

# your business

Inspiration | Advice | Opportunities

April/May 2022 DIGITAL EDITION  
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## DIGITAL EVOLUTION:

Think big, start small, and scale

## How to:

- Use chatbots
- Build your power team
- Ensure loyal customers
- Prepare for the metaverse

Easy steps  
to launch a  
webinar

7 Trends  
to ensure a  
thriving  
workplace

## PRODUCT PRICING

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with *true cost*

*cash*converters®

Unpacking the  
Cash Converters  
three-in-one  
**franchise model**

**Access to  
funding**

TIPS to make  
the right choice

FOCUS ON BIZOPPS UNDER R400K

► AGENCIES ► FRANCHISES ► LICENCES

MAKE AN AFFORDABLE START ON  
THE ROAD TO BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

LEAD-GENERATING  
TIPS AND STRATEGIES  
PUT YOUR WEBSITE  
FRONT & CENTRE

SURVIVE AND THRIVE  
CHALLENGING TIMES  
LESSONS LEARNED  
FROM FELLOW 'TREPS



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APRIL/MAY 2022

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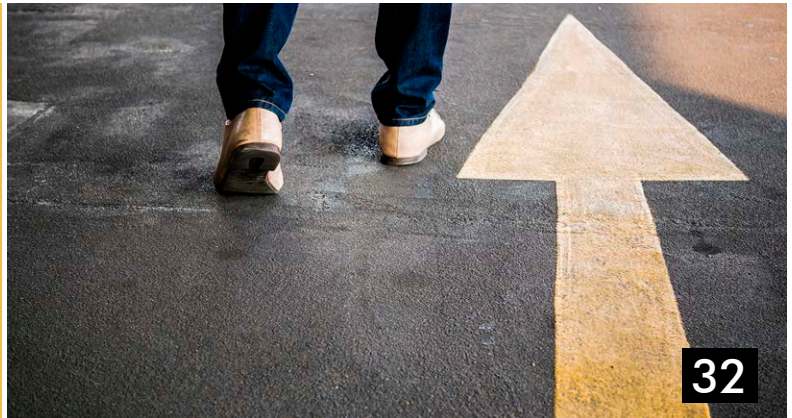
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RETAIL OUTLET



**Kodak Express**  
Digital Solutions

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# Get ready for SAITEX 2022

**SAITEX is Africa's most established, longest running and first to market multi-sector trade show.**

Now in its 28th successful year, SAITEX affords local and international importers and exporters to take advantage of multi-sector trade opportunities across the continent and is *the* market entry platform for anyone wanting to have their products represented in Africa or wanting to represent global brands locally. The show conversely provides a credible platform for retailers, agents and wholesalers to source new products or find new suppliers for existing products.

Visitors and exhibitors can meet hundreds of potential suppliers from around the globe, build important new relationships, attend free workshops, keep abreast of future opportunities and network with other business owners, entrepreneurs, retailers, wholesalers and distributors from across the African continent.

SAITEX will be held from the 19-21 June 2022 at the Gallagher Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

## Show Dates:

19 June 2022, 10:00 – 17:00 (GMT +2)

20 June 2022, 10:00 – 17:00 (GMT +2)

21 June 2022, 10:00 – 16:00 (GMT +2)

**Venue:** Gallagher Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

For more info, visit: [www.saitexafrica.com](http://www.saitexafrica.com)

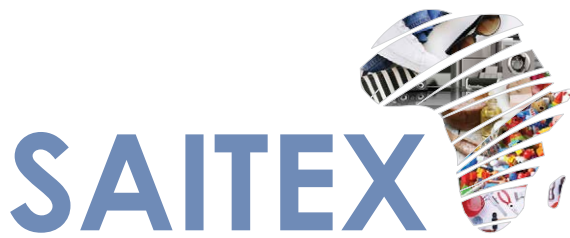


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Countries

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workshops**



**Access to the  
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## How to prepare for the metaverse



Local mobile telecommunications group MTN has bought 144 plots of digital land in Africaverse – making them the first African company to enter the metaverse. This is in line with the current trend of big brands globally investing in an expanded digital presence, from McDonald's virtual restaurant to Nike's 'sneakers for the metaverse'. The big question for small businesses that don't have billions to spend on intangible products and plots of land, is how they will operate in the metaverse?

"Essentially, the metaverse is the future version of the internet. What small businesses need to do right now, is to claim and maintain digital real estate in the form of a strong online presence. This will ensure that they are able to compete in a virtual economy," advises Thomas Vollrath, head of local web-hosting company 1-grid.com.

The metaverse is unlikely to affect small businesses now, but a lot can change in ten years. "Once the doors are open, there will be a flood of opportunities for local businesses to take advantage of, provided they've set up the necessary digital infrastructure in the meantime," says Vollrath. "The connections and trust you're building on your website and via social media will still apply in the metaverse and is the best way to get a foothold on the future. This provides business owners with digital tools to analyse, learn and predict how their consumers perceive them and the way they make purchasing decisions. "It is a means of gaining as much information about your customer as possible and converting that into useable data that can help enhance your offering, now and when planning ahead," says Vollrath.



## Surge in contactless payments

South African consumers and businesses are increasingly using smart devices to make contactless tap-to-pay payments. According to FNB, its retail and commercial clients processed in excess of R4.2 billion in contactless payments via smart devices in 2021, compared to just R640 million in 2020.

## Positive signs for the Health & Beauty sector

Data from Yoco reveals that the Health & Beauty sector (including hair salons, barbershops, and spas) has started to show positive signs of recovery after two very challenging years. Over January and February 2022, these businesses showed a 5% uplift compared to trading over the same period in 2021.

"Hospitality and Health & Beauty businesses account for about 25% of Yoco's customer base. In the second half of March 2020, these players took an immediate 30% hit, with a 90% decline in credit card transactions. So, as a company whose primary objective is to empower small businesses, we are happy to report this trend of recovery", says Matt Brownell, VP Commercial for Yoco.



## Microsoft Translator launches Zulu

Microsoft has added Zulu to its Microsoft Azure Cognitive Services Translator, enabling text and documents to be translated to and from one of South Africa's official languages across the entire Microsoft ecosystem of products and services.

Zulu joins Swahili as the latest African language to be supported, and there are plans to add more of the continent's most widely spoken languages as part of Microsoft's mission to build meaningful cognitive products and services that improve accessibility and local

engagement. "With these ever-improving capabilities, Microsoft aims to make it possible for businesses to expand their global reach, and also break barriers between employees in different countries," says Siya Madyibi at Microsoft South Africa.



# Local startup launches new self-cleaning, pink smart mask

*Copper Fresh is making waves after creating one of Africa's first masks capable of self-sanitising and killing the SARS-Cov-2 virus just a few minutes after it touches your mask.*

Trio founders David Ash, Dean Lazarus and Roy Miller are no newbies to innovation, being serial entrepreneurs who've started other successful businesses locally and abroad. Their latest product launch is an innovative solution to curb the spread of the SARS-Cov-2 virus by encouraging people to wear pink, copper face masks.

"Our mask kills viruses and bacteria, whereas your traditional blue mask doesn't. So, if you take your mask off and then put it back on again - you are still carrying the virus with you and ultimately back into your home environment. By wearing a Copper Fresh face mask you are effectively putting on a new mask, every minute," says Miller.

The secret behind the self-cleaning masks is the same reason they sport a pink hue, and it's all thanks to the copper component. Clinical tests prove that copper is effective in constantly killing viruses, disease and bacteria.

The business venture started with the foresight of the founders realising that the pandemic was going to be something we continue to face for the foreseeable future. Masks are our first line of prevention and are undoubtedly changing the way we live, work, travel, enter high-volume communal spaces and events.

"What we realised was in the medical PPE space there is little to no new technology. The stuff they are using today, is the same stuff they have been using for the past few decades. Nothing has changed. Also thinking of the environmental angle of short-lifespan, disposable masks going to landfills, provided further impetus for the venture of a self-cleaning smart mask. We started making phone calls to people that are looking at coming up with tomorrow's technology, making it today. Most of our phone calls were late into the night talking to mask-making factories and experts. One thing kept popping up...copper," says David Ash.



The trio finally found the technology they were looking for offshore. Copper Fresh has since secured the rights to manufacture this unique technology for Africa. Currently 30 patents and scientific studies exist worldwide. There's also 15 years of research that covers the origins of the technology, where copper oxide-infused fabric was being used by paramedics to dress wounds at accident scenes.

When asked about their vision, the answer is simple and unanimous: "Our vision is to see every healthcare professional in Africa being protected with a Copper Fresh face mask."

## UP FOR GRABS!

WIN

Copper Fresh is giving away two packs of masks, valued at R150 each. (Each pack contains five masks.) To stand a chance to be one of two lucky winners:

- Click here to enter online
- Or email your name and contact number to [competitions@bizmag.co.za](mailto:competitions@bizmag.co.za) with 'Copper Fresh' in the subject line.

*\*Entries close 15 May 2022*



# Looking for a post-Covid business opportunity?

The saying goes: "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade". Becoming a CASH CONVERTERS franchisee allows you to start fresh, be your own boss and make a sustainable living...

If living through a pandemic for close on two years has taught us anything, it's that it's imperative to have a recession-proof business. One that will make it through the good and bad economic cycles. Perhaps you've been re-evaluating your life and decided that you don't want to do the same old grind every day? Maybe you want to be your own boss? There's no time like the present to make a change and jump into a good business opportunity. Becoming a Cash Converters' franchisee allows you to live smart and work smart, with the kind of freedom and flexibility you'd be hard-pressed to find elsewhere. We're the smart franchise solution.

## But why even consider us as a business opportunity?

When you start a business from scratch, it can be extremely daunting. You usually have to work for months – sometimes years – just to develop your brand... before you have a substantial customer base. Marketing often takes a back seat, as you're simultaneously trying to run the business, be innovative in your approach, plus make sure that you have enough money coming in every month. Franchising minimises the risk of being your own boss, as all the essentials – site selection, store build out, training, marketing and fixed assets – are all sorted for you before you even start. What does this mean for you as a business owner? Customers are more likely to frequent your business when you open a franchise, as they are already familiar with the company you represent.



## The challenges entrepreneurs face

The main challenge with starting your own business from scratch is the lack of support. Besides encouraging words and perhaps some financial assistance from loved ones, you are largely on your own. Opening a Cash Converters franchise, however, comes with built-in support from the franchisor. You represent their brand, so they want to do everything they can to make your franchise a success.

## What sets Cash Converters apart

At Cash Converters, support is a fundamental pillar of the business model. This means extensive training programmes for franchisees and store staff on an ongoing basis. In-field experts also offer practical, on-the-ground advice and insights into the day-to-day running of the store. And that is just the start. Best of all? You don't need to have a cutting-edge business idea to run a Cash Converters franchise. You simply take someone else's already successful idea, follow the 'recipe' and make a thriving business out of it. From there, you focus on being the hands-on entrepreneur that you have always dreamed about and potentially build substantial wealth for you and your family.





Richard  
Mukheibir

We buy, we sell and we loan cash. With over 35 years of success globally and 28 years locally in southern Africa, we have a proven track record. Our tried-and-tested business model offers multiple streams of income, which means that you have more than one way to make money.

**We offer three different ways to generate an income:**

- Buying and selling of pre-loved household goods.
- Secured money-lending (against goods).
- Unsecured money-lending (against a salary).

We have continued to thrive through a global pandemic, as we've become more streamlined and efficient – and demonstrated how resilient our model is. If you're looking for something that provides a sustainable business opportunity, adds value to your community and brings different people and items through your doors daily, then becoming a Cash Converters franchisee should be top of your list.

Richard Mukheibir, CEO and co-founder of Cash Converters Southern Africa, has been appointed as the newest member to the board of directors of The Franchise Association of South Africa (FASA).

In this role, Mukheibir will contribute towards the strategic and key role that FASA holds within the franchise industry, and more broadly, franchising as part of the country's economy.

Mukheibir was among the first people to bring international franchising to South Africa in the early nineties. Together with his business partner and current Cash Converters' CFO, Peter Forshaw, they introduced the country to several franchises, including PostNet.

He opened the Cash Converters pilot store in Parow, Western Cape, in 1994. Over the course of the past two decades, the company has expanded into a chain of almost 90 stores across southern Africa. Around 1 300 people work within the Cash Converters network – creating sustainable employment within communities.

### Do you have the following qualities?

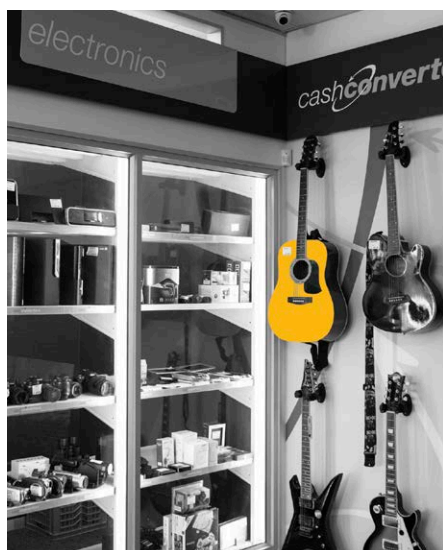
- Desire to be an Owner-Operator
- Previous Business Experience
- People Skills
- Entrepreneurial Mindset
- High Energy
- Initiative
- Motivated
- Hard Working

If you answered 'yes' to most of these, becoming a Cash Converters' franchisee might be the perfect opportunity for you.



### What can Cash Converters do for you?

We can provide a total turnkey solution at all stages of your franchising life cycle. We curate a curriculum that is specific to franchisees and our store staff. We supplement our online training modules with specialised workshops, which take place both online and in person. In addition to the theoretical elements of training, we offer assessments to supplement the classroom work, and provide ongoing training within stores. We also help you to look for a site, then guide you towards sustainable wealth creation for you and your family. Our Network Support teams are always available to discuss any questions or concerns and give our franchisees real-time advice.



### Our fee structure:

Total investment: R4 million VAT Inclusive  
Unencumbered cash required: 50% of the total investment  
Amount you can borrow: Up to a maximum of 50% of the total investment, from a commercial bank  
Loan term: Usually 5 years

For more info, visit [www.cashconverters.co.za](http://www.cashconverters.co.za)

If you have specific questions, please contact  
Ilsé Murray on +27 087 820 4271  
or email: [ilsem@cashconverters.co.za](mailto:ilsem@cashconverters.co.za)

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# BECOME PART OF THE CASH CONVERTERS INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS STORY!

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We're perfect for all economic cycles

What a Cash Converters franchise gives you:

## A recipe for a recession-proof business

Our tried-and-tested  
business model offers  
**multiple revenue streams.**



## A proven track record

We have **35 years** of success  
**globally** and **28 years** locally  
in southern Africa.

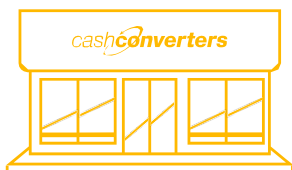


## A three-in-one business model under one roof

- Buying and selling of pre-loved goods
- Secured money-lending (against goods)
- Unsecured money-lending (against a salary)

\*Our money lending is ethical, legal and compliant.

How much does a Cash Converters franchise cost?



A store costs  
**R4 million**  
(including VAT)

A minimum of  
**50% unencumbered cash** is required,  
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If you have specific queries, contact Ilse Murray on **087 820 4271** or [ilsem@cashconverters.co.za](mailto:ilsem@cashconverters.co.za).

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# Understanding the **true cost** of a product

Determining the right price point is a delicate balancing act that should take many factors into consideration, and requires entrepreneurs to take both their short-term and long-term goals into account.



Pricing is one of the most fundamental determinants of profitability for a small business. And when what should be a complex formula is oversimplified, pricing can become an Achilles' heel, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in their fledgling years.

Determining the right price point is a delicate balancing act, that requires entrepreneurs to take both their short-term and long-term goals into account. Ultimately, what underlies all successful pricing strategies is a broad understanding of the true cost of a product or service.

## **Surface-level costs and hidden costs**

There are several factors to be considered when determining how much a product or service should cost. At the most basic level, the universal formula that can be used to determine the cost of manufacturing is raw materials plus labour costs plus overheads. While this formula may appear to be quite straightforward, there exists, within each of them, a number of hidden costs that can be easily overlooked.

When calculating the cost of labour, for example, you must consider the total cost to company of salaries and wages, which includes pension, medical aid and other contributions. Other potential hidden costs include the cost of providing safe and sterile sanitation, office supplies, stationery, and equipment. And while overheads like rent, electricity and water may be accounted for, there are also less, "obvious" costs like the depreciation of equipment, insurance, software subscription fees, banking fees, connectivity and telephone costs, as well as printing expenses. If you as an entrepreneur use entertainment as a marketing or lead generation tool, this cost also needs to be factored in.

## **What about the cost of *not* selling a product or service?**

One of the most notorious hidden costs that SME owners neglect to consider is the cost of not selling a product or service. Frozen goods providers, for example,



will need to account for the cost of keeping those goods frozen, should they not be sold within a specific time frame. Aspects like rental and utilities are of particular relevance here too.

Another example can be found in the tourism industry, where getting 'bums on beds,' is the ultimate business objective. Establishments that do not manage to optimise their capacity, particularly now with the impact of Covid-19, still have to pay staff wages, maintenance costs, rental, bond costs and other expenses. Entrepreneurs in this position need to establish what these expenses are and adapt their pricing accordingly.

Pricing strategies like discounts, specials and bundles may become particularly useful in mitigating some of these hidden costs. Here, small businesses have their size as an advantage. Typically, they are more agile than larger corporations and can adapt more easily to changing economic circumstances.

### Looking beyond the financial cost to determine future value

Apart from the costs that can be accounted for in rands and cents, there are also non-monetary factors that need to be considered. Here, two crucial components come into play: time and effort. The first few years of starting and running a small business are associated with a high level of unpaid labour, in the form of late-night planning, high levels of stress and physical labour.

As an entrepreneur, you may want to consider adding a percentage onto the cost of your product or service to account for this. That percentage could make it possible for you to reward your employees for going the extra mile, through bonuses, morale-boosting team building events, prizes and other incentives. Thinking in terms of the non-monetary component that comes with manufacturing a product or offering a service is a good departure point for planning for the long term.

### Getting to know your customers

Determining the correct pricing also involves considering that there is a degree of psychology involved in how people choose which brands to support and how to spend their money. The target market is therefore a key determinant of price. If an entrepreneur is hoping to gain traction in the mass market, they might need to consider that their audience is price-sensitive, many of whom may be bargain hunters.

