

# be.first helps uplift local businesses

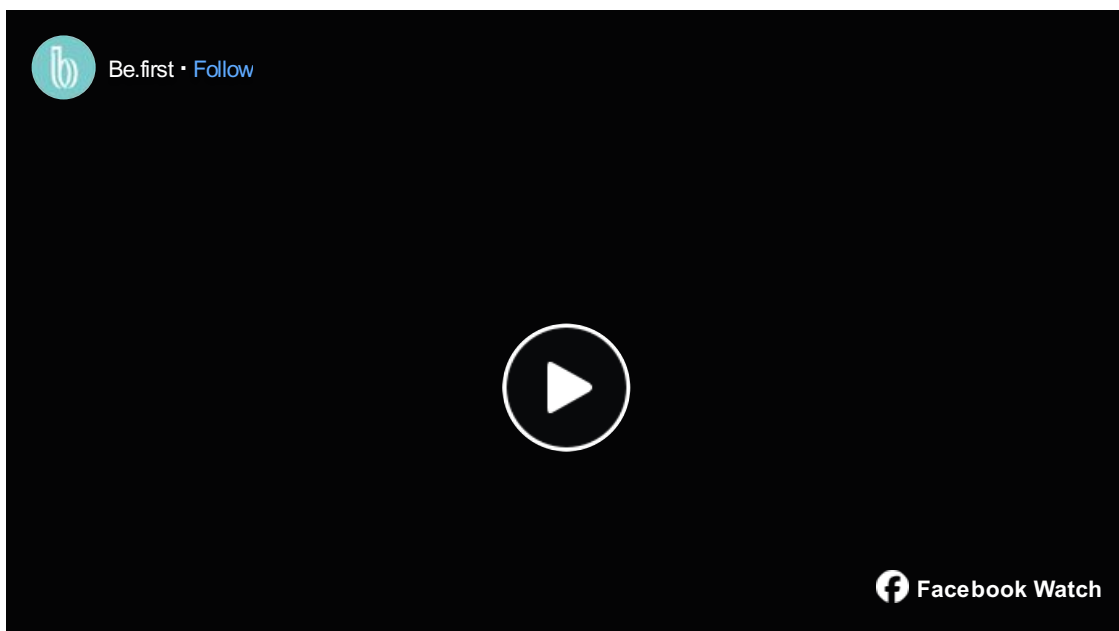
By  Evan-Lee Courie

23 Apr 2020

#TheLockdownSeries explores the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses, how they prepared for lockdown and its impacts on operations and employees, as well as lessons learned that we can take into the post-Covid-19 era.

Dishi Smit and Keri Stewart are two moms who created [be.first](#), a mobile app that allows you to find and share product recommendations in a single place. It's a completely free app that's built around a community of sharers and discoverers.

With a little more time on our hands as a result of the nationwide lockdown, consumers are now exploring the various options of online shopping. For the co-founders of be.first, like many small business owners, the pandemic has turned businesses upside down.



Dishi Smit and Keri Stewart share their struggles of a young business in these trying times...



Dishi Smit and Keri Stewart, co-founders of be.first

 **How has Covid-19 impacted your business?**

be.first is a big supporter of small local businesses and the core of our offering is providing a platform for people to share products and services they've used and loved. With the non-essential industries shut down we've had a decline in the recommendations people share.

We were in the process of collaborating with SMME's to provide deals unique to our community, we have had to slow down these co-labs. We're losing time but are in a fortunate position being such a young business to not have any major financial losses.

### ■ ***How did you prepare for the lockdown?***

We have reprioritised our business strategy to focus on the parts of the business that will ensure we still have a business in the recovery period of Covid-19.



Dishi Smit, co-founder of be.first, continues to work from home

📊 ***What's the biggest challenge you are facing during this pandemic?***

This was our peak period for seeking investment as the complete and new version of the be.*first* offering has been scoped - we are finding ways to present this to interested parties digitally.

Being productive is really difficult at this time, as with most of the world juggling kids, home and work is not easy!



**#StartupStory: be.*first* aims to help you buy better**

Evan-Lee Courie 28 Jan 2020



📊 ***What sort of assistance will you need going forward?***

Again, we are fortunate to be such a young business so all the support we need going forward existed before Covid-19. This includes funding and brand collaborations.

📊 ***If you are able to operate, What steps are you taking to continue operating?***

We're making sure that we remain relevant and we're hyper-focused on adding value. Part of our new version of the app will allow our customer to do the same.

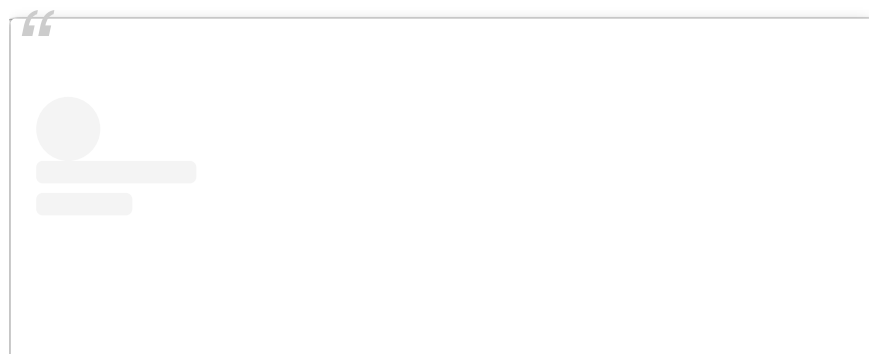




Keri Stewart, co-founder of be.first, continues to juggle a family, home and work.

■ **How are you offering assistance to your customers who rely on your services?**

We're sending messages of support and information of the impact to SMME's. We have also offered all our advertising assets for free during this time.





[View this post on Instagram](#)



Never underestimate your worth in this world! ☐ ☐ You are awesome, yes YOU!



A post shared by [be.first community app \(@be.firstsa\)](#) on Apr 19, 2020 at 5:09am PDT

📌 **What do you predict the next 6 months will be like?**

There are a few positives coming out of all of this for *be.first*. The uptake in online shopping and the increased use of digital platforms will increase the size of our opportunity as well as speed up adoption and engagement of our platform, especially the new version of it.

“ With the newfound patriotism, supporting local will be highlighted, we're hoping to solve easy access to this sector. ”

📌 **Now is the time to innovate and experiment. What is *be.first* doing?**

In our new version of the app, we have found a way to really support small local businesses. We're hoping to contribute to the recovery and growth of this sector.

📌 **What has been your biggest lesson from all this?**

Scenario planning is important regardless of the size of your business. In this fast-paced, ever-changing and unpredictable world we live in, planning for change is essential.

## ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

Group Editor: Retail and Lifestyle

- #StartupStory: Meet Marko Stavrou, the 18-year-old co-founder of HustlersGlobal and Stavrou Consulting - 7 Dec 2022
- #BehindtheSelfie: Herman Bosman, chairperson of Endeavor South Africa - 30 Mar 2022
- #StartupStory: Zoie Health - a digital health clinic for women - 2 Mar 2022
- #StartupStory: The Client Media - 22 Feb 2022
- #StartupStory: In the Loop with Kimberly Taylor - 17 Feb 2022

[View my profile and articles...](#)

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