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- Protect your business
- Create top-notch photos
- Market across generations

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so can you!**
How these business
owners are thriving

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GREAT FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITIES
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STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Tips to stay customer-focused

**Social
commerce**

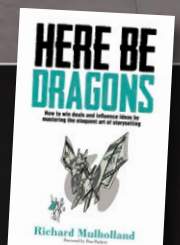
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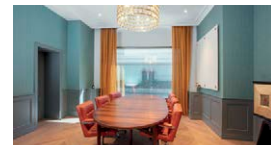
SPACES.



HQ



Signature



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022

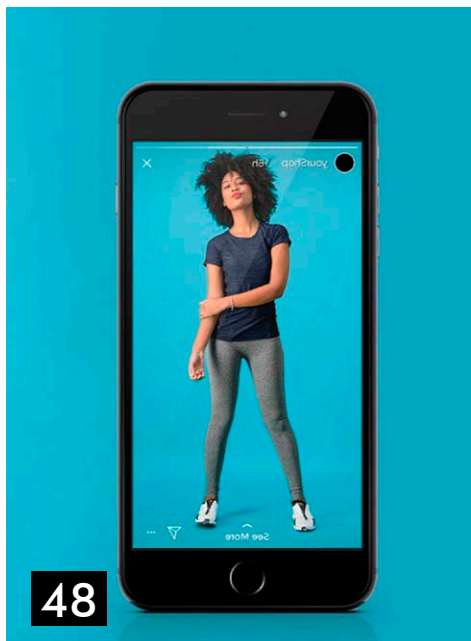
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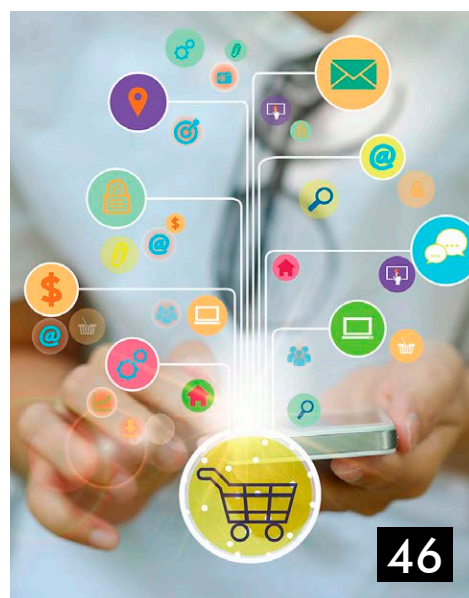
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Often through lack of funds, small businesses are easy targets.

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Consumers expect frictionless transactions with personalisation, convenience and flexibility at the forefront.



THE TOP 10 GLOBAL CONSUMER TRENDS IN 2022

Every year, global market research company Euromonitor identifies emerging and fast-moving trends that are expected to gain traction in the year ahead. These trends provide insight into changing consumer values, exploring how consumer behaviour is shifting and challenging business strategies in the year ahead.

The top 10 trends are:

► **Backup Planners:** Consumers are finding creative solutions to purchase their go-to products or searching for the next best options as supply chain disruptions cause massive shortages, with 28% actively trying to purchase locally sourced products and services during 2021.

► **Climate Changers:** Eco-anxiety and the climate emergency are driving environmental activism for a net-zero economy. In 2021, 35% of global consumers actively reduced their carbon emissions. And 78% of professionals believe that climate change will impact consumer demand, changing behaviours, needs and preferences.

► **Digital Seniors:** Older consumers were forced online as the world shut down. Now, familiar and comfortable with technology, businesses have an opportunity to tailor their digital experience to target and meet the needs of this expanded online audience.

► **Financial Aficionados:** Consumers are gaining confidence in investing and becoming financial aficionados taking control of their money. Financial literacy is no longer restricted to Wall Street. Companies should provide tools and easy-to-use solutions to make any consumer feel financially empowered.

► **The Great Life Refresh:** Consumers are focusing on personal growth and wellbeing, making drastic life changes that reflect their values, passions and purpose. Reflecting this is that 4 million Americans quit their jobs in July 2021 and another 4 million in August. Businesses should innovate goods, services and experiences that respond to this once-in-a-generation moment, coupled with marketing that acknowledges and embraces the upheaval.

► **The Metaverse Movement.** The digital world is evolving beyond virtual hangouts to immersive 3D realities. Consumers are embracing these digital spaces to socialise with communities. This can drive e-commerce and virtual product sales as access expands.



► **Pursuit of Preloved:** Secondhand shopping and peer-to-peer marketplaces flourish as consumers seek unique, affordable and sustainable items. Thrifting is trending. Investing in circular economy initiatives will drive value whilst positively impacting the environment.

► **Rural Urbanites:** Consumers are relocating to safer, cleaner and greener neighbourhoods. Businesses that strengthen e-commerce distribution, expand sustainable product lines and cater to Rural Urbanites will emerge as winners.

► **Self-Love Seekers:** Authenticity, acceptance and inclusion are at the forefront of lifestyle choices and spending habits as consumers embrace their truest selves. Products that evoke physical, emotional or spiritual wellbeing will resonate and enhance the lives of Self-Love Seekers.

► **The Socialization Paradox:** Certain consumers are eager to return to pre-pandemic life, whilst others are hesitant to resume their normal activities, creating The Socialisation Paradox. Companies should provide seamless solutions and multiple options across channels without sacrificing the experience.

What is clear is that traditional business models and logistics networks are being challenged. Businesses need to evolve as quickly as consumer behaviour is changing. In today's world, past purchasing habits do not necessarily imply brand loyalty. Successful businesses will meet consumers on their terms, and customer relationships can no longer be transactional. Consumers will prefer and trust brands that are humanised. *Download Euromonitor's "Top 10 Global Consumer Trends 2022".*

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TikTok named World's Fastest-Growing Brand, while African brands continue to elude ranking

Brand valuation consultancy, Brand Finance, every year puts 5 000 of the biggest brands to the test and publishes nearly 100 reports, ranking brands across all sectors and countries.



Brand value is understood as the net economic benefit that a brand owner would achieve by licensing the brand in the open market. Brand strength is the efficacy of a brand's performance on intangible measures relative to its competitors. Now in its 16th year, some notable findings this year include:

- New entrant TikTok named world's fastest-growing brand, up 215%, leading global revolution in media consumption.
- Apple holds on to world's most valuable brand title with record valuation at more than US\$355 billion, followed by Amazon and Google.
- US and China dominate claiming 2/3 of brand value, while African brands continue to elude ranking, with continent's most valuable MTN (brand value US\$4.0 billion) just under top 500 threshold.
- Tech remains most valuable industry, while second-ranked retail crosses US\$1 trillion mark following 46% brand value

growth during COVID-19 pandemic.

- Development of COVID-19 vaccines sees pharma named fastest-growing industry, while tourism sector remains below pre-pandemic valuation.
- WeChat named world's strongest brand for second consecutive year with top score of 93.3 out of 100 and elite AAA+ rating.
- Microsoft's Satya Nadella comes out top in Brand Finance Brand Guardianship Index 2022 of world's top 250 CEOs.

Tripling in brand value over the past year, TikTok's rise is testament to how media consumption is changing. With its offering of easily digestible and entertaining content, the app's popularity spread across the globe, however, it also acted as a creative outlet and provided a way for people to connect during lockdown.

African brands still outside the ranking

There are still no African brands in the Brand Finance Global 500 2022 ranking as global brands continue to dominate on the continent. Jeremy Sampson, Managing Director, Brand Finance Africa, comments: "It is estimated that Africa will soon house a quarter of the world's population, making it a lucrative location for global multinational brands. Within this context, no African brands feature in the ranking of the world's 500 most valuable, as many local brands have been discontinued by global giants. However, South African telecoms giant, MTN is currently performing very strongly and is well positioned for the future, so could be expected to move closer to being included in the ranking next year."

View the full Brand Finance Global 500 2022 report [here](#).



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HERE BE DRAGONS

By Richard Mulholland

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Here Be Dragons isn't just a how-to book, it is far more a *why-to* and mostly a *what-to-do* book. You're in for a wild tale of dragons, heroes (spoiler alert: it's not who you think it is) and a shift in the way you sell a story. You'll learn how to win deals and influence ideas by mastering the eloquent art of storytelling.



Richard Mulholland

About the author

Richard Mulholland, author of *Legacide*, *Boredom Slayer* and now *Here Be Dragons*, is the co-founder of global presentation powerhouses Missing Link and TalkDrawer. He is a renowned speaker and has presented his thinking in many countries including Canada, Puerto Rico, UK, USA, Germany, Kenya and Pakistan. When not activating his audiences, he can be found coaching many top CEOs and TED speakers to activate theirs.



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Saving money in 2022

Here are some savvy ways to save money, without impacting on effectiveness or efficiency.



1 Rethink your marketing strategies

You know what they say about doing business without advertising: it's like winking at someone you fancy in the dark. That doesn't mean you need to allocate a huge budget to marketing strategies, though.

Don't underestimate the power of simple moves, like optimising your website for SEO, which negates the need for spending on Google AdWords. Or sending a handwritten 'thank you' note with your product - a small

touch which helps to build loyalty; you're more likely to get business from a return customer than a loyal customer. One should also carefully consider the social media channels which best fit their brand profile and keep up a consistent presence.

Find ways to get the brand out there without coughing up - maybe you can identify a micro-influencer who would be happy to promote your brand to their audience in exchange for preferential use of your product or service. Finally, understand that every touchpoint is an

opportunity to promote your brand – in fact, every time you meet someone new, you have a chance to grow your network and introduce them to your offering.

2 Make the most of free tools

Why pay for software when you can use the open source equivalent? Obviously, it's impossible to run a business without using some form of software, but you may manage to avoid the hefty fees associated with many offerings by finding the open source equivalent. Spend a little time researching what's available – you'll find that there are many apps and tools that can be used free of charge. For example, some sites make it possible to download images for free (perfect for marketing or using on your website), while others give you the ability to design a logo or social media posts without investing in design services.

3 Reconsider all your costs

Make a list of all your company expenses and review them all. These may include rent, electricity, phone and internet charges, refreshments, stationery and maintenance. Insurance is always one to look at and review regularly. Has your business structure and therefore your insurance needs changed? Has your vehicle depreciated in value?

Become a bargain hunter and run your small business the way that the head of a frugal household might manage the home finances. Do you really need to buy a car or a fleet, and commit to spending money on all that goes with it? Perhaps considering the vehicle subscription marketplace or leasing would be more cost-effective. Office equipment and furniture can also be leased or purchased second-hand.

Renegotiate with your suppliers, as they are often willing to negotiate for mutually beneficial price structures.

If you have many smallish transactions going through your banking account, you can miss recurring payments you're making for services that you no longer need but forgot to cancel.

4 Does your staffing solution work for the business?

Small business owners are used to taking care of every aspect of the business. They may joke that they're not only the HR director, they're also the finance executive and marketing specialist. But while it's true that anyone

running a small business needs to have a variety of skills, the reality is that you can't do it all alone. At some point you will need to bring employees on board. Or will you?

Many small business owners find that it's more cost effective to outsource functions, rather than bringing a staff member into the business and investing in training and other costs like creating a work station. This is especially true if the requirements of the job fluctuate. If there is a heavy workload for just a few months of the year, it certainly doesn't make sense to hire a full-time employee.

If, however, you decide that you'd like to grow your staff complement, it's a good idea to look for candidates who have a great attitude and are hungry to learn, rather than those who have impressive experience and are therefore more expensive. There's another solid reason for hiring employees fresh out of college or university: they're often up to date with the latest tech and trends, and they're full of fresh, out-the-box ideas.

5 Embrace the new way of working

At first, many of us weren't comfortable with the changes that Covid brought to the workplace, like working from home, for instance. It didn't take long however before we came to realise the advantages. Is there anyone who doesn't appreciate the extra money they've saved on petrol by forgoing the morning commute? For a small business owner, these changes make even more sense.

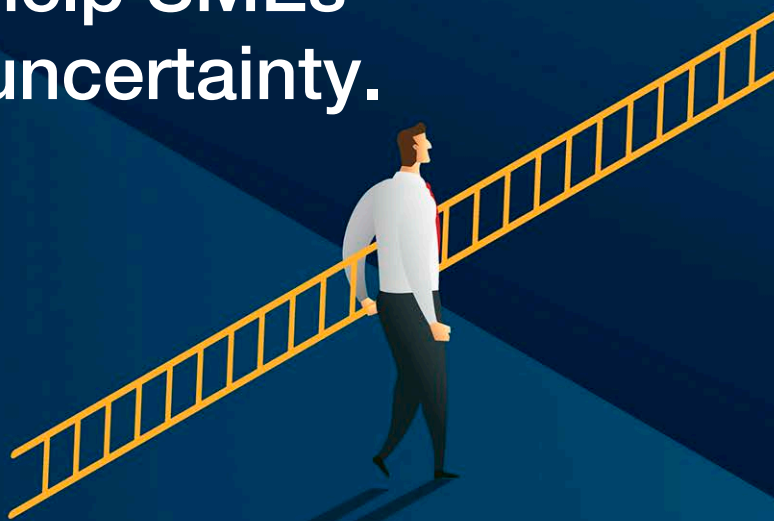
If you have a workforce, allowing them to log in remotely means that you can save on office space, and all the little extras that come with running premises (you have to keep stocked up on tea and coffee, for example). You'll also find that you're spending less on electricity and water. On that note, you'll find that there are many cost savings to be enjoyed from going green wherever you can. The best news? The small changes you'd have to make are so simple, and take literally seconds. It's as easy as using both sides of the paper when printing, making sure that all equipment and lights are switched off when not in use, and keeping wastage to a minimum.

Little actions like this add up over time to bring down your operating costs, but they also have the benefit of creating a halo effect for your brand. After all, consumers like to know they're supporting companies that are doing what they can to support the environment.

Article supplied by FlexClub.

Bridging the gap

4 Types of bridging finance and how they can help SMEs navigate uncertainty.



Companies can face various financing issues, especially in the initial lifecycle of their business. Structured as a short-term loan agreement with flexible terms, bridging finance can be a useful financial tool that can help carry SMEs through short-term periods of uncertainty.

“This form of short-term finance is a useful way for SMEs to bridge cashflow gaps, fund operational needs or start expanding a business. Often, businesses also face the issue of delayed payment from their clients. The flexibility and fast access of bridging finance can support SMEs in terms of day-to-day operational cashflow in this instance,” says Tom Stuart of Lulalend.

Having a clear understanding of bridging finance and its various forms is imperative in helping business owners understand which options are most suitable for their needs.

1 Closed bridging finance

Closed bridging finance is a short-term loan that is issued by a lender to a borrower for a fixed term. This type of bridging finance tends to be more accessible because lenders have a higher level of certainty for the repayment of loan, since the set terms are agreed to beforehand.

2 Open bridging finance

Open bridging finance adds an element of flexibility for lenders. The terms of the loan do not stipulate a fixed date for repayment, which can be useful for businesses who face uncertainty. However, a setback of bridging finance is usually a higher interest rate owing to the uncertainty around the repayment period of the loan.

