

Avon Justine's Precilla Kalogeropoulos offers advice to female entrepreneurs

According to statistics, women only make up 18.8% of small and medium enterprise (SME) owners in South Africa. Along with the latest unemployment data from Stats SA - which reveals that female unemployment continues to rise - the need and opportunity for women to pursue entrepreneurship as a career has never been clearer.



Precilla Kalogeropoulos

Employment and empowerment

This is according to Precilla Kalogeropoulos at Avon Justine – who says that female entrepreneurs are a vast untapped source of innovation, job creation and economic growth in South Africa. “By embracing entrepreneurship as a career choice, women have the opportunity to empower themselves financially as well as create employment opportunities for others.

“However, despite the opportunities, a number of challenges can hinder women from pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams, including a tough competitor market and attracting new customers.”

Kalogeropoulos says that one way female entrepreneurs can bolster their entrepreneurial presence and skills is by developing a strong personal brand. “By building and growing a personal brand, especially as a woman in a “male-dominated” industry, you are affording yourself the opportunity to showcase not only your work but also your ethos to your audience.

“As a self-employed professional, a personal brand, along with your level of expertise within your given field, is what will set you apart from competitors.

You need your unique brand to express and communicate your abilities to your customer base. And the truth is, it really isn't that difficult, but it does require commitment.”

Kalogeropoulos outlines a few key points for female entrepreneurs to use in order to flourish:

1. Define your target market and build your audience

To do this, you need to foster relationships with both current and potential customers. Often, entrepreneurs use networking or community events to do this.

As you build your network, you can attract more business while drumming up referral business through happy clients. Although it's important to note that face-to-face networking is very important, ensuring a digital footprint is just as necessary.



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2. Build your social media presence

With consumers increasingly turning to social media for product recommendations or reviews before making a purchase, an online presence is essential for anyone looking to sell a product or service. As an entrepreneur, you have the opportunity to use social media to position yourself, your brand and your expertise as a leader in your particular field.

Boost your social media presence by ensuring your content is eye-catching and that it has the ability to resonate with your audience. Through this, you're able to connect with your audience, prove your field knowledge, while gaining exposure from doing so.

It's not always easy to build up multiple platforms, which is why Kalogeropoulos advises picking one platform as your focus to begin with, and building it up slowly to ensure its success. Can't decide which one to focus on? Pick the platform that plays to your strengths as well as that of your product or service.

For example, if you sell beauty products, ensure that your platform allows you to best demonstrate the visual appeal of your products, whether it be via video or static imagery.

3. Highlight your successes

Lastly, do not shy away from singing your own praises. If you believe your products are of high-quality, then tell your audience so. You need to promote your skills, abilities and products.

Women, especially in the entrepreneurial sector, tend to struggle or feel uncomfortable with high levels of self-promotion, but in this day and age, there's no time to be coy. With a world full of competitors, we cannot wait for others to speak positively about us, we need to make the noise ourselves and be our own biggest fans.

In closing, Kalogeropoulos warns to be aware of the risks that come with having a strong personal brand and public platform. "While it can take years to build up a strong personal brand, all your hard work can be ruined in an instance of poor judgment. Therefore, it is critical to always be aware of the messaging that you are putting out and how it can be interpreted," she concludes.

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