" an outcome can be.

- **Agility**

Agility in decision making is one of the greatest differentiators in an owner run business. In my view, one of the finest value propositions of working in our organisation is that everyone has direct access to the leadership team. There is no greater reward than seeing one of your ideas getting rolled out with the full support of the executive team. The more layers there are between idea and execution, the more unlikely it is that the environment will be primed for the owner mindset.

- **Build a performance-based reward model**

The benefit of linking remuneration to performance outcomes is that it allows ambitious employees to be the masters of their own financial destiny to a certain extent. Even those employees not driven by money will recognise the importance of this differentiation. We have found that when an organisation doesn't link pay with performance, the effect is an organisation wide decrease in performance levels and an increased risk of talent looking elsewhere for opportunities.

EMPLOYEE IMPERATIVES:

- **Be proactive**

Employees 'wait', owners 'make'. Employees are used to waiting - waiting for the boss to hand out work, waiting for direction, waiting to get paid. A key element of stimulating an owner mindset is to start by taking ownership of your own role. See it as an important part of a whole - one that is influenced by and influences other roles.

Make decisions that will benefit the value chain and ultimately the business. Be willing to ask questions to understand more. Banish any thoughts of "it's not my job" forever.

- **Be accountable**

"No one ever excused his way to success." - Dave Del Dotto. Excuses are a sure way to hamper your growth and prevent you from developing that owner mindset. Embrace an "if it is to be, it's up to me" mantra.

- **Be consistent**

Everyone has bad days when they struggle to perform at their best or, in some cases, even turn up. In crafting an owner mindset, you need to treat your role as your own business. Consistency of energy, mood and performance is critical when aligning your behaviours to the organisational culture. Your superiors, colleagues and clients need consistency from you – they need to know what they can expect.

- **Embrace learning**

Employees with an owner mindset revel in testing their limits. They take initiative by embracing new challenges. In this way they demonstrate a desire for more experience, the motivation to improve and the confidence to succeed. Make it a priority to enrich your skillset by trying new things, learning about related roles and ultimately how those roles benefit the business.

This article is not about championing one mindset over another, and organisations are filled with countless wonderful employees. It is, however, my observation that those employees who have the attitude of "owning" their jobs are far more successful (and more happy!) than those with a "just an employee" mindset. This is certainly true in our high-performance business where balancing working hard and playing hard creates an environment where the owner mindset can thrive and where "turning up the volume" is a metaphor for amplifying effort and performance."

By Craig Raath, Executive Director at 21st Century, one of largest Remuneration and HR consultancies in Africa.

From co-worker to first-time manager

Transitioning from being 'one of the team' to actually having to manage your co-workers can be tricky and an adjustment.

Anja van Beek, Talent Strategist, Leadership and HR Expert and Executive Coach, answers this question that she recently received from one of her followers:

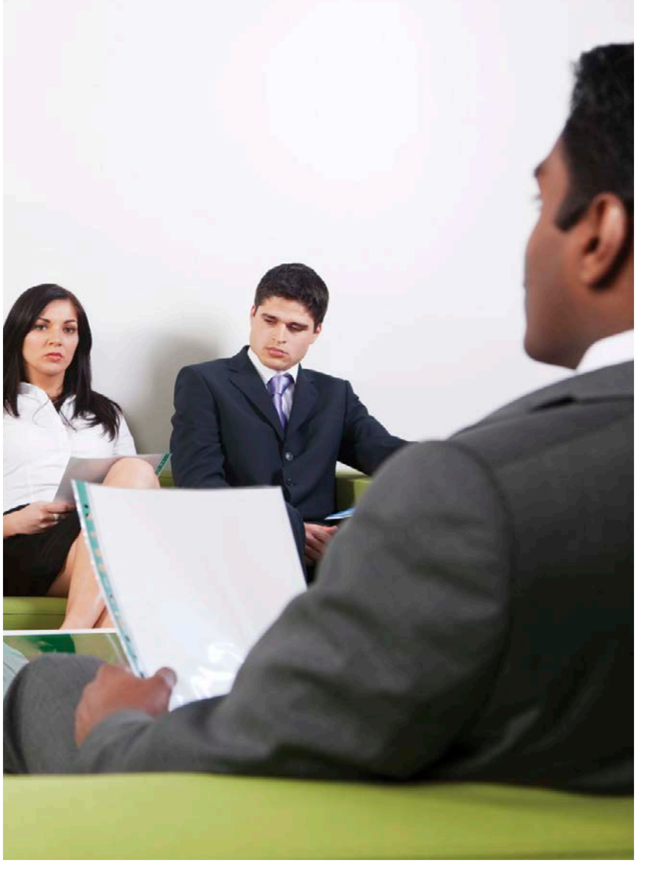
Question: *I am having some issues with boundaries in the workplace. I have always been friends with my co-workers, but I recently got promoted into a management position where I am now managing my co-workers. Is there a way I can remain friends with them, while also being their manager? How do I balance being friendly with being firm? I'm really struggling to be assertive without being authoritative, as I don't want to alienate them at all. Please help!*