3 Debt bridging finance

Debt bridging finance is useful for businesses who need temporary, short-term finance to cover operational costs while a larger, long-term finance agreement may be pending. While this solution can be helpful for a smaller business that needs to cover costs in the short-term, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the repayment and interest structure of the loan to avoid exacerbating financial difficulties.

4 Equity bridging finance

Equity bridging finance usually takes the form of venture capital or private equity investment for equity in exchange for funds. In this instance, a venture capital investor would supply funding for a lender while the lender raises equity financing. This is a useful way for a lender to avoid accumulating high-interest debt.

Financial services providers have varying criteria for applicants to qualify for finance, but generally require a form of I.D. from the business owner, banking statements and cashflow statements. Often, you may also need to apply in-person depending on the requirements of the finance provider. Smaller fintechs often only require an online application, three months bank statements and will provide immediate feedback on the status of the application.

"These various bridging finance options available to SMEs can help address their unique challenges. By taking a careful, strategic approach to bridging finance SMEs can access a financial lifeline to help keep their operations functional during periods where cashflow might be dried up", concludes Stuart.



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All about

VAT



We take a look at the differences between being a VAT Vendor and a Voluntary VAT Vendor, and the pros and cons of de-registering as a VAT Vendor.

Let's start at the beginning: VAT or Value Added Tax, is exactly that. It is a tax that is imposed by the government and that is collected by SARS (South African Revenue Service) that is due at 15% (as of January 2022) on sales less purchases. Some items are exempt of VAT, such as basic foodstuffs for example. A full list of exemptions is available on the SARS website www.sars.gov.za.

Now the basics: The vendor/business owner is legally responsible for not only collecting this tax, but also for paying it across to SARS on a bi-monthly basis, in the cases where turnover is under R30 million per annum and on a monthly basis, in the cases where turnover exceeds

R30 million per annum. As a “thank you” for collecting the tax on their behalf, SARS allows you to offset your incoming VAT (the VAT you have collected from the sales you have made) against your outgoing VAT (the VAT you have paid out on your purchases). The difference between the two is yours to keep. In other words, if you have collected say R10 000 in VAT from your clients, but you have paid out say R7 500 in VAT to your suppliers (depending on what you have purchased), then the difference of R2 500 is what you pay across to SARS. Again, there are some items that you purchase that you cannot claim VAT for, depending on what type of business you have. (Please check the SARS website for the current list.)

There are other periods that VAT must be paid, but this is dependent on the type of business and the ones listed above are the two most common. If you are not sure which category your business falls under, please check the SARS website.

Now that you know exactly what VAT is, let's get onto the difference between a VAT Vendor and a Voluntary VAT Vendor.

VAT VENDOR

By law, when the annual turnover of a registered company (be it a Corporation, an Entrepreneur or an individual such as a Sole Proprietor) is in excess of R1 000 000 (one million Rand), the Corporation, Entrepreneur, Sole Proprietor or individual **MUST** be registered as a VAT Vendor.

Remember: SARS can see your income from tax returns or even from reports from banking institutions. If you are caught not registering it becomes “Tax Evasion” and you can go to jail. Remember the story of Al Capone!

In order to get registered you will need to do the following:

- You have to complete a VAT 101 form.
- An original letter from the bank or a recent bank statement with an original bank stamp must also be submitted. (See, I told you SARS has access to your banking information.)
- If you have rented office space in the name of the business you will need to supply a recent certified copy of the business municipal account or utility

If you manage your VAT correctly you could actually add up to 6% to your bottom line. This is one of the reasons many company's and entrepreneurs actually prefer to become Voluntary VAT Vendors.

bill or CRA01 form with a certified copy of the lease agreement.

- If you are working from a home office space you will need to supply a recent certified copy of the residential municipal account or utility bill or CRA01 form for each shareholder.
- Certified copies of your financial information in the form of Tax Invoices for a minimum value of R50 000 and your Financial Statements.
- You will also require certified copies of the Company Registration documents (in the instances where the Company is in fact registered.)
- If the application is presented by a registered Tax Practitioner, you will need to supply a signed Power of Attorney in favour of the Tax Practitioner that you are using.
- Proof of Income Tax registration and other taxes such as Tax Clearance certificates or SARS registration certificates are also required.
- Finally, you will need an Appointment letter for the Public Officer to act on behalf of the company.

Please check the SARS website to download the official documentation that is required.

VOLUNTARY VAT VENDOR

The biggest problem that many VAT Vendors face is that they do not have sufficient funds available at the

end of the period to pay the VAT that is owing. Apart from getting themselves into huge problems with SARS, partial or non-payment of the VAT will result in penalties and interest, and in severe ongoing instances of non-payment, you could actually go to jail.

Here's the thing though, if you manage your VAT correctly you could actually add up to 6% to your bottom line. This is one of the reasons many Company's and Entrepreneurs actually prefer to become Voluntary VAT Vendors.

My advice to both VAT Vendors and Voluntary VAT Vendors: In order to make sure that you have sufficient funds on hand to meet your VAT requirements, open up a separate interest-bearing account and when your client pays you, transfer the VAT portion to the new account. It's a very simple solution, but you have to be consistent and diligent about this.

Another reason for becoming a Voluntary VAT Vendor, especially as an Entrepreneur or Start-Up, is that very few companies who are registered as VAT Vendors or even Voluntary VAT Vendors, will do business with you as they are then unable to offset the VAT on their returns - basically, they are literally throwing money away.

Furthermore, as a Voluntary VAT Vendor, the perception is that you have a stable legitimate Company and you are not just going to disappear and leave them in the lurch.

In terms of getting registered as a Voluntary VAT Vendor, you need to supply exactly the same documentation as a VAT Vendor.

Now let's have a look at what happens if your income dips badly and you are literally struggling to stay afloat.

DEREGISTRATION

Most Companies, Entrepreneurs and even Sole Props find themselves in a financial hole at some point, where their annual turnover drops below the minimum R1 000 000 (in the case of VAT Vendors) or the minimum R50 000 (in the case of Voluntary VAT Vendors), and because they haven't managed their VAT monies, they are unable to pay their VAT.

When this happens, most think that the easiest way to dig themselves out of the hole is to de-register as a VAT Vendor or Voluntary VAT Vendor.

I am going to deal with the "Cons" first as there are many more of them than there are "Pros".

Cons:

First of all, de-registration is not as easy as registering for VAT. Here's why...

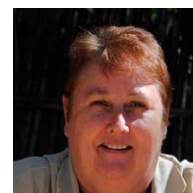
- Firstly, you have to be 100% compliant with all of your SARS requirements. So much so, that you will need to supply SARS with a Tax Clearance Certificate to evidence that you are in fact compliant. This means that all of your Company Tax, UIF, Skills Development Levies (if applicable) and even your VAT has to have been paid in full.
- Then you need to evidence that your turnover has, in fact, dropped below the minimums required. So you will have to supply SARS with a copy of your Annual Financial Statements and believe me when I tell you that they will go through that document with a "fine tooth-comb"!
- You will also need to give them a document where you 'motivate' the reason for going the de-registration way and this must be supported by your last 3 VAT returns.
- Finally you will need to complete the VAT De-Registration forms.

My advice to you is to stay registered, manage your VAT money as previously suggested. Pay what you must pay and get your business back on track. That, in my opinion, is far less stressful.

Pros:

So then, when is it advisable to de-register as a VAT Vendor or Voluntary VAT Vendor? I asked my friend and colleague, who actually does SARS registrations for all the various types of tax and who is also a registered Accountant and Tax Practitioner and her reply was . . . "the *only* time you should de-register as a VAT Vendor or even a Voluntary VAT Vendor is if you close the business."

Nikki Viljoen is an Internal Auditor and Business Administration Specialist. Call 083 702 8849, email: nikki@viljoenconsulting.co.za or visit: www.viljoenconsulting.co.za



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The Covid-19 global pandemic has changed the way a number of industry sectors operate and quite notably, the demand for home care services has never been greater. Families are choosing to keep their loved ones safe and cared for by using essential home care services as opposed to residential care homes.

As lockdown restrictions lift, it is envisaged that these services will be further in demand as many elderly and disabled people engage home care providers to assist them venture out and about again.

VIEW OUR LATEST VIDEO

DOWNLOAD OUR INFO PACK



Assisted Home Nursing is one of the fastest-growing home care franchises in South Africa offering a 24/7 professional, personal and compassionate service for seniors or the disabled in the comfort of their own homes. We take care of routine tasks and simplify daily living for families in need.



Work from
home or office



Time-tested
business model



Low cost of
entry

EXCLUSIVE TERRITORY FROM ONLY R250K ex VAT

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Intensive one-on-one training
- Full induction programme: recruiting, training and retaining carers
- Expert marketing to attract new clients
- Proven business with ongoing support
- Recession-proof business model

This is a financially and personally rewarding franchise. If you have management experience, a desire and aptitude to run your own high-quality home care business, we'd like to hear from you. Go to www.assistedhomenursing.co.za for more information.

Successfully operating in the following territories:

Gauteng's Northern and Eastern suburbs, Midrand, Cape Town's Northern Suburbs, Cape Town West Coast, KZN's South Coast and Port Alfred in the Eastern Cape.



Partner with some of South Africa's best-loved and iconic food brands



Start your franchise journey with us today...

The Franchise Co. is a franchise management specialist company that owns and manages a diverse range of established and popular South African franchises, offering a wide range of franchises in multiple sectors.

Over the last decade, we have successfully acquired a collection of franchises across a spectrum of sectors, including medical, accommodation, retail, restaurants, fast food, health & beauty, IT, financial and construction. Our reputation as franchise management specialists soon resulted in external entrepreneurs and investors approaching us to be part of their success story.

By understanding the applicable market trends and continuously analysing potential business risks and

opportunities, we have built a reputation of being excellent at acquiring ideally located and sustainable franchises at the best entry prices and ensuring your company and our company's business stability.

Our management team consists of highly skilled, actively involved members with decades of experience in business operations, management, financial and funding, and franchising. Their passion, dedication and knowledge form the cornerstones of our business.

With years of experience in managing and promoting some of South Africa's best-loved fast-food and restaurant brands, The Franchise Co. strives to be partners of choice. The benefits of our marketing services, advertising and ambassadorial support mean that your franchise will find ready recognition and brand loyalty, drawing customers straight to your door.

Turnkey business solutions

As leading franchise specialists with a reputation for excellence, our team of experts are dedicated to assisting our franchisees in every aspect of their business. From site identification and evaluation, staff recruitment and training to marketing, customer support and weekly head office consultations – we are with you every step of the way and will provide you with:

- Control systems.
- Continuous product, menu and brand development.
- Internal training and continuous upskilling of all staff.
- Promoting the Brand.
- Many item specials and promotions.

If you are passionate about food and would like to join a winning team, why not open one of our Franchises, and let our proven success formula work for you.



Our fast-food, restaurant and retail market include the following successful and unique brands.

Walk-in franchises:



Like any truly South African tale, the **ZEBRO'S** story started many years ago around a fire, with good conversation and chicken pieces braaied to perfection on smoking hot coals.

This authentic South African brand was an instant hit with people queuing for this 100% local, lekker and authentic braaied chicken. "Our unique sauce became the

talk of the town. Of course something this good has to be shared and so we are spreading the original Zebro's experience, born in the heart of Caledon, to the rest of our beautiful country."

With 40 stores already open, the future of Zebro's is prosperous as a growing South African brand, spreading the love of lekker local and authentic meals.



The **YAMI PIZZA** franchise entered the proudly South African market with the very first store in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga. Yami Pizza is the home of deliciously different mouth-watering pizzas that will hit that "mmm mmm mmm" note whatever your mood.

Each pizza is made with fresh products the

traditional way ensuring pizza perfection with every bite. Traditional pizzas and the unique Yami-style recipes are served with either a thick or thin base.

Our focus is to create a fun-loving restaurant experience that brings families and friends together to make them feel like they are part of the Yami family!



YUMMY FISH & CHIPS offers delicious fish and chip meals at exceptional prices. From humble beginnings in the Eastern Cape, the brand is now spreading across South Africa. What makes Yummy Fish & Chips so different is the top quality, fresh

and affordable meals served. Something this yummy deserves to be shared with everyone. There is no doubt that the future of Yummy Fish & Chips is bright - we're aiming to serve the whole nation.



CHESANYAMA is a franchise enterprise which brings the local butcher to your doorstep. Serving you the best matured A-grade meats, flamed-grilled in our open-plan kitchen, accompanied by our secret traditional pap and sauce or freshly cut chips. Under the proud ownership of The Franchise Co, the brand is being restored

to what it was known and loved for. ChesaNyama and its Nyamalicious meals are coming back to the market stronger than ever. With ChesaNyama around, customers are provided with premium A-Grade meats, prepared the traditional way and grilled to perfection - it's Nyamalicious.

Franchise structure and costs per store - Turnkey franchise solutions

Walk-in Franchises	Franchise Joining fee	Building Est. Cost per m ²	Store Size	Projected RIO	Set-up time	Franchise Fees (Turnover)	Marketing (Turnover)
Zebro's Yami Pizza Yummy Fish & Chips ChesaNyama	Original: R190 000 Now: R100 000	R6 200 - R7 000	+/- 120m ²	25% - 40%	15 - 30 Days	4%	2%

Single or combination franchise stores available

Open your franchise store as a single brand or as a combination store with two or more of these brands offering more variety and convenience to the market, and increased profit potential.

Sit-down franchises:



MIKE'S KITCHEN has been creating memorable family experiences since the very beginning. The first Mike's Kitchen, brainchild of founder Mike Illion opened in Greenside, Johannesburg on the 17th September 1972. With a long and rich

heritage and known to families across The brand continues to deliver its' famous mouth-watering rack of ribs, succulent and tender steaks and, of course, legendary burgers and carvery! Unforgettable and authentic proudly South African brand.



YAMI RIB & BURGER - our focus is to create a restaurant experience that brings families and friends together. We appeal to vibrant families, trendy teens, young professionals and students seeking a great place to socialize and have a delicious meal. Yami's brand essence is Deliciously Different – we are the misfits, the

madcaps and the black sheep. We are far from normal, but that's how we want it! Never boring and always having fun.

Yami Rib & Burger offers the widest range of mouth-watering meals served by the most friendly, helpful staff passionate about serving others.



BLACKSTEER has been providing South Africa with deliciously meaty meals since 1963. Blacksteer is famous for steaks, burgers and legendary ribs. Our family of franchisees have stood the test of time and seen the

competition come and go. By re-engineering the brand image we will ensure that the "living legend" lives on! The Blacksteer Group is now set to become the market leader in the QSR and take-out sectors.



EIGHT TO THE LOUNGE cigar and music lounge is the culmination of sophistication. Think sultry tunes, world-class cuisine, and exclusive dining. Located in Grey Owl Shopping Centre, Midstream - our

restaurant will be the measure by which the bar is set. With this unique concept we want to bring an exclusive experience to our diners by combining our love of good food and appreciation of soulful sounds.

