

5 online trends for South African SMEs

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Where is it all happening? Online, of course. According to Statista there are now 38.13 million active internet users in the country.



That's why it is important to relook at how your SME is doing online and whether there is room for improvement. Below is a list of the top five most important online trends and what they can do for your business.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Website myths that could be keeping your small business small

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Online trend one: search engine optimisation

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is not a new trend, however, it is important to realise that it isn't a once-off task either. In order to give customers exactly what they want, search engines are constantly improving algorithms. SEO is therefore a long-term, on-going project. Make sure your content is always updated, regularly add new and informative images, videos, blogs, FAQs, etc. to your website, and make sure you follow Google's E-A-T (expertise, authority, trustworthiness) principles when you do.

Online trend two: online reputation management

What customers are saying about your business online, matters. In fact, it matters so much that three out of every four customers base their buying decisions on the reviews they have read about you online. You need to manage this. Ask customers to review you. Getting bad reviews? Zone in on the problem and fix it ASAP.

Online trend three: social e-commerce

In a digital age, convenience is perhaps one of the main things online-savvy customers come to expect. A growing number

of people want easy access to answers they might have relating to your product. Social e-commerce is, therefore, becoming very popular because it is closing the gap between 'seeing' and 'buying'. Social e-commerce makes it more convenient for potential customers to learn about a product (price, availability, etc.) within fewer clicks, rather than sending them to your website instead.

Online trend four: influencer marketing

There is a good reason why word-of-mouth marketing will never die. This is because it works. People like to hear how great your products or services are from other people who have experienced it first-hand. If this person is a cousin – great, however, if this person is an influencer they admire and adore – even better. Do not just pick 'any influencer' for your marketing; try and connect with a micro influencer whose core values are similar to that of your brand.

Online trend five: think mobile first

Over the course of the past seven years online shopping via mobile devices has grown by 222% globally! So, when it comes to the user-experience of your website: think mobile first! Continue testing your website pages and making any adjustments until you can get the mobile vs desktop user-experience almost seamless. It may be a good idea to ask several people outside your organisation for honest and critical feedback regarding the useability of your website.

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