

Why PR is so important for small businesses

 By [Miranda Lusiba](#)

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I'm a PR professional that has been profiling executives of different companies for 21 years - and because I was taught that my job is to be behind the scenes profiling other people, it was very difficult for me to be the one in the spotlight when I decided to go back to running and profiling my business.



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You are all probably aware of the saying 'a doctor can't heal himself'. Well, this is the case for PR/Communication professionals - we are very bad at communicating or profiling ourselves. We've always believed that our work should speak for us and that there's no need for proactive PR around our businesses or ourselves. This is unfortunately not the case if some of us want to either attract new clients or grow our businesses.

Over the years, my business associates and I have relied on word of mouth or referrals for any new business opportunities that came our way. However, Covid-19 showed us flames, and it became very difficult for all of us to attract business when we were not profiling our services; more importantly what we are capable of.



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A lot of small business owners either do not see the need to publicise their companies and their offerings or think that it would be an expensive exercise to do so. As SMMs, what we don't seem to realise is that although big corporates such as Coca Cola, Absa, MTN, Standard Bank, Vodacom are well-known brands; they still invest in marketing and PR services for their businesses.

This is because they know the importance of talking about the developments in their businesses, which could include new product or service offerings; appointments of new executives in the company and even transformation-related issues. They don't end there though – they also capitalise on their success stories and celebrate their achievements through testimonial stories from beneficiaries in their corporate social investment (CSI) initiatives.

Mind you, these are established brands that still feel the need to entrench their brand in the minds of both their existing and potential customers, their shareholders, employees and key stakeholders in the public (government) and private sector.



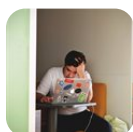
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You would think because they are such big brands they wouldn't see the need to invest in marketing or PR initiatives - but instead, they do so on an ongoing basis. This is because they know the value of staying relevant and top of mind to their consumers. I've seen that this is the case for bigger PR agencies as well - they brag about new client acquisitions, awards that they've won or any CSI-related stories that they might have. These stories are a testament to the fact that the company is doing well – achieving great things for the clients and being recognised by their peers in their respective industries for the excellent work that they are doing.

I've realised that most SMMEs only realise that they need PR when they are in trouble – either when the business is struggling to attract new business or if they are in the media for the wrong reasons. This is when they start to understand the importance of PR and by then the only PR strategy they can get is a reactive one aimed at responding to the problem at that time. It is important for small businesses to realise that proactive PR is very important to build the reputation of any brand – small, medium or large.



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PR services do not have to be expensive – SMMEs can start building their brand with very small budgets and use social media to keep their brands top of mind to potential and existing customers. Putting yourself out there is unfortunately what is needed by SMMEs these days; Covid has shown all of us how important it is for our businesses to be known as well as our capabilities.

So, my advice to SMME owners and aspirant ones is not to wait for business opportunities to come to them, but rather use whatever means are available to profile themselves enough to attract new business – because these are opportunities that so many of us are in desperate need of nowadays.

ABOUT MIRANDA LUSIBA

Miranda Lusiba is the Founding Director of Strangé Consulting - a boutique PR Agency specialising in Communications, Freelance Writing, Media Relations, Reputation Management and Media Training.

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