

Mobiz keeps communication going during lockdown



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

30 Apr 2020

#TheLockdownSeries explores the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses, how they prepared for lockdown and its impacts on operations and employees, as well as lessons learned that we can take into the post-Covid-19 era.



Greg Chen, CEO of Mobiz

[Mobiz](#), an innovative South African startup combining the ubiquity of SMS with the visual power of the web to change the way South African companies talk to their customers.

As an example, a fashion retailer wouldn't just be restricted to sending out its winter specials. Instead, it could send out personalised deals and discounts based on a person's spending patterns, past purchases, and other characteristics.

Mobiz' mobile tools have made communication between businesses and their consumers a whole lot more convenient in a time of the nationwide lockdown.

Greg Chen, CEO of Mobiz, shares what business has been like amidst the Covid-19 pandemic...

How has Covid-19 impacted your business?

Covid-19 has actually had a positive impact on our business. In the run-up to the crisis, a lot of major South African companies realised that communicating with their customers would be imperative. While most customers used to do outbound communication with both email and SMS, during the lockdown most businesses are now focusing their time and resources on direct channels.

“ What became clear is that they needed something which could offer them a more immediate way of communicating with their customers without compromising on hyper-personalised, well designed messaging. That reaches all its intended recipients due to us being the one of the only business messaging that cost no mobile data to consumers. ”

The number of messages sent using our SmartSMS platform has actually increased 150% since the beginning of the outbreak.

#AfricaMonth: Mobiz, the startup changing how SA corporates talk to customers



■ ***How did you prepare for the lockdown?***

We were fortunate to have recent key hires that came from remote ready companies which brought in a lot of knowledge in remote work protocols. Being a tech-focused company, we were able to transition to remote work fairly seamlessly.

■ ***What's the biggest challenge you are facing during this pandemic?***

We are a small, close-knit team. We do miss being in the office, especially when it comes to hashing out new ideas and plans in amongst some good-natured banter.

■ ***What sort of assistance will you need going forward?***

We're fortunate in that we are able to maintain cash positive revenue and recently closed a funding round. While our clients may face some lean times, we strongly believe we play a key role in helping them return to prosperity in the months to come.

■ ***If you are able to operate, What steps are you taking to continue operating?***

We're fortunate to be a technology-focused company. Outside of leaving the office behind, it's largely been business as usual for us. Of course, one disadvantage is onboarding new team members. We are a tight-knit team and it is much more difficult to build rapport over Zoom and Slack.

■ ***What measures have you put in place for your employees?***

We subsidize the cost of Covid-19 tests for any employees who wish to or qualify to get tested. We've also prepared masks and hand sanitizers for when the lockdown has ended. Of course, the world we know has changed and so we will continue to promote remote work within our operations.

■ ***Are you communicating with your customers? If so, how?***

Our business model is predicated on helping our customers communicate with their customers. We wouldn't be doing our jobs if we didn't provide the same level of communication. We regularly check in on our customers, ensuring that they are getting the most out of the Mobiz SmartSMS platform. We are also always on hand to answer any questions they might have, whether that's around creating campaigns, optimising their databases, or understanding the ultimate results.

“  Mobiz update regarding the upcoming Covid-19 National Lockdown. pic.twitter.com/NWxG5iYB1c— Mobiz South Africa (@Mobiz_RSA) [March 25, 2020](#) ”

■ ***How are you offering assistance to your customers who rely on your services?***

As a startup, we don't always have the resources necessary to help our enterprise customers beyond minor payment term extensions.

“ We have also agreed to help smaller businesses with subsidizing their fixed platform cost for the next three months. ”

■ ***What do you predict the next 6 months will be like?***

The next six months will be challenging for all businesses, but the ones that prove most resilient are those that consistently communicate with their customers. Importantly, this shouldn't just be communication for the sake of communication but personalised and relevant to their customers' individual and changing needs during this pandemic.

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🔴 ***Now is the time to innovate and experiment. What is Mobiz doing?***

We are working with the Silicon Valley B2B Accelerator, The Alchemist, to build better onboarding and user experience for enterprises of all sizes. We also recently concluded an internal brand audit, and will be relaunching our website and product messaging very soon.

🔴 ***What has been your biggest lesson from all this?***

Business is always uncertain, but there are some things you simply cannot plan for. Every business needs to be able to quickly adapt to new kinds of normal as they appear. This is also where we have seen our recent successes in that our customers have leaned on the agility of our product to pivot their customer engagement.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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