Franchise structure and costs per store - Turnkey franchise solutions

Sit-down Franchises	Franchise Joining fee	Building Est. Cost per m ²	Store Size	Projected RIO	Set up time	Franchise Fees (Turnover)	Marketing (Turnover)
Mikes Kitchen Yami Rib & Burger Blacksteers Eight to the Lounge	Original: R190 000 Now: R100 000	R12 000	+/- 250m ²	30% - 45%	20 - 40 Days	5%	2%

Combination franchise stores available

Franchise joining fees include:

- Full site evaluation
- Site plan
- Site detailed costing
- Business forecast
- Final ROI layout

Cost is set upfront and stays transparent at all times (The Franchise Co. takes no mark-ups):

- Building cost
- Set up cost
- Equipment cost
- Signage cost

Support structure:

- Full staff training
- POS system support
- Marketing support
- Operational training
- Set supply chain with support
- Equipment training

READY TO START YOUR FRANCHISE JOURNEY?

For more information on any of these franchise opportunities, visit our website at www.thefranchiseco.co.za, email marketing@tfcop.co.za or call 012 548 6028.



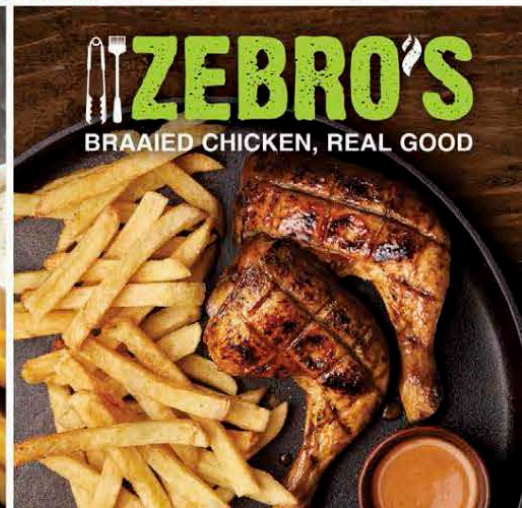
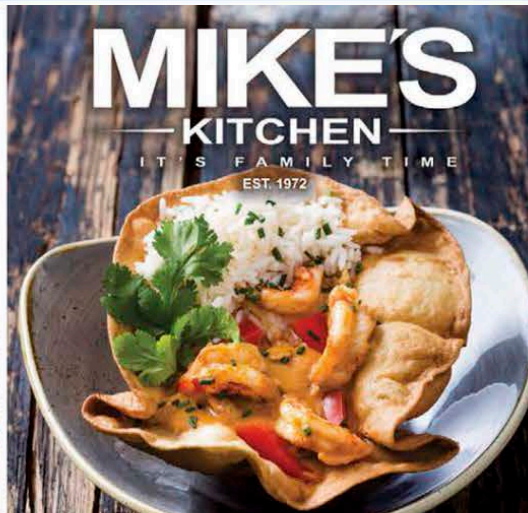
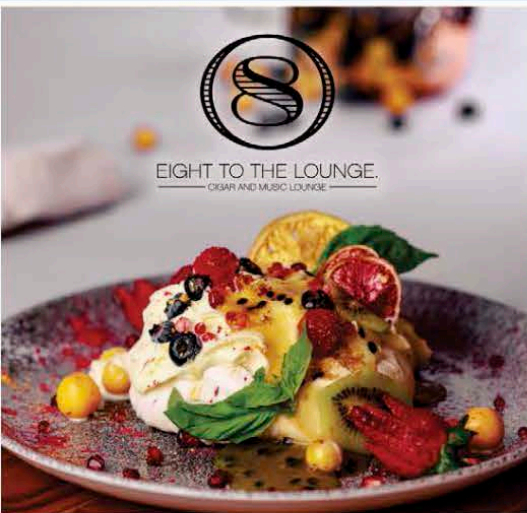
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T'S & C'S APPLY. E&OE.



If *they* can, **so can you!**

**Here's how
ordinary business
owners just like
you have thrived,
in spite of COVID...**

It may be surprising to hear that now is still a great time to be an entrepreneur. "How can that be?" you may be asking, as you battle constrained cash flow, your market drying up, talent shortages that are causing deep concern, supply chain issues that have only just begun to be felt, your nearest and dearest telling you to "give up", marketing woes and complaints around pricing abounding - to mention only a chosen few challenges.

Add to that the constant deluge of international bad news; politicians behaving badly (again or still), natural disasters, petty shenanigans in just about every country; while we ordinary mortals battle death, disease, money troubles and fear, it's easy to start feeling like it has "never been this bad".

While it is true that many things are bad, the truth is that we currently find ourselves in the 28th big market dislocation since 1929. Things have been this bad and worse before. In each of these threats to the global marketplace, there were businesses that boomed and those that went bust.

And every time, as it does, the market restabilises. It may be different for sure, but things normalise enough to operate and make room for boomers yet again. There may be some calm before the storm, but before we know it, there will be the next big thing. In short, COVID is simply the next and current dislocation we have to deal with - and the truth is, that as business owners, it is up to us to gear up, survive and thrive in spite of these upheavals.

As much as we would like to blame all our business woes on the Covid-19 pandemic, the hard reality is that business challenges are nothing new.

As business coach Kathi Clarke says: "The pandemic hasn't so much caused *all* problems that we as business owners are currently facing. Rather, it has served to uncover what was wrong, but not showing yet."

In spite of what is going on around us, there are those SMEs that have grown tremendously over the past two years and have used the opportunity that the pandemic has presented to their best advantage. Be that to reinvent themselves, change their business model completely or be courageous enough to acknowledge the flaws in their business, diagnose the issues and remedy the situation.

Over the next couple of issues, we will be featuring some of these entrepreneurs who have thrived despite being in sectors that were some of the hardest hit by the pandemic. These sectors include Music, Hospitality, Shipping and Transport, Professional Services, Building and Manufacturing.

We'll tell their story, take a look at what their big problems were when COVID hit and how they overcame their challenges. So, take heart, because the good news is that business is fixable, and we hope that these stories will inform, inspire and enable you. These real, resilient wins can be yours too.

Case study #1:

LEARNING THE HARP

Owned by three sisters, Christy-Lynn Dosé, Megan Dugeč and Cara Smuts.

Christy-Lynn Dosé (33) only started learning the harp as a complete beginner when she was 25, but in just three short years her talent and hard work paid off. She mastered the instrument, passed her Grade 8 and was officially a performing, working, teaching and composing harpist with a palpable and infectious love for what she did.

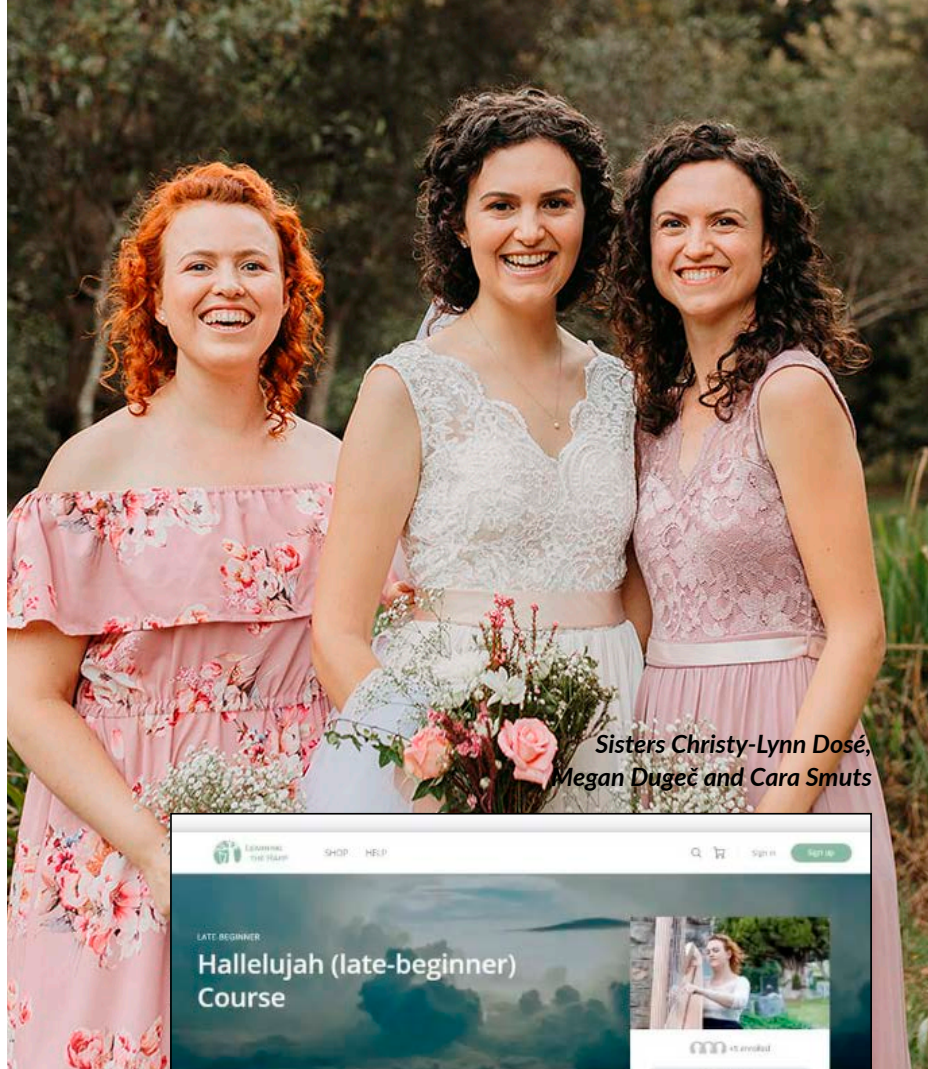
However, as is the case with so many musicians, turning her passion into something that could make enough money to be deemed 'a living' eluded her. She was resigned to doing weddings and events, working when everyone else was off, teaching 1-2-1 and composing, with the million-to-one odds of ever becoming the next Michael Bublé or Ed Sheeran of the harp world!

"By 2017 I realised that I needed help, because my number one problem was that I had no idea how to turn what I was doing into a profitable livelihood that could support me", says Christy-Lynn.

Flash forward and today she and her two sisters, Megan Dugeč and Cara Smuts, run *Learning The Harp* that is turning six-figure numbers monthly and they profitably employ a total staff complement of ten. Their 1 000 retainer clients (none of whom are in South Africa!) are learning to play the harp and loving it, paying each month with joy and coming back for more.

Christy-Lyn and Cara are based in Cape Town in their home-based surrounds which now boast a swish, new recording studio; Megan "runs the show" from Croatia; and the other seven staff work in Cape Town producing what's needed to keep the largely American Harp Players and Learners enthralled.

And yes, Christy-Lyn found her business help by connecting with Industrial Psychologist and Business Coach Kathi Clarke – who is between Cape Town and Edinburgh – and has been meeting with the business twice a month, helping them every step of the way to



Sisters Christy-Lynn Dosé, Megan Dugeč and Cara Smuts



transition from that solo performer to where they find themselves today, a thriving business.

And no, they didn't have any loans or family money. In fact Christy-Lyn was barely making a living when they started the business and first met Kathi. And no, they haven't spent fortunes on smart, silver business bullets that (as Kathi was quick to underline) don't exist when you are looking to authentically build a resilient business. They haven't forked out for expensive, business strategies either. Instead, they have steadily and systematically grown each month by putting best practices into effect year-on-year as they followed the plan.

In short, they have all worked hard and dedicatedly with their coach to grow their business from scratch in an extremely tough industry, through impossible times and against the odds, using best practice (which exists) and everyday tools and strategies that anyone can use.

HOW DID THEY DO IT?

Christy-Lynn's question to Kathi "is it possible to turn what I do into a livelihood" was met with a resounding "yes". "So firstly, I had to realise that I was not only a Harpist or a Harp Teacher. I was also a business owner," she says.

"I learned the basics from Coach Kathi, started applying it and began as a sole practitioner in a Group Coaching class. With the growth and gains in that fledgling business, I was able to approach my sisters - first Megan and then Cara - to come on board as joint owners of our new enterprise." With only one of the three owners being a musician, *Learning the Harp* had to move from an "I" self-employment to a "we" business.

Secondly, the *Learning the Harp* owners realised that they needed a vision that would mean stretching themselves - uncomfortable though that would be - into a fearful zone that none of them knew, or was even sure that they really wanted. They knew that they needed to sell something different other than the usual performances at events, live gigs, CDs and 1-2-1 lessons that most musicians sell.

With Kathi's guidance, the sisters were able to create a revamped "grocery shelf" of offerings, including a novel lesson format, new complementing product lines that form part of their growing 'merch section', and tackle strategic alliances that increase their global visibility, impact their pipeline and help them continue to grow month-on-month profitably and sustainably.

The sisters applied their combined talents in systems, technology, video production, music-making, harp-expertise and novel marketing to keep the pipeline full of clients and attract the talent that now makes up their team who they can rely on and helps them to continue to deliver to the highest of standards on a global stage. After all, any business needs to be able to work profitably without the owner there 24/7. This rule does not change because you are a musician or because of COVID. As Kathi underlines "owners need a life, and their business is a vehicle to that life, to funding it well - and it must be built to deliver that. If it is failing to deliver the means and a life worth having, then something has to change".

Throughout the ups and downs of their growth journey, Kathi has helped them hold on to a positive attitude and has kept them accountable. Identifying and settling on sensible business structures, and putting in place the systems to drive their capacity to deliver, build their sales funnel, grow their social media audiences and

"We no longer listen to those musicians who tell us they live from hand-to-mouth and give up weekends to eke out a living."

improve their capacity to deliver has helped them reach where they are today. Not only are they all employed profitably, but *Learning the Harp* has also been able to withstand the catastrophic impact of COVID world-wide and now brings joy to their delighted, loyal and growing client base (largely in the US but also in Canada, the UK, Germany, Europe and Australia).

HAVE THE COURAGE TO DARE TO DREAM BIG

Expansion has also enabled the sisters to extend an invitation to Cara's husband, Kevin Smuts (an experienced, internationally recognised Composer responsible for works like the music score for the Oscar-winning *My Octopus Teacher*) and involve Christy-Lyn's husband Jonny Dosé (a highly respected guitar teacher and recording studio owner) in creating their international online presence and own recording capability respectively. Truly a family business.

Their results continue to inspire them to have the courage to 'dare to dream BIG'. "We no longer listen to those musicians who tell us they live from hand-to-mouth and give up weekends to eke out a living" says Christy-Lyn. Instead, they've become an inspiration to those they know around them as to what is possible and a real encouragement to both the harp and business world.

Parting words to other business owners? "When people ask us the reason for our success, I always say we didn't do it alone. As Christians, we prayed through each and every decision and we got a really good business coach whom we trust and enables us to think differently. She helped us to let go of what we may well love, but isn't working for us. Follow the proven steps and best practices - they are everyday tools and strategies that you too can use to succeed."

By Kathi Clarke, registered Industrial Psychologist, internationally-certified Business Coach and an award-winning business growth expert. Contact her at +27 63 624 4492 or email: buildingbestbusiness@kathiclarke.com.



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FRESH, HOT & A LOT



Stand out from the crowd

In a tough market, you need to give your small business the best chance to succeed. Adopting a clear and tight strategy can help business owners get big results from small budgets. Here's some tips to stay customer-focused.