**Pricing is one of the most fundamental determinants of profitability for a small business. When what should be a complex formula is oversimplified, pricing can become an Achilles' heel.**

On the other end of the spectrum, suppliers of luxury goods may need to consider that their target audience is particularly brand-sensitive and image-conscious. To price a product or service too low could damage the perception that the target market has about the product's value or ability to represent a specific kind of lifestyle.

This is where market research can play a "make or break" role in a small business. Beyond conducting costly market surveys, there are a few things that SMEs can do to get to know their market. Tools like Google Analytics and Facebook Insights can prove invaluable insights into understanding niche markets. Building a test group that is representative of the market in terms of demographics and asking that group for product or service reviews, is another way of conducting marketing research cost-effectively.

When in doubt and on a budget, you could turn to competitor business models. Look at how their business model developed over time, identify any pain points and how they addressed them, examine their customer service and review onboarding strategies. Sometimes the best way to learn as an entrepreneur is from the mistakes and learnings of others.

Social media polls and surveys are also a great way of capturing information, as well as one-question surveys that can be sent via email. As a fledgling small business that does not have the funds to spend on acquiring the advice and assistance of expensive market research companies, the biggest investment to be made is time. No time spent on understanding your target market: their buying behaviour, their lifestyles and their daily routines, is ever time wasted.

### The competition factor

Looking to competitors as determinants of what your pricing should be can also be an effective strategy.

It is however, not without its pitfalls. Entering the market with a price that undercuts competitors can lead to the perception that your product or service is inferior. Price your product too high and your target audience may be reluctant to choose you instead of competitors when they know very little about your brand or your value proposition.

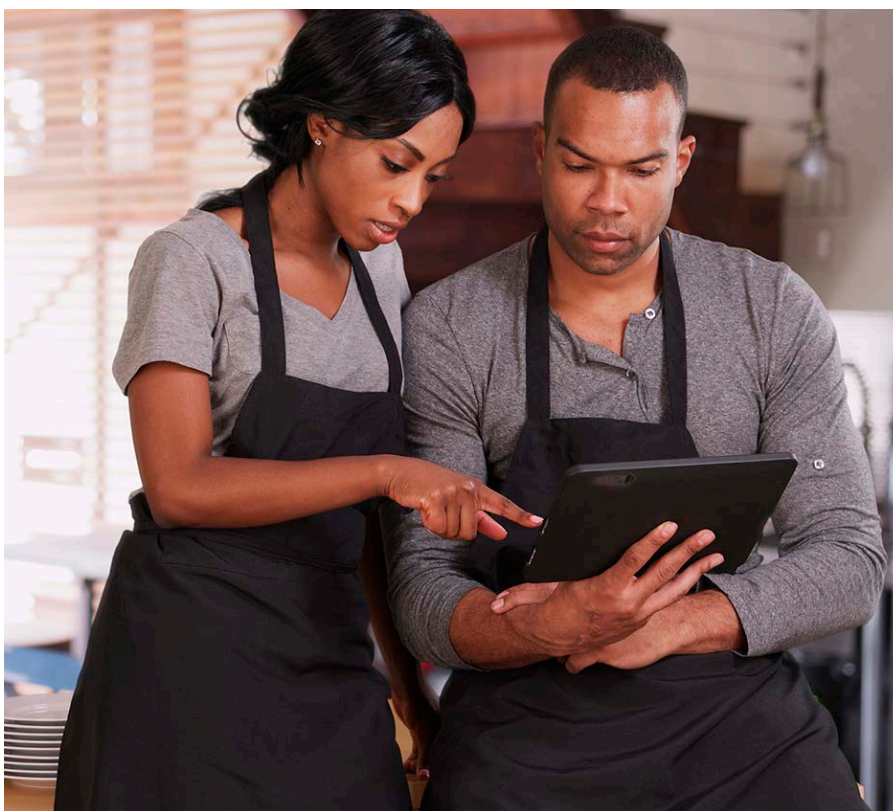
While competitors' pricing models can be used as a factor to inform your pricing, it should never be the only factor. Pricing must be considered holistically, because as a cornerstone of your business model, it can determine whether your business will endure for the long haul.

One of the most common pitfalls for emerging small businesses occurs when entrepreneurs set their ambitions on taking on large businesses or corporates in a way that leverages on the pricing of a product or service. Entering into a price war with a larger company is never a good way to launch an SME, because larger companies will be able to cut their prices on certain products and absorb the loss in a way that doesn't have a big impact on their bottom-line.

As an SME, when the sale of every product or service counts, being undercut by a larger company could mean the end of business. Choose your market carefully and strategically. Know who the big players in the space are and go into business cognisant of the existing and emerging competition.

### How to address price increases

For small businesses, size is both an advantage and a disadvantage, but there are ways to optimise this strength by pricing products strategically. You could, for example, come in at a lower price than originally expected and then increase your prices gradually. This is where customer service becomes indispensable. In a business environment in which good service is rare, you could differentiate yourself by providing a superior level of service.



You could also introduce bundled pricing, where deals on multiple bundled products serve as an indicator that customers are getting more value. Loyalty programmes and membership schemes are also effective ways of adding value, which could serve as a buffer against the effects of increasing your prices. Your price increases should be communicated to your target market openly and with a degree of transparency that will instil trust in your brand. Often, a well-written rationale that lets your customers know what you are doing to ensure that your pricing remains justifiable, will help you to avoid any potential backlash.

As a small business, once the pricing of your product or service has been determined, it will become part of your role to defend that price by leveraging your unique selling proposition. Offering value in a world with a "quantity over quality" mindset and taking a human-centric approach to business, could provide you with the competitive edge you need to go from starting a business to building a brand.



By Rene Botha, Area Manager,  
Business Partners Limited.



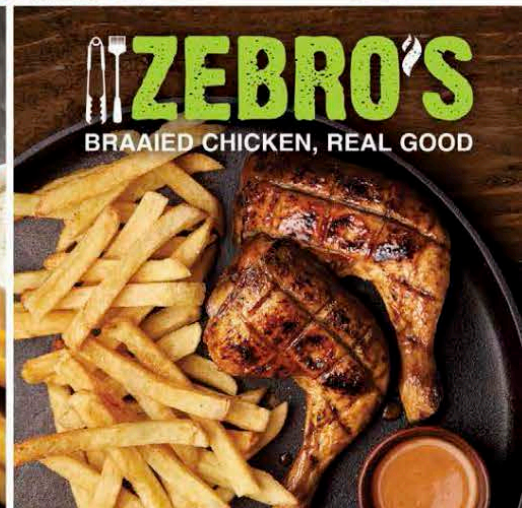
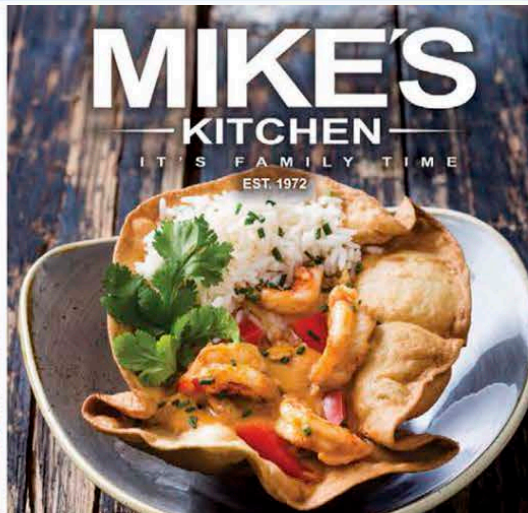
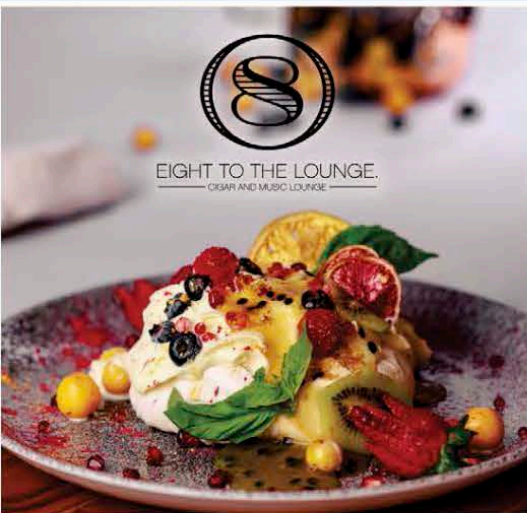
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# Customer loyalty:

## What customer service and retail brands get wrong...

Earning a customer's loyalty is critical to business success. It is often far easier (and more cost-effective) to retain existing customers than it is to find new ones, but how exactly do you keep them coming back for more?

Some believe that you can earn loyalty by delighting customers or that a positive emotional response works best. Others would argue that we shouldn't use the term loyalty at all, because it's misleading, and no one can ever really be 'loyal' to a brand anyway.

I believe that there are three principles that guide great customer service. The first is to meet customer expectations so that your customers don't have a reason to leave your brand. The second is to build loyalty by making their shopping experience as seamless and hassle-free as possible. And finally, exceptional customer service is about optimising the customer experience by actively gathering and collating insights about your customers' expectations and needs.

Rooted in strong commercial logic, these principles help team leads manage stakeholder expectations about what customer service should (and shouldn't) be focusing on. They can help identify which services can add the most value and where these can have a maximum financial impact.

The *2021 Truth & BrandMapp Loyalty Whitepaper* revealed that as much as 74% of economically active South African were using loyalty programmes in 2021.

But can customers truly be 'loyal' to a brand? Let's take a look:

### **Dogs are loyal, customers aren't**

In an Oracle report, consumer behaviour expert Philip Graves explains that, in psychological terms, being loyal is just not something that applies to humans and brands. Loyalty is an emotional restraint that keeps humans within the 'safety of the herd'. When we don't act in



accordance with social 'rules' or norms, we feel shame and guilt. Without shame and guilt, loyalty cannot exist. And no one should believe that consumers feel so bad about leaving a brand that they will experience shame and guilt.

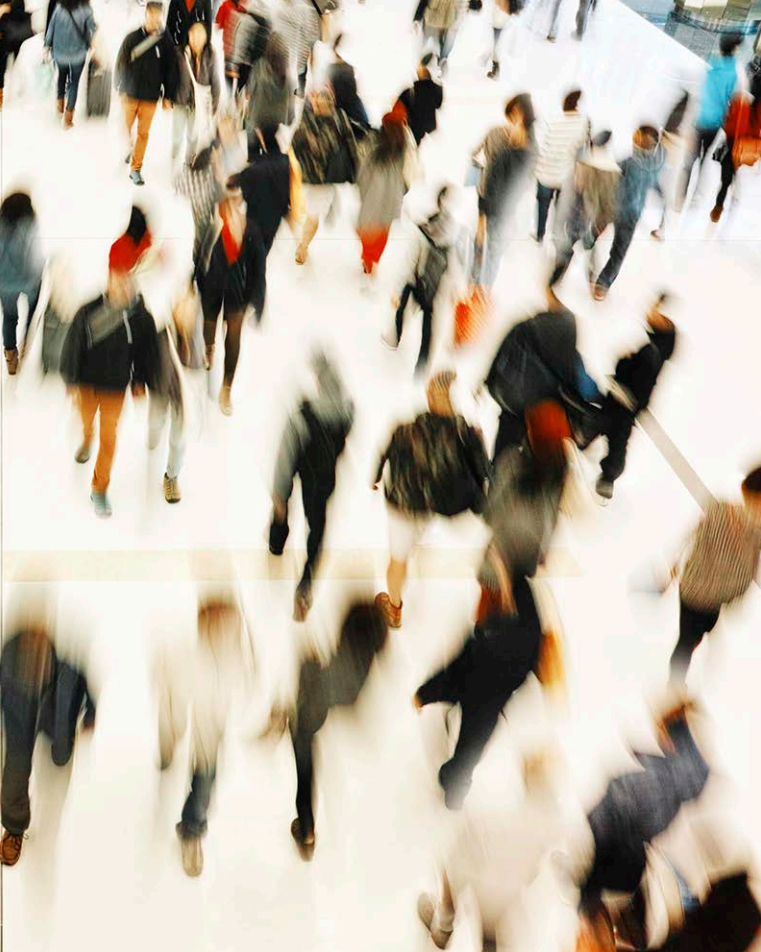
So, while customers can indeed keep on using your products, this is not actually 'loyalty'. Graves believes that repeated use comes down to how good your product is. All this is worth keeping in mind. The word loyalty will not disappear from the business lexicon any time soon, but it is always good to be clear on what we are actually talking about.

### **Poor customer service is the biggest cause of disloyalty**

While online shoppers buy from you because of your product or brand, they often jump ship due to poor customer service. Customer service is typically the most significant contributor to brand disloyalty. Therefore, it's fundamental to prevent customers from leaving in the first place.

The first priority of your team should be to address speed, friendliness and effectiveness in meeting customer expectations. Modern customers also demand personalisation. They want brands to evolve with their specific needs in everything from products and services to experiences, moving beyond traditional offerings to





something attuned to their unique lifestyle, interests, and activities.

Without reliable and personalised customer service in place, your marketing department could be fighting a losing battle from the start.

### **Satisfaction and spending are not indicators of loyalty**

Many retail brands see customer satisfaction as a great indicator of customer loyalty. But as Frederik F. Reichheld, the inventor of NPS (Net Promoter Score), established many years ago, satisfaction isn't always connected to actual customer behaviour and revenue growth. However, this doesn't mean that satisfaction isn't important to measure. Satisfaction determines a customer's attitude towards their latest interaction with your brand — nothing more.

More so, your highest-spending customers are probably spending their money on your competitors too. Many retailers believe that a high average spend translates to brand loyalty. But as a McKinsey study found, close to half of spending by a company's best customers actually goes to other retailers in the same category. What can we take from this? Correlation is not causation. Your high-spending customers are not necessarily loyal, so be wary of making connections that aren't there.

**Considering the cost of acquiring new customers versus the cost of guaranteeing existing customers stick around, it's well worth going the extra mile to earn customer loyalty.**

### **Reducing customer effort is the clearest way to make loyalty gains**

The bottom line is that, above everything else, customers want their shopping made easier, and customer effort and loyalty benefits are strongly correlated. Reducing customer effort is the most beneficial thing a brand can do to meet customer needs and generate loyalty.

This means that retailers need to think carefully before hiding their phone numbers, sending emails from 'no reply' addresses, or redirecting all customers towards self-service or FAQs that aren't actually useful. These distinctly user-unfriendly options could be killing loyalty at the source. Smart self-service options can be deployed with great success, but they need to be customer focused, and there should always be a human agent standing by in case it's necessary.

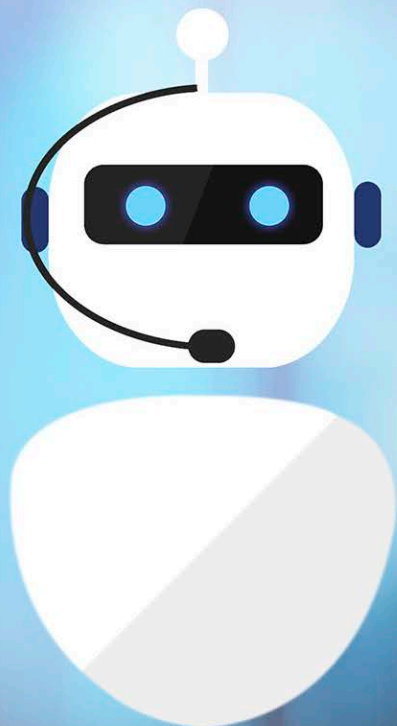
Today, retail brands are facing serious competition due to rising customer expectations and demands. Many companies are still trying to optimise a mix of physical and online stores and refine their business model and operations to scale with the business. During this process, brands must keep asking themselves how their customer service departments contribute to loyalty.

With the right tools and platforms (such as conversational commerce, ticketing services, self-service, or mobile support), businesses can ensure that their customer service meets modern expectations and leaves a lasting impression. And considering the cost of acquiring new customers versus the cost of guaranteeing existing customers stick around, it's well worth going the extra mile to earn customer loyalty.

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**By James Bayhack , Director,  
Sub-Saharan Africa at CM.com.**





What can i help  
you with?

## How innovative chatbots stand to revolutionise eCommerce and retail.

The potential for artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots in the business world is enormous, and they're already proving useful in bridging the gap between online and offline experiences. By leveraging the ability to place chatbots on various platforms, retail brands have been engaging with customers in a more conversational and personalised context with tremendous success. This allows businesses to deliver more focussed conversion strategies and, more importantly, offer potential customers inclusive and highly personalised opportunities to interact.

Even though retailers realise the importance of providing a seamless self-help experience and that it should be a top priority, getting it right still seems to present a challenge for some retailers. In certain cases, retailers exhibit a lack of awareness in how they deploy chatbots by either devoting too much time to repetitive, laborious tasks (such as returns and answering customer queries), or leaving the customer without a solution, which requires them to go through more steps to contact their support team.

Ensuring a frictionless shopping or engagement experience is critical in the retail and eCommerce sectors, and chatbots are one of the easiest and most cost-effective tools to deploy in these contexts. This technology is particularly relevant and presents retail brands with exciting mobile-driven opportunities. Plus, the industry is on the rise. Recently, it was reported that the global chatbot market was expected to grow at a compounded rate of 29.7% each year.

James Bayhack of CM.com looks at some of the ways chatbots can be used to boost business and automate time-consuming tasks...

### ► Acquisition chatbot

An acquisition chatbot can exist on any number of channels and can interact with customers who aren't inclined to talk to a real person. You might use an acquisition chatbot to start an initial conversation with new visitors, or to share useful information and production suggestions with existing customers.



Either way, an acquisition chatbot must offer users value over and above a traditional transactional relationship.

Because this part of the process is about the acquisition, it's important to ensure initial interactions with customers are about building brand equity and providing information rather than delivering the 'hard sell'. And remember, context is king. Make sure your interactions are appropriately targeted to new and returning customers. Consider offering discounts and suggested products to those that have bought from you in the past.

### ► Collections chatbot

Making payments simple and easy is key to converting eCommerce customers quickly and efficiently, with minimal cart abandonment. Collections chatbots provide a one-platform solution to collecting payments from customers and can be set up to accept a wide variety of payment methods.

Collections chatbots can also be used to convince delinquent account holders to pay up promptly. If you're struggling with credit control, a collections chatbot might be what you need to get customers' payments back on track. By making it a seamless journey from message to payment, you're more likely to collect from busy customers who are easily side-tracked or put off by complex payment journeys.

### ► Returns chatbot

Returns are about making the best of a bad situation. No one is making money from the returns process, except your logistics service, but it's important to make sure the customer comes away from the process with a positive impression of your company. After all, the ideal situation after any returns process is that the customer comes back the following week and spends twice as much.

