

7 things you need to know before opening a B&B

The tourism industry is now in recovery mode following a couple of years of being stunted due to travel restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The climate is now seemingly right for entrepreneurs to invest in the sector.



Source: freestockcenter via [Freepik](#)

As much as it may seem like it is a good time to start a B&B, there are things you need to know in order to make sure your investment will be protected.

Starting a business, and succeeding, takes careful planning and a lot of hard work and is not something that can be achieved overnight - or as South Africans like to say, 'it's not *pap en vleis*'.

Knowledge is power, so if you want to start a B&B, these are some of the things you need to know:

Plan properly within the necessary laws

Whether you'll be refurbishing an old house or building a new one for your business, make sure that the [land use zoning](#) according to your local town planning authorities allows you to operate a B&B on that land.

There are also other regulatory considerations before you get started and these include:

- Make sure that you operate according to labour laws,
- Register your business and get the proper licensing to operate your business
- Observe the standard health and safety protocols required by law.

Don't cut corners

When getting your inventory ready, buy the best linens, kitchen equipment, and furniture you can afford. Cutting corners will damage your B&B's reputation and because of interactive review sites, where customers share their travel experiences, the damage may be irreparable as their reviews will live online.

The customer experience should complement your marketing efforts because travel products are personal to the customer, for example, the standard of food, decor or facilities at an establishment. If one of the two slacks off the other can't sustain a travel business by itself.

Study your destination and leverage on tourism offerings that aren't your competitors

Tshepo Matlou, who is Head of Marketing and Communications at online booking, Jurni says: "It's important for tourism operators, big and small, to network and find ways to leverage each other's strengths. For context, a guest house is not in competition with an activity provider. Collaboration in this regard will benefit both parties and eventually, the industry."

A digital footprint is a must-have

It is virtually impossible for a small business operating in the travel space to compete successfully without the use of technology. Modern travellers pick their destinations and also pay for their travel experiences online. A digital footprint is a must-have.

Matlou says: "It is costly to incorporate the technological advancements that assist tourism operators in securing bookings. Partnering with a bigger company that already has the technology in place is a smart way for an SMME to avoid having to shoulder those costs and propel their businesses into the arena where digitally savvy travellers will notice them."

Get graded as soon as possible

Being graded by a recognised authority like the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) is one way for SMMEs to instantly enhance their credibility.

"Grading doesn't just provide a tourism business with a certificate and a plaque - it makes good business sense. It's a seal of approval that assures travellers that the quality of what you're offering has been verified by an objective and impartial entity," says Matlou.

Keep relevant health and safety protocols

Covid-19 is still around, so the travel and tourism industry will need to continue upholding health and safety standards.

"Covid-19 remains something we have to work with, both as a factor and a barrier in our business. It's part of the way forward. Gradual and safe reopening of the industry is very important and health and safety protocols should be followed to ensure that travel isn't restricted again. If that were to happen, it would be even harder for the industry to bounce back, because it would have bled value multiple times," explains Matlou.

Get your business insured

Running a B&B comes with risks that you can insure against for a peace of mind, knowing that should something unwanted

happen, you'd be covered against extensive financial loss. These risks include fire, damage to property due to harsh weather, theft and robbery, among others.

South Africa has world class destinations and the tourism sector offers many opportunities for investment as a result, however, you should take these tips into consideration before you follow your dream and start a B&B.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>