- **Focus on your customer holistically.**

Essentially, one of a business' key metrics should be customer success. Although critical, many companies only place focus on customer service or support. What sets businesses apart is an approach that involves the customer from the beginning of their journey and incorporates their needs on an ongoing basis, and as the business scales.

This can be done by identifying the customer's specific pain points and working with them to closely ensure that they achieve the results they want by using your solution. Then help them to go over and above those goals. Include your customer in your business and product journey; talk to them often; ask for

customer feedback, respond to it quickly, and innovate accordingly. This will result in winning customers who are successfully using your product. If you treat your customer well, they will continue to take your business wherever they go.

- **Know what kind of customer you want.**

The success of a business' product development, marketing and ultimately the entire business, depends on identifying and mapping out in detail who the company's ideal customer is.

Often businesses target too broad an audience which dilutes marketing outputs and makes budgeting infinitely harder. Take the time to work out your ideal customer profile (ICP). An ICP as *Gartner* aptly puts it, focuses on the most valuable customers and prospects that are also most likely to buy. This is not the business' total addressable market, but the section of that market that has the potential to be of most value and is thus worth focusing resources on.

- **Tell your ICPs about it.**

Focused, effective marketing is every business' secret weapon. Let your product do your selling. Identify your customers' and potential customers' pain points and highlight how your product solves these. Don't be scared to adopt a brand personality and take a personalised

approach to your marketing. People want to feel like they're dealing with people - not a business or enterprise.

■ **Identify and use the right tools that reach your audience.**

For example, if the business' ICPs are most accessible via a cell phone, then that's where you need to invest your marketing resources. While focusing on the best performing channel is key, it's also important for businesses to take an omni-channel approach, giving customers the option engage to with and purchase from you as conveniently as possible.

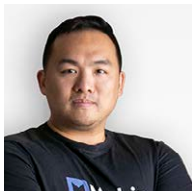
Often businesses target too broad an audience which dilutes marketing outputs and makes budgeting infinitely harder. Take the time to work out your ideal customer profile (ICP).

■ **Speak to your customers compliantly and personally.**

In the POPIA era businesses can only communicate with customers who have opted-in. Rather than seeing this as a hindrance, realise that speaking only to those customers that have agreed to have that conversation means you can develop personalised, quality content that directly addresses their needs. Think of how Netflix and Amazon curate their product to the consumer. This can result in businesses spending less while garnering a greater return on investment and building a more perceptive and loyal customer base.

There are no silver bullets or magic wands, but focused goals, and quality delivery will keep you ahead of the game, every time.

By Greg Chen, CEO at South African-founded mobile marketing platform, Mobiz.



FEATURED OPPORTUNITY

A taste of Ireland

Are you interested in owning your own restaurant and pub?

A Brazen Head restaurant may be just the answer for you. Celebrated for its warm and welcoming atmosphere, this popular franchise brand offers guests a truly authentic Irish dining and entertainment experience. Bringing this to life, the restaurant has an extensive food menu and full wine and beverage menu, including many international beers on tap. Our menu features hearty, wholesome, reasonably priced Irish and South African fare that appeals to the local palate. The Brazen Head allows you to experience a true taste of Ireland in South Africa.

For franchise information, please contact our Head Office and speak to Karin van der Walt or Ralph Rojahn. Tel: 011 467 4224, email: info@brazenhead.co.za, or visit: www.brazenhead.co.za



FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITIES



THE BRAZEN HEAD
Authentic Irish Restaurant & Pub
Traditional Irish Pub & Restaurant

We have going concerns and new opportunities available.

If you would like to join the Brazen Head family please contact us at head office on 011 467 4224 or email: info@brazenhead.co.za www.brazenhead.co.za



Our stores are celebrating St. Patrick's from the 17th March until the 20th March 2022.

The Brazen Head Restaurants, celebrated for its *warm and welcoming atmosphere*, offers guests a truly authentic Irish dining and entertainment experience.



Why don't you visit one of our branches to experience the franchise first hand.

THE BRAZEN HEAD STORES

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• Edenvale: (011) 609 0273 • Fourways: (011) 465 5318
• Sandton: (011) 783 6122

GREAT FOOD • GREAT ATMOSPHERE



Customer.Customer.Customer.

12 000 Customers from around the world were asked precisely what their expectations were, and South Africans replied with: customer service.

This is not just delivering a parcel on time or being polite on the phone, it's a blend of all the different elements that make up any customer engagement, from personalisation to experiences to convenience. Customer wallets are tighter. The market is volatile. And the future is complex. This is why these are the trends leading the way when it comes to customer service and experience:

TREND #1: Convenience, please

Two megatrends dominated 2021: the Great Resignation and burnout. People struggled with long hours, ongoing anxiety and incredible social and professional stress. So, what customers don't want is to spend unnecessary time dealing with admin and poorly designed customer service platforms to resolve problems or pay their bills.

Short answer: *Make every customer experience and touchpoint as convenient as possible, and use any feedback to the contrary to refine systems until they are.*

TREND #2: Personalised Experiences

People want to be remembered. Sure, a giant retail outlet or convenience store has thousands of customers, but with the technology that's available on the market today, even a mega-store can address someone by name, offer them a personalised service route or connect with them on the phone. When customers connect with companies, they want to know that their spend is valued and their input is important.

Short answer: *Build trust and connect with customers by personalising their experiences and building comprehensive ecosystems around each person.*

TREND #3: Analyse, analyse, analyse

Yes, the data and analytics conversation is a bit like that uncle who tells the same stories at every family gathering. But as the technologies that enhance data collation and analysis become increasingly capable and inventive, so do the insights that they deliver. If a company can tap into every customer communication channel and analyse how the conversations flow, then it can fundamentally change how it engages with customers across these channels. Using analytics across speech, email, and social media, companies can enhance their customer experiences by removing the obstacles or choke points that are impacting on customer service. The added bonus here is that these insights can be used to assess where sales fall short, how to reduce customer admin, and what platforms are best suited to servicing very specific business requirements.

Short answer: *Use technology to dig deep into the data and squeeze out the insights that can help refine process, product and customer engagement.*

TREND #4: Empowerment for customers and employees

Customers don't want to stare at another email that says the same thing as the last email - unhelpful, time-wasting, frustrating. The same applies to the employees who work on the customer front line. They want to be empowered to answer the customer's questions properly. They want access to tools that allow them to tap into the company knowledge centre and respond to questions intelligently. *Gartner* predicts that around 60% of large organisations will extend their customer service technology and processes so they can pull disparate systems together to create a more holistic approach delivering the multi-experience strategy.

Short answer: *Empower people on both sides of the customer service line with the insights, tools, technologies and systems that they need to get their jobs done and lives managed.*

The franchise with NO franchise fees

ALUCAPE EXPERT, a trusted South African multi-brand, is a leading manufacturer and supplier of the best aluminium products in the home improvement space.

Earning recognition in the marketplace and ranked #1 Aluminium Company in SA on www.hellopeter.com/alucapexp, AluCape Expert is on an expansion drive to grow its franchise network.

Entrepreneurs with a zest to succeed in their own business are invited to join AluCape Expert by supplying and installing their range of in-demand products that include aluminium windows and doors, security gates, shutters, and blinds to residential, commercial and retail customers.

Start your own business from R125 000 depending on the area. AluCape does all the manufacturing and the franchisee installs the products. Franchisees will receive product samples, all the necessary tools, discounted products delivered to your area, plus an advertising voucher when starting.

No franchise fee is payable, you only pay a discounted manufacturing price and advertising fees for area campaigns.

Franchisees benefit from an exclusive area, full product training, set-up and ongoing assistance, advertising leads, website exposure, use of the company logo and more.

This value-added opportunity can be home-based or operated from business premises. The business can be run as a 'standalone' business or added to your existing business portfolio if you currently operate in the building or home improvement sector.

Owning your own business has never been easier. Simply get the business, order your products, install and provide the best service to your customers!

For more info about this unique opportunity contact Jacques on 083 611 5554 | 087 701 563 or email info@alucapexp.co.za.



Jacques Briel,
Managing Director of AluCape



Join the expert manufacturers supplying in-demand quality aluminium products to residential properties, commercial properties and retail shops.

Franchise cost: R125 000 depending on area

Benefits of partnering with AluCape Expert:

- NO FRANCHISE FEES
- Exclusive area – Franchisees can operate from home or business premises
- All necessary tools and product samples supplied
- Discounted products delivered to your area
- Full product training, set-up and ongoing support
- Initial advertising voucher thereafter set fee for ongoing advertising
- Leads provided from advertising campaigns
- Listed on the Alucapexp website
- Use of company logo

Be Part of the Buying Power Revolution!

Looking for a unique FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITY in the Home & Building Improvement Space?

Aluminium Windows & Doors | Security Gates
Shutters | Blinds

Important note: We rank the No.1 Aluminium Company in SA on the Hello Peter website: hellopeter.com/alucapexp

Safety Glass: We use SABS approved PVB Laminated Safety Glass

Aluminium Sections: We only use the best material available in South Africa for our doors and windows. Crealco from Wispeco, National Glass and Eagle products. Beware of thin walled Aluminium imports.



Contact Jacques Briel TODAY to secure your area! Email info@alucapexp.co.za or call 083 611 5554 | 087 701 5633

www.alucapexp.co.za

It's all about the kids...



A kiddie-orientated franchise or business opportunity can be a smart investment and provide a rewarding route to business ownership.

The business of products and services aimed at children has become a thriving industry in South Africa, and this is good news for the entrepreneur looking for a flourishing sector to invest in. Little people are big business. Education and tutoring, fitness and recreation, parties and entertainment, specialised and personalised products and even bath and skincare products are just some of the areas in which there is a huge variety of child-related opportunities to explore.

Of course, one of the benefits of buying into a proven franchise model is the tried-and-tested systems, training and ongoing support. Plus, many of these opportunities allow you to work from home and set your own pace.

While the nature of the business may vary substantially across this sector, one key requirement for setting up shop would be a passion for working children and a desire to interact with them and help them grow.

Characteristics such as patience, flexibility, empathy and a desire for them to succeed will stand you in good stead for building a healthy kiddie business. People skills are also a necessity as you will be working closely with parents. There are personal factors to take into account as well, like how a business might impact on your own family. In many instances, a child-related business appeals to new mothers who desire flexibility and feel that it will give them more time with their children. This may be the case, depending on the opportunity,

but often the reality is that the start-up phase for any enterprise is fairly demanding; so be sure to go into the industry with your eyes wide open. Just like any other business sector, the more effort you put into your child-related business, the more you will get out.

Liaise with parents in your area to find out what services they require, and visit children-focused businesses to get an understanding of gaps in the market and what it takes to succeed. Giving children the best start in life has always been a core motivation for parents everywhere. They are willing to spend more money than ever on their kids as society places more and more emphasis on the happiness and wellbeing of children. Parents also invest heavily in extra-curricular activities to give their children an advantage and enrich their skill set. Niche markets have opened up for entrepreneurs to fill the education gap, providing all types of extra-curricular activities for children of all ages.

Look carefully at the offerings in this space, and chat with existing operators and franchisees about their experience, how they rate the support from their head office, and what they believe the strengths and weaknesses of the system are. Whether you join an existing network or go it alone, thorough research is always the starting point of any successful entrepreneurial endeavour.

By finding the right opportunity in this vibrant sector, you can help other people's children succeed and reach their full potential.

If you have a genuine love for children, a lot of energy and a good dose of business acumen, there's money to be made in the burgeoning children's product and services industry. And the best thing about opening a franchise in this space? You'll never run out of customers...

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There are currently 24 franchisees in South Africa with expansion on the cards across all provinces in SA, in cities as well as rural regions. MiniChess franchisees need to have entrepreneurial and managerial abilities, along with a passion for education and children. They will need to build a

team over time to serve the schools, pre-schools and communities in the franchise area and must be able to manage, organise, communicate and market the product. MiniChess franchisees do not need to have any chess pre-knowledge, but must be available for training and mentoring.

The MiniChess business model and implementation is very flexible. Franchisees receive everything they need to get going, along with ongoing franchisor support. In addition to being able to earn excellent remuneration, perhaps one of the biggest advantages of joining the network is the opportunity to mentor programmes in disadvantaged communities, thereby making a real difference to our country.

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How to start a **Virtual Assistant (VA)** business

Virtual assistants are independant workers who carry out various administrative, creative, technical and managerial tasks from outside of a traditional office, usually from a home-based office.

Small business owners have a variety of tasks that needs doing in their business, such as bookkeeping, marketing and admin to name just a few. Often though, they lack the skills or time to complete all these duties, and they also cannot afford to pay someone a fixed salary. Therefore, Virtual Assistants are an ideal solution, as they work on an ad hoc basis and business owners can pay them according to their workload and budget.

For many people who have lost their jobs or had to take a pay reduction during the pandemic, starting a small business or supplementing their income with a side-hustle has become a workable solution.



Being a VA can be a full-time career, or for those who still want the security and benefits of a full-time job, it can be done on a part-time basis. If you want to do it part-time, just make sure that you are clear on the number of hours that you are available and do not take on any projects where you must work during operational hours. Work only with deadlines.

The types of services virtual assistants offer can be anything from admin tasks, creative tasks, technical or personal tasks. In fact, anything a business owner does not know how to do, does not have the time to do or is not supposed to do, a Virtual Assistant can do. The list of services you can offer is endless.

Soft skills required

There are certain soft skills that are necessary to run your business successfully. Being able to work independently and nurture good relationships with diverse types of personalities are important. You need to make decisions daily - not only in your own Virtual Assistant business, but sometimes in your client's business as well. Planning and organisational skills are a plus. Having self-control and discipline to meet deadlines is especially important, as well as the ability to remain focused. And lastly, you must enjoy working alone. If you possess these qualities, then you are cut out to be a VA!

The sky is the limit to what you can offer, but here are some of the most general services provided:

- Bookkeeping
- General Admin
- Website management, SEO services
- Travel arrangements
- Graphic design, Social media, PR
- Reputation management
- Shopping and e-commerce assistant
- Sales Administration
- Ghost writing, blogging
- Content marketing
- Customer Service, Live Chat Customer Service
- Recruiting assistant
- Data entry
- Research Assistant
- Resume Writing
- Email Management
- Project or event management
- Real Estate assistant
- Affiliate Management Assistant

Productivity tools

Productivity tools are important to help you be efficient and come across as professional. An essential tool is a timekeeping software, as Virtual Assistants charge clients per hour. This keeps track of your time and a report can be downloaded to send with your invoice. By using timekeeping software, you build trust between you and your client.

The next software that is recommended is an invoicing system to invoice your clients weekly, monthly or as soon as a project is completed. An online file storage system is important too for several reasons. The main reason is to keep your business' and your client's files and documents secure. Lastly, a project management tool is helpful in keeping your client up-to-date with the progress of their tasks.

Reaching potential clients

Once you have your virtual assistant business set up, you must reach out to clients. Before doing so, be sure to have all your online profiles updated, because your potential client will research you. Social media is a powerful tool to find clients - just be consistent with posting valuable content and engaging on these platforms. Networking is also something you cannot do without.