Keeping this process simple is key. A chatbot that can handle the full returns process – including logistics, tracking, and refunds – by interrogating your back-end systems for information is ideal. This will save customer service teams valuable time and allow them to focus their efforts on more important tasks.

### ► Where Is My Order (WISMO) chatbot

When it comes to logistics, customer expectations are higher than ever. Buyers want to know where their order is from the moment they complete a purchase. Manually tracking individual orders over chat, email, or phone would be an enormous drain on customer service teams.

**Ensuring a frictionless shopping or engagement experience is critical. Chatbots are one of the easiest and most cost-effective tools to deploy in these contexts, presenting retail brands with exciting mobile-driven opportunities.**

Fortunately, there's a chatbot solution for that. A Where Is My Order (WISMO) chatbot can communicate with your data storage or third-party courier systems to track down orders quickly, then return the information on a map or in text form, if that's what your customers prefer.

### ► Customer Service chatbot

Customer service tasks can involve an awful lot of repetition. Chances are, many customers will be asking identical questions day-in and day-out. Automating this process can save customer service teams countless hours and enable them to deliver a better, more consistent experience for your customers. A chatbot can automatically respond to frequently asked questions, scrape your website for information to answer tricky questions, and even use AI to create its own answers to customers for a more conversational experience.

### Internal Knowledge Base

In retail, customer service teams tend to have a high rate of churn. Training new team members and equipping them with the knowledge they need to do their job can take time. A more efficient option is to build a knowledge base that allows new and existing staff to find important information at the press of a button. This means new employees can be put 'into the field' much sooner, and so help reduce the line management and training time required.

While chatbot technology is rapidly evolving to make things easier for merchants, implementing new technology requires money and resources. It's therefore crucial that brands are certain it's worth the investment. Evidence suggests that conversational tools adoption is taking effect across the globe, which is why conversational software providers should be encouraging all businesses – and specifically those in retail and eCommerce – to realise the potential of this technology.

# Think big, start small, and scale



When it comes to digital transformation, far too many organisations get bogged down in the grand vision, resulting in analysis paralysis or fractured experiences.

**Aim for ongoing evolution instead.**

The world has, undoubtedly, moved past the point where the case for digital transformation needs to be made. The vast majority of organisations, thanks in no small part to the events of the past two years, understand that if they don't embrace digital transformation they'll struggle to remain competitive.

But when it comes to actually embarking on a digital transformation journey, far too many organisations get bogged down in the grand vision. That is, they understand that they need to digitally transform and are aware of the benefits that come with being digitally transformed, but then attempt to "boil the ocean" resulting in analysis paralysis or execute on disparate initiatives that result in fractured experiences, or throw the kitchen sink at acquiring the next CRM platform that they believe will solve all of their problems.

In truth, there is no magic bullet. No organisation is able to fully digitally transform overnight. There is no doubt that it will take a well-coordinated approach and lots of expertise. But the trick, for any organisation, is to think big, start small, and scale.

## Transforming customer communication

Let's take customer communication as an example. It is, after all, a vital pillar of digital transformation.

Remember, the ultimate goal of any digital transformation initiative is to improve the customer experience (CX). You can't hope to do that if you don't have an engaged relationship with your customers. And you can't build a relationship if you're not communicating with them.

From a customer communication perspective, being fully digitally transformed means being able to take a completely automated and intelligent omnichannel approach. With this approach, customers are able to seamlessly move across channels (eg. email, chatbot, app) as they interact with the organisation while all the time receiving relevant and contextual information.

Many organisations, however, aren't in a position to take a direct run at intelligent, consistent omnichannel communication. That's okay and it doesn't mean that it can't still have this as an end goal.

What it can do instead is start with audits of its existing digital communications according to the journeys its customers take. The key here is to take your team through each step in the customer journey from the customer's perspective. The organisation can then note where its communication is lacking and can be improved.



If necessary, an organisation can undertake this process one product, customer journey, digital channel or a combination thereof at a time. This allows the organisation to pioneer in one area (limiting the impact and risk) while building a foundation for other areas (reducing rework and inconsistencies). Once it's undertaken the process with email, for example, it will be simpler to do so for other journeys and other channels like instant messaging, social media, and push notifications.

Once each channel, journey and product is in an optimal place and aligned according to the broader communication plan, the organisation will effectively have multi-channel communication in place. When it's comfortable it's achieved that, or at least on a good path towards it, then it can start seamlessly integrating the various channels using a combination of a Customer Data Platform (CDP) and Journey Orchestration Platform to build towards intelligent, omnichannel communication.

## Ongoing evolution

These are examples of small, easily scalable steps and can be mirrored across every aspect of the digital transformation journey. In fact, there's a good argument to be made that it's the most sensible approach to take. After all, organisations that take a big bang approach to digital transformation can end up in CX debt, with siloes still in place, legacy technology and thinking, solution redundancy, and inconsistent experiences.

By starting small and scaling, organisations not only avoid these issues, they also set themselves up to approach digital transformation as a process of ongoing evolution within the organisation, making them less likely to ever fall behind again in the long run.

By Brent Haumann, Managing Director,  
Striata Africa.



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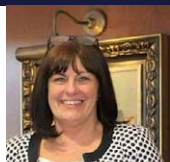
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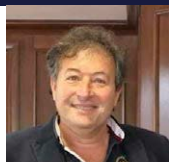
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# SME FUNDING:

## Tips to make the right choice

**For many a small business owner, there has never been a time when a thorough awareness and knowledge of the different financing options available to them has been so vital.**

Small business owners have had a very rough ride over the past two years, and there are many who have managed to stay afloat that will agree that access to the right financing at the right time was instrumental to their survival. Many businesses applied for funding to facilitate e-commerce platforms or pivot the business, and it's no coincidence that those who managed to keep their doors open did so by acting quickly on the challenges and opportunities that presented themselves.

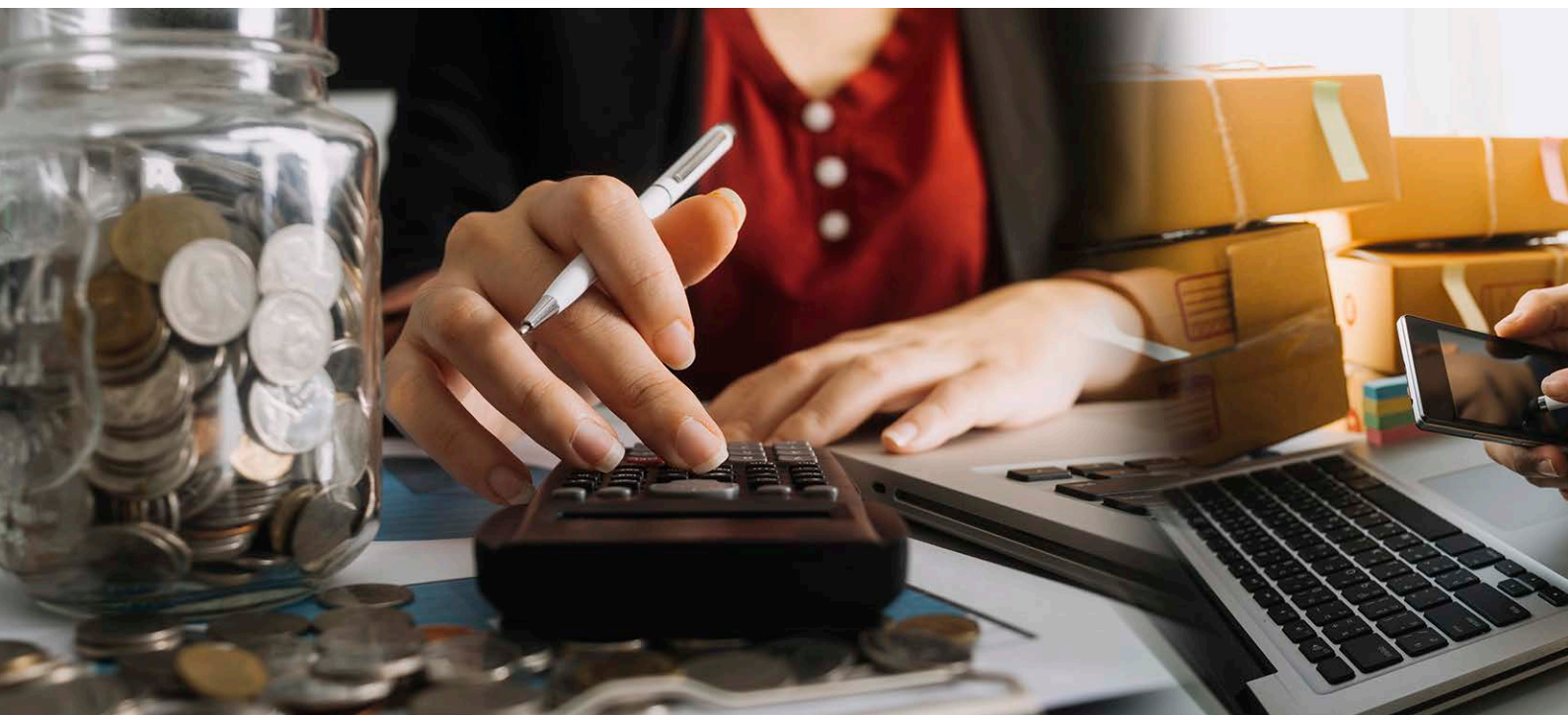
The general perception among small business owners is that accessing loans is difficult and limited to the traditional banking fraternity, that applying for financing is complicated, and that they would need substantial

collateral to obtain the financing. But, as Rean Bloem, General Manager of Funding at Retail Capital says, this is only true if they are approaching formal lending institutions such as banks for a business loan.

Alternative lenders have disrupted traditional business funding models using technology – making access to business funding far more accessible to many, the process faster, and offering terms that support SMEs and don't stifle them.

### **Which key factors determine success when applying for business finance?**

- A good credit profile is key. Small business owners who buy supplies or other materials from third-party vendors would do well to pay on time as those purchases could help build their business credit profile. This is relevant to all lines of business credit too.
- A digital footprint opens many doors. If an SME uses e-commerce tools and paypoint technology such as





POS card terminals to trade, it increases their chances of obtaining funding fast, as it allows funders to make quick assessments to grant funding.

### **How can a small business owner determine the best type of funding for their business?**

Understanding the difference between a small business loan and small business funding is a good first step.

The key differentiators are that a loan will generally have rigid conditions attached to the payment terms – especially with regard to what the money can be used for e.g. a 5 to 10 year payment period, and the business would need to provide security in some form. With funding the scenario is very different. Access is far easier, payment terms are far more flexible, a funder will not require any security from the business, and the business owner can decide (along with the funder) how best the money can be invested back into the business. Also, with funding, payment can be linked to the business turnover, allowing the business owner to pay back the full amount earlier, thus bringing down the total payment.

There are a number of financing options available to SMEs depending on whether the business is in the

Business plan/Idea phase, Start-up phase, Growth/Established/Expansion phase or in a Mature state. Each is vastly different. Small business owners would do well to familiarise themselves with the various options in terms of risks and benefits related to the lifecycle of their business.

- **Private loans from family/friends**

These loans are often unstructured and limited to the amount available. There could be an expectation that they will be paid back within a very limited time at a rate of interest higher than through a financial institution.

- **Bank loans (Overdrafts or fixed period loans)**

The amount available from Bank Loans is limited by the security the SME can offer against the loan. This usually takes the form of property, fixed assets and insurance policies.

- **Term financing such as hire purchase or leasing**

Very similar to Bank loans but for term-financing of moveable assets it will be the underlying asset item that is funded.

- **Private / quasi equity investment**

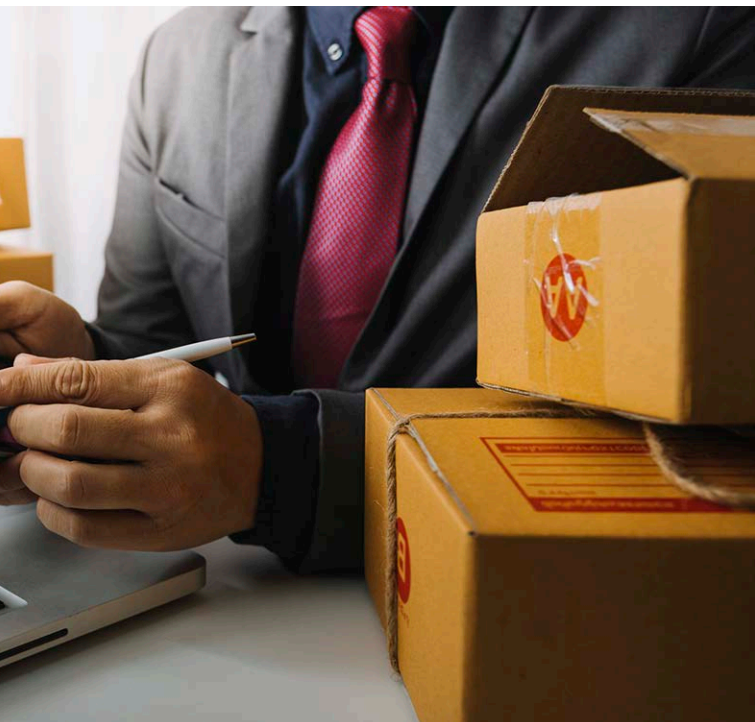
Private investments are offered based on the potential for success in the market as per the presented business plan and the ability or track record of the operator/entrepreneur.

- **Asset Finance**

Often, businesses don't have the working capital available to pay upfront for an asset. That's where asset finance can come in handy. There's a range of traditional asset finance products available that includes Hire Purchase, Equipment Leasing,

- **Merchant Cash Advances**

This type of business funding is designed to help businesses gain access to the cash they need in a fast and flexible way. The lender provides the business with funding which it pays back through a percentage of its future turnovers/receivables. The funding does not require any security and is unrestricted, meaning it can be used for working capital or asset finance but ultimately it is at the discretion of the business owner what they use it for.



# Show me the money

Ask any entrepreneur and they'll tell you that accessing finance is very challenging, many feel that it's almost impossible to find lenders willing to part with money. While it may feel this way, there is money out there for SMEs that have done their homework.

It is important for owners who apply for funding to know if they are actually fundable and if so, that they are applying to the right funder.

## Where to look for funding?

A quick Google search of "funding for SMEs" produces thousands of results. It's difficult to know which type of lender and funding to look for – whether debt, grant or equity finance. This can be overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Finfind was created to address this very issue.

It is a very easy to use website that helps business owners save time and money by automatically matching them with the most relevant funders for their need. Finfind has an updated base of more than 600 funding products and has more than a half a million users.

## Why don't some businesses get funding?

Finfind has identified some common themes when businesses are rejected for funding:

- **Applying for too much:** Many businesses apply for amounts that are not aligned with their income. On average, businesses only receive one third of the amount that they apply for.
- **Providing the incorrect turnover:** Startup businesses often state their turnover as what they project it to be for the next 12 months, rather than what the actual turnover is. Again, this results in incorrect funder matches and a rejection from the funder.
- **Mixing business with personal:** Another mistake is using both personal and business accounts to prove overall income and expenses. It is important to keep personal and business income and expenses separate, if you want to apply for business finance.
- **Ignoring personal credit score:** How you manage your personal credit repayments has an impact on whether you get business funding. Many entrepreneurs are

unaware that lenders look at the owner's credit score to assess business repayment risk.

## How can a business gauge their chances of securing funding?

Several factors can help predict the likelihood of a business securing funding:

- **Average annual turnover:** Businesses with more than R500k per year in revenue are more likely to get funded. Lenders prefer to see regular monthly income, rather than big lumps one month, and then no income for several months.
- **Trading history:** You can secure funding if you have been trading for a minimum of 6 months, but 12 months is preferable.
- **Profitable:** The business must be making a profit to qualify for funding, otherwise lenders are concerned that the business will not afford the repayments.

## What's the bottom line?

It may be an option for an SME to first pursue purchase order financing or invoice discounting to create a lending track record, before looking at longer term working capital facilities or asset finance. Many businesses qualifying for short-term working capital facilities are turning the money down, as the costs are too high. While these facilities are usually very expensive, owners should understand that lenders are pricing based on the level of risk they are taking. Most early-stage/smaller businesses have no credit history for lenders to reference, and no assets to provide as security.

To find the right lender for your needs, visit [www.finfind.co.za](http://www.finfind.co.za) - it's a free service!







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# Need to access cash flow?

## An overdraft is not the only way...

Needing swift access to finance is part and parcel of running a business, and many companies explore the traditional routes first. However, conventional sources of capital are not easy to get and involves an excessive amount of red tape.

Commercial banks will typically review your company's assets, liabilities, credit history, period in business, its overall financial health, profitability and positive cash flow, amongst other criteria. If any one of these items fail to meet the lender's criteria, then a funding application may not get rubber-stamped.

### There is another way:

Factoring is a finance solution that focuses on the quality of your customer's credit, rather than your own credit score. This means that if your company has accounts receivable to leverage, you can still access working capital – and much more.

### What is factoring?

- It's a financing strategy that boosts your cash flow.
- It is also known as 'accounts receivable financing'.

### How does factoring work?

- It involves you selling your unpaid invoices to a third-party organisation, known as a 'factor'.
- The factor collects payment of the invoices in line with your invoice terms.
- This enables you to draw cash back into your company when it is needed, rather than having to wait out the credit sales terms.

### Why factor?

Get faster payment on your invoices and boost cash flow. This in turn means that your company can:

- Meet expenses on time!
- Take advantage of settlement discounts from suppliers.
- Lessen the risk of potential bad debt.
- Expand and diversify operations.
- Redirect monies to other activities that grow the business.



- Gain a competitive advantage. With factoring in place, you can accept deals with clients who can only accept extended credit sales terms without compromising your cash flow.

### Why factoring is better than a bank loan

- **Easier to access:** Banks are under immense pressure from regulators and a volatile economic environment. This means that many companies – especially SMEs – are struggling to achieve bank loans.
- **Shorter turnaround times:** Banks can take up to twelve weeks to process your application. Even once the loan is approved, you may still have to wait months before the cash is made available to you. Factoring, however, boosts your cash flow almost immediately.
- **Scalable funding.** A bank overdraft limit is defined by the value of bricks and mortar. This means that your access to capital does not increase as your turnover grows. It's capped. So, your business could potentially outgrow your funding line, translating into a cash flow crisis, but because factoring is based on your accounts receivable, the amount of money you can finance increases as turnover rises.

