

5 practical tips to digitally adapt your business

The economic impact of Covid-19 pandemic on global businesses has sparked universal uncertainty and panic. Some industries are more accustomed to rapidly-changing conditions than others, which find themselves at sea, particularly when it comes to relying more heavily on digital.



Amanda Bester, founder of Pragmatica

Amanda Bester, founder of Pragmatica, believes that there are plenty of lessons to be learnt from the world of digital media and digital-first SMME's, for those businesses currently in the digital space in their fight for survival.

“Many companies are finding that the pandemic is driving their digital transformation more quickly and effectively than their CTO's or CEO's ever did,” says Bester. “That may seem flippant, but the lesson is that many businesses shouldn't have had to wait for a massive global disruption to dictate a new strategy for them – the need to incorporate a more digital-focussed model has been there for years, and a lack of preparation has been shown up by recent global events”.

Bester says that she believes that strategy drives digital transformation, and she suggests five practical strategies that should be considered when approaching ways to adapt your business for the digital world:

1. Consider outsourced expertise to help kickstart your digital transformation journey. Many companies have halted new

job hires, but that doesn't always mean that the job position they required is no longer needed within their corporation, a practical solution would be to make use of independent contractors or online freelancers for the short term.

2. Those businesses still choosing non-digital marketing solutions will no doubt experience a rapid decline in brand awareness and sales. Now is the time to focus your marketing resources and investment on a digital strategy.
3. Keep your communication at an all-time high – both internally and with customers. The scramble to employ tools such as Zoom and others continues whilst businesses adapt to the new normal. Think of the communications on all of your marketing platforms, including your website – it might be a good time to explore chatbot integrations especially when it comes to customer support.
4. Leadership to drive change management through digital transformation is more important than ever. Organisational leadership needs to be all-encompassing from all levels within the organisation. For employees, leading upward is a way to support management, and at times like this, it is just as vital.
5. Some employees may be without immediate work during this lockdown, and you may find yourself with some free time on your hands. Now is a great opportunity to upskill yourself by making use of skills development through online training. Don't underestimate the power of upskilling your digital skills during this time in order to future-proof your career.

Covid-19 hasn't only forced businesses to look at new ways to communicate with and sell to their customers – it's fundamentally changed the way they have had to function internally, too.

Remote working is now the norm under lockdown and all in-person business development meetings have been cancelled, resulting in a snowball effect on growing new business and revenue streams. The scramble to acclimatise to the new remote working order and factoring in the challenges this presents to their sustainability has forced many leadership teams to re-think the way they do things on every level – and how their teams meet deadlines.

Bester believes that the new order – or at least the order that is going to help many businesses survive the effects of the pandemic – is collaboration. "We see from our workspace at the Absa WorkInProgress hub that the power of collaboration within a relevant ecosystem can propel a business on to new heights, as much as it can lend support when things are faltering. Being surrounded by quick thinkers with diverse skill sets and talents is hugely helpful in finding solutions to problems that start-up teams encounter on a daily basis".

She says it's not a stretch to believe that the togetherness fostered between entire populations, and between countries around the world in supporting each other in the face of the virus can be translated to the business world, too.

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