

How to find clients and grow your business

By [York Zucchi](#)

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Without clients, a business is essentially just a hobby. Too many startups, innovators, entrepreneurs and SMEs focus too much time on product and service and not enough time on access to markets.



For the last four years we have analysed and supported SMEs in over 83 countries with access to markets and learned key findings that can apply to practically every business:

1. Most entrepreneurs make it difficult to understand what business problem they actually solve.

This makes it more difficult for people to introduce them to potential clients as well as reduce the top of mind presence that is so crucial at decision time.

Fixing this can be as simple as adding a paragraph to your email signatures (e.g. "I help shop owners to create online marketplaces so that they can increase sales"), especially given the amounts of emails are sent on a monthly basis.

2. Every SME is working on an interesting project yet they are not sharing this publicly.

By sharing what an entrepreneur is working on, the entrepreneur is creating what we term "engagement bridges". This not only gives others a reason to engage but it also shows your track record and competences.

3. Most entrepreneurs are struggling with something.

Human nature being what it is, most entrepreneurs keep these challenges close to their chest, yet in our research, we

found that the more entrepreneurs shared what they are struggling with or looking for the more other businesses engaged with them from sharing resources, knowledge, suggestions and ideas.

Interestingly, we found that sharing humanised the business relationship and created empathy links (most people want to help others) which resulted in relationships being formed that led to trade opportunities.

Just one caveat: the more specific the challenge or that which is being sought is the easier it was to get engagement (e.g. I need investor Vs I need spare warehouse facilities for 10m²).

4. Most free social media tools are not being used efficiently.

By this, I don't mean that you should run an ad campaign, but rather look closely at basic things such as your Facebook banner (personal and business), LinkedIn header and Twitter header.

These are valuable pieces of real estate that are seen by many people each day. A simple effort at creating a banner (use a free tool such as Canva and search for "LinkedIn Banner template" and populating it with the text of what you solve has shown to substantially increase the lead generation efficiencies of said social media tools.

5. Start sharing knowledge and IP freely.

Small posts (eg. "5 Tips a dentist can give to potential patients to save money on your next visit" or "Things to watch out for in the construction industry if you are considering renewing your offices") create powerful traction and are an ideal advertising virtual billboard that can work 24/7 for you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

York Zucchi is a Swiss innovator, entrepreneur and investor. Before moving to South Africa in 2007 he worked in 11 countries, with the last post at Goldman Sachs. He is currently the chairperson of the Centre for Unconventional Entrepreneurship, amongst other roles. He is passionate about entrepreneurship and its potential to lift the tide for everyone.

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