### Need working capital, now?

Founded in 1988, **Merchant Factors** offers growing businesses an alternative to traditional bank loans and overdrafts. The firm specialises in factoring, invoice discounting and trade finance products. Since inception, **Merchant Factors** has empowered over 3 000 businesses to reach their financial goals.

**For fast, flexible invoice financing - contact Merchant Factors today. [www.mfactors.co.za](http://www.mfactors.co.za).**

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# Innovative fintech solutions to the rescue

Using technology and data science to bring a new approach to traditional business loans, **BRIDGEMENT** offers simple finance to SMEs across South Africa.

As an SME, you can expect to wait about 3-5 weeks to obtain funding from your bank if you're lucky enough to get approved. And in today's world, this is time that many South African businesses simply don't have.

Enter FinTech. FinTech has been around for years, but today more than ever people are starting to understand the power of technology in enhancing and automating financial services. FinTech lender, Bridgement, has created South Africa's simplest and quickest funding option for SMEs, enabling success without setbacks.

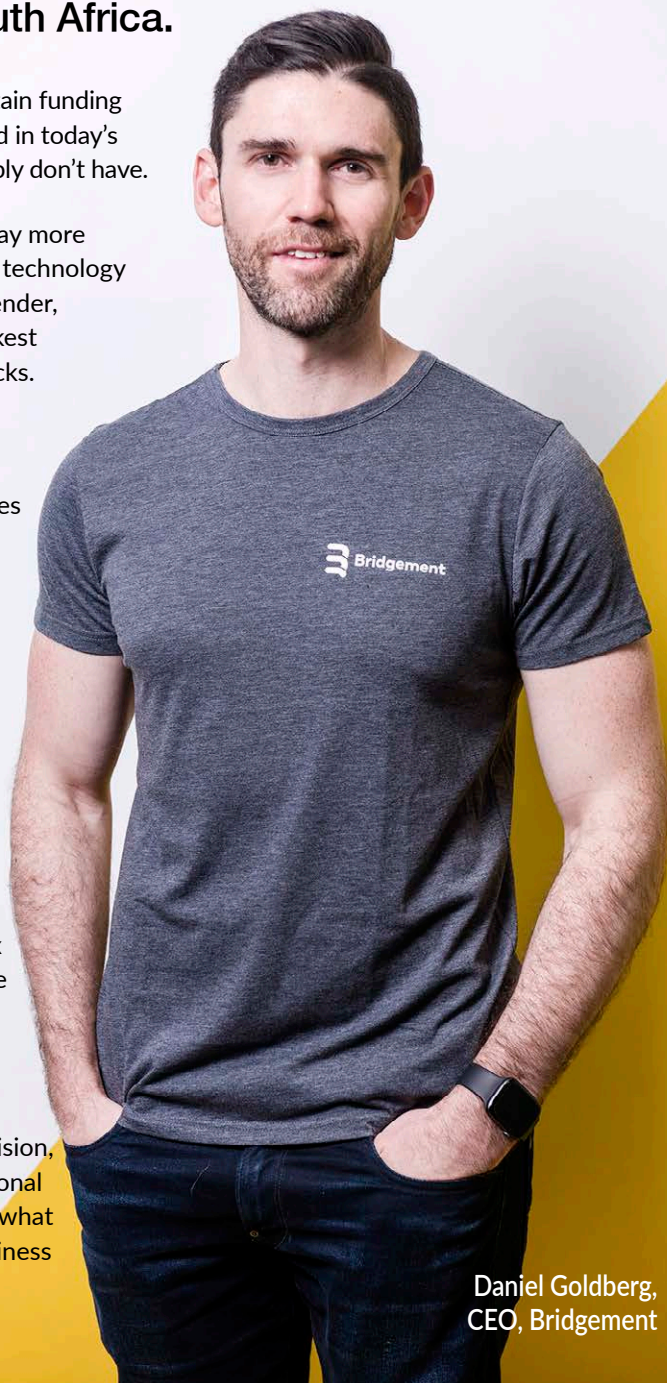
By offering simple and flexible business funding online of up to R5 000 000 to small businesses across the country, SMEs can expand their operations, seize new opportunities and bridge gaps in cash flow.

By weaving together traditional funding and disruptive tech, Bridgement's free online application process takes 2 minutes to complete. And because Bridgement knows that time means money, their clients know whether they've been approved and have access to funding within hours.

With their simple pay-per-use facility, SMEs only ever pay for what they need, when they need it. With a single, transparent fee, there's no need to page through a 200-page pdf in an effort to understand a bank's complex pricing structure. "That's Bridgement's way of making sure you spend less time managing cash flow, and more time growing your business", says Daniel Goldberg, CEO of Bridgement.

Bridgement keeps its clients at the forefront of every decision, and by removing all of the unnecessary hassle that traditional banks have yet to reduce, Bridgement is able to focus on what matters – funding SMEs and helping them grow their business and the South African economy.

Apply today at [www.bridgement.com](http://www.bridgement.com)



Daniel Goldberg,  
CEO, Bridgement





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# An affordable start on the road to business ownership

**From training and education brands, to B2B services, personal care, manufacturing and more, there are a number of franchises and business opportunities with a model that requires an investment of R400 000 or less that can put you on the road to business ownership...**

Whether the start-up cost is big or small, investing in a business should not be a decision that is taken lightly. Most successful business owners are those who realise from the outset that running a business is tough and that they need to be motivated, involved and organised. The success of their business will to a large extent be directly proportional to the effort they put in.

## **Ask the right questions**

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

### **Q. What's their track record?**

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

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

### **Q. What knowledge, skills and abilities do you have?**

You must align your competencies with the business you want to purchase. Is the product/service you're going

to be selling something you know enough about to be successful? Or is it something you feel confident that you can be trained to do well, and will the company train you appropriately?

You could also ask friends and family to help you evaluate how well your skills and personality match the business you're considering. Experience also matters – if you have no background in the food industry, for example, it might be difficult to open a restaurant franchise assuming it's just a “business in a box”.

### **Q. Is it the right time and the right place?**

Is there sufficient demand in the proposed area for the products/services that your company will be providing? What does the competition look like, and how well are they doing? What do you intend to do differently that will set you apart?

### **Q. Will this business realistically turn a profit, and when?**

You may love the product or service you're selling, but will your potential customers? Common sense dictates that you know everything possible about the company you're buying into when it comes to finances. Ask the major players to show you the numbers. If the business has been demonstrably successful elsewhere and you believe that success can be replicated by you in your marketplace through your hard work and dedication, then you can calculate what should be a reasonable return on investment in what time frame. You must examine what's been done before in the context of a given set of circumstances so that you can adequately predict your potential profitability. Only then will you have a true sense of what kind of working capital you'll need to sustain your business.

If you've answered all these questions positively, you may be ready to “hit the road”. Then it's just a case of looking for the right opportunity to come along...



# The business of selling businesses

**Aldes Business Brokers (established in 1979) act as expert Brokers for Sellers of businesses by sourcing qualified suitable Buyers.**

Servicing predominantly the SMME market through their national footprint and established network of Agencies, Aldes boasts more than 40 Agencies across South Africa and Namibia.

Aldes makes use of bespoke online systems to analyse, value, market and report on any business in the market. The Group is successful and results driven, selling more businesses than any other in Africa

Covid-19 has seen a big uptick in enquiries from both Sellers and Buyers - business people are looking for solutions on both sides of this equation. This represents an excellent opportunity for their Brokers.

The Aldes Agency presents a real opportunity for financial planners and entrepreneurs with a background in sales and marketing. Some of their most successful brokers stem from a background in the financial services industry. Many have also come from a successful corporate background, and several are also past owners of SMME's themselves.

Aldes is currently looking for agents in the following areas: Polokwane, East London and Rustenburg. To find out more the company, their agents and the business opportunity, [click here to view their video](#).

For more information, contact Frank Schrempel on 012 361 2690, email: [frank@aldes.co.za](mailto:frank@aldes.co.za), or visit: [www.aldes.co.za](http://www.aldes.co.za).

## Be the Boss

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**Aldes has been selling medium and small businesses since 1979 and have the largest selection of SME opportunities in South Africa available.**

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# Join the best home-nursing franchise in South Africa

## ...and make a meaningful impact in your community.

Gone are the days when families have to struggle to take care of their loved ones. Operating for over 8 years, the ASSISTED HOME NURSING franchise offers a 24/7 professional, personal and compassionate home-based caring service for the elderly, disabled or those recovering from surgery to become more self-sufficient in the comfort of their own homes.

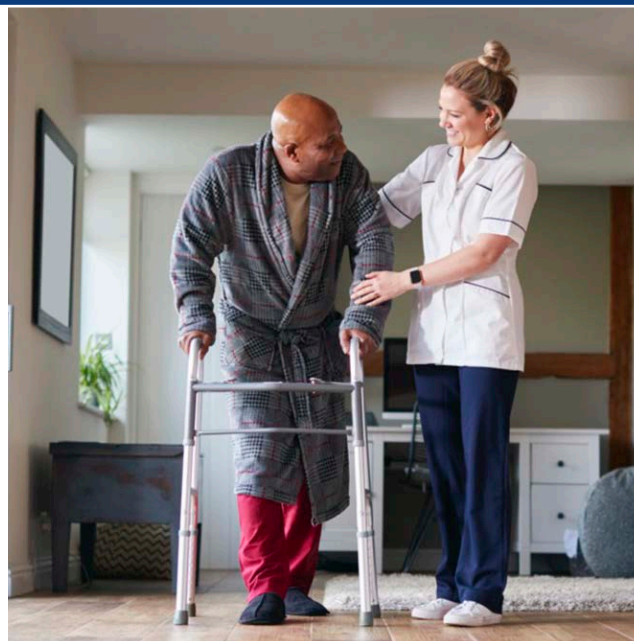
The range of services and routine tasks that are taken care of allows clients to retain an optimum degree of independence and dignity, thus reducing unnecessary stress for the individual and their family. The type of care can be tailored to suit the needs of the client and their family and can include cooking, cleaning, assisting with personal hygiene, dressing, helping with mobility and providing support to those who have more complex medical conditions. Most importantly, caregivers provide a level of companionship that eases loneliness and isolation. Since the pandemic there has been a surge in demand for home care, with more people preferring home care nursing as opposed to nursing homes.

Assisted Home Nursing is currently operational across Gauteng's Northern and Eastern suburbs, Midrand, Cape Town's Northern suburbs, the Cape's West Coast, KwaZulu-Natal's South Coast and Port Alfred in the Eastern Cape. Due to the increasing demand for quality home care services, other territories across South Africa are available for prospective franchisees.

### Full turnkey franchise offered

The cost of a turnkey franchise package is R250 000 ex Vat. This includes one-on-one training, a comprehensive induction programme covering recruiting, training and retaining carers, marketing support and systems. Assisted Home Nursing's state-of-the-art caregiver monitoring system allows daily tasks to be monitored easily, which is part of what sets the brand apart from its competitors.

Budget is set aside for local marketing, and franchisees receive a mini-website to generate interest from potential clients looking for quality care services in their area. This business can be run from home or an office. Franchisees have the freedom to control their own



schedule and choose which clients to work with. The advantage of this "home-care" franchise opportunity means job security in these uncertain times of unemployment.

### Grow with us

"Our typical candidate should have some management experience, an entrepreneurial spirit and the desire and ability to run a high-quality home care business. No medical experience is necessary. This opportunity would suit caring individuals who are ethical, hardworking and committed. This is a business that revolves around people. The people we look after, the people who work for us and of course the people who do everything in-between," says franchisor, Chris Dunn.



If you're looking for an opportunity to achieve your goal of business ownership and make a meaningful impact in your community, this could be the business for you.

**For more info and to download a detailed information pack on this unique franchise opportunity, kindly visit: [www.assistedhomenursing.co.za](http://www.assistedhomenursing.co.za)**



# It's time to invest in home care.

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NATIONWIDE

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Run your own high quality  
home-nursing business that  
is both financially and  
personally rewarding »**

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.



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home or office



Time-tested  
business model



Low cost  
of entry

## EXCLUSIVE TERRITORY FROM ONLY R250K ex VAT

### PACKAGE INCLUDES:

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

**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](http://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.



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# Going the franchising route

**Choosing a franchise investment requires careful analysis and evaluation to find your right fit...**



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

Franchisees, in turn, benefit from the marketing and branding undertaken by their franchisor, tried-and-tested business systems, training and support. So, in theory, franchisees acquire a model that already works on every level. While things can go incredibly well, they can also go wrong.

As much as a franchisor may be choosing you, you are also choosing them, so make sure you do your homework. When investing your hard-earned cash, make sure you've considered any possible negatives.

Request the Disclosure Document, Franchise Agreement and Operations Manual. (This is usually after you have signed a confidentiality agreement as it gives a number of insights into the franchisor's business.) Don't be intimidated by the size of this document; it offers a wealth of information including any potential 'negatives', such as bankruptcy filings by the franchisor, litigation involving the company, the type of training offered and costs that may not seem initially obvious.

If you have accounting know-how and feel comfortable reading a balance sheet, you've insured a past business and negotiated legal contracts, you may not need an accountant, insurance agent and lawyer. But at least getting a second legal eye on the franchise contract could be worth its weight in gold for extra peace of mind.

Disclosure documents also include the names and phone numbers of current franchisees. Speak to as many as you can, and ask about pros, cons and hidden costs.

What did they learn that they didn't glean from their research before they became franchisees? How long did it take them to become profitable? How supportive is the franchisor? Given what they know now, would they invest again, or recommend the franchise to a close family member? Remember that franchisees that have left the system may have their own agendas, so consider their answers carefully.

Make an old-fashioned pros and cons list. On the one side, write the benefits you're getting, for example an established brand, proven market, training, etc; and on the other side list the costs and liabilities (mark-ups on required ingredients, royalties). If you think you could open your own shop that would be equally successful, perhaps you can do it without the franchised name.

No business is a "get rich quick scheme". Any investment will take time to make returns, and you must be financially prepared for this. If you are over geared and had to use too much borrowed finance at the outset, it is going to be difficult to provide for the unforeseen. Sometimes it is better to keep it small and simple, rather than stretching yourself beyond your financial capabilities.

The Franchise Association of South Africa (FASA) offers a wealth of information on their website, to help educate and inform you on the franchise industry, and to help you choose your franchise fit.



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# 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/alucapex](http://www.hellopeter.com/alucapex), 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, and 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@alucapex.co.za](mailto:info@alucapex.co.za).



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 AluCape Expert 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

**No.1**

**Important note: We rank the No.1 Aluminium Company in SA on the Hello Peter website: [hellopeter.com/alucapex](http://hellopeter.com/alucapex)**

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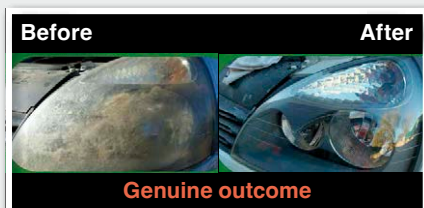
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# If *they* can, so can *you*!



**Despite market dislocations and volatile change, it is possible to work through the challenges and come out the other side thriving - you just need to know how!**

We trust that you enjoyed the first instalment of our six-part series in the previous edition, sharing the stories of business owners in sectors that were some of the hardest hit by the pandemic. These businesses have not only survived COVID, but have come out of the last two years stronger, better and more profitable. Our hope as a business magazine is to inspire you and dare you to dream big again, and also to challenge the excuses that owners permit themselves in hard times: “the market has collapsed”, “constraints have strangled trade and we’ve had to close our doors”, “we didn’t have the cash flow to see us through”.

Market dislocations and volatile change are of course real, but it is possible to work through these challenges – you just need to know *how* and *what* to do. The fact that some businesses right here in South Africa have done so is testament to it being possible, and these owners have a story to tell that’s worth listening to. They are the first to say that they are not particularly special, talented, resourced or lucky. They have had to put up their hand, get help, fail and overcome. They’ve had to learn new things, do things differently, adapt and flex. They’ve used normal resources and strategies that anyone can access.

Last time we looked at *Learning the Harp*, a business that’s now turning over six figures a month, employs 10 people and has more than 1 000 clients largely in America.

This time we look at Marquerite and PK van Wyk from the Hospitality industry. They had a restaurant... and then they didn’t.

## Case study #: 2

### STRUISBAAI SEASHACK

*Marquerite and PK van Wyk*

As an entrepreneur Marquerite can remember being told that “you find what you’re passionate about, what you’ll get up for at 3 a.m. and then you grind it. It has to be something that makes you tick and excites you every single hour of the day. That thing that when a storm hits you, you will go to the ends of the earth to help your ‘baby’ make it.”

Marquerite’s family have a history of being entrepreneurs since the 1890s. They’ve been shop owners, bread bakers, car builders, house builders, caterers, auto-electricians, tailors, carpenters, garden-servicers and restaurateurs. “It’s in our blood – it’s what we do,” she’ll tell you.

Being the owners of five successful businesses, (six until just last year), both she and her husband PK admit that in spite of the roller coaster ride they’ve been through, they would not change the past for anything. That said, *The Struisbaai Seashack* was one of their six businesses – a great experience as a family – and the best teaching college for a business they could have ever had.

“*The Seashack* was our restaurant on the beach where we served up seafood platters to locals, local visitors and overseas visitors by the dozen. ‘In season’ it was our cash cow that turned over millions, employed a vibrant team of 80 and kept us in the style we loved. Our kids learned from a young age what it is to serve people, work long hours and earn their own income. We learned as a family what it is to save together until we had enough for a holiday cruise and as a team to handle long hours, catering to people’s needs and delivering quality when all we wanted to do was sit down and rest. *The Seashack* was ‘our baby’ that truly represented us and what we stand for. We love people. We love good food. And we love a good vibe.



To make it even more successful, we as owners could not have asked for better partners in the business – ours were phenomenal. Nothing was a problem or too much to ask of Jan and Annamarie. We made an excellent team and worked hard and well together, even during the hard times.”

But then it started to go wrong. The lease on which the restaurant stood was in jeopardy with a letter from the municipality calling a halt to business. And just like that, what had seemed so sure and profitable suddenly wasn't.

Marquerite had already previously reached out to Business Coach Kathi Clarke to help them with how to stabilise their income each month, rather than continue with the big swings and roundabouts of the earnings curve for most in the hospitality industry, i.e. hitting it big “in season” and then living way too close to the line in the “off season”. But then, just a couple of months into business coaching – wham! Both coach and client were dealing with the imminent closure of the cash cow.

