

# Telkom Business's Yep! portal designed to help SMMEs make the big digital leap

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Telkom Business has launched Yep!, a portal dedicated to helping South Africa's struggling SMMEs transition onto digital platforms. Keneilwe Gwabeni, Telkom's chief information officer says that the portal aims to provide SMMEs with an easy way to set up a shopfront in a national digital marketplace.



“Yep! is essentially the reinvention of the Yellow Pages for the digital age, providing an online marketplace where customers and businesses can find each other,” she says. “Yep! is creating a digital ecosystem in which SMMEs can expand their reach to acquire new customers and develop new linkages with other SMMEs whose businesses complement their own – collaboration is key in the modern, digitalised economy.”

Yep! was conceptualised with the difficulties faced by SMMEs in South Africa very much in mind. Globally, according to figures from the Small Business Institute, SMMEs are seen as engines of growth and job creation – just the medicine our ailing economy desperately needs. But despite making up 98.5% of the economy, South African SMMEs create only 28% of its jobs. By contrast, in successful economies, SMMEs also make up the bulk of the economy but they also employ 60%–70% of the workforce and account for up to 60% of GDP.

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years to develop. ”

One of the reasons for the underperformance of the SMME sector could be the unwillingness of South African entrepreneurs to adjust their business plans to new realities. In this case, the new reality is the unstoppable shift to digital platforms, accelerated by the Covid-19 lockdowns. Digital platforms are essential on many grounds, not least the opportunities they offer to reach new markets and streamline business processes. Yep! will instantly give an SMME the kind

of national shop window that would take a brick-and-mortar business years to develop.

Yep! backs this up by providing assistance in setting of the necessary website, and training as needed to help SMMEs begin optimising their business processes. Further assistance in creating and building a brand, and marketing products and services is also available if required.

Another key benefit of moving online means SMMEs will be able to accept digital payments, something that's important for security and also because digital payments automatically create a financial record that can be used to access capital funding.

"Access to capital is one of the key challenges for SMMEs, as is the ability to find new customers – Yep! will provide a solution to both these issues," concludes Gwabeni. "As a leading corporate we see this not as just a business opportunity, but also an obligation to help nurture the vital SMME sector in the quest for a more inclusive and vibrant economy."

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