A person who wants to start a virtual assistant business can do plenty of research on the internet, however, they may experience information overload. Also, most of the information is based on the UK and US Virtual Assistant industries. Attending training may be worth your while to get all the basic and essential information covered. The trainer can also share her or his own personal experience, as well as the pros and cons of the industry. The Virtual Assistant industry is fairly new in South Africa and business owners must still be educated on what a VA is and how they can benefit their business.

Being a VA is a great option for someone who wants to be location independent, earn an extra income, want a flexible lifestyle, or still want to work after retirement or just spend more time with their family.

By Sonja Arendse, founder of Virtualy Training & Coaching that helps individuals setup their remote or Virtual Assistant business. Reach out on LinkedIn or Facebook.





Must-have tech for your online business

New online businesses are exploding, and many others are digitising traditional operations to keep up with the times. We look at some essential technologies every online business should have.

■ Infrastructure

While working virtually will save money on physical network infrastructure, employees still need high-speed internet connections and good quality computers to do their work. Whether you subsidise employees for high bandwidth broadband internet or not, you need to ensure that your virtual workforce can operate at their optimum.

■ Software Apps

The emergence of software-as-a-service has become the best thing for virtual businesses, and these cloud-based offerings offer a variety of apps where your data is stored on servers located with an external provider – either in a public or private cloud. The cloud acts as a virtual 24-hour office for virtual employees, and reduces the cost of a dedicated IT infrastructure. Do make sure your provider has the available capacity to avoid network outages and that your data is backed up in the event of a failure.

■ Company processes and standards

When you keep information separately it cannot be shared across the company which is very inefficient, so it is important to pay attention to how you centralise your data and digitise your processes. By using technology to streamline processes, setup workflows and automate tasks, you can free up teams to focus on more critical tasks.

While not a technology per se, in the virtual world standardisation and processes are critical when your

team is working outside a traditional work environment. These answer the questions such as; Where are your files stored? How do you communicate internally and externally? How do you collaborate and share as a team? What are the expected times teams need to be available and respond?

■ Security

With employees working from home or coffee shops they need to access data from home internet or WiFi connections, and so security is a critical factor. Offering a VPN for access to private cloud systems would be critical, and multi-factor authentication, URL filtering, and security agents are needed to ensure secure remote computing. Also, ensure that your security policies and awareness training are in place so that employees are aware should a suspicious email arrive in their inbox.

■ Work collaboration tools

It is important that you have collaboration tools to enable centralised group communications, there are a variety of tools like Slack, which is free, Huddle and many more. Ensure you have project management tools for planning, scheduling, assigning, tracking, and managing tasks centrally such as Microsoft Project, Basecamp, Monday.com, and Asana.

For creating documents, storing files, and sharing tools there are many good tools such as Microsoft Azure, One Drive, Google Drive, and Box. For virtual meetings, video calling and video conferencing there are apps like Microsoft Teams, webEx Meetings, GoToMeeting, Zoom,

Continued on page 36

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■ Customer Communication and Engagement

As an online business your communications have to be digital, resist the temptation to direct communications offline. You will need to respond and deliver quickly as this is what customers demand from you. A two-way conversation is expected and there are many tools to help you.

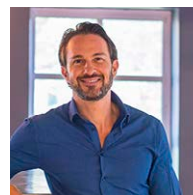
Building a website that is highly service oriented is a must. This is where your customers will engage, search for products and also make purchases. By using simple tools to automate the interaction you can provide 24/7 service and increase your sales. Automated chatbots, live chat, social messaging, contact forms and explainer videos all

provide a way to engage with customers quickly.

Also, use a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool to centrally manage your customer interactions including sales history, pipelines and to uncover trends in revenue. Use lead-generation tools to grow your customer base and convert a customer from consideration to sales. There are many affordable tools like HubSpot, FreshWorks CRM, and Zoho CRM.

The tools above are just some of the essential ones for most online businesses, however you can also use digital tools for Call Centre Ticketing, Human Resources, Supply Chain, Accounting, and Payroll.

By Warren Bonheim, Managing Director of ICT and telecoms provider, Zinia.



Massive potential for African markets

According to Visa, new e-commerce users grew by five percent across the Sub-Saharan Africa region during the pandemic. Research from *WorldWideWorx* meanwhile shows that online retail in South Africa grew 66% in 2020 and was expected to hit R42-billion (nearly £2 billion) in 2021. While this growth is remarkable, it's not wholly unexpected - online retailers around the globe saw significant growth.

What really sets African markets apart is how much growth potential there still is. Even with the phenomenal growth e-commerce experienced, it still accounts for just under 4% of total retail sales in South Africa. Compare that to a market like the UK, where e-commerce accounts for around 38% of retail sales. If any African economies can reach similar levels of e-commerce activity, the most active companies in the sector stand to see serious returns.

The right ingredients

That potential for growth isn't the only reason to be optimistic about online retail in Africa - it's also because there are several other factors that mean Africa is ideally poised for an online retail explosion.

The first of those factors is the age of its population. The continent's median age is under 20-years-old, with 60% of the population under the age of 25. This youthful population will very likely become the world's labour engine in coming decades, especially as other populations around the globe start to age out. That will, in time, mean a working population with disposable income and the kind

of desire for convenience that's helped spur online retail around the world.

That young population is also eager to embrace technology. And with the growing levels of connectivity on the continent, they'll increasingly be able to do so. Southern Africa has an internet penetration rate of 62%, higher than the global average. To date, however, the cost of connectivity has been prohibitively high, but thanks to digital migration, coupled with the arrival of more submarine cables, we will see those costs slashed and ever-larger numbers of people come online.

International players will find their way to the continent. Amazon, for instance, is reportedly sourcing warehouse space in South Africa, but it will take time for them to get a foothold. There is massive potential for local operators to grow and expand in the interim.

Economic and social good

Supporting the development of these online retailers brings a lot of potential good to the economies that get it right. Employment and additional tax revenues are two of the more obvious ones. But online retailers also have an indirect impact, through the infrastructure required to keep them going (such as warehousing and data centres) and by enabling entrepreneurship, especially in the case of marketplace-style retailers.

By Bryan Turner, Partner at SPEAR Capital.



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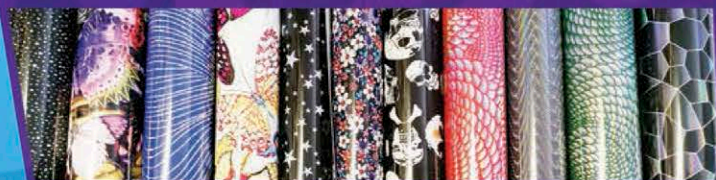
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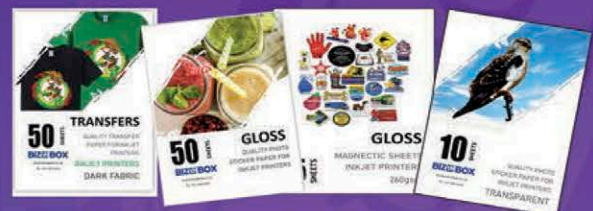


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The Circular Economy

Fertile ground for South African 'treds

According to the UN's 2030 Agenda, each country faces specific challenges in its pursuit of sustainable development, with African countries being some of the most vulnerable. Increased awareness of social entrepreneurship and the importance of a more circular economy is therefore imperative for its potential to make a lasting impact by creating jobs, reducing waste and contributing to our economic development.

Circular thinking promotes sustainability by ensuring that raw materials and products are recycled, repaired and reused, but also goes further by trying to eliminate waste altogether. The business opportunities for entrepreneurs are real. These can focus on water, energy and waste, manufacturing, green technology, food production and packaging, carbon reduction, waste reduction or recycling.

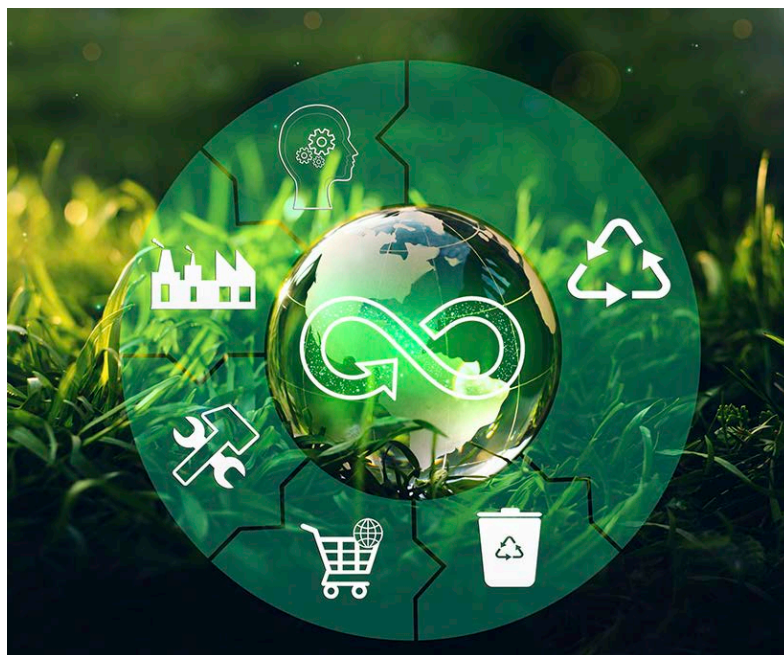
This sector holds so much promise, that it has been identified as a key part of South Africa's post-Covid-19 Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

And entrepreneurs in the circular economy sector have several other advantages: Start-up costs are usually lower than in other sectors, the markets for sustainable solutions are growing exponentially and businesses with significant social and environmental impact have a growing appeal to consumers who want to feel good about the future.

Accessible to township or rural entrepreneurs

Start-ups in rural areas in particular face many challenges – with a lack of access to finance being one of the largest hurdles. However, circular thinking moves away from the traditional ideas of manufacturing products. Instead, it looks to reuse existing products or materials in an endless cycle. This means that start-up costs for circular economy businesses can be much lower than other sectors, which in turn makes this industry much more accessible to township or rural entrepreneurs.

A very popular circular economy model is product sharing, such as the renting or hiring of equipment, which requires minimal start-up costs. For example, an entrepreneur



could start a business in which parents can hire or exchange baby equipment, allowing them to trade in these items as their child grows. Often for these township 'treds, they simply have to look around them to find where the opportunities and gaps lie.

Shifting eco-conscious consumerism

The market for "green" products and services is growing significantly. Research commissioned by WWF found a 71% rise in popularity of searches for sustainable goods over the past five years, with consumers more inclined to click on eco-friendly product options. While the South African consumer may be lagging behind the international trends, more and more local shoppers are starting to look for green alternatives.

Consumer demand drives production, and many international corporates are already having to meet sustainability targets. Research presented at the Global Climate Action Summit estimates that over 65 million new low-carbon jobs will be created around the world by 2030. If the South African entrepreneur can tap into this sector, we could not only drastically reduce the country's unemployment rate, but also build a better tomorrow.

By Catherine Wijnberg, CEO of Fetola that is running the Circular Economy Accelerator (CEA) focused on businesses in the circular economy.



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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.

B-BBEE Refresher

Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, commonly known by its acronym, B-BBEE, is a term that all too often strikes panic in many business owners. More often than not, it's simply a lack of knowledge that causes this reaction. At a glance, B-BBEE compliance can appear intimidating to tackle.

"The many complexities to B-BBEE can make it incredibly daunting if you aren't clued up on the ins and outs. It can be an uncomfortable topic, but it shouldn't be. Business leaders are putting themselves at a disadvantage when they ignore their B-BBEE scorecard. It pays to be compliant," advises Wessel Botha of SDC Wealth.

Botha offers this 'refresher' to give some insights into B-BBEE and its benefits to a organisation.

What is B-BBEE and is it effective?

Thabo Mbeki, Former President of RSA, introduced Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BEE/ B-BBEE) in 2003 as part of the government's implementation of the Transformation Charter.

Its introduction ushered in a new era for individuals previously rebuffed from particular career opportunities and societal activities as a result of the Apartheid regime.

The term "Broad-Based" encompasses Africans, Indians, and Coloured's, though B-BBEE seeks to also empower the disabled, women, young South Africans, and rural communities – all groups disadvantaged prior to 1994.

There are multiple systems of measurement which aid in the enrichment of the lives of those whom B-BBEE influences. These include ownership and management control, skills development, socio-economic development, and enterprise and supplier development. These metrics not only endorse the employment of Broad-Based Black individuals, but also ensure that they receive upskilling and fair career growth opportunities.

Prior to 2015, the metrics that B-BBEE scorecards factored in were slightly different to what they are today, with today's metrics offering accelerated progression in terms of the objectives it strives to meet. In 2017, only 1% of companies listed on the JSE were 100% black owned – this spiked to 3.3% by the end of 2019.

What are the benefits of B-BBEE and compliance?

As previously mentioned, the core aim of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment is to, through its various elements, transform and uplift the quality of life of those adversely affected by the Apartheid regime.

This is, of course, the single most important aspect of B-BBEE and its greatest benefit as we strive towards a better future for the Rainbow Nation and its residents.

The far reaching "ripples" that B-BBEE creates include improved quality of education for young South Africans, decreased rates of crime, increased employability, diverse markets, and much more.

B-BBEE offers benefits at a commercial level too when you get your scorecard in order:

- B-BBEE compliant businesses can engage in trade and apply for tenders with government, offering increased income potential,
- B-BBEE compliant businesses are preferred suppliers to larger businesses, as larger businesses are incentivized to engage with B-BBEE compliant SMEs (EMEs/ QMEs).
- B-BBEE compliance sets a precedent for your business, showing investors, customers, and suppliers that your brand is committed to initiating positive change,
- B-BBEE compliant companies may apply for grants and business finance – something inaccessible to non-compliant businesses,
- And finally, B-BBEE compliant businesses receive tax gains that they would otherwise miss out on.

By Wessel Botha, Managing Director of specialist skills development organisation and B-BBEE consultancy, SDC Wealth.



Impact sourcing extends the concept of B-BBEE beyond a tick-box exercise to make a meaningful difference

B-BBEE has always been aimed at addressing historical inequalities and empowering previously disadvantaged individuals. However, it has proven a challenge to implement in a meaningful way, and for many businesses it has become a tick-box exercise and little more. The concept of impact sourcing is one way that we could work toward addressing this.

A hub for change

South Africa is becoming an outsourcing destination of choice in the international market, especially around call centre services. This presents us with a unique opportunity to affect real, meaningful change. The concept of impact sourcing has emerged in recent years 'as a business practice where a company prioritises suppliers that intentionally hire and provide career development opportunities to people who otherwise have limited prospects for formal employment'.

Impact sourcing dovetails perfectly with the spirit of B-BBEE. It is a way for the local private sector to aid in the upliftment of disadvantaged individuals and their families and communities by employing them in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) space. In turn, this will help to stimulate the local economy, which will assist in generating more jobs and growth.

Compelling the case

With South Africa's distressingly high unemployment rate, particularly among the youth, addressing this challenge has become paramount. One of the challenges for those seeking employment is always the lack of skills, either because the education system is insufficient, or the individuals simply cannot afford to educate themselves further. The idea of impact sourcing centres on finding disadvantaged individuals with high potential and assisting them in earning a living wage, while also giving them opportunities to build skills.

