

SMS solutions essential for an inclusive business strategy in SA

By [Greg Chen](#), issued by [Hook, Line & Sinker](#)

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South African companies must take care not to inadvertently deepen the existing digital divide. Although Covid-19 and related lockdowns have accelerated a growing trend towards the digital economy such as artificial intelligence, in an unequal society such as South Africa, many consumers find it difficult to access data-intensive apps and processes.



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This makes it vital for local businesses to include different forms of technology in their business strategies to ensure their operations are running inclusively. An effective way to do this is by including SMS solutions in customer processes.

Once seen as a luxury, mobile phones are now in the hands of 95% of South Africans, according to [Geopoll](#), with data-hungry smartphones accounting for 91% of devices.

However, data prices in South Africa are some of the highest in the world. This is reflected in a [study](#) by Cable.co.uk which ranked South Africa 136th worldwide for its mobile data based on the cost of 1 gigabyte (1GB). As such, SMS solutions are still a great platform for businesses to utilise in 2021, as WhatsApps and emails rely on data to be delivered. SMS reaches stakeholders across locations and income groups, making it an inclusive and accessible format.

Some of the industries that can benefit from this approach include:

Retail and e-commerce: Companies in the retail sector, be it online or a brick-and-mortar store, can use SMS to reach their full audience with personalised and tailored deals to customers based on their buying behaviours. They can also share payment links and leverage customer insights through data.

Healthcare: Information compliance is essential in the healthcare industry. For example, medical aid companies are reliant on customer information and unfortunately this can become outdated quickly. This data-collection can be done safely and

in real-time by using privacy features through reputable SMS solution providers, all without impacting a customer's data bundle.

Financial services: SMS solutions can integrate with various payment partners making collections quick and seamless. These integrations make it easy for businesses to send statements - and even easier for the customer to make payments with a 0-data barrier. This also means that businesses can save paper and ensure all data is digitised.

Education: As schools have been operating remotely on-and-off to mitigate the spread of Covid-19, SMS solutions are becoming more and more beneficial to communicate with parents and students alike. They can be used for any form of notification, emergencies, admissions, or even to perform tests.

Internal communications: A recent PwC [survey](#) showed that as a result of the pandemic more employees wish to work from home in the future. Just over a third of South African workers (33%) say that in the future they would prefer for their working environment to be a blend of face-to-face and remote work. With this in mind, SMS solutions are a great way for the company to stay connected, promote employee engagement, and remain personal.

Taking SMS beyond the character limit

While traditional SMS achieves the reach, businesses are no longer limited to 160 characters. Mobiz goes beyond text messages with hyper-personalised landing pages delivered to recipients via SMS. This gives businesses more room to communicate the necessities without compromising the benefits of reach or marketing personalisation. Mobiz landing pages are also data-free for users, improving accessibility and allowing companies to effectively communicate or engage stakeholders across the board.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Chen is founder and CEO of mobile marketing company Mobiz - offering personalised, secure and trusted SMS marketing at scale.

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