

Why SMMEs need to think small

They say you need to walk before you learn to run. Many new business owners are more likely to deliver this sage advice to their petulant child than use it themselves. Yes, there are examples of businesses that started in a garage and within a blink of an eye became multi-billion rand runaway successes. These are usually tech brands with a great idea whose time had arrived.



Photo by Mguel Á. Padriñán© from [Pexels](#)

For most SMMEs who serve everyday consumers or other businesses, growth only comes in time - time which is frustratingly peppered with many 'Did I make the right decision?' moments.

So, why would thinking small be a key to success?

It starts with the comparison to bigger brands or established competitors. They are big on advertising, online presence, and splashy branded events that turn your eyes green with envy. These are, of course, fantastic tools when your business is up and running at speed, but daunting when it's not. The key for SMMEs who have yet to blaze their own trail is to use the methodology behind these tools but take a more patient approach – thinking smaller.

“The make-or-break moments happen within the first two years of the birth of a company. These milestones also appear

when a business decides on a communication plan and embraces new tools to take the next step forward. Every experienced SMME owner knows that each investment must be carefully considered. There will always be time to seize the day, but a smarter risk-averse strategy can pay dividends over time, “says Ivan Radmore, CEO of BuzzApex.

As counterintuitive as it may seem, thinking big when you have limited resources can be counterproductive and hugely costly. It’s essential to learn best practice and then tailor it to your environment to maximise results.

Is thinking small smart?

It can be. And it definitely is when thinking small means adapting big ideas to your local area. Big fish in smaller ponds get noticed. When the time comes to move to larger rivers, you’ll be a better swimmer with just a few tactics inspired by the ‘big boys’.

Click with the community

Big businesses tend to be everywhere online. Thinking smaller with limited resources means creating, claiming, and updating all the local business listings and profiles to match your product offering.

In addition to your website, be sure you maintain an updated and active Google local business listing, a Facebook page and any other site that offers local profiles for your industry. When a potential customer searches for “my city” + “your service,” ensure that they see you everywhere. This is the start of getting in the streams of local business that you simply need to thrive. Having a strong internet presence is a business imperative, as is ensuring that all bases are covered.

Don’t be two-faced

If you operate in a smaller community, your company can stand out by putting a face to the company or product. People have an easier time trusting a company when they know and respect the face behind the brand. The more they trust you, the more likely they’ll be to buy. This may mean engaging local or community radio stations or even creating local ads with the photo or the name of the owner. Becoming an authority on topics important to the community adds weight to your brand.

Encourage small talk

If your product is good, then existing customers will be talking about it. Although it doesn’t help if only the customer or their inquisitive aunt knows about it. These testimonials must be leveraged to build trust. The fact is people love to search for reviews before trying out new products or services.

If you don’t have many reviews on your social platform or website, it’s time to start encouraging them.

Don’t be big news

Local newsletters that are relevant to defined communities or industries create good credibility and visibility in the market. Where possible, direct mail works on a local level to target customers and prospects in a way few companies are doing. This means one company’s junk mail, could be your company’s gold.

Have a heart

The best way to be noticed in the local community is to support the causes that matter and make an impact over the long haul. When you make an impact, even a small one, people will notice you, and in the process learn about your business. And while you’re in the community be sure to attend local events like conferences, trade fairs, and markets.

These factors have a cumulative effect over time. While many big corporates market their plethora of initiatives, few really

engage with people the way a targeted local approach can.

Dotcom smaller

While having a website seems to be a given these days, the cost of designing and maintaining one can be costly. Unless you need a site that requires commerce capabilities, keep it simple. If the maintenance of the website does not justify the costs spent, focus your efforts on the social media platforms.

In the beginning, social media, customer reviews and community interaction will reap more value. A concise website that professionally describes your service will suffice. You may find that a free-to-access online platform, such as BuzzApex, may be more beneficial as a focus, improving productivity levels and providing businesses with innovative and secure ways to access their data, ongoing projects, and even pursue new local marketing avenues through their catalogues function is the way forward for companies of any size.

“A local approach may feel small for a business with big aspirations or a product envisioned for a national market. However, over time it requires less resources and as you move community to community you eventually begin to speak to a wider audience with the voices of customers paving the way forward,” concludes Radmore.

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