Impact sourcing provides opportunities for people to gain the skills they need to differentiate themselves within the workforce, while companies can meaningfully achieve B-BBEE status by providing training, skills development and employment. The key is to find disadvantaged people with potential, and then securing and growing this potential for the benefit of the individual and the organisation.

Impact sourcing refers to a function within the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector that creates employment for previously disadvantaged individuals across BPO hubs such as call centres.



Leading the way

The first step is to identify high potential candidates and then to provide them with opportunities and upskill them. In turn, this favours the organisation by improving the quality of employees and opening the door to contracting with other companies that have skilled personnel available. Improving the quality of employees and business makes South Africa even more attractive as an outsourcing destination.

The two foundational pillars are identifying the value of impact sourcing and developing potential. Not only is this an essential part of B-BBEE, but it is also aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is increasingly becoming a requirement for international companies seeking outsourced services.

If South Africa wishes to remain an outsourcing destination of choice and to grow this sector for economic development, impact sourcing is fast becoming essential. BPO providers can lead the way by focusing on impact sourcing led from within and then by taking these skills to the broader market to the benefit of all.

By Tennille Bell, General Manager
Sales at MD at Programmed
Process Outsourcing.



Build your network

Networking is based on the question 'How can I help?' and not with 'What can I get?'

Networking is an important skill for aspiring and existing entrepreneurs, and when used consistently and purposefully, it can seriously increase your impact; raise your income and extend your brand awareness. Here are some tips for building a growing network.

► **Aim to connect, not to sell.**

The MC at a recent networking breakfast related how those attending a previous event had been asked, 'How many of you came to sell something?' The answer was about 50%. The next question was, 'How many of you came to buy something?' The answer? None!

People don't attend a networking event to buy products or services. Uppermost in their minds is how can they build relationships and connect with others who might add value to their business and vice versa. Making this key mistake could alienate you at the event and leave you with the impression that 'networking doesn't work for me'. It can and does work when you focus on connecting.

► **Identify what you want to achieve and whom you want to meet.**

Another mistake that is made is focusing on quantity (shotgun approach) rather than on quality (laser). Most events last two to three hours with the networking section restricted to 45 minutes. Rather than distributing and collecting business cards, aim to focus on six to eight new people or connections. You will need to leverage these through speedy follow-up after the event.

► **Follow up promptly.**

It is essential to follow up quickly and in a meaningful way. A sincere email sent within 48 hours of the event should do the trick. Don't forget to put this contact into your networking schedule and maintain the momentum.

► **Prepare your elevator pitch.**

At the recent event, we all had a short opportunity to share our elevator pitch. The key here is to practise your pitch, make it personal, impactful and concise. One of the gents attending delighted the audience by singing the song Jeremiah was a bullfrog! His first name was Jeremiah, and now no one will forget it!



► **Be present, visible and likeable.**

This means being punctual, practising little courtesies like listening carefully, smiling appropriately and shaking hands firmly. It means thinking about how you can first add value to others before seeking value for yourself. After all, one of these 'strangers' might be the key person who opens a door to a major business deal for you. What would be the reason they remembered you? Because you came across as genuinely interested in them and their world. This can lead to expanding yours!

► **Finally, identify which groups, companies and individuals you want to meet and connect with.**

It may be that a networking event doesn't have these earmarked people in attendance, but there may be a company, individual or interest group present at the networking session who can, in turn, give you a warm introduction to those key people/organisations.

It might be helpful to draw up a list of potential customers; decision-makers; influencers; opinion leaders and experts through whom you want to extend your networking circle. By then asking yourself through whom and how you can be introduced to them, you might see clear links in the event or session you plan to attend.

Remember, networking is your net worth. Your first focus is to connect, not to sell; and networking will pay huge dividends, when you work!



By Steve Reid, Centre for Entrepreneurship/Rapid Incubator-Centre Manager at False Bay College.

Network mapping

GrowthWheel® is a toolbox for decision-making in startup and growth companies. It helps entrepreneurs and business advisors *Get Focus, Set Agendas, Make Decisions, and Take Action*. The Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubator (CfERI) uses GrowthWheel® in its learning and coaching.

Networking is a key activity in an entrepreneur's armoury and when done well, it can bring wonderful dividends. Here is one tool from the toolkit that may assist you in identifying future possible links and network opportunities.

The worksheet shares a visual map of possible links that you/your organisation has. This covers suppliers, partners,

personal connections, and leaves room for you to tailor to your situation.

There is something powerful in writing things down, so don't skip this step. (Remember, if it's not on paper, it's vapour!) The big idea is to brainstorm and come up with as many names as you can. (Just write down, don't evaluate at this stage)

Then comes time to consider who on the list should be your focus in networking for 2022. The next step is to consider where you may encounter them (for example, a Business Chamber event). Budget for time to mindfully pursue these potential networking opportunities.

Applying the tool.

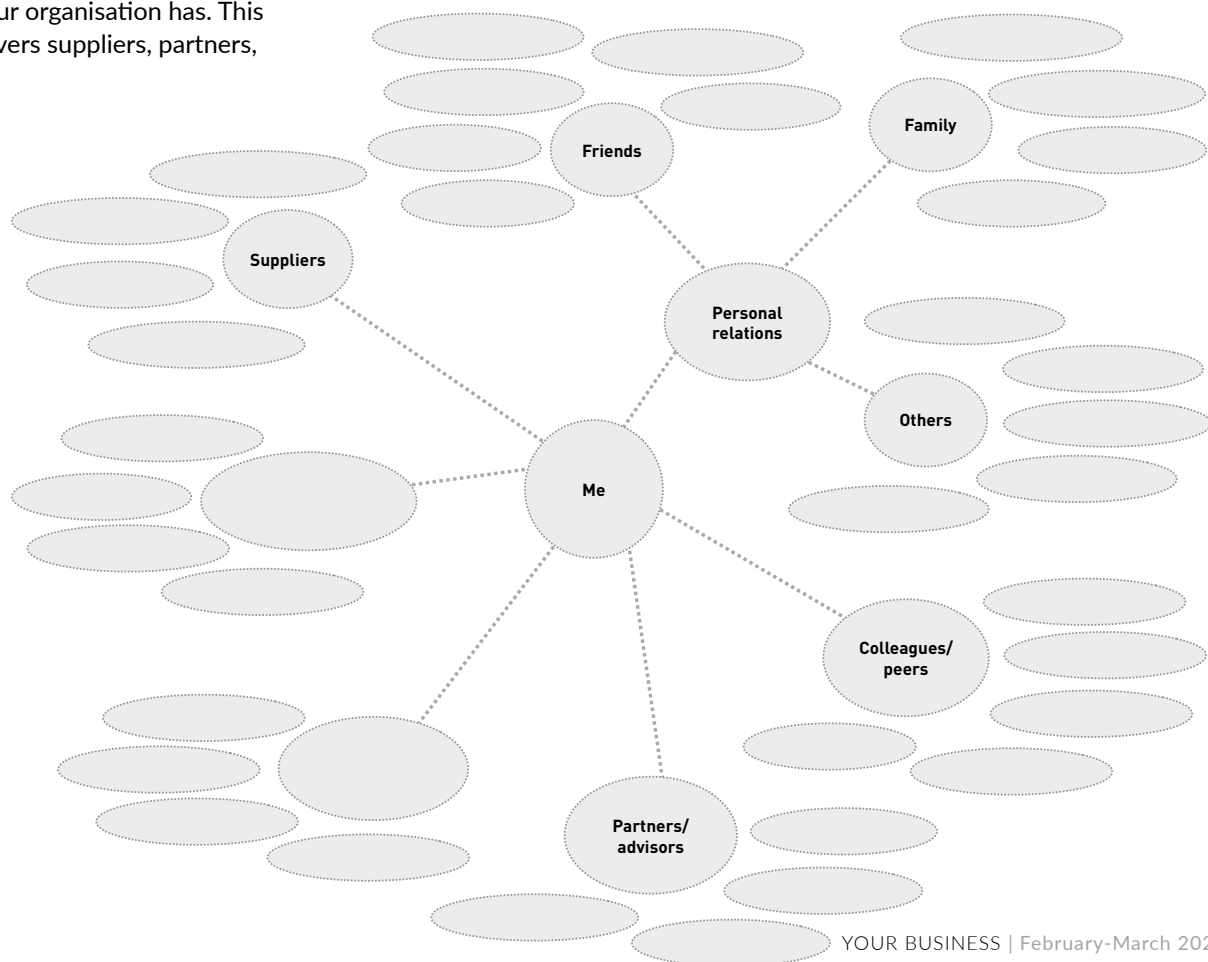
A company network can include both professional and personal contacts. By getting an overview of our existing network, we can start creating paths to expand it as well as finding the resources we need.

► How to do it

Start by putting the names that come to mind on the map in the different categories. Continue by systematically going through all groups and come up with as many names as you can. Finish by marking the groups where you need to expand your network the most.

► Next step

Point out who in your current network can be helpful with the challenges you are facing at the moment. Figure out who you want to add to your network and who can get you introduced to these persons. Find contact information and draft e-mail or other communication.



Why **social commerce** should form part of your strategy...

According to the latest *Salesforce Connected Customers Report*, 25% of shopping will occur outside of a retailer or brand's website, app or physical store by 2023. And during the 2021 Christmas season, social media apps accounted for 4% of global mobile digital sales, while individuals browsing social media accounted for 10% of mobile traffic.

Consumer purchasing behaviour has changed and as a result, businesses' strategies for providing personalised customer experiences have shifted. In-store and online purchasing experiences are merging and more companies are exploring social commerce and including it as a key strategy in their commerce plans.

Are South African businesses and consumers prepared, and is this a necessary strategy for success in 2022? We speak with industry experts and ask them to share their thoughts.

Consumers spend their time on social media during micro-moments

Over the past 15 years, commerce has been moving toward new and disruptive digital channels with increasing speed. This all accelerated further when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

“One of these new channels for shoppers in both a B2C and B2B world is social media, because that is where shoppers are spending their time,” says Robbie Kearns, Senior Regional Vice President at Salesforce. “In addition, social media is usually the first place people go when they pick up their mobile device during the ‘micro-moments’ that they have between their own daily routines, and it’s easy to anticipate this across the social networks.”

Salesforce Commerce Cloud customers reported a staggering 66% increase in visitor traffic to their digital sites shortly after COVID hit, which resulted in a 127 % increase in cart size. “This ultimately resulted in a staggering 146% rise in year-over-year revenue,” Kearns says.

Social commerce brings brands up close and personal with customers

“It’s well understood that social media has revolutionised the way businesses connect with their customers and now social commerce elevates that interaction into a transactional one that offers both parties great value. Social commerce brings the product to the customer at the exact point where it piques their interest - see it, shop it right there! On the other hand, social commerce



also provides brands with useful data on things like customer preferences and their social habits more generally,” says Reagen Kok, Hoorah Digital CEO, who believes that the brands that ignore the impact and influence of social commerce today do so at their peril.

Significantly, social commerce allows brands access to data such as customers’ social profiles (with their consent, of course), adding to the dataset that enables brands to craft more personalised online experiences for their audiences.

Kok explains, “It’s the manifestation of the seamless, platform-neutral shopping experience that we’ve been anticipating for years now. And it’s happening in a way that’s creative, relevant, entertaining and set to ultimately revolutionise how we shop online.”

A multi-channel approach is key to e-commerce success

Ross Sibbald, Commercial Director of Striata Africa, however, warns businesses that although the metaverse may be the latest and greatest shiny ‘thing’, it is crucial that businesses focus on developing a relationship and loyalty with their clients. Sibbald says that, “A multi-channel approach is still incredibly useful now and in the future.”

Authentic content is still king

One difference between social commerce and traditional e-commerce is that social commerce is largely developed around social content, instead of the product. This is the foundation of how Creators and brands are all leveraging how consumers are discovering brands on social networks and then making purchases as a result. Whether a user is watching a livestream, a short video or is on a challenge, they can easily be redirected to the product page, enabling them to purchase.

This is crucial because audiences do not arrive on social channels with the initial intention of shopping. Instead, they are looking to be entertained and possibly to discover new products.

Thanks to Creators, brands can leverage existing fan bases and the content that Creators are developing to connect with target audiences. Remember, Creators have established followers and tend to do a better job of creating authentic, long-term customer relationships than any brand account can hope to achieve.

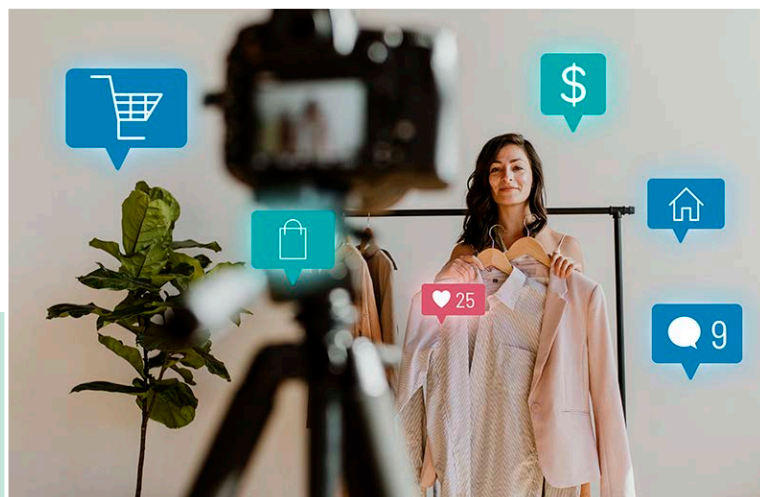
According to Facebook, 81% of shoppers were already using social media to discover new brands and research products before the pandemic. This level of consumption, combined with lockdowns has resulted in a social shopping explosion. Letting users discover products and then

“It is extremely likely that an increasing number of shoppers would abandon traditional brick and mortar stores in favour of alternate channels where the experience is less obtrusive, more smooth and ultimately more convenient for the shopper, but it is also important to not force new technologies on to customers,” says Sibbald.

Rather than that, we must establish how and where they wish to connect and communicate. “e-Commerce and email are really coming into their stride and are already widely used and welcomed by shoppers, and I don’t see that going anytime soon,” Sibbald adds.

Consumers are open to new methods

As retailers crop up in the metaverse, it’s apparent that consumers are prepared to make transactions through novel methods. Retailers are witnessing the emergence of a new business model in which physical and digital realities coexist and stores remain open 24 hours a day.



checkout in the same app just makes sense.

“However, brands choosing to leverage this trend should be careful. The authenticity of Creators is what drives trust and engagement. Dictating content to Creators is therefore ill-advised. Instead, choose Creators who align with your brand values and whose audiences meet your own target audience criteria,” advises Greg Bailie, Head of Growth & Innovation at the Influencer Division of Nfinity Media.

