

Startup owners should seek business advice online

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The Covid-19 lockdown has forced many of us to take things online, whether it was to do online banking for the first time or to do online events via Zoom (and other platforms).

However, many still feel that meetings or conferences are best done in person, especially when it comes to networking. But the question remains: How can you leverage getting business advice online because you want to save time on travelling and save money on transport expenses?

In his series *#VellyTalks: Secure your business's future with Velly Bosega*, the entrepreneur and founder of [Startwise](#) shares ways for entrepreneurs and freelancers to increase their chance of business success and protect their fledgling business from becoming an unfortunate statistic.

In part two of the series, Bosega addresses why it is important to seek advice or support as a new business owner, and how you can make use of online platforms like Startwise to ask for business advice.

Asking the right questions is still a challenge for many new business owners, entrepreneurs and freelancers, and many do not know where to go to get business advice. It is not as simple as logging into Facebook and asking in a Facebook group for help on a business challenge.

Bosega warns that this method can be dangerous. “The problem with asking for business advice in a Facebook group or even Google, is that you will get a generic answer. Many people share advice based on their own experiences or on something they have heard or read somewhere. Then they don’t ask you questions specific to your situation, so the advice you will get might only help on a limited level or be of no help at all. “This is why you need to ask for help from a business coach or a mentor in a one-on-one setting, because they can guide you to ask the right questions, and from there you can get the right answers to your specific situation,” Bosega adds.

Beware of researching for answers online

Bosega warns that trying to find answers on Google on your own can lead to outdated information. He suggests that new business owners, entrepreneurs and freelancers look at Startwise to get business advice from business experts.

[Startwise](#) is a virtual on-demand consulting platform where small business owners can connect with experts to obtain mentoring and business coaching. Last year the platform was announced the winner of the ‘National Start-Up Champion’ award at the NSBC Small Business Awards ceremony.

Not getting the right answers for your business challenges can lead to you making continuous mistakes as a business owner and a possible business failure.

According to [SA Accounting Academy](#), anywhere between 30% and 50% of new businesses in South Africa fail while another large percentage of small businesses don’t achieve their full potential due to a lack of information and a lack of financial management skills.

A lack of financial expertise rates high on their list of concerns.

The academy revealed that many entrepreneurs do not understand the financial requirements of a business such as the VAT, tax, costing, financial controls and other obligations that are part of the business mix.

Although entrepreneurs can adopt the self-study route to teach themselves these skills on the internet, self-study without external input requires industry know-how and time; these are things new business owners often don't have.

With the rise of fake information on the internet, business owners also put themselves at risk of incorporating unfounded information into their business plans.

[The Conversation Africa](#), a platform funded by the National Research Foundation ran a study and found that more than 75% of South Africans say they regularly come across political news they think is false. Eight out of 10 South Africans believe that disinformation (or 'fake news') is a problem or a serious problem in the country.

According to the [National Youth Development Agency](#), mentorship assists with this problem.

How mentorship can assist business growth:

- It allows the business owner access to a senior role model.
- A mentor can provide guidance, help the mentee ask the right questions which are specific to his or her situation.
- Seeing the previous success of a mentor can act as a source of motivation.
- A mentor's experience can assist in providing emotional support.
- Mentors can assist a business owner with developing contacts.
- Business owners are aided in goal setting.

Bosega advises that new business owners, entrepreneurs and freelancers make use of the Startwise platform. They can sign up for business guidance. They have the option to browse experts according to their field or area of expertise to connect with them on-demand for a scheduled consultation.

The platform provides a forum on which mentees can engage with mentors and ask questions relating to their businesses, before making the decision to book a mentor for a consultation. Mentees can also look at a variety of masterclasses done by several business coaches and mentors and learn from them.



More about Startwise

Startwise is not only an award-winning platform but also a first for South Africa and the African continent. Startwise conveniently provides consultation services to SMME owners in their own time, so they can save money and grow their businesses successfully, but they also provide a flexible working environment for business mentors to earn an income online by helping businesses and entrepreneurs succeed.

[Visit Startwise for on-demand business advice in South Africa.](#)

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