Kathi, Marquerite and PK had already had some hard, frank discussions about the vulnerability of lives funded by a restaurant on a rental ground that could disappear in the blink of an eye, and also the looming reality of what PK would do when he no longer wanted to or could continue the hard life of commercial fishing. There was no plan. Scaling *The Seashack* with its huge off season and a tenuous lease made it according to Kathi “frankly risky”. If anything, it had to be the icing and not the cake. Kathi's big question was “when, not if, they pull the lease, what then?” And how right she was. Mere months later the lease was gone. “Thankfully we had already started ‘future-proofing’ by prioritising and growing the other small businesses in our stable. So when the crunch hit we could hold through, and have been able to recover,” says Marquerite.

### The hard crunch

When a great business fails due to decisions that you have no control over and circumstances like a pandemic, it's hard. It's one thing if it's a lack of finances or bad management – something that can be laid at the door of the owners – but in the case of *The Seashack* this was not so. “In the beginning we chose to ignore the warning signs that Kathi had cautioned us about, and so became the testament to what can go wrong,” says Marquerite.



“Even the hard things have made us better. Learn to get back up again and trust that just because something ends, it does not have to be *the end*.” - Marquerite van Wyk

They've had to learn the hard way that all their eggs in one basket isn't smart; that building a great business on someone else's land is risky and how to separate themselves from the business so that, in her words: “if it fails, it does not have to mean we failed.”

So, *The Seashack* that had hosted so many weddings, funerals, birthdays, parties and music shows, that had been on DSTV six times, had to close because the lease agreement ran out and could not be renegotiated. Despite continually looking throughout the pandemic, they have been unable to find an alternative spot. They had to let the team go. Their partners have gone onto another venture and Marquerite and PK are still here, working hard, keeping hopeful and graceful, and poised for their new season for which they remain excited and optimistic. “Even the hard things have made us better, stronger people who hold onto hope and faith, learn to get back up again and trust that just because something ends, it does not have to be *the end*”.

## New seasons

So, how did they survive the forced closure of their flagship business and the stresses of COVID? Here's what they did, that you can too:

- ▶ Stay positive by holding onto a real vision, dream and purpose that hard circumstances cannot dislodge.
- ▶ Recognise and accept closed doors, as they are there for a reason. Often they save you from even greater loss when you look back on them.
- ▶ Keep perspective. Just because something ends, it doesn't mean everything has to.
- ▶ Keep marketing in hard times – it is an investment, not a cost. Kathi helped Marquerite to get really focused on the 5 ways they would market and sell (at their other businesses that include a coffee shop, surf shop, trailer hire shop and their *Fish 'n More* food take-away shop) and this has enabled massive growth that has covered costs, paid the salaries and replaced the income lost from *The Seashack*, but at a better profitability and with greater monthly consistency.

For too long the thrill and pressure of *The Seashack* commanded all of Marquerite's focus to the detriment of the other businesses that just pootled along. The crisis forced the focus to change, and while none of the other businesses have the turnover power of *The Seashack*, they do have the profit-generating power. "Restaurants are traditionally lean margin businesses, so we had to get used to bringing in less money, but having more left over at the end of the month."

- ▶ Get help. This has included hiring people so that Marquerite has time to attend to the pipeline (owner work); the plan and execution of this by watching the numbers (owner work); deploying the team each day, week and month with a good return (owner work) and flying the vision instead of panicking (owner work).
- ▶ Date well. Marquerite and her team have worked hard with specific strategies to become a "loved household name" in Struisbaai with a reputation for caring and serving that goes beyond what they do as a business. This has endeared them to local government, staff, a supply chain under threat and strategic alliances that have helped them grow. They are a visible presence, and this has assisted with feet in the door when it was needed most.
- ▶ Flex and be creative. During COVID they registered *Fish 'n More* as an essential outlet providing food and later held services for the Church when restaurants had

to close. So they were able to call themselves places of worship and stay open. Not untrue - but creative indeed. They have flexed and sold what they could while the restrictions were at their peak and behind the scenes kept working at being ready for when things opened up. They recut their cloth by realising assets and digging into savings that they had for such a time as this. They sold off stock, equipment and a branch of *Fish 'n More* in Bredasdorp to reign things in. This work has paid off as they have been able to hit the ground running and the results are being reaped.

- ▶ They got real about the numbers and didn't let emotion get in the way of finally closing the doors when needed. They held onto their values and did things right and with the right heart, and it showed.

Kathi is quick to say that Marquerite is one of the most positive and hard-working people she knows. "Too many people think that building a business is easy – it is not, even in good times. It can be simple, but still takes the *right kind* of hard work and courage. Marquerite and PK have both in spades."

And now that they are through COVID and their forced closure are in their rear view mirror? Well, some of the businesses have enjoyed a 350% growth and there is a working plan to keep the profit coming in each month from all five. Marquerite and PK remain positive about the future saying: "We believe that every end can be a new beginning. We're enjoying an open window and our rainbow after the closed doors!"

## Parting advice

"Firstly, don't be afraid to get help – two heads are better than one when things hit the fan. When we as business owners are under pressure it is hard to be creative. The sanity check and bouncing board in an independent third party like a business coach has been invaluable. And this is especially true in an industry that throughout COVID was all about closures and having to retrench. Thinking out of the box, doing what hasn't been done before and having workable alternatives were essential."

And secondly? "Well", says Marquerite, "get back to basics – and if you don't know what those need to be – see the first point!"

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](mailto:buildingbestbusiness@kathiclarke.com).





# Start a WizMix detergent manufacturing business today!

The detergent industry is one of the world's lucrative industries and is an ideal and easy business to start from home.

SA Business Opportunity & Empowerment Training Academy (Pty) Ltd (SABOETA) supplies the WizMix detergent mixing machines across South Africa and into Africa. This local company with a solid track record is offering entrepreneurs the opportunity to be their own boss and determine their own income. No experience is necessary as full training is provided at a training venue situated in KZN.

The Wizmix detergent machine can produce 100 litres every half an hour – a huge earning potential of R2 000 to R5 000 profit per day. Machines are of the highest quality, workmanship and precision, meeting international standards.

The range of detergents that can be manufactured includes dishwashing liquid, bleach, window cleaner, tile cleaner, Pine gel, liquid hand soap, shower gel, bubble bath, car shampoo, air freshener, fabric softener, engine degreaser and many more liquid products.

The WizMix set-up package costs only R46 000 incl. Vat and includes:

- A detergent mixing machine with 200L mixing capacity.
- 200L drum with tap.
- Start-up chemicals and bottles (T's & C's apply) – Easter Special!
- Safety Kit.
- Over 30 different liquid detergent formulas + operating manual.
- One-day intensive training programme for you and your partner in KZN. Trainees receive a Certificate of Attendance on completion.
- List of suppliers of raw chemicals and bottles.
- Marketing tips.

WizMix is on the Government Central Supplier database. Assistance with funding can be applied for through Municipalities and Financial Institutions such as NYDA, IDT, KZN Funding (Vula Fund) etc.

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To view our trainees' success stories and experience with the WizMix brand, visit: [www.wizmix.co.za](http://www.wizmix.co.za).



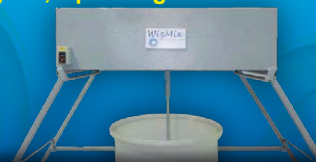
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# LESSONS LEARNED

When starting and growing a business, there's inevitably many mistakes made along on the way. Luckily, in the school of business, there's a lot to be learned from our fellow 'treds...

## 10 Lessons in 10 years

- **Gareth Price, Founder of Cloudworx and Investmint and 5-time Ironman finisher.**

10 years ago, Gareth Price started a business – or so he thought. What he did was go to the shop, spend R4 000 on a printer, printed a few letterheads and business cards and declared himself self-employed.

"I was armed with a fancy qualification, an economy in a recession and a whole lot of enthusiasm to become a 'one-man-band' accountant," recalls Price.

10 years on, he still has the fancy qualification, an economy in a recession (again) and a whole lot of enthusiasm. The difference is that he's grown his business well beyond the "one-man-band" he envisioned. And he's learnt a lot of valuable lessons over the years.

"Some of these I learned the easy way - by watching others get it wrong and doing it better myself. And some of them were school fees I had to pay. But all of them have made me better at what I do," he says. Price shares his lessons and insights...

### 1 You do not need to have a 5-year plan in order to start a business

There have been a few occasions when I've been asked "where do you see yourself in 5 years?", and each time I've grinned a cheeky grin and said, "well, whatever I say now, I'll probably be disappointed if it turns out right because then nothing interesting and innovative and different has come up in the next 5 years." Frankly, the last 2 years have taught us that we really have no idea what is coming."

Rather than a detailed plan for the next year, Price suggests that the biggest tool you have at the start of



your business-owning journey is adaptability. There will be curveballs and opportunities that are not in the plan - and if you can adapt, you can thrive.

## **2 The product does not need to be perfect - it needs to be sold**

You will never have the perfect products. Every single app on the iStore or Google play gets updated every few weeks. Your product will evolve and change as technology changes or as you learn new things. You can spend years in R&D - but that doesn't make any money.

Sell the imperfect product - then while that is generating money, improve the packaging. And then get a nice label.

## **3 Say 'yes' to things**

There will be times when you get asked to do something that you don't quite know how to do. And you'll be faced with two options - say no, and lose the client, or say yes and land them.

So say yes - but make sure you figure out how to do it and deliver because it's your credibility on the line. It'll lead to some heart-stopping moments, but you will expand your skillset and your offering. Necessity is the mother of invention.

## **4 Don't be penny-wise but pound foolish**

Cutting costs is not always the option - sometimes, you need to spend on efficiency. It means buying your team a second screen so they can do things quicker. It's spending money on an inventory system that costs your products correctly and keeps track of margins - because

I guarantee you that you are losing more money to errors that are going unchecked than the cost of the system. You may think you can't afford to, but the reality is that you can't afford not to.

## **5 The client is not always right**

As a kid, I saw a sign in a store that said 'The Customer is always right, even when he is wrong'. I was perplexed and frankly, still am. The customer is not always right. Sometimes, they will ask for something that you know is not the right solution for them. Or they will say they can do it themselves, but you know that they can't. You are the expert and the relationship needs to reflect that.



**"Some of these I learned the easy way - by watching others get it wrong and doing it better myself. And some of them were school fees I had to pay. But all of them have made me better at what I do." - Gareth Price**

## **6 A non-paying client is not a client**

We go into business to make money. Money that lands in our bank accounts. And we use our scarce resources to do so. When clients do not pay, or pay so late as to negatively affect cash flow and therefore our ability to operate, they are not adding value to your business. Spend your time and resources on generating new and better clients who will pay you. It doesn't matter how much revenue they are (theoretically) generating. If they're not paying, it's not real money and it's not growing your business.

## 7 Get an accountant involved early

There may be a bit of bias here. And I know that I'm lucky in that I have the skills to manage the financial side of my businesses well. But money makes the world go round - and if you don't know what is happening with your money, if you aren't keeping up with your taxes, then you are digging a hole for yourself. And it will cost you a lot of money and tears to fix. See point 4.

## 8 Hire a team that you can trust to have your back

Wow! This one took me longer to learn than it should have and both my business and I suffered for it. The power of a strong management team is that it frees me up - mentally and physically - to grow the business.

## 9 Never underestimate the incredible good a job can do for someone

The downside of hiring an HR manager and working through a recruiter is that I don't get to call people and offer them jobs anymore. I don't get to hear the happiness and excitement. But I do get to see people grow in knowledge, confidence, experience and become better all-round people because of what a job gives them. It's an incredible privilege and one that should not be taken lightly.

## 10 Running a business is hard - but let's focus on the privilege

I read a post the other day listing all the difficult parts about running a business - the long hours, the friends who want discounts, the ungrateful employees, the complaining customers - generally, a list of how hard it is to run a company. Yes, it's very hard work - harder than anything I have ever done.

But it's also exhilarating and exciting. There are happy clients. There are friends who support your business. There are amazing employees who work hard and add value and pop into my office each morning just to say "Hi". I have freedom and flexibility and I can choose where my office is so it's close to home and I don't have to sit in traffic. I can make the decisions to change the things that upset or annoy me.

But most of all, I get to build a workplace that fulfills and challenges both my team and I - and that is a massive privilege that we must never lose sight of. Especially when it's hard.

## From beans to bucks...

**- Mhlengi Ngcobo, Founder of CoffeeMM and working towards a sustainable future, one sip at a time!**

A surprise diagnosis as a child sparked a lifelong passion for Mhlengi: the humble coffee bean and creating a way for small-scale farmers to reap the rewards of their labour.

When Mhlengi was 13 he was diagnosed with young hypertension and advised to avoid all caffeinated beverages. Intrigued by caffeine's impact on his body, he began researching the chemical. More than a decade later, he now owns and runs a coffee roastery that caters for coffee drinkers with similar health concerns.

Mhlengi started CoffeeMM at the age of 22. The coffee roastery, located in Stellenbosch, sources fresh green coffee beans from African countries such as Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Burundi, roasting them to the individual's requirements. Every order is prepared with delicacy to meet the customer's unique preference. CoffeeMM also supplies restaurants and companies with fresh gourmet coffee.

### Learning on the job

Following his diagnosis, Mhlengi discovered that different roasting could produce different coffee, including brews with less caffeine that were more suitable for those with similar health conditions. "When you start because you've had a personal experience, it's not just about profit. It's about awareness, seeing the change you can make," he says.

But this research was only put to good use as a final year civil engineering student. Mhlengi was required to complete a project management course in which he chose to simulate a coffee roastery. The project was so successful that he decided to turn it into his career.

However, the journey did not run as smoothly as Mhlengi had simulated in his coursework. With no funding, Mhlengi launched the business with a R150 coffee grinder and a bicycle as his only equipment. And despite putting in the hours, in his first year as a business owner, he sold only one bag of coffee.

"I made the assumption that everyone drinks coffee, but I was wrong. That bag was a lesson," he says. "I had no





“There’s also the emotional and psychological side of entrepreneurship that no one tells you about. You have to drive yourself every day, even when the results are next to nothing.”

- Mhlengi Ngcobo

experience of running a business. I didn’t even have any work experience. I had to learn during the process. From creating the product to branding and marketing, I had to teach myself everything,” he recalls.

And investing so much into the business also came with a personal cost. Mhlengi had to drop out of his studies twice in the space of five years to focus on the business. “There’s also the emotional and psychological side of entrepreneurship that no one tells you about. You have to drive yourself every day, even when the results are next to nothing,” he says. “But I just had to do it. This business became the only thing I could see that could become my legacy.”

In around 2018, Coffee MM reached a turning point, and all of Mhlengi’s hard work started to show results. He won several contracts to supply gourmet coffee, which added to the company’s credibility, and he developed a loyal following of customers. He opened a coffee stand at the CoCreate Hub in 2021.

Mhlengi has also since completed the Stellenbosch USB SBA Programme in 2020. He has won the award for Business with the most potential, and in 2021 he was nominated and recognised as one of Mail and Guardian’s 200 most influential Young under 35 South Africans.

### Brewing for change

Mhlengi’s vision is bigger than just providing the perfect cup of coffee. He dreams of growing his business to help small scale farmers earn more for their hard work.

“Our vision is to empower small-scale coffee farmers. The coffee industry has a reputation for the exploitation of farmers. It’s a real-life problem that farmers experience daily. Estimates say that farmers only earn between 7-10% of the retail price of coffee. And that’s not even gross profit; they still have to cover their costs,” explains Mhlengi.

He dreams of using the profits of CoffeeMM to develop agro-processing plants in South Africa and Mozambique that would allow farmers to roast their coffee beans and earn more for the produce.

“The value of the coffee industry is growing. It’s one of the fastest-growing markets because of the way coffee is becoming a luxury, status product. Small farmers are struggling to meet the growing demand because they can’t afford to upgrade their infrastructure with the low earnings they make. If we create an agro-processing plant, they can move up the value chain,” says Mhlengi.

But until he can open that agro-processing plant, he will settle for more coffee shops in hubs such as Johannesburg and Cape Town. “This would allow us to bring in enough income to pursue our vision of empowering small scale farmers,” he says.

“When it comes to being an entrepreneur and following your dreams, you just have to start. If you believe in something, just start.”



# 7 Trends to ensure a thriving workplace

**Over the past 24 months, leaders and employees alike have reevaluated their employment; questioning how we work, where we work, and - most significantly - why we work.**

In 2021, we expected life to return to normal. We survived 2020, COVID-19 protocols were second nature, vaccines were being rolled out and we were making plans to get our teams back into office. But the year brought far more unpredictability than expected, and with new COVID-19 variants came renewed challenges and regulations. Clearly, life was not returning to (our version of) normal any time soon.

In 2022, we can expect another year of uncertainty. Our places of work will persist to adapt, change...transform. Over the past 24 months, leaders (and many of our employees) have had to reevaluate their employment; questioning how we work, where we work, and - most significantly - why we work. What initially looked like "the Great Resignation" with many people leaving their jobs, was soon reconceptualised as "the Great Re-Evaluation" with many reevaluating their purpose of employment and their work/life (im-)balance.

Here are seven trends that we, as leaders, must take

note of if we want to ensure that the people within our organisations continue to flourish and make a positive impact:

## **TREND #1: A renewed focus on employee wellbeing**

Today, employee wellbeing must be seen as an opportunity for our organisation to support our employees on a personal as well as a professional level. Over the past 24 months, the focus of employee wellbeing has shifted from improving organisational benefits to supporting the life and family experience of employees. In my work, I have found wellbeing to be key in attracting and retaining talent, with many - particularly Generation Z, the newest entrants to the job market - conveying that wellbeing programmes have a direct impact on their choice of job application and employment. HR teams will need to transform their approach and move away from a one-size-fits-all methodology to a culture of care, which meets the needs of all employees.

## **TREND #2: Increasing support for a hybrid workplace model and greater flexibility**

The past year has clearly demonstrated that working from anywhere is possible, but it is about owning results, regardless of where the work takes place. This means that we will need to reconsider work from home practices and create policies to promote virtual collaboration, mentoring, as well as asynchronous





“What initially looked like “the Great Resignation” was soon reconceptualised as “the Great Re-Evaluation” with many reevaluating their purpose of employment and their work-life (im-)balance.”

brainstorming. Creating virtual communities of practice for remote workers and integrating the right combination of collaboration tools is also of vital importance.

We will need to clearly define how we intend to create a fair and equitable workplace – again regardless of where our employees choose to work. The hybrid workplace model and greater flexibility therefore requires not only changes in management strategy, but changes in the way this model is communicated to our teams.

