

# Growing your small business with digital technology

By [Danielle Senekal](#)

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The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that digital platforms, people and small businesses are not that different. Digital platforms are always evolving, shedding their skin to adapt to changes in the business environment, consumer demands and competitive pressures.



Danielle Senekal, senior digital campaign manager at +OneX. | Source: Supplied

Likewise, the pandemic has shown how adaptable people and small businesses can be when it's necessary.

Forced out of our comfort zones, we've all needed to learn new ways to live, work, shop and play online.

## Equipping small business owners with a new skillset

That said, let's not allow the negative impact of a pandemic to detract from the opportunities small business owners have in using digital channels to market their businesses.

Over the past two years, we have hosted a number of tailored one-on-one digital media workshops to help small business

owners get to grips with digital marketing and the overnight transition from traditional media to online media.

Through this initiative, we could see first-hand which gaps small companies experience when they do not use digital channels. We have also learned much about the challenges business owners encounter when they invest in digital campaigns, but have limited knowledge about how to drive successful outcomes. One major issue is that few small business owners know where to start with Google and Facebook. It is not their core competence, after all.

But for those that get their Google and Facebook accounts configured correctly from the outset and then learn about the powerful marketing tools these platforms offer, enormous opportunities await. To take advantage, small business owners need to cross the hurdles (old ways of thinking) and be open-minded to the opportunities of utilising digital tools and trends.



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## Keeping up with digitalisation trends in 2022

According to Iconic Collective, there are some interesting trends coming our way this year and small businesses that tap into them can get ahead of the game. Small business owners that are already comfortable with the digital platforms will be in the best position to exploit these trends. First off, Meta, the owner of Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, is giving a facelift to WhatsApp for Business integration.

Designed specifically for small business owners, the free and easy-to-use tool, for fast and secure automated communication to customers, is getting new features for conversational commerce. This function will enable sales and support teams to answer product and customer service questions with rich, contextual messages that will, ultimately, facilitate a new transaction or keep a current customer happy.

For owners of small ecommerce businesses, it is no secret that the pandemic has forever changed consumer-shopping behaviours. But now, consumers will be able to fill up their trolleys and swipe their cards during organic live shopping experiences on platforms like YouTube. Creators will be able to tag their top products and set up a live shopping stream after they have connected to their store.



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In terms of brand awareness, content creators will be able to add a trailer to their upcoming live event watch page to encourage users to set reminders to take part. Other features include the ability for creators to offer their audience live product drops and exclusive discounts or run fan polls during the live streams to get feedback from their audience. Talk about innovative thinking.

TikTok has taken the world by storm and reached billionaire status in terms of people on the app around the globe; it has also been the most downloaded app as of late 2021, according to DataReportal. Though popular in other countries, it is yet to reach its full potential in Southern Africa. With a host of innovative features inbound, it's one to watch.

Socially active foodies and restaurant owners should keep an eye out for TikTok Kitchen. This project is a delivery-only service in the US that will cook up some of the trending recipes on the app. It will create hype and tap into upcoming trends within food delivery operations, and aligns with TikTok's broader ecommerce plans: which are as simple as getting more

users to order and pay for things in the app. It turns out we can have our cake and eat it too.

## Key benefits of digitising your organisation

Incorporating digital elements into a small business is a flexible way to build brand recognition and trust among consumers. It also enables a business to deliver innovative interactive experiences through a variety of digital channels with different capabilities.

Digital gives a brand the opportunity to narrate products or services in a creative way, grab attention, inform, entertain and engage with their ideal target audience on a maximised scale.



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Digital channels can also help small businesses get insight into online consumer behaviour and identify ways to improve the user journey to keep that personalised experience fresh and relevant—whether it is to minimise fraudulent traffic such as “bots”, rework remarketing strategies to keep a brand top of mind or adapt to more dynamic setups to capture new users.

Digital possibilities are endless and it's never too late to start the journey.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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