

Building business relationships as a SMME

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Being an entrepreneur or small-business owner can be a lonely place; so getting to interact with other like-minded individuals and being exposed to business opportunities, can be challenging. To help you build your business relationships.



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Many business owners forget that their business relationships also need nurturing to ensure success. One of the best ways to do this is through business networking and being involved in business 'match-making' forums. Many people cringe at the idea of going to networking sessions or forums. However, it is definitely worth moving out of your comfort zone to get involved in interacting with organisations that are geared towards addressing small business needs and creating access to market opportunities. Here are some worthwhile organisations and forums:

- **The National Small Business Chamber:**

The NSBC is dedicated to helping small businesses grow, connect and network. The organisation runs a number of conferences and events throughout the year – as well as other member benefits – that cater for the needs of self-employed and small- to medium-size businesses. Subscription is free and at some of these events 'hook up' sessions are hosted. To find out more visit www.nsbcc.org.za

- **Business Engage:**

Business Engage is a member based organisation that focuses on enabling entrepreneurs to maximise their growth and profits through a variety of offerings, including networking, conferences, mentorship, training, international collaboration and entrepreneurship development, and support. They have a host of helpful online resources to equip entrepreneurs. To find out more about their events and resources visit www.businessengage.co.za

- **Business Chambers of Commerce and Industry:**

It is a good idea to join your city's Business Chamber as they prove invaluable for networking with other entrepreneurs in your area, as well as connecting with big businesses. Members are drawn from every sector of the economy, and range from independent entrepreneurs to the large corporates. They also promote enterprise development, offer free skills development training, and business advisory services. Visit: www.jcci.co.za, www.durbanchamber.co.za, www.nmbbusinesschamber.co.za and www.capechamber.co.za

- **The Business Women's Association of South Africa:**

The BWASA is the largest association of professional and business women in South Africa – with a head office in Johannesburg and eleven branches across the country. With regular events and networking sessions, this is an ideal forum for business women to meet. Visit www.bwasa.co.za

- **Visit these online sites to find more networking opportunities:**

Online resources and publications geared towards entrepreneurial development, and upliftment in general, are often hosts or they promote events. To get more information on your sector and for free or affordable conferences and workshops, visit sites such as www.smesouthafrica.co.za, www.spice4life.co.za, www.ventureburn.com, www.catalystmag.co.za, and www.simodisa.com.

For more information on small business advice, go to www.SMEasy.co.za.

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