#### **TREND #3: Skills-based hiring practices**

Many people lost their jobs during the pandemic. This meant that the pool of unemployed (or potential candidates) became larger than pre-2020. This instigated an increase in self-generated employee upskilling and reskilling with many trying to better position themselves for new job opportunities. Organisations have also recognised the significance of having access to critical skills that sit outside of the traditionally accepted skill base. An example of this is emotional intelligence. Whilst many jobs still require formal education, certification and experience, there is a move away from the traditional, linear hiring approach (where candidates are employed based on their qualification and working history) to a more skills-based approach; where employers identify specific skills and make appointments based on that.

This skills-based approach has benefits for both the employer and the employee. Some examples of these are the widening of the talent pool, and the reduction in the cost of training and onboarding. This approach also has the potential to increase diversity and inclusivity in the workplace. It is something to consider – specifically for entry-level and middle-skills jobs that (in most cases) do not specifically require a qualification and practical experience.

#### **TREND #4: An emphasis on power skills**

In 2021, we learnt the need to develop resilience and agility to respond to unpredicted changes. It also taught us the importance of proficiency in multiple technology platforms and applications.

For the coming year, there will be an emphasis on specific power skills, including technology skills and digital fluency, communication across remote and/or distributed teams, emotional intelligence, cross-functional collaboration, leading through change, change management, dealing with stress and being more mindful, time management, as well as creativity. The need for upskilling employees is inevitable and we, as leaders, play an integral part in setting this trend not only to the benefit of our employees, but for our organisations as well.

#### **TREND #5: The demand for a new value-proposition from working parents**

Many families have been disrupted by schools closing, and parents have been compelled to work from home whilst simultaneously ensuring that learning still takes place. There is also an increased possibility that working parents will have left their jobs over the past two years (versus their non-parent counterparts). Exhaustion from the pressure of working from home while balancing home and childcare responsibilities has led to many employees reevaluating their work-life balance. For us to hold on to our talent, we will need to invest in ways

of working while keeping childcare, expanded parental leave, flexibility and the hybrid workplace model into account.

### **TREND #6: The importance of the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)**

At the start of the pandemic, COVID-19 was seen as a healthcare issue. It was however, soon recognised as a complex business and people issue that needs strategic intervention. Queue the CHRO – a strategic leader, who is able to lead with empathy and understand what is important to the different segments of workers. The CHRO must be recognised as a vital part of the C-suite and supported in their efforts to ensure employee wellbeing and developing fair and equitable workplaces.

### **TREND #7: The redefinition of fairness, equity, and inclusion**

Although fairness, equity and inclusion are themes we have addressed for quite some time now, questions regarding these topics are emerging in new ways. Who has flexibility at work, and will this directive be for everyone in the organisation? What happens when employees relocate to places with a lower cost of living; should compensation be adapted? We as leaders will need to be mindful that we don't favour those in office above those that work remotely.

According to a Harvard Business Review article, women and people of colour are far more likely to choose working remotely. This, combined with a management belief that those in office are more productive, has the potential to increase gender and racial wage gaps and weaken diversity within leadership. As leaders, we must be intentional about fairness, equity and inclusion to ensure that all our employees have the same opportunities for growth within our organisations.

In conclusion, although many of these trends are not new, they have been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. So far, we have survived the greatest workplace disruption of our time and there is little evidence indicating that the disruption will wane any time soon.

With a year of adaptation behind us, leaders are facing a year of transformation. Let this be an opportunity for us to recognise and embrace the uncomfortable, and to intentionally grow and transform – at least 'til the next disruption hits.

By Brian Eager, Founder and Group  
CEO of the TowerStone Leadership  
Centre.



## **HYBRID WORK** Avoiding employee backlash could mean tailored solutions

**Hybrid work environments are serious business. Should we be returning to the office? Full-time or part-time? How will this affect productivity? Do I even need to be there to do this work?**

Unfortunately, there are no cut-and-dry answers to these questions. Every organisation requires a unique solution. The current trend appears to be the promotion of hybrid working environments as a solid compromise to improve efficiency and offer flexibility to workers. However, we've seen the kind of change resistance that can send employers reeling when a return-to-office strategy is mishandled.

Google was criticised for a "hypocritical" plan that seemed to favour senior executives. And dissension

among employees had to be handled with great care by Apple to avoid a major backlash. When these two giants of the tech industry were originally struggling to get their hybrid work environments up and running, the change management sector took notice. Ultimately, we have learned to treat this hybridisation like any other major organisational change. Even though at first glance it seems like a return to pre-pandemic work processes, this is most definitely not the case.

Some of the first return-to-office strategies were launched mid-pandemic in the United States, with many people simply being told to return to work – business as usual. However, after months, sometimes more than a year, of remote working, habits had set in, new behaviours had been learnt, and for some, their at-home efficiency had skyrocketed.





When employees were not consulted about returning to the office, analysts were able to (accurately) predict that talent retention and employee dissatisfaction would become a problem.

As early as April 2021, Harvard Business School professor and remote work expert Raj Choudhury said that employees and teams should be empowered to make decisions on office schedules and other WFH (working from home) strategies – not just the leadership.

ProSci, the inventors of the ProSci change management methodology, recently conducted research that revealed that on average, 43.8% less work was being conducted on premises (previously 87.8%) in a post-pandemic world. So, the shift appears to already be happening.

However, every industry is different, and depending on the kind of work being done, it may be impossible to work from home. Retail, construction, healthcare are all obvious sectors where people have to work on-site, but when remote working is possible, strategic thinking to manage employee expectations is mandatory.

As much as leadership wishes there was a one-size-fits-all solution, the hybrid work environment must be tailored to the industry, the unit within an organisation and even down the individual in some cases. This is why effective change management is so important. Change managers in an organisation can be the leads on employee engagement and help leadership properly construct strategies that address top concerns.

From the physical requirements (such as how much space one needs for a potentially smaller in-office team) to the less tangible considerations (like managing employee expectations), organisations are realising they

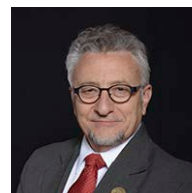
“We’ve seen the kind of change resistance that can send employers reeling when a return-to-office strategy is mishandled.”

require agile people trained in effectively implementing such a significant change. My advice?

- ▶ **Communication will be central to hybridisation.** Create a platform for people to air concerns before they start resisting the change.
- ▶ **Make the change gradual** so that people can slowly become used to these new ways of working.
- ▶ **Be flexible.** Negotiate what works (not only for your most valued team members) to still allow for maximum efficiency and personal work/life balance.
- ▶ **Invest in improving onboarding processes.** It's tougher than before for new recruits to get a sense of a company's processes and culture in a digital/hybrid working world. So use the time and resources to help prepare them. It'll save you headaches in the future.
- ▶ **Incentivise the return to work:** give legitimate reasons as to why the office environment is positive, such as easier collaboration and preserving workplace culture.

Finding new, malleable ways of working is never a bad thing, so regardless of how you feel about hybridisation, try and keep an open mind.

By Tom Marsicano, CEO of 'and Change' a global advisory and change management consultancy.



# BUILDING YOUR POWER TEAM



**Your team is your greatest asset. Happy, productive teams underpin great companies. Disaffected, demotivated staff can ruin them.**

**Here are 20 tips to mould and develop your power team...**

## **1 Hire the cleverest people**

Always spend the most you can on great staff. Hire people cleverer than you. While they may be critical and expensive and give you lots of grey hair, they will also pull your organisation forward. They will think creatively, innovate and question – qualities that will take you and your business out of your comfort zone.

## **2 Treat people how you would like to be treated**

Treat people with respect and dignity. Lead with understanding and empathy. Be ready to adapt, collaborate, share ideas and skills. Help team members to improve and become better at what they (and ultimately all of you) do. How you treat your staff is integral to their performance, and the way they in turn deal with your customers. Simple as it is, happy staff = happy customers = a successful business.





### 3 Model hard work

The only way to success is to work hard and smart (i.e. on the right things that are going to propel you and your business forward). Being in a leadership role means having to work even harder. Don't ask your staff to do something you wouldn't. Set the example by being there till the end of challenging projects, or supporting your team with difficult conversations they need to have.

### 4 Build diversity

Research shows indisputably that diverse teams are more innovative and perform better than those that aren't. As you lead and develop your team, think about all areas of diversity, including age, race, gender, sexual orientation, experience, background, personality types and skill sets. For example, take age: any good team needs a balance of maturity and experience, as well as

youthful enthusiasm and exuberance. These feed off each other to the benefit of all sides. Ask any sports coach...

It's tempting and easy to hire people like yourself (it's called affinity bias – we're drawn to others who we think are like us or share similar characteristics). Too much of something is not good; nor is too little of something – good balance within a team can make it formidable.

### 5 Hire for attitude first

Hire for attitude and culture-fit first, technical ability second. Many skills can be taught, but attitude is infinitely harder, perhaps even impossible, to change.

### 6 Hire slowly, fire fast

Related to point 5, it's worth noting the adage "hire slowly, fire fast". When hiring, do multiple interviews using different members of your team on the interview panel to gauge feedback (people respond and come across differently to different individuals), and check references and qualifications (just look to the media to see how often even senior people fake these).

Ask personal questions as well as work-related ones. At our company, we always ask people if they have pets and why or why not, which provides insight into whether they care about things other than themselves.

If you find someone isn't the right fit, manage them out as quickly as possible. Bad apples can infect good ones quickly, and negative energy is always more contagious than positive energy.

### 7 Have a strong vision and clearly articulated goals

Share a vision with your team that is greater than the day-to-day work you do. What can you collectively achieve as a team? This is the *why*. (Simon Sinek, a well-known researcher and writer on leadership, wrote a book entitled *Start with Why*, which is well worth the read.)

What is the meaning behind what you are striving for in your work? Is it to help create jobs when they are desperately needed, is it to grow a better company that everyone can be proud of working at? Is it somehow to change the world to make it a better place, or is it something else?

In order to achieve your big *why*, which might take many years, you need to break this down into SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound) goals. Use SMART goals to drive towards the vision. Once your team can get behind the goals and can see the benefit of achieving them, it's much easier to motivate them in future.

## 8 Set clear roles and responsibilities

Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities in your organisation and in projects. For example, in a marketing campaign, one person might oversee research, another ideation, another storyboarding, another drawing up the budget and yet another client liaison. Clear roles and responsibilities can also help with clearly defining and enforcing accountability, another mark of a good team.

## 9 Be positive

It's your job as a leader to be positive, even when you don't feel like it. Positivity is inspirational; negativity is demotivational. Celebrate the successes; play down the criticism.

## 10 Communicate well

No leader has ever been accused of over-communicating. Make sure you communicate frequently and that your communications are substantive. Be transparent whenever possible and always have integrity. Transparency and integrity are key to building trust.

## 11 Get to know people as individuals

Get to know your team members: what are their likes and dislikes, what makes them tick, what are their children's names, and their cat or dog's names, what are their strengths and weaknesses at work? Spend time talking to them about what's happening in their lives. Investing time and energy in getting to really know your team members is more important than ever, now that remote working has become such a big part of our lives.

While you need to be consistent and fair in your leadership, don't try to create a one-size-fits-all management solution. Remember that different people have different strengths, and managing them according to their individual needs is likely to bear more fruit.

## 12 Having fun is a serious business

The team that plays together, stays together, works well together and pulls the load together. Make time for fun. Fun is an exceptionally serious business

– it takes time, effort and conscious planning. People are naturally playful. Encourage this and see the strong bonds form.

## 13 Build an environment where it's safe to make mistakes

If you hardly ever see a mistake in your workplace, it probably means your team is not trying anything new or innovative, which is crucial to keeping your business moving forward positively. It's okay for anyone to make a mistake, and your team will find it affirming and encouraging when other team members support and help them learn with no judgement. But of course it's not okay for people to make the same mistakes over and over. Good leadership will find the balance between these.

## 14 Consciously build a strong and unique culture

People who feel a sense of belonging are more engaged and productive. Consciously forge your company or team's culture by creating opportunities for people to get to know each other, to succeed together and to create memories together. Creating rituals and encouraging positive traditions can also help to create strong bonds. For example, you could designate a day for people to dress up in your corporate colour or a space for a daily joke from a different team member every day, or an annual awards ceremony for your team.

## 15 Don't micromanage

The following mix is essential for a first-class orchestra: teamwork, collaboration, direction, flexibility, goal setting and performance. The same goes for any company or organisation if it wants to succeed in business today. Remember that a top orchestra can play without a conductor. A CEO must know when to step away to allow their staff to do what they do best.

## 16 Encourage learning

Entrench a culture of learning in your team. You can do this in many ways: by getting people to showcase new trends or pieces of work for others; by having a company thread on your intranet or email of interesting new things to look out for; by having a bookshelf where people can pick up and leave books; by regularly having company-wide learning sessions; even by sponsoring team members to study further. On an individual and organisational level, you are either learning and growing or stagnating and regressing – there is no in-between state.



### 17 Listen

Listen with empathy and attention, not just to respond, but also to give time and attention to your team. Put yourself in the other person's shoes. Everyone has a story; everyone has challenges and difficulties to overcome.

### 18 Build trust

Trust is paramount in building a great team. When the manager and team members have mutual trust, they can rely on each other; and if you feel trusted, you automatically want to do your work to the best of your ability. To build trust, you have to earn it from others by keeping your word – and you must trust others, too, to win back that trust.

### 19 Keep an eye out for snags and bottlenecks

A bicycle with a broken chain is useless. Pay attention to every piece of the chain, not just the particular areas in which you are personally most

interested or most experienced. If one part or section of that chain is crooked, you're guaranteed to crash.

### 20 Reward and recognise great work

People like to be acknowledged and thanked for their work. Reward and recognise your team fairly and frequently, in big and small ways – a handwritten note at the end of a tough day on someone's desk can go a long way, as can a shout-out in a company meeting for someone who's worked particularly hard at accomplishing something.

On a bigger scale, make sure you do regular and fair performance reviews with team members and that you pay people fairly for their contribution.



By Tara Turkington, CEO of Flow Communications.



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# 3 Low-cost ways to encourage employee wellness



**With the spotlight on employee wellness, we look at affordable ways you can generate and inspire wellbeing in the workplace - and in turn help your business reach its full potential.**

It's no secret that healthy employees who are content and engaged in their work contribute greatly to the growth of any business. By maintaining their wellbeing, employees will have the capacity to perform their role with excellence and reach their KPIs.

Many businesses took strain through the pandemic due to employee health stressors and the global struggle with wellbeing, among other reasons. Wellness programs, mental health awareness, encouraging work-life integration and incorporating a more hybrid or flexible work structure can assist with employee wellbeing.

Luckily, wellness is not something that necessarily needs to cost a company more than a bit of time and effort. Here are ways 3 to encourage employee wellness without using expensive outsourced resources.

## **1 Encourage employees to take ownership of their wellness in and out of the workplace**

A first proactive step to gleaning the benefits of employee wellness, such as the retention and engagement of top talent, would be to change the narrative of the conversation around it.

The first key is to encourage your employees to take ownership of keeping themselves 'well'. Ultimately, working on one's overall wellbeing is a personal responsibility. No company can take full responsibility for this. The second key is to ensure a clear message that as a company, you value their health and happiness, because you value them as people and the contribution that they bring to the organisation as employees.

Here are a few ways to empower your employees to own their wellness journey, while still communicating the message that, as a company, you care.

- **Hold team discussions** that will allow employees to share their wellness process with others. This will encourage openness, will not consume too much productive work time and will cultivate a more health conscious environment.
- **Hold monthly webinars or staff meetings** on a wellness topic that either an outside expert or an in-house employee can run. Topics such as personal finances, the benefits of regular exercise, healthy eating or conflict management will not require large amounts of preparation time or cost, and will use both keys of encouraging personal responsibility and communicating the message that the company cares.
- **Wellness days or entering fitness competitions** as a company or team is a fun, inclusive team building experience. Ensure that all employees are welcome and included, and that these activities are optional.

As employees take positive steps towards personal and professional wellness, this will also help retain talent and engage them in the business, which is favourable for business growth.



## 2 Work-life integration vs. balance

Healthy boundaries between the workplace and life create more room for in-house productivity. As employers, we want to encourage employees to integrate work and life, rather than to put pressure on themselves to achieve a perfect state of balance. Life doesn't always lend itself to perfect balance, but we still need to get the job done with a positive impact. And this is why work-life integration is a key part of employee wellness and company morale.

Practically speaking, you could consider more flexible working hours within certain boundaries. For example, employees need to operate within defined core operating hours, but there is flexibility with start and finish times. Hybrid working and rooms with hot desks are another way to encourage work-life integration - if you are open to remote working in any capacity.

Work-life integration and flexibility are not something that just women with children seek out. At RecruitMyMom we have also seen an increase in men looking for more flexible or hybrid work environments.

