

Make your business stand out during lockdown

By [Vince De Castro](#)

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For the most part, most South Africans are back at work under level 3 lockdown. Despite the court ruling that lockdown regulations are unconstitutional, there are still several weeks to go until we could possibly move to level 2. Until then, businesses need to stand out in order to survive. But how?



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Level 4 and 5 of the nationwide lockdown were very tough for business. As a result, many had to close down, particularly in the retail sector. Now, in level 3, there's a lot of 'catching up' to do as far as turnover is concerned.

But with so many companies in the same boat who are vying for attention in a cluttered marketplace, it's not easy to stand out and get customers to notice your product or service. Now is the time to stand up and differentiate yourself.

Here are a few ideas for making your business stand out:

- **Boost your social media presence**

If it doesn't happen online nowadays, it just doesn't happen at all. Staying relevant online is the key to getting your business noticed. The most effective way to do that is through interesting and shareable content.

Social media users engage with content that is of interest in some way. This can be as simple as a killer deal on a desirable product, or it can be something that entertains. Nando's is a brand that does this exceptionally well.

Their marketing content is frequently shared online because it is funny and/or relevant. And if your branded content is good enough to be shared, half the battle is already won. Sharing can – and will – exponentially grow recognition and affinity for your company.

It's true, not everybody is like Nando's. But content can be relevant in a number of ways. If it is informative in some way, it adds value, becoming shareable because it's useful. Blogs are an effective platform through which to share information and engage with your customer base and so is video.

It's also important to keep posting content regularly, to try and keep your business top-of-mind. The content you post doesn't always have to be your own. Curated content that is meaningful to your customer base is also useful. Many companies share news stories or video from other online sources, and that's fine, provided the creators of the content are credited.

- **Add extra value for your customers**

What makes you different from your competitors? If the answer is 'nothing', it's time to examine what you can do differently – even more so now in a cluttered marketplace. Giving customers “a little something extra” that is of perceived value inspires loyalty.

Going above and beyond where your competitors don't will get you noticed. Value doesn't have to come in the form of a physical 'thing' necessarily, and it doesn't have to cost much. It can be something as simple as a great service ethic or offering the customer a cup of coffee.

Service with a smile goes a long way. It lets your customers know that you value their business. Little touches that show the customer you're going the extra mile will make them want to come back for more of the same.

- **Expand your product offering**

This may require a bit of lateral thinking. If you sell tyres and tyres only, it may be hard to add additional income streams to that, for example. But what if you did something completely different? You could sell tyres and also sell advertising space to your suppliers on your website or shopfront.

Alternatively, take a detailed look at your customer's journey. Is that journey really as streamlined and smooth as it should be, or is something missing? Is there an additional product you could offer your customer that would be of use to them on that journey?

Sometimes new products aren't born from a specific need. In fact, in many cases, the need itself is 'manufactured' by the creator of the product. This is where lateral thinking needs to kick in.

Before Steve Jobs launched the iPod, no one 'needed' a portable device that could store and play thousands of songs. But when they found out it existed, they wanted it and flocked to buy it. Perhaps your next product or service brainwave is something your customers don't even know they want yet.

- **Try something different**

As lockdown continues and the country runs at limited capacity, forward-thinking and new ideas are needed more than ever now. The world has changed – most likely forever. Will your business change with it?

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