

# How digital technology can help your small business

By  Selina Bieber

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Even before the pandemic and the hard lockdown, small South African businesses were navigating a time of relentless change - new technologies, new customer expectations, a shifting economic landscape. Now, Covid-19 has put change on steroids and every small business needs to be agile to survive.



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Here are three ways to use technology to help navigate the crisis:

## 1. Reach new customers efficiently

Even before the pandemic, South Africans were becoming more digital in their behaviour, increasingly using the Internet as their first port of call when researching a potential purchase. Now, with many people avoiding unnecessary face to face meetings and visits to the shops, this behaviour is accelerating and becoming more entrenched.

With less walk-in business or opportunities to knock on doors to sell, your digital presence has become even more important. Your social media accounts, blog, search engine optimisation (SEO) and website are your storefront and salesforce. If you don't already have a website in place, this is an ideal time to register an appropriate domain name for your company and jump in and get started.



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Your website is accessible to anyone from any part of the world at any time of the day or night when online, making it easy for people to get information about your business. You can also use it to gather email addresses and get consent from customers to send them personalised marketing emails. And unlike your social media accounts, you are in complete control of the look and feel of your own website.

These days, it's relatively easy to get up-and-running with a mobile-optimised website using a content management system like WordPress. It's even simpler to get online with an integrated website builder tool like GoDaddy Websites + Marketing, which includes a website builder and a suite of tools to manage social media, SEO, email marketing, online appointments, and more.

## 2. Streamline customer communications

In this unsettled time, your customers want information that puts their minds at ease and saves them time. Your digital channels are an ideal way to share information - starting with using your website to keep people up-to-date with opening times, contact information, stock availability and other details that may be constantly changing as the pandemic unfolds.

You can also use channels like Google My Business, Facebook or Instagram to keep people in the know about updates for your business. Regular emails, social media posts, and blogging are also good ways to connect with your customers to let them know what's going on with your business. The benefit of these channels is that they are efficient for you and the customer - yet without losing the human touch.



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## 3. Automate where possible

Right now, most small business owners want to spend their time adding value for customers or generating revenue - not managing busywork or administrative work. Software can help to automate many manual tasks and processes to make your business more efficient, which can free up more of your time.

Cloud accounting software like Sage Business Cloud or Xero, for example, lets you easily generate invoices, capture transactions, generate VAT returns and more. Marketing automation tools, meanwhile, can streamline formatting emails, tracking leads, managing your customer contact database, scheduling social media posts, and monitoring social media conversations.

## Opportunities from technology

Technology has become more affordable and accessible than ever before, with cloud technologies and digital platforms levelling the playing fields for small businesses. The pressures of Covid-19 mean that productivity and efficiency are more important than ever, and today, that means putting the available digital tools to work to enhance your business.

## ABOUT SELINA BIEBER

Selina Bieber is the regional director for Turkey and MENA at GoDaddy EMEA.

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