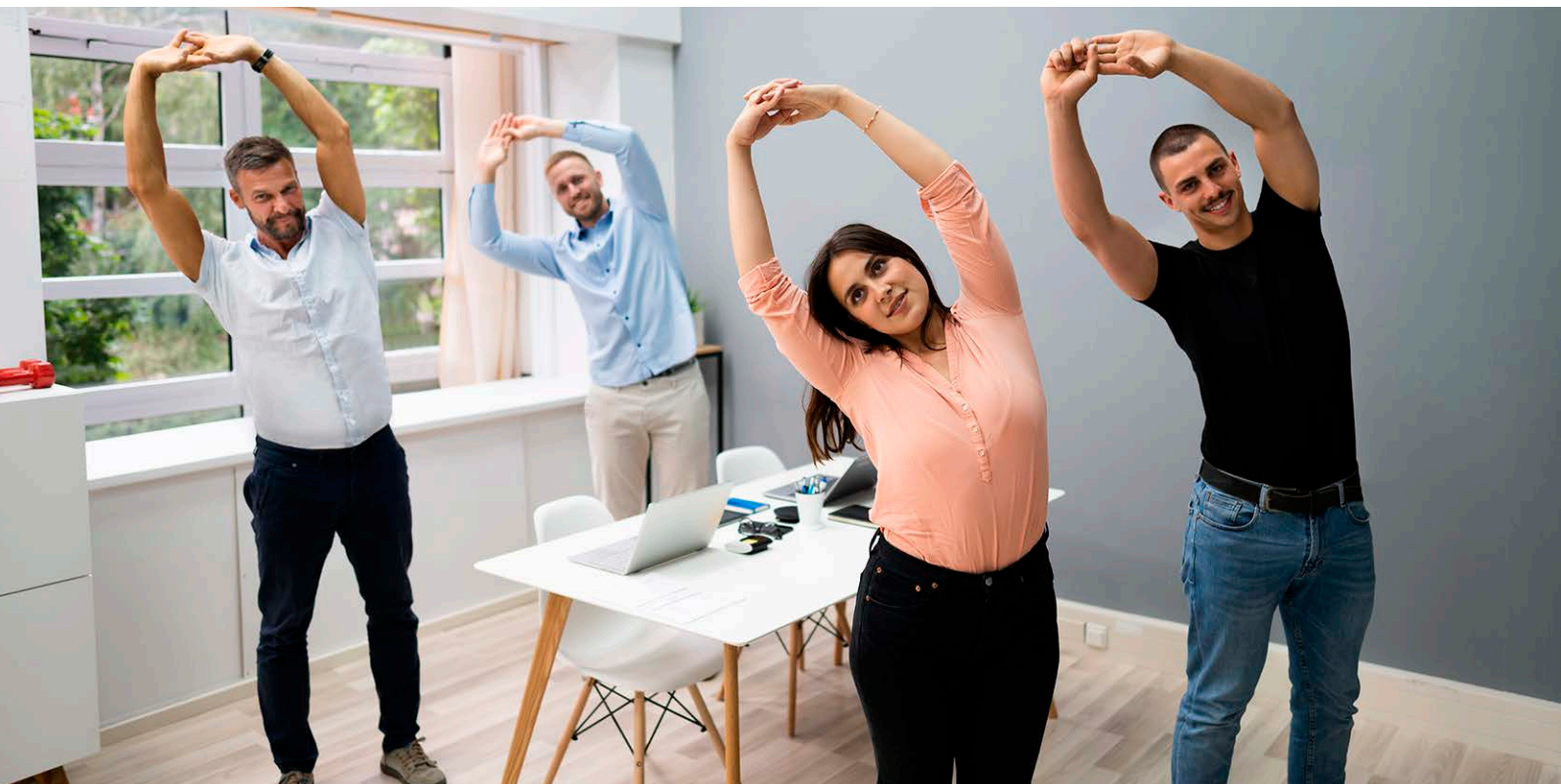
With a focus on productivity rather than presence, employee morale, focus and productivity will increase a company culture of work-life integration.

## 3 In-house research, surveys and collaboration

When it comes down to employee wellness, one of the top priorities is for employees to feel heard and seen by their employers. Conducting in-house anonymous surveys will provide staff members with the opportunity to inform you, as the employer, as to how they are really feeling about work and life in general. Surveys can be conducted every quarter or twice a year depending on the organisation's size and are an excellent source of idea generation. The survey needs to be followed up with actionable improvements or changes as a result of the feedback for this process to succeed.

The bottom line is that when employees are feeling good from the inside out, they are more likely to take initiative, provide solutions and get the job done. The effects this has on the company-wide KPIs is that problems are solved quicker, more effectively and ultimately the company thrives. It's win-win.

By Phillipa Geard, Founder and CEO of multi-award winning company RecruitMyMom.co.za, an innovative online recruitment agency.



# Grounds for a Disciplinary

Chances are that at some point during your working career, you have participated in one way or another in a disciplinary hearing. And if you are an employer, chances are that you have lost more of these battles than you have won.

This is often because the employer either did not understand the process completely, or alternatively did not follow the correct procedures. In this issue, we will look at what constitutes ground for a disciplinary and also go through what most of those are. So, buckle up and let's get going.

First of all, let's have a look at exactly what "Grounds for a Disciplinary" are. These are usually the reasons why you as the employer feel the need to discipline an employee. Obviously some "Grounds" carry more weight than others, although if a minor offence is continuously repeated by the employee, then the consequence will be greater with each repeated transgression until such time as you can dismiss the offender.

Let's have a look at some of the "Grounds":

*Here are some of the offences that would warrant a verbal warning (although it still needs to be documented and put into the offender's personnel file).*

- **Unsatisfactory Work Performance** - Minor (with little or no prejudice or consequence to the company and no action that can be interpreted as incapacity). Negligent failure to perform work or assigned tasks satisfactorily. For example, if an employee was instructed to perform a minor task such as balancing the petty cash before they

went home for the day, and they got very busy and only balanced it the following day, but it caused a problem with the day-end figures, the employer would be well within their rights discipline the employee and put a verbal warning on file.

- **Bet or gamble on Company premises.** This could result in tension between employees who do not have the means to "pay up" when a bet is lost.
- **Operate as a moneylender** by lending money to other employees and charging interest on the loan.
- **Late Coming** – single instance.
- **Unauthorised absence for a period of one (1) day.**
- **Failure to report unauthorised absence at commencement of business hours on the day of absence.** Remember though, that if this is continuously repeated, it could end up being grounds for dismissal.
- Any other offence which any reasonable person would deem to be a minor offence. Obviously this would be at the discretion of either the Department Head or the HR Manager.

*The next lot of offences listed are regarded as serious enough to warrant a written warning for a first offence.*

- **Failure to comply with official working hours** – late coming and early departures (2 or more instances). Remember that in essence when employees repeatedly come in late or leave early, it is theft of time - the employer's time. Being 5 minutes late does not appear to amount to much, but if an employee arrives late to work, returns late from tea and lunch breaks, and leaves early at the end of the day (or leaves early for tea breaks and lunch breaks) this will amount to 40 minutes a day loss of productivity. Add that up for a month: 15½ hours. That's almost 2 days a month that you are paying for and not getting the correct productivity time out of that person.



- **Unauthorised absence for a period of two (2) days.**
- **Engage in any other business or work without proper prior authorisation.** Your employee could be using your infrastructure to fund their own “side hustle” and could even be your competition.
- **Sleeping on duty.**
- **Use of unacceptable language/gestures.**
- Any other offence which any reasonable person would deem to be a serious offence. Obviously this would be at the discretion of either the Department Head or the HR Manager.

*The offences listed below are regarded as so serious in nature that they warrant a final written warning, even in the event of this being a first offence.*

- **Failure to comply with any Company Policy and procedure** (can be dismissible depending on the type of non-compliance).
- **Unauthorised absence for a period of three (3) to four (4) days.**
- **Unauthorised use/possession/removal of company or client property.**
- **Negligence in the performance of duties that do not amount to gross negligence.**
- **Bringing the company name into disrepute** (can be dismissible depending on the type or degree of disrepute).
- **Insubordination** (can be dismissible depending on the type or degree of insubordination).
- **Failure to return to work after the expiry of a leave period.**
- **Abuse the company's electronic communications system** or use of the system for personal reasons or download any unauthorised material from the Internet.
- **Use of abusive/offensive language.**
- Any other offence which any reasonable person would deem to be a major offence.

*Finally, some offences/transgressions are so serious in nature that the principle of progressive discipline cannot be applied, since a continued employment relationship has become intolerable and an irreparable breach in the trust relationship has incurred. These are:*

- **Assault** - assault or attempt to assault any other

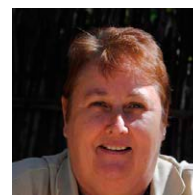
employee/manager or customer or carry dangerous weapons on company premises.

- **Rude and insolent behaviour** towards a fellow employee and/or a Manager of the company.
- **Insubordination.**
- **Unauthorised removal of company property** – this includes money, vehicles and any other assets/property belonging to the company.
- **Refusal to obey a reasonable and lawful job instruction.**
- **Gross negligence** (where prejudice or harm – actual or possible occurs) in the performance of duties.
- **Fraudulent behaviour** – this includes tampering with company documents.
- **Misuse or abuse of any company property.**
- **Incitement of any nature whatsoever that will be harmful to the safety and/or operations of the company and its employees.**
- **Sexual harassment.**
- **Unlawful work stoppages.**
- **Intimidation/Incitement.**
- **Dishonesty.**
- **Bringing the company's name into disrepute** and/or behaviour detrimental to good client relationships.
- **Disclosure of company information** to an unauthorised person.
- **Bringing liquor or non-prescribed drugs onto company premises.**
- **Being under the influence of alcohol or any other non-prescribed drugs** during working hours.
- Any other offence which any reasonable person would deem to be a dismissible offence.

Keep in mind though that even a minor (or verbal) offence, if continuously repeated, could end up being grounds for dismissal. Also, dismissals **must** be done by following the proper disciplinary procedure.

In the next issue we will go through the different steps that need to be followed when taking disciplinary action.

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# Turn your **website** into a **lead-generating machine**

**B2B technology marketing has undergone tremendous change in the past few years. A shrinking sales force, the rise of remote work, and new buyer behaviour have turned up the pressure on internal brand assets to deliver the goods.**

Where previously companies relied on one-to-one, personalised consultations with sales agents to deliver sales, buyers now expect to be able to make purchasing decisions with minimal human interaction. And that puts company websites front and centre in a revitalised marketing strategy.

## **1 First, listen to your audience and show them what they want**

Websites serve multiple stakeholders or audiences, including existing and potential customers – often from multiple industries – as well as suppliers, employees and potential employees. Understand what they're looking for when they visit your website and make it easy for them to find it. Show website visitors how your product or service solves their problem – rather than repeating technical specifications that might not be as important for key business decision-makers.

Technology is moving at lightning speed and businesses are evolving just as fast. How you can stay agile:

- Make sure your website reflects your current offer to

clients. It's surprising how often this is not the case.

- Incorporate blog posts, case studies and campaign-specific landing pages to appeal across audience segments.
- Don't forget to analyse internal search results and terms, and include these in your content strategy.

## **2 Be ruthless about performance**

The way we consume media is changing. Users are more impatient than ever, and if your website takes too long to load or doesn't work on mobile, they'll simply drop off. Grab their attention with relevant messaging upfront, in the first 30 seconds of their visit, or the rest of your work is futile. Users take only seconds to decide whether to click on banner ads.

Success is a sprint. Stay ahead of the pack:

- Analyse bounce rates and time spent on the page so you can fine-tune as you go.
- Users spend more time on case studies and blogs that are directly relevant to their needs – so give them content that shows you understand their pain points.
- Optimise for search engines and maintain your copy accordingly.
- Continuous testing and fine-tuning will give you the best results long term.

## **3 Show them you're worth it**

Visitors typically look at a website up to 16 times before initiating a sales conversation. Think of your





website as your global shop front. It's the primary way of communicating your brand message and product benefits, so it must resonate with website visitors.

Organisations can become over-invested in social media channels where organic reach declines over time. On the other hand, they neglect their own website where they have full control of the user experience. This is where you can show visitors – through quality content, design and user journey – you are a credible, trustworthy and dependable business partner with value to add.

Put your best foot forward:

- ▶ Focus on content that's authentic for a distinctive brand experience. Users should be intrigued within the first one minute of their website visit.
- ▶ Talk business first and technical specs (if you must) later.
- ▶ Cut the jargon and use authentic language that tells your brand story and business impact.
- ▶ Use engaging, visual content such as infographics and video.
- ▶ Ensure your tone, messaging and identity is consistent throughout.

## 4 Make it beautiful, but make it searchable too

Your website has to be functional, beautiful and search-engine friendly. Too often, there's a mismatch between company terminologies and the search terms potential customers are using. Diving into Google Analytics will help you to join the dots.

Search engine optimisation (SEO), email marketing, social media and advertorials all have a role to play in generating traffic and, ultimately, potential leads to your site.

- ▶ Advertorials can provide an initial burst for campaigns.

“Websites serve multiple stakeholders or audiences, including existing and potential customers, as well as suppliers, employees and potential employees.”

- ▶ Engage in re-marketing for returning visitors.
- ▶ Integrate SEO at every step – and don't just focus on Google Keyword Ranking. Also consider other search engines such as Bing.
- ▶ Consider a website audit that looks at copy, brand image, visual languaging, SEO, user journey and analytics. Look for opportunities to simplify.

## 5 Credibility is key

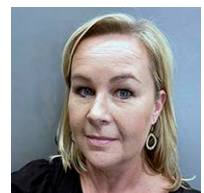
PR remains an important aspect in establishing your brand as trusted, reliable and credible. This is hard to establish via advertising and social media, and is most persuasive from a third-party source such as a media article. Establish your business as a trusted brand:

- ▶ PR must be authentic and should position your brand as credible. It's not a sales tool, but rather a brand authenticator.
- ▶ Include case studies and customer testimonials on your website.
- ▶ Let buyers know that there is someone they can rely on to turn things around.
- ▶ Measure PR's effectiveness with website tracking links.
- ▶ PR should form part of a comprehensive strategy that also includes owned (website), paid and social media.

## The last word

Remote work and virtual sales have fundamentally changed B2B marketing. It's a new way of doing things, but the old school wisdom of human connection and empathy will be more important than ever before.

By Judith Middleton, CEO of  
DUO Marketing + Communications.



# How to launch your webinar in 10 easy steps

We may feel like webinars are being overkilled, but there is definitely still a place for them. Just remember to think of a topic that's of interest to your customers - not just to you.



## The pro's of hosting a webinar are numerous:

- **Lead generation:** Webinars give you the chance to interact with new prospects and generate high quality leads.
- **Brand awareness:** Webinars give you the ability to reach hundreds or thousands of people around the world cost-effectively.
- **Customer loyalty:** Webinars are one of the best ways to build trust with complete strangers worldwide or increase trust with existing customers.
- **Easy to start:** Webinars are simple to set up.

All you need is a laptop, a camera and reliable WIFI, and something to talk about!

## Are webinars for B2B and B2C brands?

Webinars work well for both Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) brands.

B2C marketing can bring in a larger audience, which means you will pay more to the platform.

B2B businesses can usually expect anything from 30-250 attendees at a webinar, depending on what you're talking about and who you're targeting.

Ready to create your first webinar?  
Take a look at this guide to get started.

## STEP 1: SET YOUR OBJECTIVES

When setting webinar objectives, you need to identify the needs of your business. These questions need to be answered in order to set your webinar objectives:

- Are you in search of new clients?
- Is your business in need of proper exposure?
- Do you want to entertain your attendees?
- Do you need more subscribers to your site or business?

Make sure that your objectives are linked to your business. It will help to set a deadline and will motivate and direct your team. Setting goals and objectives give you actionable results and a clear understanding of webinars.

## STEP 2: CHOOSE A RELEVANT TOPIC OF INTEREST

The content you choose must suit your potential audience. You need to captivate your audience with valuable information that will see them stay the duration of the webinar. There are two ways to go about this: you can either choose to talk about general topics related to your content or speak about a single topic in detail.

We recommend that you become specific when selecting topics for your webinars and be knowledgeable about the information you are speaking about. For example, instead of just speaking about digital marketing, break it off into different segments - this gives you much more to speak about. You can include Digital Marketing Budgeting, Digital Marketing trends or and new technologies in marketing.

While searching for interesting pieces of content, you need to consider:

- **Look at previously produced content:** While searching for an interesting topic, consider going through the content that you have already produced. This includes previous articles, posts and information you might find relevant.
- **Attend other webinars:** This will not only help you gather new ideas from competitors' content pieces, but will also help you understand new trends in the kinds of topics being discussed. The data from these insights will allow you to decide on viable pieces of content to use.

## STEP 3: PICK THE RIGHT DATE AND TIME

If you connect with clients around the world, choose a specific date and time that will allow as many people as possible to attend your webinar. If your target audiences are businesses abroad then it's best to find a time suitable for you and suitable for their time zone.

Choosing the right date and time for your webinar really depends on your target demographic. You want to choose a niche that allows you to reach as many people as possible with your content. A recent poll conducted by a San Francisco-based company that markets products and services based upon webcasting and virtual event and environment technology, ON24, suggested that the best days to host webinars are mostly Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. GMT, respectively.

With people working from home and homeschooling, evening events have also become the norm.

To help you choose your target niche/demographic, use Google Analytics to locate regions in the world where most of your online traffic comes from and target potential businesses in those areas. Send surveys to potential attendees asking them for the most convenient times for them to participate in and attend your webinar.





#### STEP 4: CHOOSE YOUR TEAM

The success of your webinar depends on these important figures:

- **The Organiser:** The facilitator of the webinar is the key individual responsible for developing content for the webinar. Responsibilities include the promotion of the event, registrations for the event and finding speakers that are suitable for the subject.
- **The Presenters:** Also known as the Subject Matter Experts, their focus is on developing and delivering the presentation on time and without a glitch.
- **Master of Ceremonies:** It's not imperative to have one, but if you have multiple speakers you might want an MC for continuity.
- **Technical Assistant:** To look after the tech side of things and make sure everything runs smoothly on the day.
- **Lights and Sound:** You will want decent lighting and sound if it's a large event. If a small intimate one, then you might be able to get away with your camera's built-in equipment.



#### STEP 5: DECIDE ON THE WEBINAR FORMAT

- **Single Speaker:** A single speaker communicating with the webinar attendees. The speaker will then answer all queries raised by the attendees after producing their selected piece of content. This type of webinar is highly recommended for small audiences.
- **Interview:** The speaker will act as an interviewer and ask a set of predetermined questions. This type of webinar can be very engaging, with the attendees watching the important and relevant members of the webinar answer questions, which also encourages them to engage.
- **Panel Discussion:** Consists of several speakers who talk over a preset topic. You will need a moderator to facilitate this discussion.
- **Q&A:** This type of webinar also allows the speaker to answer questions, directly from the audience. Q&As should be added at the end of your webinar.

#### STEP 6: SELECT YOUR SOFTWARE

At Shift One we mainly use Zoom for webinars, but there are many other webinar platforms out there that will assist you in creating the very best webinar. These webinar platforms include GoToWebinar, BigMarker, Adobe Connect, WebEx, ClickMeeting, and many, many more each packaged at various price points.

Depending on your chosen webinar solution you would be able to conduct polls and surveys after each session, this will allow for valuable insights to further improve your webinars, you can even run breakaway groups on certain platforms.

Here are some other important things to consider when choosing your webinar software.

- How easy is the software to use?
- How much will it cost you?
- Does the software offer free-trials?

#### STEP 7: SET UP THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT AND SPACE

It is important that you find a space that is right for you. It will need to be quiet and preferably professional. This could be your study if you are working from home or a conference room.

Ensure that your equipment is top-notch and consider making a big investment at the start, so that you won't have to keep replacing faulty devices.

#### **STEP 8:** **BE CAMERA READY!**

Webinars largely rely on audiovisuals to communicate their content. The best webinars should feel like a face-to-face experience, so presenters can use their webcam while presenting. This allows the audience to see the speaker during the presentation, adding a sense of human interaction.

Each speaker needs to have a decent camera and lighting. Professional events would want to hire in lights and sound for a world-class result.