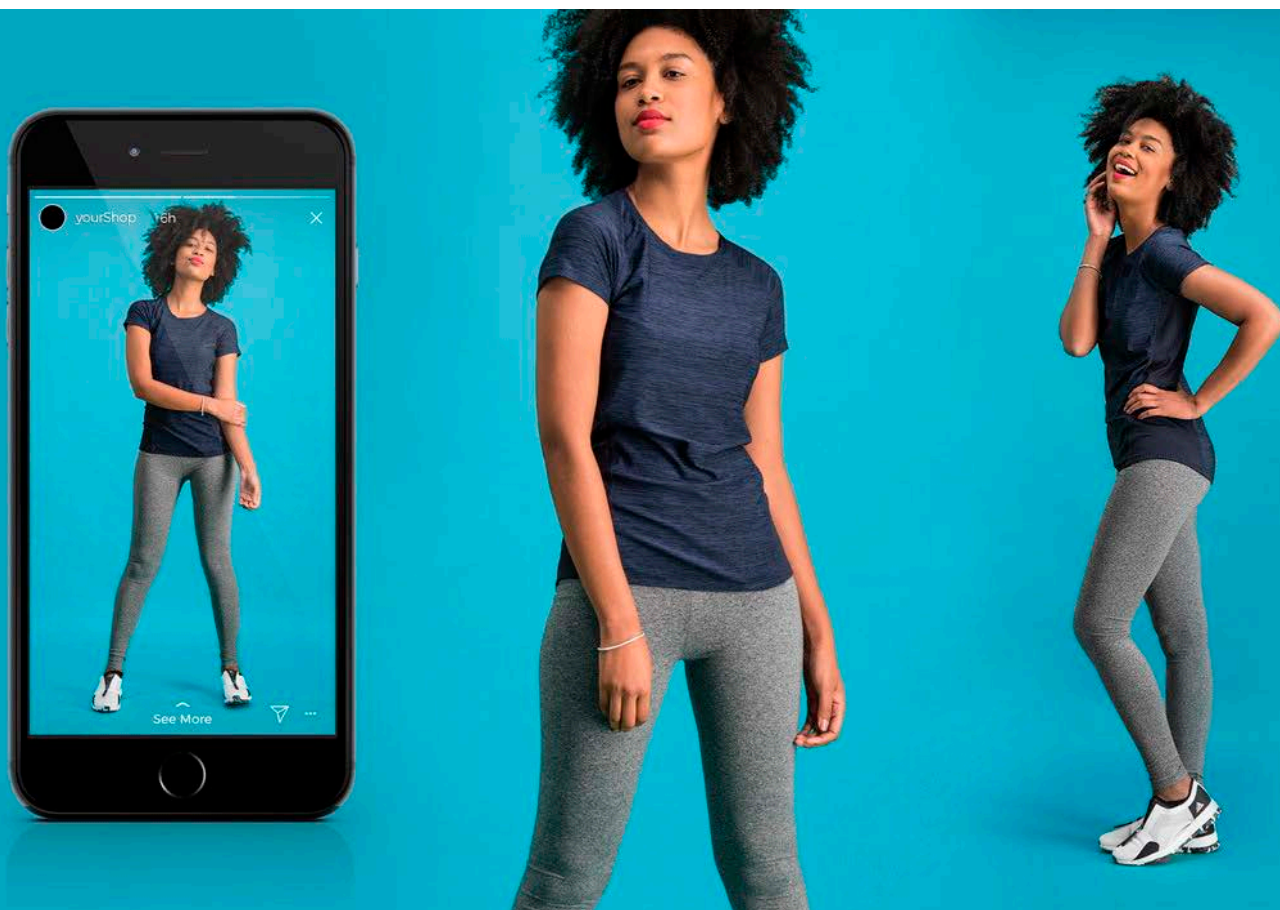
8 Things to know about **e-commerce photography**

The way customers shop has changed forever, and top-notch product shots are a must-have.

A single photo can make the difference between making and losing a sale. There are multiple aspects to consider when integrating this into your e-commerce strategy - from 360-degree photography to products in motion, storytelling, search results rankings and more. Craig Bellingham, founder and CEO of Studio[K]irmack, who has overseen over 150 national retail campaigns, with a client list that includes Adidas, Puma, Engen, Pick n Pay Clothing, Hi-Tec and Cape Union Mart, among others, shares eight key points to keep in mind.

1 Your online photos need to recreate the in-store experience

Customers want to learn as much as possible about the products on offer before committing to a purchase. High-quality photos and descriptions can virtually replace the capacity to feel and touch a tangible good, filling in for lost senses in online shops. Research shows that nearly 80 percent of online shoppers crave a visual experience - they are unlikely to explore the





“shelves” further if there are no photos. Retailers need to give customers what they want; and for maximum satisfaction, it’s recommended that you provide a number of photo options, video and 360-degree solutions if you are able to do so.

2 Video killed the still image star

Stills were used to promote products for decades. Various trends and styles have changed the way these pictures have been taken over the years, but the essence has remained the same - until now. In recent years, we’ve seen a big shift to video. As technology has developed, video has become much more compact - expanding its usage on websites and social media. 73% of consumers are more likely to buy products after watching videos that show them in action. This is exciting, because we know that people pay a lot more attention to video than they do to still images. Savvy brands have been taking advantage of these increased opportunities for exposure, which has had a domino effect on product photographers. It’s reasonable to expect the studio you hire to be well versed in videography, even if the degree that product shots require it may be limited. In fact, you could argue that this skill is now a basic requirement.

3 360-degree photography is here to stay

Initially dismissed as a flash in the pan, 360-degree photography has become increasingly popular across the majority of social media platforms and is being integrated into many large e-commerce sites. It’s a trend that looks set to stick around, and more and more brands are trying to take advantage of it. Though 360-degree photography is still in its relative infancy, companies can - and should - learn how to implement it into their marketing strategies; this is something that an e-commerce photography studio or professional should be able to assist with.

4 Move it or lose it

Customers are bored of seeing the same types of images over and over again, especially when it comes to differentiating one brand from another. Seasoned strategists have found a few ways to overcome this catalogue fatigue - one being to capture products in motion. This doesn’t have to be the same as using video; it means creating the illusion of action and movement through a series of stills. Products in motion can be a great way to shake things up, so you might want to consider adding them to the mix.

5 Great photos will be shared (and might go viral)

Visual material is 40 times more likely to be shared on social media than other types of content. That means quality photos are essential if you want your product to go viral - for the right reasons, anyway. Visual signals trigger emotional responses - and, as we know, these can be powerful for a brand. If a customer likes one of the top product photos from your website, it's likely to end up on social media, increasing both your visibility and potential sales. People post photos to their accounts, consult friends and family for advice before buying, and share their shopping experiences. If you want your photos to be shared, make sure they look professional.

6 Photos tell stories

Simply by selecting a well-placed, thoughtfully designed image, you can conjure up a feeling, dream or vision. Visitors to your website will "read" your photos and decide - in a split second - whether the rest of the material on the site is relevant to them or not. It all boils down to the stories your photos are telling; you may be able to bring a customer to your product online, but unless the images are appealing, and reinforce the narrative that they will benefit from the product (or service) in their lives, they will ditch the transaction and



stop engaging with your brand, taking their interests elsewhere. While it's true that well-crafted text can be very persuasive, strategically planned - and placed - visuals can go much further. Studies suggest that people recall 80 percent of what they see, compared to just 20 percent of what they read.

7 Product shots can reduce refund rates

Because "products look different in reality than in the photos", over 20 percent of all items sold online will be refunded. This is another reason why you need to make sure you've got good-quality product shots on your e-store; it helps set realistic expectations for your customers about what the goods they are ordering are actually like. The right photos will alleviate doubts and concerns - the wrong ones will do the opposite.

8 Photos can help you rank higher in SEO

Optimising your product shots for search engines is an excellent way to increase the number of people who are interested in your products. There are several easy ways to do this, including the following:

- **Name your photos clearly and carefully.** Images with names like IMG03.JPG are not helpful to Google or users. Choose terms that actually describe the image but keep the name short - long file names that are stuffed with keywords could have a negative effect on your search rankings.
- **Add that alt text.** Even if it seems like a time-consuming extra step, provide a brief description of the contents of the picture. Search engines rely heavily on alt text to parse images. Make it easier for them, and you may be rewarded.
- **Check your page load times.** If your images are too big, they could be slowing your site down. Slow loading times may mean lower rankings and missed purchases. JPEGs are the most-used file format for e-commerce, as they allow for high-quality previews without chewing up all the bandwidth.

By Craig Bellingham, founder and CEO of Studio[K]irmack, an innovative high-tech production studio.



Marketing across the generations

As brands start finalising their marketing and sales strategy for the new year, it's important that they include the younger demographic which they may have missed previously. With Gen Z's relatively new purchasing power, brands should avoid reusing traditional marketing ideas and tactics.

Of course, older generations such as Generation X and Baby Boomers continue to hold considerable purchasing power, so adopting a multi-generational marketing approach is key. Marketers should recognise the distinct nature of each audience and the fact that what works with one group may not resonate with another.

■ Tailor your communication

Good old-fashioned marketing means that there is no 'one size fits all' approach and you must tailor not only your product offering, but also your communication style.

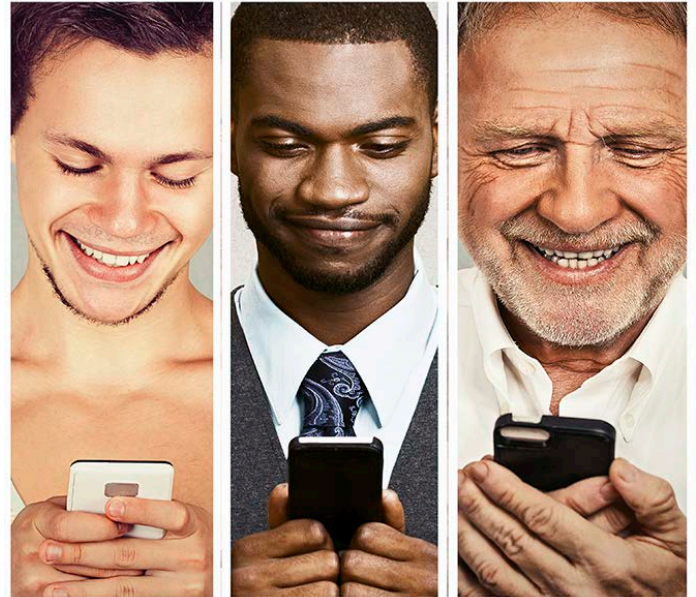
"Successful marketing is about gathering as much information as possible about your customers in order to segment them into relevant target groups based on variables such as age, generation, life stage and purchasing power," explains Ross Sibbald, Commercial Director at Striata South Africa.

"Email has already been widely recognised and acknowledged as a channel, and email marketing continues to be the most successful medium for communicating a product offering targeted to each customer category, from Millennials to Gen X and Baby Boomers," notes Sibbald.

■ Remember the three fundamentals of marketing

The same characteristics that are being used to define Gen Z were once used to describe Gen Y, and before them it was Gen X, and so on, as we progress through the ages of marketing.

"Defining a target audience by the class of generation that they fit into is to say that everyone in that generation thinks, acts and enjoys all of the same



things, all of the time and if that's true for Gen Z then it must be true for every other generation as well. It's mass marketing and it's been around for about as long as marketing has existed," says Pieter Geyser, Head of Digital and Marketing at Irvine Partners.

"While there is nothing wrong with mass marketing, because it certainly works for some brands, a clearly defined target audience requires greater segmentation than a person's year of birth. A marketing strategy needs to have three fundamentals: *Clear target audience, distinctive brand positioning and achievable strategic objectives*," explains Geyser.

■ Shifting customer expectations present challenges

According to a recent *Salesforce State of Marketing* survey, 66 percent of South African marketers believe that challenges are afoot, primarily due to the constantly shifting customer expectation. To succeed, marketers must adapt their strategies to meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's customers. This means realising that no two customers are the same. This is especially vital when it comes to cross-generational marketing and executing it correctly will only ensure success.

Public Relations is dead; Long live Personal Relations



The discipline of PR has evolved so dramatically over the past few years that it is no longer effective in its traditional form. Instead, we are seeing a new emphasis on building personal, one-to-one relationships between consumers and brands. And that's a good thing.

Traditionally, Public Relations focused on getting good stories into mass-market media where they'd secure large audiences - the 'public, part of public relations. It was a top-down, one-to-many approach, and for a long time it worked incredibly well. Until we saw the widespread adoption of the internet, the rise of social media and the decline of print. Consumers choose their own content to engage with and elect influencers that mesh with their own personality and interests.

And then came the Covid-19 pandemic with almost six million lives lost, soaring joblessness and huge uncertainty around the world. Trust in traditional institutions, including government, business, the media, and civil society has plummeted according to findings.

"We're seeing a fundamental shift in the way people are relating to one another and to businesses. And that means that Public Relations as it was previously practised, needs to radically change and evolve. Now, we're seeing the rise of personal relations - where we communicate with consumers as individuals, on their terms, about what they want."

There are several key takeaways from this evolving shift:

Fake news itself is at epidemic proportions, with 80 percent of US consumers reporting that they had seen fake news in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, phishing emails, which offer fake credentials and narratives from cyber attackers, are a daily annoyance for most professionals. As a

result, consumers have to either double-check all the information they receive, or instead put their trust in selected individuals as content curators.

TAKEAWAY: Companies will double-down on monitoring brand assets and clamp down on misuse, while consumers will need additional proof of experts' credentials. Testimonials, case studies, executive profiling and thought leadership will take centre stage.

At the same time, authenticity and integrity become sought after. What do you really stand for? What's your personality? Is there a face behind your brand? Brands are more memorable when they are distinctive. Consumers have been trending towards purpose-driven and ethical brands and this will continue in 2022 and beyond. We're seeing this desire become more urgent, with consumers calling out brands who are perceived as insufficiently ethical or who issue half-hearted endorsements.

TAKEAWAY: Consumers want to interact with brands that stand for something and have their purpose front and centre, because they trust them to do the right thing. Know what your consumers value and show them that you share their vision.

Cookies (data files used to identify and track users across the internet) are crumbling as data protection legislation becomes more stringent. Third party cookies are being removed and this means brands need to put more effort into building first-party, human-centred

relationships. Added to this is the overwhelming need for curation. It's estimated that 500 hours of content are loaded onto YouTube every minute, 695 000 stories are shared on Instagram and nearly 70 million messages are sent via WhatsApp and Messenger. Consumers either curate their own content feeds or follow others who do.

TAKEAWAY: *Companies need to put more effort into knowing their audiences, who they're interacting with and where to find them, and offer content that's relevant, insightful and actionable. At the same time, the role of influencers will change, with brands working with influencers who are relevant and show engagement with target audiences. Long-term partnerships promote consistency and measurable returns.*

These changes may seem daunting, and they do signal the need for a change in the way communications are conducted. We believe, though, that this focus on the personal is achievable for companies who put time into understanding their target audiences and deliver content that is tailored and meaningful.

A fast-changing world requires an integrated communications strategy that is equally agile, able to pivot to find audiences where they're at. With the rise of remote working, social distancing, and digital media, consumers are not just hungry, they are starving for real connection, experience, understanding and meaning. The opportunity here is for brands to stop spinning and start listening and sharing what's authentic and unique to them.

Viva personal relations!

By Adam Hunter,
Head Honcho at
Hook, Line & Sinker
Communications.



Five PR trends to keep an eye on

According to a recent *Muckrack* poll, 73% of PR practitioners believe the term 'public relations' as it is currently defined will not adequately reflect the work they will be performing in the future.

