

How local SMBs can ride the fourth wave

South African small to medium-sized businesses (SMBs) are on high alert for tighter lockdown restrictions, which could impact trading over the festive season. For entrepreneurs and small business owners banking on a bumper month, getting online is critical to reaching customers and making sales heading into the new year.



Thomas Vollrath, 1-grid CEO

“A strong digital presence is your biggest asset when it comes to surviving unstable times. By planning ahead, entrepreneurs can leverage the power of online marketing, e-commerce, and social media to keep sales rolling in – and to reassure customers that they are prepared for the challenges of the fourth wave and beyond,” says Thomas Vollrath, head of local web hosting company 1-grid.com.

The key benefit of an online presence is ensuring customers can find and contact a business, should tighter lockdown restrictions be implemented. “Technology can be daunting for small business owners, who are used to doing business face-to-face. They may lack confidence, or worry that the customer experience will be impacted negatively – but the opposite is true. In these extreme circumstances, technology enables communication and commerce,” says Vollrath.

During previous waves, small businesses who were able to apply learnings and pivot online continued to turn good numbers – and in many cases, saw accelerated growth and improved performance. Basic digital elements that are essential to businesses of any size, include a registered domain that matches the company name, a business email address, and a website. An online presence allows entrepreneurs to advertise their offerings, ensure their business appears in Google search results, supply contact details to consumers, and even set up direct online sales.

“We don’t know exactly what the fourth wave will bring, but local SMBs do have the time to prepare for any scenario. For now, we recommend setting up the basics and investing in your e-commerce set up. Additionally, entrepreneurs should anticipate which of their products or services are going to be most in-demand under tighter restrictions, and which are viable to sell online,” says Vollrath.

Beyond the basics, SMBs can take this opportunity to jump on trends like social commerce, contactless payments, and virtual appointments. “The pandemic has introduced consumers to the convenience of doing everything via the internet on their mobile device. For example, our soon to be launched new scheduling function, GoConnect, allows customers to book appointments directly via a business’s website. These can be facilitated physically or virtually, where necessary,” says Vollrath.

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