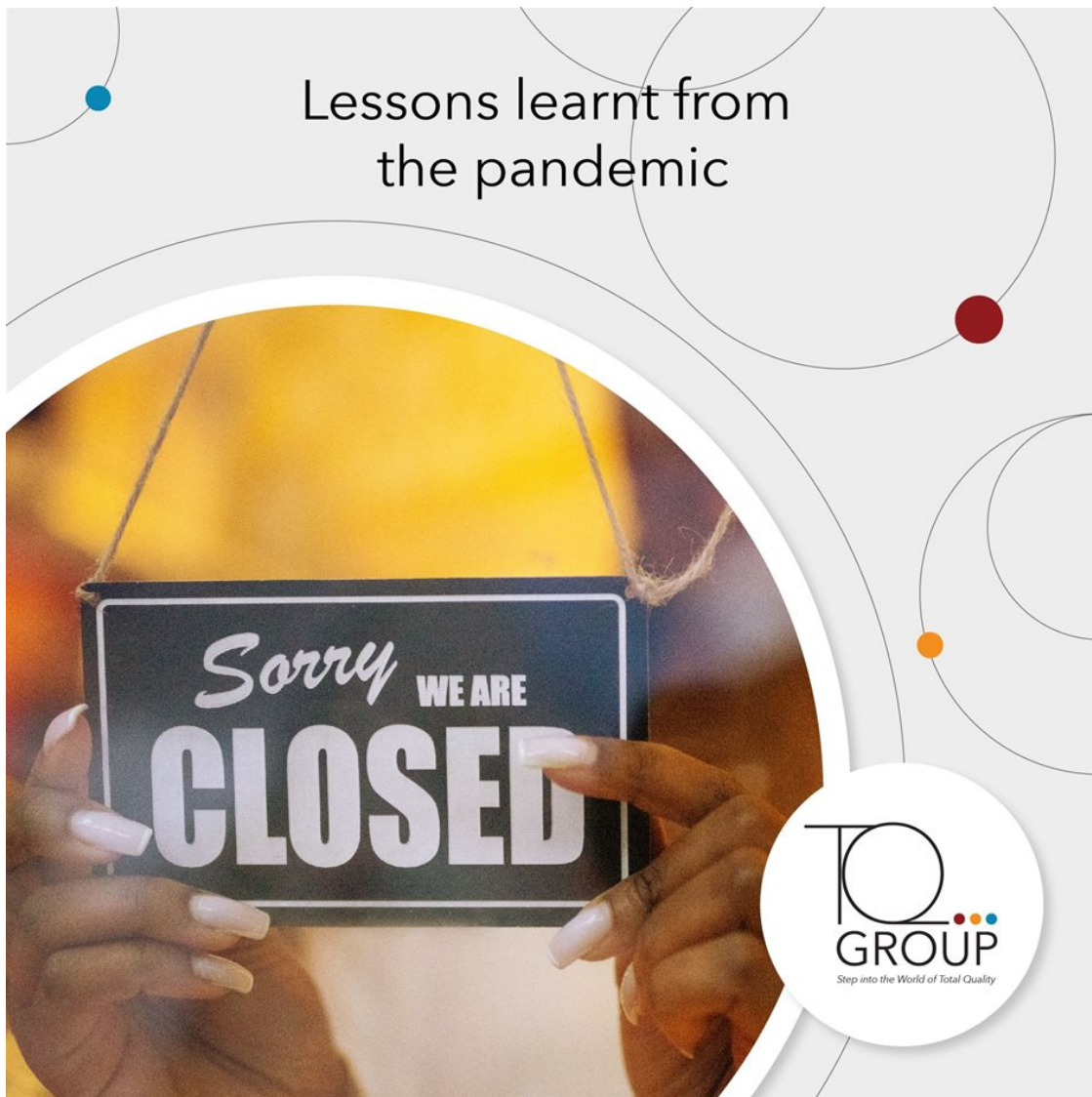


Turning crisis into opportunity: Lessons learnt from the pandemic

By [Elbé Smith](#), issued by [TQ Group](#)

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The vagaries of the Covid-19 pandemic have put unprecedented pressure onto the business community and ushered in a unique new paradigm around the world. Indeed, the pandemic's impact on the global economy is nothing short of cataclysmic. While larger companies and conglomerates may have built up the resilience to weather the storm, many smaller businesses have been utterly devastated, and the past year has seen a staggering spike in small business closures, as many operations succumbed to the numerous challenges of today's turbulent business environment.



Despite the constraints imposed by rolling lockdowns and the ensuing economic meltdown, some small businesses have managed to adapt nimbly, and some shining outliers even thriving in the face of this adversity, turning crisis into opportunity. But even the most agile of those have faced some steep learning curves. As business leaders reflect and seek to make sense of the year that was, certain key lessons stand out as crucial takeaways for building resilience into small business in 2021.

Prominent among these insights is that those companies who could swiftly embrace en-masse remote working structures, with the necessary internal systems in place to ensure a seamless transition, had a clear edge over their competitors.

Similarly, those businesses who could readily digitise and embrace 4IR enjoyed a distinct advantage over those who faced constraints within the new playing-field of Covid-era economics. The ability to facilitate e-commerce, digitised services and online payments all proved invaluable as the business community strived to adapt to the new realities of this tumultuous time.

At a human wellness level, the importance of self-regulation is a key consideration, as the lifestyles of traditionally office-bound workers shifted drastically to the WFH situation. Striking a work-life balance is far more difficult in this paradigm, but has proven to be absolutely critical in sustaining the efficiency of one's operations, and is an important aspect in understanding the success of those who are riding the wave of these trying times.

Smaller operations that levelled-up their IT infrastructure benefitted from the enhanced efficiency to workflow, protocol, processes and automation that such upgrades allow. Although smaller businesses may be hesitant to spend scarce income on such technological improvements during these economically uncertain times, even minor IT system upgrades are proving worthwhile as they manifest cascading benefits. These improvements are expressed through greatly increased fluidity in terms of both internal communications networks, and remote provision of services to clients. The need to invest in such upgrades must however be balanced with the necessity of keeping enough liquid cash-flow on hand to be fortified against potential dry spells.

The plethora of innovative new marketing strategies which emerged in response to the catastrophe has been nothing short of inspiring. Companies sought out-the-box solutions as traditional approaches were imperilled or were simply no longer adequate or appropriate. In a nation renowned for solidarity and coming together in mutual support during times of need, it's not surprising that we saw forward-thinking firms embarking on philanthropic campaigns in the spirit of *ubuntu*. Such campaigns also served to further the interests of marketing objectives. TQ Group's contribution to the #AllInThisTogether campaign bears testament to this. Together, TQ made available multimedia templates centered around Covid-19 awareness messaging, which many businesses adapted and used, enabling them to effectively communicate life-saving Covid-19 related messages to their staff, stakeholders, customers and clients. These were provided free of charge, and thus saved beneficiaries significant amounts of both time and resources, while at the same time showcasing the company's work.

As small businesses seek to cultivate the necessary resilience to weather this pandemic, and any inevitable future storms, the lessons learnt from those who emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic will no doubt inform their strategic focus going forward.

For TQ Group, with its sights firmly set on being the 'go to' digital communications firm for the African continent, this means a fully digitised, customer-centric operation that is able to pivot as and when required in order to live up to its ethos of 'Total Quality to customers first'.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elbé Smith is the founder and CEO of TQ Group.

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