As such, several PR companies will be expected to offer a far broader range of services than in previous years," says Managing Director of The Dynaste Communication Firm, Mkhusele Vangile. Staying on top of the newest industry trends is more important than ever in the field of public relations. Vangile looks at five PR trends to expect in 2022:

- **LIVE VIDEO PR:** The new wave of popularity linked with live video is one of the PR trends that should not be missed in the future. For many firms, live video PR has become one of the most popular strategies to promote their brands and gain public attention.

- **THE POPULARITY OF NEWSJACKING WILL BE ON THE RISE:** The practice of newsjacking will be one of the most popular trends in public relations this year. Newsjacking involves taking a piece of news or current event and creating content that aims to highlight or promote your brand. This is a trend that businesses should keep an eye on if they want to raise brand awareness.

Newsjacking should be done mindfully though. Feeding off a news story can seem insensitive or exploitative if done incorrectly, particularly when news stories are tragic or controversial. Audiences will also balk if the campaign is too obviously promoting the company's products and services.

- **TIKTOK WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE MOST POPULAR APP:** The Covid-19 pandemic has compelled half of the world's population to use social media. As a result, some public relations experts are using TikTok as part of their public relations strategies. This year, several public relations agencies will target campaigns using the social media app to increase brand exposure and engagement.

- **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PR:** This has to be one of the emerging trends that many PR agencies will follow. Artificial intelligence (AI) will enable businesses to produce better results more quickly. Another method AI will be employed in the PR industry is to create a new virtual environment and assist businesses in developing new brand strategies.

- **VIRTUAL EVENTS:** Physical events have been replaced by virtual ones as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Fortunately, the PR industry handled the unprecedented change with ease and has never looked back. Many PR businesses provided a seamless platform for their clients to connect even when no physical events were held. This is also one of the trends that several PR firms will follow in order to keep their businesses functioning.



Making mental health a priority

How small business owners can help reduce the chances of burnout.

According to Xero's latest *State of Small Business Report*, an overwhelming majority (94%) of businesses have mental health and wellbeing as a top priority for their employees in 2022, while 96% of small business owners also reported that stress has harmed their mental state in the past year.

While doing research on the subject, Colin Timmis, General Country Manager at Xero spoke to clinical and consulting psychologist Marc Rogatschnig, who warned against a looming 'burnout pandemic' due to months of uncertainty, anxiety, and stress.

Entrepreneurs and small business owners tend to be driven and passionate, often pushing themselves and those around them to perform their level best. While admirable, unfortunately these traits often result in stress and work overload.

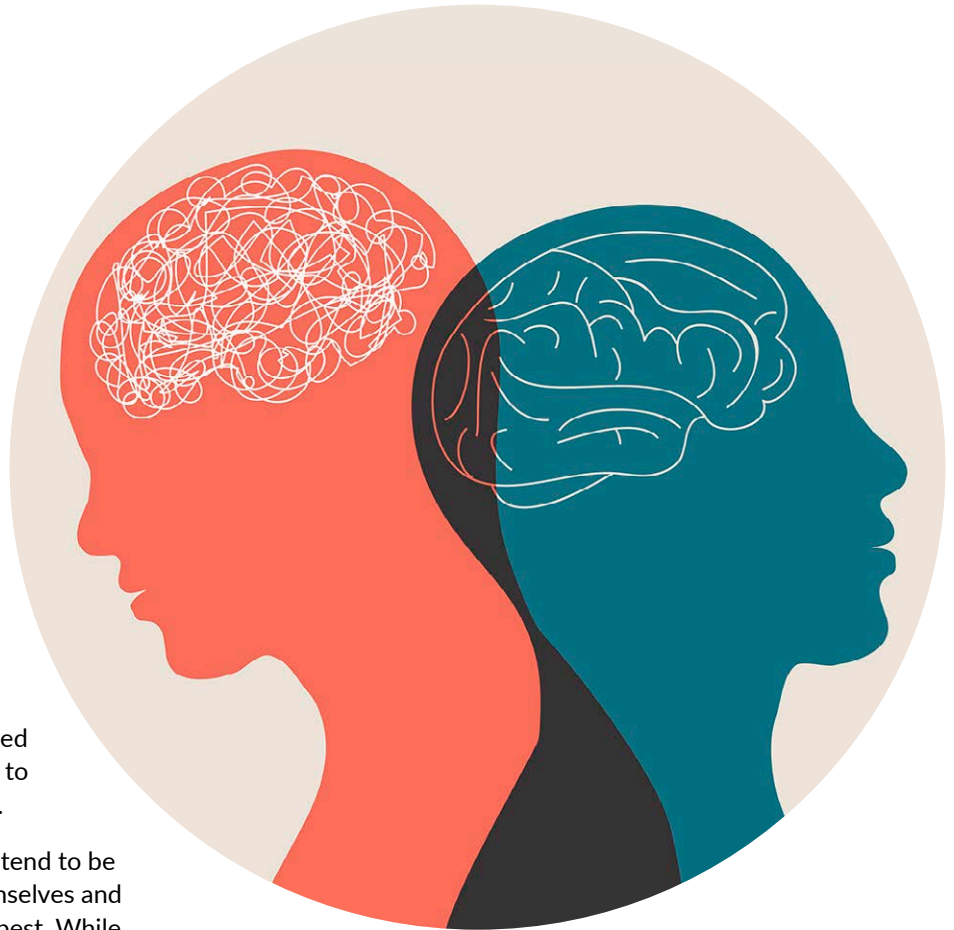
According to *The World Health Organization*, burnout is 'a syndrome conceptualised as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.' Combined with prolonged stress factors, such as those caused by the pandemic, the risk of burnout increases drastically. It's essential to be aware of the signs, because if left unaddressed it may have adverse effects on your mental health and the ability of your business to function adequately. Symptoms may include lethargy, mental aloofness, pessimistic and cynical feelings related to work and reduced professional capability.

According to Marc, "Burnout is an insidious condition that can last anything from weeks to years. So, while there's a more upbeat atmosphere and some reprieve

from the constant change and setbacks, I'm still worried that people have ignored the deeper systemic changes they need to make in their lives."

Marc states that 2022 would be the "battle for the soul of the workplace", which will add further stress to organisational systems. People have started exploring their overall sense of purpose and direction, fanned by the rise of hybrid and remote work.

"Unlike developed economies where it's easier for people to change roles, we are in an economy where the fear of leaving and not finding a job is extremely high. This means more people are likely stuck and stagnant in their daily work than elsewhere. The question, 'what do I really want?' will keep gnawing at people. These factors are highly distracting and still pose a real threat to emotional wellbeing," Marc explains.



Fortunately though, the *State of Small Business* report does indicate that an increasing number of businesses see mental health as a priority. Asked how they support mental wellbeing in the workplace, three quarters (74%) responded that they'd created an open culture for employees to talk about it. Long may this continue.

Tips to protect your mental health

There are a few steps we can all take to help protect our mental health amid the consequences of the pandemic. Marc suggests the following as a starting point:

- 1 Focus on emotional wellbeing:** This long period of uncertainty, instability, insecurity and anxiety needs to be understood as a profoundly emotional challenge. Unlike mental challenges, we can't simply think our way out of this with more plans and strategies. We need to create space and focus on how to replenish emotional reservoirs.
- 2 Get in touch with your whole life:** To replenish these reservoirs, we need to take stock of every aspect of our life, then identify which elements are filling our emotional pots, which aren't and what parts of our daily lives were neglected. Emotional replenishment comes from each individual's daily choices, requiring deliberate attention and support.
- 3 Reset and reboot:** This is something each of us needs to do, and which small and medium-sized businesses can do very easily. The process of emotional renewal is best done with others and in the company of real human support and engagement. However, the pivot point for this will be how the future of work will look in each organisation and each individual's reaction to what is forced, encouraged or co-created.

Be a coach to your employees

Although you cannot fundamentally change the emotional wellbeing of your people, you should aim to be a coach and supportive. "You should be as fascinated with human behaviour as with commerce, and thus be encouraged to understand just how to support individuals and groups in a dynamic and ongoing manner."

So, in the coming year, be sure to invest the time in taking care of yourself and your employees – your business will reap the benefits in abundance as a result.

The case for mental health training

Poor mental health affects organisations in the form of absenteeism, loss of productivity, interpersonal conflict at work, poor team cohesion and an increase in workplace disputes and grievances. The cost is bound to increase post-Covid, with people battling to come to grips with financial and other losses.

It is estimated that around 57% of the South African population has suffered trauma because of the pandemic, and that one out of 5 of South Africans will experience a depressive disorder once in their lives. Organisations and businesses would do well to recognise and help address the issue.

Larger organisations that can afford to do so, can introduce Employee Assistance Programmes to support employees from a wellness perspective. For companies that cannot afford such programmes, an investment in mental health training for leaders, managers and employees may be the answer. Or as far as possible, managers and leaders should be able to detect mental health problems that their employees may be experiencing, and refer the employee to an organisation or person for assistance.

Change in organisations can also be a trigger, as people respond to change in different ways. The response is similar to the grieving process. It is helpful for employees and managers to be equipped with this knowledge so that they can better understand their own reactions to change and be assisted with the transition that is taking place.

Assisting employees with the fundamentals of interpersonal effectiveness, emotional regulation and mindfulness are beneficial tools can help to improve personal effectiveness and interpersonal relations at work. A proactive approach by leaders, managers and employees can provide long-term benefits in terms of employee productivity and well-being.

By Philippa Reekie, founder
of change leadership, management
and mental health training
company, holism.



Cost-effective ways to defend your SME

Don't be an easy target...



Remote work has placed small businesses in cybercrime's crosshairs. Unfortunately, many small businesses or SMMEs lack the proper financial resources to fight back.

"Hackers have no regard for businesses size or budgets. Still, there are low-cost security solutions that can assist businesses in protecting themselves from cyber threats," says Business Analyst at LAWtrust, Riaan de Villiers.

According to the 2021 STORM Guidance Cybercrime research, 43% of cyberattacks in South Africa target small businesses. Among 33 business owners surveyed, 28 are most concerned about cybersecurity issues. Small businesses are often an easy target for cybercriminals who have developed new ways to breach digital security defences and gain access to sensitive information.

There are still cost-effective cyber security measures that SMMEs can take to strengthen their defences without spending a lot of funds.

1 Use email encryption

A simple yet effective way to protect yourself is to encrypt emails. Email encryption prevents all kinds of unintentional releases of sensitive data. Your sensitive information will be encrypted and delivered to your recipients safely and effortlessly by email encryption.

2 Secure your website with a TLS certificate

Globally businesses use TLS (also known as SSL) certificates to encrypt and safeguard data. Securing your website with a TLS certificate will protect data in transit

between yourself and your clients. It is an inexpensive yet effective way to protect not only your business but your clients too.

3 Set up two-factor authentication

Small businesses looking to protect their online data on a limited budget also have the option to enable two-factor authentication to enhance their login security. The process is typically as easy as registering a phone number or downloading an application. However, it adds an extra layer of protection that makes it more difficult for an attacker to access your account.

4 Digital signatures

Digital signatures are one of the most cost-effective ways to secure business data, create trust and reduce the risks associated with fraud. Digital signatures save time and are more secure than electronic signatures. They protect documents against unauthorised changes and identify the signer's identity. It is an ideal tool to increase productivity and increase security.

5 Backup vital system files

Another easy way to improve cybersecurity is to back up your business's files since cybercriminals may have unlimited access to your information. It is good to keep backups locally and in an offsite location. Having your important files backed up to an offline computer can help limit the damage caused by ransomware attacks.

Five digital payment trends to tap into...

Following exponential growth over the past two years, the South African e-commerce market is expected to be valued at R225 billion by 2025. With consumers expecting frictionless transactions with personalisation, convenience and flexibility at the forefront, the industry has already developed a host of new technologies to streamline payments across the board.

“Improving the customer experience, through the provision of alternative payment methods and improved banking integration, is one way that the e-commerce industry is attracting new audiences. For online businesses, this means fresh opportunities to make sales - provided they stay on top of emerging tech,” says Colleen Harrison from PayFast.

Harrison highlights five key trends that will lead the pack:

► Buy now pay later.

The buy now pay later (BNPL) model lets customers make immediate big-ticket purchases while spreading out their payments with zero interest. With better integration into consumer bank accounts and digital wallets, BNPL will become more accessible and inclusive as a short-term finance solution moving forward.

► Direct consumer relationships.

Following an increase in direct-to-consumer commerce under lockdown, businesses were able to develop and nurture authentic, one-on-one relationships with their consumers. Moving forward, businesses will leverage social media channels and micro-targeted campaigns to cement these brand-to-consumer relationships.

► Rapid payments programme.

Currently in development and expected to go live in 2022 in South Africa, this next-generation banking concept aims to provide people with the ability to make instant digital payments between banks using simple identifiers, such as mobile numbers or email addresses. The programme is designed to



increase access to digital payments for the un- and underbanked who have traditionally relied on cash as their primary payment method.

► Contactless payments and digital wallets.

Last year, PayFast saw a 178% increase in QR code payments which made up 3.5% of all transactions on the system - a significant increase from previous years. Moving forward, more platforms are likely to introduce a direct link between consumers' digital wallets and their bank accounts as well as support alternative stores of value, in addition to the South African Rand. These developments will further streamline peer-to-peer payments and digital purchases.

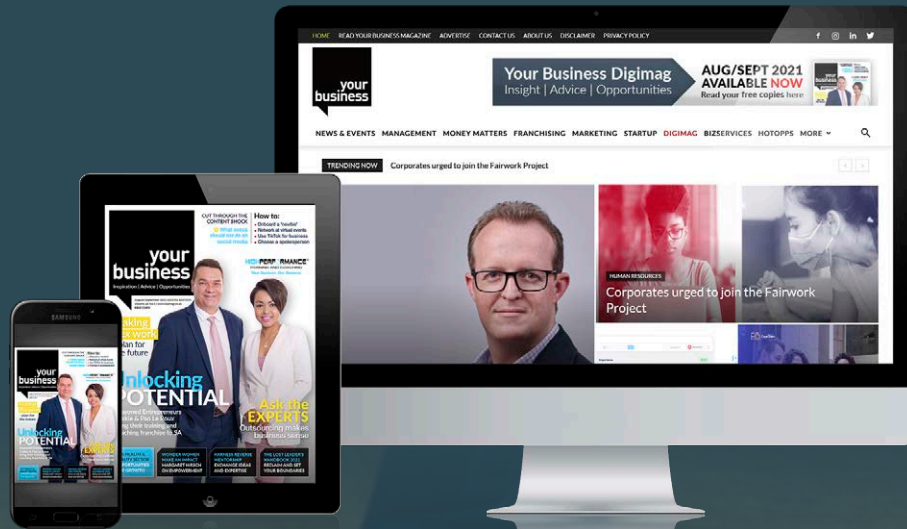
► New stores of value.

While money is set to retain its status as a primary store of value, the rise of quirkier and more diverse options is changing the way people transact online. In addition to dollars and euros, loyalty rewards, non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and cryptocurrencies are becoming increasingly popular mediums of exchange.

Although unlikely to go fully mainstream in the near future, the rising trend of alternative stores of value will be interesting to watch moving forward.

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