Answer: Firstly, congratulations on your appointment! This is an amazing opportunity to create an environment where your team can be successful.

I want to assure you that you're not alone. Many people promoted to a first-time management role grapple with the same issue – how do I transition from being a team member yesterday to being the manager today, especially if the team members are your friends.

The first step is really to decide what type of manager you want to be. There are many different styles, and based on your approach you can increase your influence and be more effective. I would recommend adopting a servant leadership style as it emphasises the shift towards enabling your team to succeed.

Think of a gardener as a metaphor. You are the gardener, and your role is to ensure each team member grows and have what they need to be successful. As a gardener, you will know which plants need more water or sun. You would know when you need to add soil or prune the plants to flourish. It is your role to help them perform at their highest level and make them successful.



Back to your question. Don't let the personal relationship cloud your new responsibilities or the business decisions you need to make. You need to realise that your responsibilities have changed. Be transparent about it and include your team in the solution.

Arrange one-on-one sessions with each team member and clarify boundaries (this includes all the team members - not only the ones that are friends). During the discussion, clarify your expectation of each team member and their expectations of you as their manager.

It is critical to have open, honest conversations about this.

Once you have done that, continue with the following questions that I can recommend as discussion points for any new manager:

- What have your previous managers done that you want me to repeat?
- What are your strengths? And what are the priorities you are working on?
- What is your favourite thing to work on? Where do you need my support?
- What kind of feedback works best for you?
- How do you want to receive recognition?
- How are we going to handle differences? What are the norms/values that you (as the manager) are non-negotiable on?

This will help you to understand their needs from a management point of view; it will give insight into what to avoid and understand what would work best for them. Remember though, what works for one team member, may not work for a different team member.

You will have to find a balance between personal and business conversations with your friends. In any working relationship, there is a personal and professional focus. Be intentional in establishing a professional relationship as you might, in the future, need to have tough performance feedback discussions. You might be tempted to soundboard some ideas with your friends, but be mindful not to treat them or include them exclusively in discussions.

Anja van Beek consults with leaders and HR teams on all people-related aspects with a specific focus on integrating agile principles and practices. Visit: www.anjavanbeek.co.za

Transparency an important factor for young employees

South Africa's young people prefer to work for organisations that have business leaders and managers who are open and honest in their communication with employees, this according to the PwC Workforce Preference Study released in March 2021.

"The aim of our study was to obtain deep and real-time insights on what young people are looking for from (future) employers in South Africa," says Maura Jarvis, Associate Director in PwC's People and Organisation division.