#### **STEP 9:** **PUBLICISE AND PROMOTE**

Following these easy steps will help you get your webinars out there:

- Create a landing page that will introduce your webinar topic and the speaker, and that allows people to sign up for your event. Always end with a call-to-action for people to sign up to attend your event.
- Make visitors to your website aware of your upcoming webinar via a pop-up on the website, a menu navigation item on as well as a banner on the home page.
- Use Social Media to spread the word and create an original hashtag to publicise your event. This hashtag will benefit you, as you will be using it to interact with the attendees.
- Create online ads for your event on social media and boost your posts, otherwise you risk having nobody attending your event - this is the most critical step in gaining attendees.
- Create Email Marketing campaigns that send multiple reminders about your event, as this will increase your chances of registrations and guarantee higher attendance by those who have signed up. Send emails with the direct link to your webinar on the day of the event. You might also consider using SMS too.

#### **STEP 10:** **PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!**

Try to have a practice run at least two days before your webinar in order to be well prepared on the day.

“The ability to effectively follow up helps to build your audience for future webinars, plus it is an opportunity to close important deals.”

This should be with everyone involved and will help all parties gain confidence and be effective on the day.

Check that all the equipment being used is working properly and are not faulty, and make sure that everyone understands how to use the software and technology. Everyone should be familiar with the contents and the flow of the webinar to make the process easier. Aim to finalise your presentations and core information to prevent last-minute changes and remember to choose the communication methods that suit your team.

#### **And in closing: Follow up!**

It is important to follow up with attendees of your webinar. Don't miss out on an opportunity to continue engaging your audience and closing important deals.

Send a follow-up email thanking each webinar attendee, and in the email supply a survey asking them for feedback and to rate their experience with the webinar. Send out another email and include a recording of the webinar targeting the people who signed up, but were unable to attend it or register in time. The ability to effectively follow up will ensure that you get repeat viewers and helps to build your audience for future webinars.

After you have successfully hosted your first webinar, start evaluating all your efforts. Use the feedback gathered through your email marketing efforts and follow-up emails. Consider data, adapt, and make adjustments in order to ensure the success of your webinars.

Following up is key. Remember the goals of the webinar - one of them is to close customers! So this is where it becomes critical to reach out to attendees, and hopefully, drive home those sales.

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By Dylan Kohlstadt, Founder and  
CEO of B2B marketing agency,  
Shift ONE digital. Visit:  
[www.shiftoone.co.za](http://www.shiftoone.co.za)



# Email is not dead

## *...the way you're using it is*



**Everything from SMS to instant messaging, social media and office productivity solutions has threatened to kill email at one point or another. In reality, the idea that email is dead couldn't be further from the truth.**

In 2021, nearly 320-billion emails were sent a day. Additionally, 99% of the world's 4-billion-plus email users check their inboxes at least once a day, with some checking as many as 20 times a day. Add in the fact that email has a return on investment of around 4 200%, and it becomes easy to see that email is very definitely not dead.

So, if you're not seeing results from email and everyone in your organisation is convinced that it's not effective, what's really going on? In all likelihood, the problem isn't email, but the way you're using it.

### **When email doesn't work**

If, for example, you're still using a "one-size-fits-all" approach to email that treats every customer the same way, you're not going to experience much joy. These "spray and pray" forms of email marketing have lost all relevance and have zero resonance with customers. Today's customers demand hyper-personalisation and expect relevant content from service providers to suit their unique requirements.

But it might not just be the kind of emails you're sending that are hampering your email efforts. The way you're formatting your emails may also play a role.

As recently as 2020, for example, one in five emails weren't optimised for mobile. In a world where almost everyone carries a device capable of sending and receiving email at all times, that's unforgivable. It's even more of a problem in a market like South Africa, where nearly 90% of households exclusively have cellphones and more than 64% rely on mobile devices for internet access.

Of course, avoiding these two mistakes alone doesn't mean you're using email effectively. It simply means you're not engaging in bad email practice.

### **Hyper-personal, engaging, relevant**

If you're going to get the most out of email, you have to remember what it is that you're trying to achieve. The primary goal of any form of communication is to engage with your customers. In order to do that, you have to send out something that they actually want to engage with.

That, in turn, means sending emails that are not only hyper-personal to them, but also relevant to their wants and needs at the moment they receive it.

There are some tools and tactics organisations can use to ensure that they're achieving these goals. These include:

#### ■ **Make it hyper-personal.**

With intelligent use of real-time data, dynamic content, and database segmentation, organisations can ensure that they're sending out messages perfectly tailored to each individual customer, at the ideal time.

#### ■ **Automate it.**

Making sure that the customer receives communication at the right time doesn't mean that you need to have



staff hovering over the send button. Automating email is easier than ever and can be triggered by purchases, site visits and information requests.

■ **Integrate it into the multi-channel experience.**

Remember, email is just one of the channels you have at your disposal. It should be as seamlessly integrated with those channels as possible.

■ **Mobile first, always.**

I've already highlighted how important it is for email to be easily accessible on mobile devices. But there are other benefits to a mobile-first strategy too. When you design your content for mobile readers, it's likely to be more focused. It can also help when it comes to creating clear Call-To-Action buttons and well-crafted subject lines and preheader copy.

It's also critical that every piece of email communication sent out by your organisation has the same look, feel and tone, regardless of which department it comes from.

## No sign of email's demise

So, when someone tells you that email's dead, know that there's a very good chance that they don't know what they're talking about. Utilised correctly, email promises to continue to be a high-performing, cost-effective way to increase customer engagement. That's true now and it's likely to still be true for some time to come.

By Ross  
Sibbald,  
Commercial  
Director,  
Striata Africa.



# The social media side hustle



Currently, it's estimated that one in three employed South Africans has a side hustle of sorts. And with the continued evolution of online influencer marketing, that number is set to increase. The rapid pace of digitisation has itself

contributed to the growth of the side hustle on social media specifically. The ability to leverage these advances has inspired tech-savvy professionals and innovative individuals to find more ways to monetise the time they spend online.

So, what does it take to get in the game of the social media side hustle? Pieter Groenewald, CEO of Nfinity Media, believe it's about being real:

■ **A shift from celebrity status.** Traditionally, the trend in influencer marketing has been for brands to work with celebrities who have hundreds of thousands (dare we say, millions?) of followers, because the perception was that that's where the value lies. Of course, along with the many followers would also come a hefty fee, driving up the cost for a marketing exercise that didn't always deliver tangible results. A lot of marketers were left with the question as to what they'd achieved with the influencer activity. And the answer isn't always easy to come by.

■ **Big followings don't count (as much).** Evolutions in the approach to influencer marketing suggests things are changing. And it's about time. Brands have come to realise that big follower counts don't necessarily mean something if the followers don't care about what's being shared. At the same time, celebrity audiences realise that much of the brand activity on their accounts is the result of an impressive paycheck, as opposed to an organic, tried-and-tested review. In its own way, this has brought into question the value this brings for brands, with ROI coming under scrutiny, as marketing budgets are pulled tighter and the call for real value increases.

■ **Power to the people.** That's where people like you come in. Yes, YOU. The "normal" person sitting on the other side of the screen. Whether you know it or not, you have a circle of influence, and it can give real value to brands – while putting real money into your pocket. "Normal" people like you are fast becoming a hot commodity in the world of influencer marketing – and we say, more power to you!

■ **The rise of the "normal" person influencer.** "Normal" people working as influencers have become increasingly important for marketers – and for good reason. Not only do they produce niche content, but their audiences are highly engaged. They're real people who have conversations with other people; who exist within real communities, and; have a real impact on the lives of those around them. They create real connections, so any brand or product advocacy is authentic because it's founded on trust. The people they're talking to, from their friends to their family to their followers, are more inclined to believe them. And when the time has been taken and an effort made to match the person with a brand they already know and use, the result is something exceptional!

As marketing magic goes, there are few things more meaningful and effective than something real. Real people who help brands create real connections with real audiences and give real results. And when it comes to the world of influencer marketing, what could be better than that?

# The next wave of ransomware

Ransomware as a trend will continue to affect businesses across the world in 2022, with attack types and tactics evolving all the time. As attacks get more sophisticated, so do the consequences of falling victim to ransomware and the complexity of the clean-up.

Organisations need to understand the emerging trends that we will see gather speed throughout 2022 and prepare their defences.

## ► Make your business insurable

The tension between insurers and businesses affected by ransomware is mounting. In EMEA we have already seen global insurance giant AXA announced that it will stop writing cyber-insurance policies in France that reimburse customers for extortion payments made to ransomware criminals. Furthermore, the Dutch government has considered banning insurers from covering the cost of ransom payments made by businesses operating in the Netherlands. With insurers overwhelmed and frustrated by ransomware claims, underwriters will tighten up their policies to ensure clients are meeting predetermined conditions such as investing in appropriate cybersecurity and employee training before paying out.

## ► Watch out for triple extortion

This technique, designed to make businesses pay more and pay faster, involves extending the attack to the victim's customers and partners. Traditionally, ransomware attacks involve cybercriminals locking down and encrypting systems then demanding a ransom payment to regain access. In 2019 ransomware strains

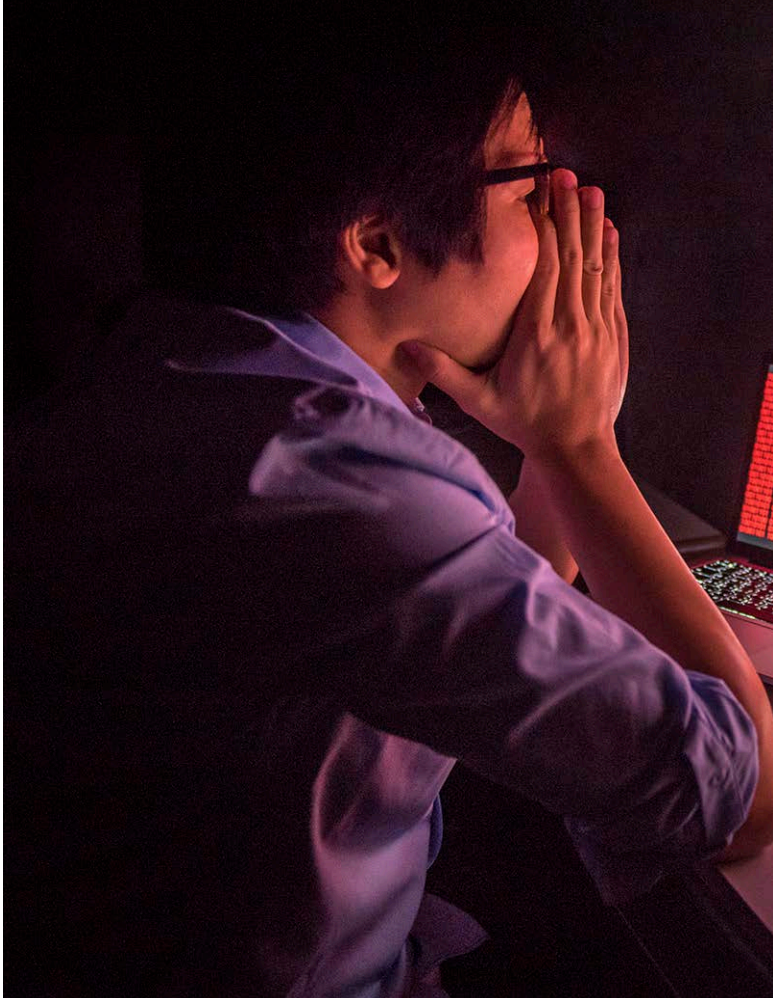
such as DoppelPaymer gave cybercriminals the ability to lock down systems and exfiltrate data simultaneously.

Not only can attackers demand ransom money for regaining access to key IT systems, but they can also threaten to publish exfiltrated data online if the victim didn't pay up. Triple extortion involves a third element: directing the attack beyond its initial target, using multi-layered extortion techniques to harm the victim's customers and partners.

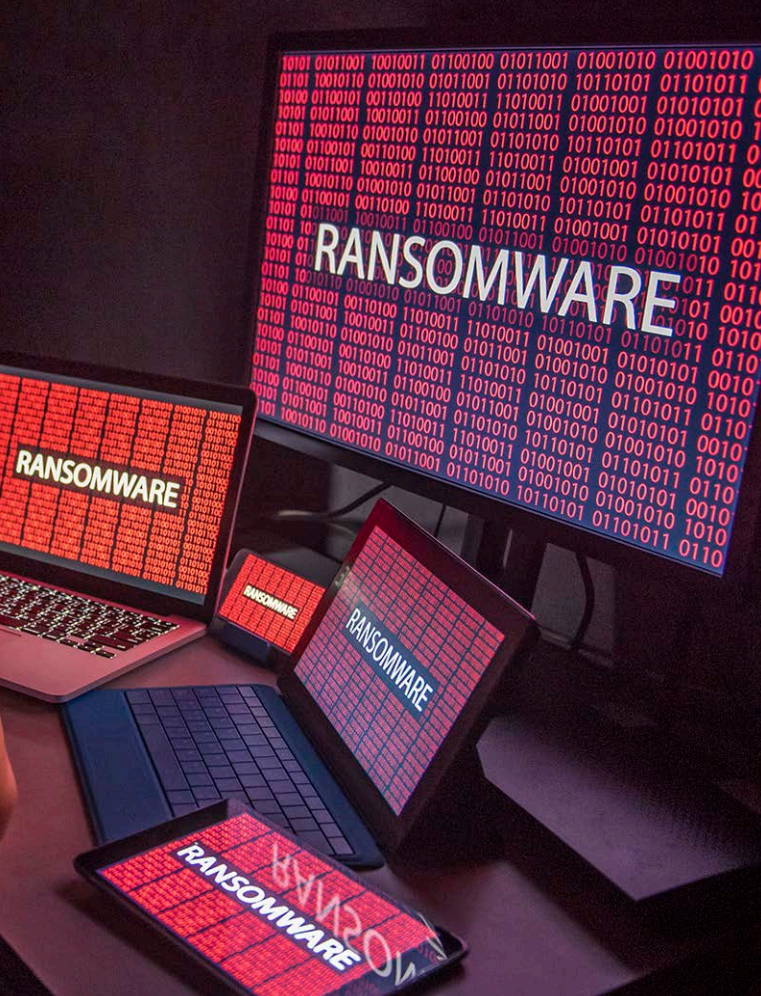
## ► Minimise the threat within

Various studies suggest that over 60% of data breaches and cybersecurity incidents are caused by insider threats. Disgruntled employees understand the power they have in terms of opening the doors to the outside.

Equally, perfectly satisfied employees who do not grasp the importance of practising good digital hygiene can be equally dangerous. Digital hygiene is the first line of defence for an organisation. Using two-factor authentication and restricting file access to only those who need it are ways of limiting the amount of damage a single user can do if security is compromised intentionally or unintentionally. Furthermore, training and education are vital to making sure employees are confident in identifying and reporting potential attacks.







### ► Beware of the slow burn

Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) attacks involve unauthorised users gaining access to a system or network and remaining there for an extended period of time without being detected – waiting for the right opportunity to steal valuable data.

Cyber-attackers are clever about choosing the right time to strike and maximising their chances of getting an easy payday by compromising a company when they are at their most vulnerable or when the stakes are highest. For example, an attacker may be ready to take your systems down and exfiltrate data, but know that your company is due to IPO in a few months. It therefore makes sense to wait it out and take you down at the moment you need the operational and reputational damage least and will be most willing to payout to end the attack.

### ► Enforce the law

Law enforcers are trying to bridge the imbalance between risk and reward for cybercriminals. Cybercriminals can make huge sums of money with little or no threat of prosecution. This will and has to change.

However, given the borderless nature of cybercrime, governments must agree on an international legal framework for punishing cybercrime. Until then legal

**Triple extortion, designed to make businesses pay more and pay faster, involves extending the attack to the victim's customers and partners.**

action will mainly be directed towards the victims rather than the criminals. Many governments are debating whether they should make ransomware payments illegal, so businesses resist the temptation to pay ransoms – cutting off cybercriminals' income supply. Moreover, cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, commonly viewed as a hacker's dream, actually have the potential to help law enforcers bring criminals to justice. Digital ledgers like Blockchain make it easier to 'follow the money' as records cannot be altered or deleted. Therefore, once criminals turn their cryptocurrency into 'real money', the digital ledger can theoretically unmask them.

### ► Protect your data

Everything from the advancing threat landscape to changes in the way the legal and insurance sectors view ransomware payouts puts the onus on data protection and cybersecurity. Organisations must consult with their technology partners about deploying Modern Data Protection solutions that can detect, mitigate and remediate ransomware attacks.

Data must be backed up and recoverable across physical, virtual, cloud, SaaS and Kubernetes so that in the event of a ransomware attack, businesses can remediate and recover quickly rather than being forced into paying the ransom.

As well as implementing Modern Data Protection solutions, businesses must prioritise improving digital hygiene levels across their entire employee base. Employee education and awareness training can help to create a more digitally secure culture across the organisation. A 'human firewall' combined with the right technology can help organisations prepare themselves for the ransomware attacks that will inevitably come their way in 2022 and beyond.



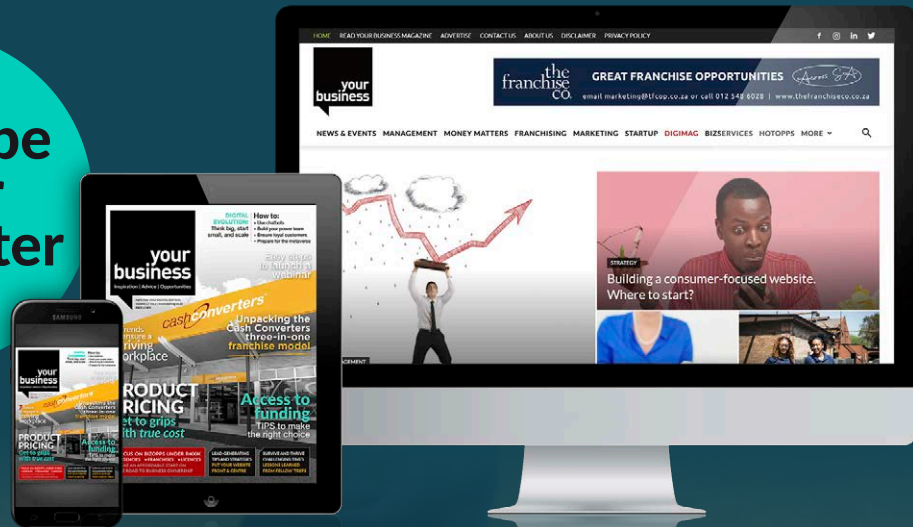
By Edwin Weijdem, Global Technologist, Veeam.



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