

Supporting small business at Saica Enterprise Development amid the coronavirus spread

By [Jameel Khan](#) , issued by [SAICA](#)

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With markets in current turmoil amid the coronavirus spread, this is the time for small businesses to relook at their current business processes and understand how their business can respond in these chaotic times.



This message has also been echoed by billionaire Mark Cuban, who recently said, “This is also a good time to clean up all the little messes every small business has. Everyone has things they wish they could redo. Now is the time to make those changes.”

So what should small businesses be doing?

Firstly, and most importantly, protect your employees. Ensure there is enough spacing of desks, installation of hand sanitisers and other prescribed measures from the World Health Organisation.

Further to this, companies need to ensure that they have developed protocols for staff to work from home in order to reduce the risk of infection and the risk of spread. This would of course only be suitable for employees whose roles allow them to work from home and businesses that can function with employees working from home.

Protocols would also include ensuring employees are aware of their responsibilities, highlighting clear reporting lines and ensuring processes are clearly communicated and defined.

Businesses should gear up for working virtually. There are a number of benefits of operating virtually which are highlighted in my article below:

{{<https://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/751/200514.html>}}

In order to facilitate this agile work force business should ensure employees have access to sufficient data and businesses

should implement a platform to host virtual meetings like Microsoft Teams. Google have also made the premium features of its Hangouts Meet video-conferencing platform free for all users until July 1. Look to use WhatsApp or other project management tools to ensure targets and deadlines are being communicated and adhered to by employees.

Perhaps it would be worthwhile to create WhatsApp groups or look into project management tools to ensure targets are being met.

Here are eight useful tips in order to make the home office a success: <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/15/815549926/8-tips-to-make-working-from-home-work-for-you>.

Further to this, I believe this is the message that we should be communicating to the public during and after the lockdown period:

Shop local. We're in this together.
Local businesses need your support now more than ever.

- Get it to go.** Order from your local restaurants and bars via delivery service, to-go, or curbside pickup.
- Shop small online.** Websites haven't closed and it's important to leave positive reviews for local vendors and businesses.
- Buy in advance.** Purchase gift cards or book services from local businesses to use at a future date.
- Stay looped in.** Keep up with your memberships, and with services that are still offered online.
- Follow along.** Your favorite local businesses are online and sharing specific ways you can support them.
- Say thank you.** Many business owners and workers are risking their health to provide critical products and services. Be thankful.

Small business owners should also use the following checklists which have been created by Facebook to put into context their own resiliency and guides for action:

Small Business Resilience Toolkit: https://scontent.fjnb9-1.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t39.8562-6/89382325_805546553278969_2529746311553482752_n.pdf/resource-hub_tool1.pdf?_nc_cat=104&_nc_sid=ad8a9d&_nc_ohc=JkKziiPt32UAX-byIXR&_nc_ht=scontent.fjnb9-1.fna&oh=2d279fa97d2c25168bdef20dec7d9eb1&oe=5E9EABD8#

Small Business Quick Action Guide: https://scontent.fjnb9-1.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t39.8562-6/88363478_155757122205084_8102107074034401280_n.pdf/resource-hub_tool2.pdf?_nc_cat=111&_nc_sid=ad8a9d&_nc_ohc=neXC5rskrq8AX_N8oWT&_nc_ht=scontent.fjnb9-1.fna&oh=b44358fcf00f4bf5d6d11561d638dd6b&oe=5E9C6016#

Research into resilience in SMEs to date has tended to focus upon the characteristics and capabilities of SMEs, and on the individual resilience of their leaders. Here are six useful tips to help leaders navigate through these tough times: <https://www.london.edu/think/how-to-lead-for-good-when-times-are-bad>.

How can your small business survive during lockdown?

The president announced lockdown measures from Thursday, midnight, 26 March, till Thursday, 16 April. This is to ensure that we “flatten the curve”. Small businesses need to enter survival mode for this period of time.

Once this period of time is over, there is no guarantee that the virus is going to be contained, so small businesses should continue to operate at minimal cost and in survival mode. This includes moving online and working virtually if possible. Businesses should ensure that they are communicating with the clients/customers as often as possible via social media or telephonically.

Below is an article which provides some useful tips on staying connected with customers through the coronavirus from the NSBC founder and CEO:

<https://www.thesmallbusinesssite.co.za/2020/03/16/covid-19-and-your-small-business/>

If the business is taking financial strain, there are some financial relief options available which have been listed below.

- R500 million available from SA Small Business Department Debt Relief Fund
<https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/finance/coronavirus-debt-relief-fund-how-to-apply/>
- R2 billion available from the Industrial Development Corporation for distressed companies
<https://www.idc.co.za/2020/03/24/idc-interventions-in-response-to-covid-19/>
- R200 million will be set aside by the Ministry of Tourism
<https://ewn.co.za/2020/03/24/tourism-dept-sets-aside-r200m-for-small-businesses-likely-to-be-hit-by-lockdown>
- R800 million available from the UIF for Small Business
<https://ewn.co.za/2020/03/24/uif-receives-increased-smme-applications-for-covid-19-relief>
- R30 billion will be set aside by the UIF in a National Disaster Benefit Fund
<https://www.fin24.com/Economy/South-Africa/r30bn-uif-lifeline-for-workers-hit-by-coronavirus-crackdown-20200324>
- \$100 billion available from Facebook Small Business Grant
<https://www.facebook.com/business/boost/grants>

In addition to this there were further financial reliefs.

- People who earn less than R6,500 a month will get a wage subsidy of R500.
- Businesses with a turnover of less than R50 million a year will be able to delay their tax payments for the next couple of months.
- Standard Bank, ABSA, FNB, Nedbank have all announced measures of relief to their customers. I'm sure other banks are also due to providing relief.

Do keep abreast of current news as there will be more reliefs announced every day.

How SAICA Enterprise Development is helping

Our mission is to grow small businesses and entrepreneurs, so please get in touch with us! Whether you are a contributor or entrepreneur we can develop a customised model for you.

Contact details:

- Investor-related queries please contact our various regions:
 - Eastern Cape/Western Cape: Jolandi at Jolandis@thehopefactory.co.za or call 082 417 4695.
 - KwaZulu-Natal: Therese at ThereseK@saicaed.co.za or call 072 725 6093.
 - Gauteng/Free State: Adelaide at AdelaideV@saicaed.co.za or call 011 479 0641.
- For any general queries or info please email Karabo at enquiries@saicaed.co.za.

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