Other results of the survey include:

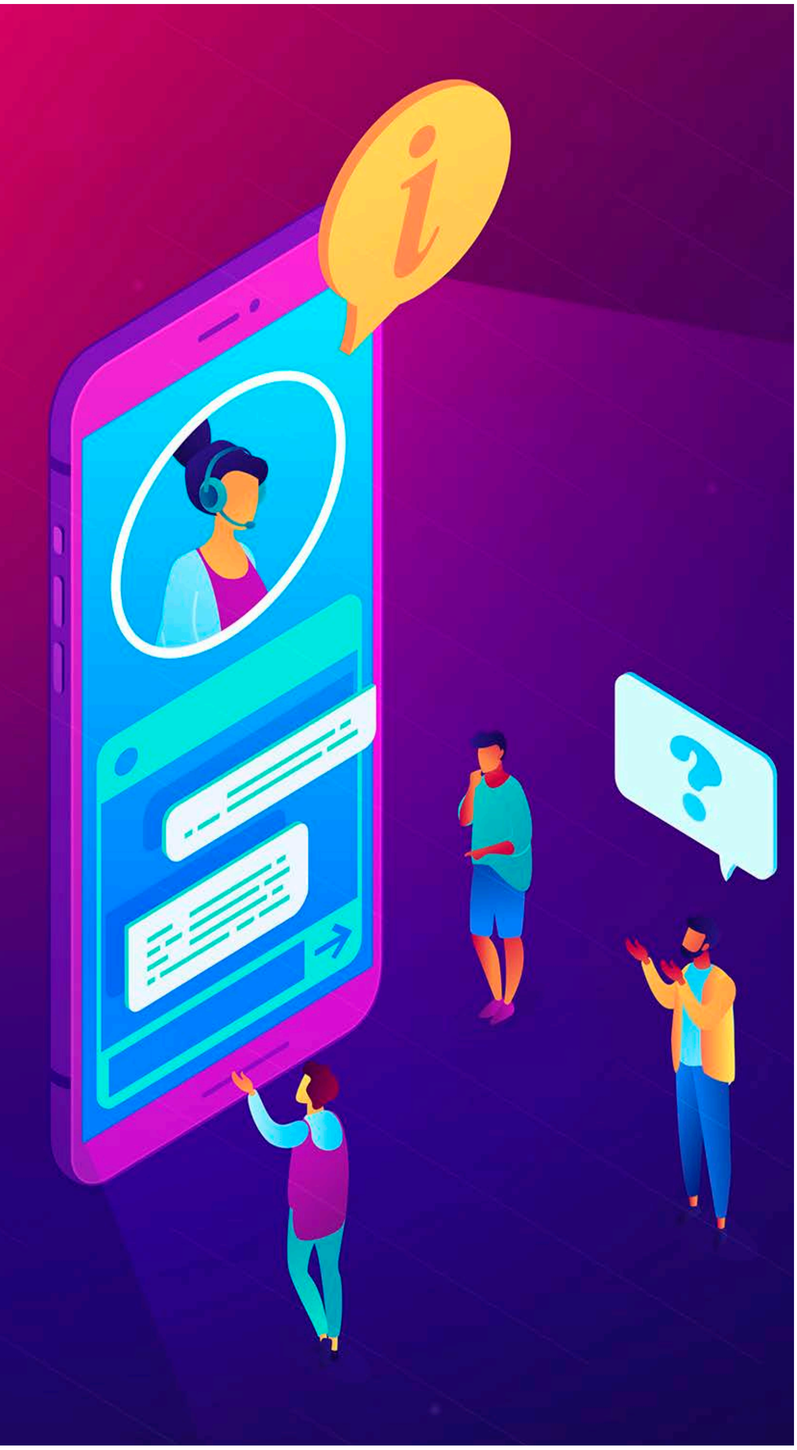
- ***Flexible work schedule and work time:*** Having a flexible work schedule and ways of working is a highly desired factor across all countries surveyed, including South Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the need for employers to offer flexibility as remote working came to the forefront. It is notable that contracting and gig employment as a preference is also growing in popularity.

- ***Base pay:*** There is still a clear preference for pay and benefits such as pension and healthcare benefits. Greater transparency about pay levels and fair pay is key for employees.

- ***Digital upskilling:*** Across South Africa there is a preference for interesting and challenging work, with digital skills development being a requirement from employees. Sharing and innovation are also a preferred working style.

"The automation of jobs and digital transformation means that there will be a demand for new high-skilled labour that currently does not exist. Organisations have a social responsibility to upskill their workforce and potential workforce. Increasingly, companies must have talent that can 'flexskill' - the ability to adjust rapidly to new and varied skills and roles. Employees need - and want to - constantly learn and adapt. They find themselves in a new era of work, workplace and life," Jarvis concludes.

Self-service portals boost the digital experience



Here's why...

Most organisations understand that a great customer experience is pivotal to staying competitive. They also recognise that in an increasingly connected world, that experience has to be digital. The key to both is ensuring that self-service portals are as compelling as possible.

Strategic customer experience leaders also recognise that customer-facing solutions, like web portals, must include self-service elements in order to be a truly effective and valuable tool. In fact, research shows that 69% of consumers first try to resolve their issue on their own, showing just how important self-service is. Additionally, we estimate that 85% of all customer service interactions will start with self-service by 2022. Despite that, less than one-third of companies offer self-service options such as a knowledge base.

That suggests a deficit of understanding when it comes to the advantages self-service portals afford the user, and how to implement them correctly.

Why self-service matters

It's not difficult to see why so many customers prefer self-service options either. Self-service customer support is often more convenient, faster, and more flexible with respect to customers' unique time, energy, and resource availability.

Because customer self-service channels tend to require much lower customer effort inputs than other customer service channels, users are drawn to them. People are always likely to choose the option which requires the least amount of energy on their part. This is actually far from the cliché of "just wanting to speak to a human", as most would rather solve a problem themselves.

Customer preference isn't the only reason to invest in a self-service portal. Well-implemented self-service can provide long-term benefits such as:

• Decreased number of support calls.
• Faster support response times.
• Greater volume of support handled.
• Increased customer satisfaction.

But self-service can only provide those benefits if it is, indeed, well-implemented.

The right kind of implementation

Since customer portals (such as websites and apps) should already be a customer-facing channel that a business is actively using, adding self-service is the most obvious and advantageous tactic to provide additional value for customers and to enhance the existing tool. Many businesses actually already have the knowledge and services to support self-service, they just need a focused strategy to bring everything together in an effective customer-facing solution.

The first step in creating such a solution is for the organisation to assess the content it already has available. Since self-service is designed to equip customers to find the information they need without any assistance, the knowledge content, whether that be articles, videos, or images, must be ready first.

The organisation should also have a full understanding of current customer journeys. That means finding the answers to questions such as:

• How many customers use the customer portal multiple times a week?

• What information are customers looking to find in the customer portal?

• Where are the points of conflict during a typical customer journey when a customer will reach out for help?

• What questions do customer service representatives find themselves answering over and over again?

Having established the answers to these questions and created content in line with them, organisations can start adding functionality to their customer portals. So, for example, they might include knowledge bases that include a browse-able and searchable database of topics, articles, tutorials, and other relevant information or forums, which encourage knowledge exchange between customers and promote open discussions.

Organisations should also include features which make it easy for users to manage their accounts, which can include editing personal information, notification preferences, as well as allow them the option to close accounts.

Digital assistants, such as chatbots, will also be critical in providing instant self-service to customers. Especially with the advancements in AI, these digital assistants will only become more effective.

Beyond building

Of course, organisations can't just build self-service functionality into their customer portals and hope that people will start using it. They also need to put effort into ensuring that customers are aware of the benefits of self-service and that it is available as an option.

Additionally, they can't assume that self-service will work in every instance. When customers have highly complicated or unique questions and situations that require human expertise or if they prefer to speak to representatives instead of searching for the answer online, then the organisation's support team should be ready to jump in.

An addition - not a replacement

Ultimately, self-service does not give businesses the license to simply ignore their customers, until it's time to cross-sell or upsell. Self-service is meant to elevate the existing customer service experience, not replace it.

But as customers move towards a fully connected world enabled by technology, the demand for immediacy, connectivity, and simplicity in every interaction on their buying journey will only grow stronger.

Companies that are able to provide relevant and agile customer experiences will be the ones that differentiate themselves from their competitors, and a compelling self-service offering is critical to that.

By Greg Gatherer, Account Manager at Liferay, digital experience software for web, mobile and connected devices.

Choosing the right mix of tools to sidestep silos

When different divisions within an organisation use diverse software applications that not only vary in shape, look, and sound, but also fail to integrate, tech silos emerge.

Technology silos are one of the most common barriers that organisations come across in their digital transformation journeys. Tech silos mainly crop up at a juncture when various departments within the organisation use disparate software applications that not only differ in form, look, and feel but also struggle to integrate contextually. When business-critical apps do not communicate with each other seamlessly, organisations are left battling information silos, disjointed processes, and half-baked analytics, says Andrew Bourne, Regional Manager for Zoho Corporation.

Investing in digital tools built on the same technology stack

Business owners and tech leaders who are intent on avoiding silos in their firm's digital transformation journey should consider a holistic view and try appraising their software choices in the following aspects as an add-on measure:

- Beyond satisfying an exclusive departmental need, does the chosen software have the necessary integration capabilities to work with other tools and systems to create an **inter-connected business tech ecosystem?**
- Will the software contribute towards **the three Cs—convergence, collaboration, and context,** which are imperative for frictionless business processes?

An effective solution to the above is to move away from point solutions and consciously invest in a set of business solutions that are built on the same technology stack such as unified platforms, common data models, and consistent interfaces. This allows functionally distinct modules, like CRM, marketing, and finance to converge at an architectural level, facilitating powerful integrations, customisations, and capability extensions.

Let's look at a few scenarios below that portray the benefits of contextual integration:

When a CRM and a finance tool work together, a customer support executive is able to, say, access a client's invoice history and pending product licenses directly from the CRM or Help Desk console without having to log into a secondary tool, thereby saving time. Next, an inter-connected collaboration platform that blends internal and external communications in one place, like a contextual messaging portal within the CRM tool, will allow executives to discuss a certain ticket before responding to the customer. The creative possibilities of such cross-functional integration are endless and so are the benefits, irrespective of industry type and organisation size.

Integrated solutions with a unified data repository also ensure high success rates and quality outcomes while employing modern technologies like AI, ML, and business intelligence. Uniform data sets power unified business analytics, resulting in meaningful inferences and actionable insights that help organisations future-proof their business decisions. Additionally, the integration capabilities should also allow organisations to build custom workflows or connectors on their own

A technology silo essentially refers to apps and software that do not communicate with each other, meaning that the data they contain cannot be easily accessed by other departments and/or apps.

with as little coding as possible to explore new value avenues in growth scaling, supply chain management, customer experience and so on.

The UX angle

This is another important angle for organisations to keep in mind during their business software decisions: the employee experience (EX) approach. Employees should be given tools that are simple to work with and offer consistent experiences across departments. The tools should also make their jobs easier, with process integration and automation and allowing for quicker cross-functional collaboration. When the tools tick all of the above, employees are much more likely to embrace the change that comes with digitalisation.

A great EX also contributes to a greater customer experience (CX). Tools that streamline communications and elevate EX allow organisations to exist as a single cohesive unit and ensure that their customers get a consistent experience.

At the end of the day, a stellar customer experience is what gives an organisation the winning edge over competitors. In this digital age, an intelligent mix of business tools plays a defining role in achieving that competitive advantage.

Leveraging the power of integration for digital maturity

When it comes to business technology, invariable connectivity is vital because every organisation thrives by working as one unit. So, CTOs and business process architects should bear in mind the importance of a collaborative approach while going digital and that 'integration rather than siloed is essential'.

For a digital transformation strategy to act as a true business enabler, it's pivotal to choose the right set of tools that will work in harmony towards the same goal and mission, thereby reducing management complexity, simplifying the user environment, and increasing customer delight.