

All growing businesses need to invest in good PR

 By [Thoriso Kolobe](#)

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To many small and medium businesses, PR is seen as more of a luxury than a necessity. "Reputation management is for the big guys" SMME owners will be heard uttering such words; "when s#*t hits the fan, that's when I'll call in a PRP, right now I don't need one" another SMME owner will mutter.

Is that so? Is PR a luxury only for the big budget companies? Is it ridiculous to want to structure any agency around the SMME environment? I used to think so, until I realised just how many SMMEs are out there. If any company is to grow it must have a healthy bottom line, right? Yes, but that's not all it takes to grow a company, a company needs a bevy of loyal customers. These loyal customers build a relationship with the company, learn to trust a company and eventually tell their family and friends about it. These relationships require full-time management; which requires a PR practitioner.

As a young agency it is ill-advised to focus solely on SMMEs; the number one reason is that you will probably work at a shortfall. SMMEs don't really value PR as a necessity in the company, yet ironically to grow their image and to be taken seriously by their biggest competitors, they mostly undergo a PR- makeover. If the reality is that SMMEs need PR and the illusion is that they don't need PR; how does PR show up in reality as a need?

Public Relations



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It shows up with facts, stats and insight. One of the many reasons why PR is not taken seriously as an industry on its own is because it has a bad reputation. For most of history, PR has been associated with negativity. Propaganda, publicity stunts and too many Hollywood disasters to mention; are just a few reasons as to why no SMME can really take the industry seriously.

PR needs to change course, it needs to go from being the lying, sexy, fun-type of partner to the more loyal, honest, transparent type of partner that every business needs. PR practitioners are encouraged to be more honest in their pitches. They are encouraged to not sell the world to SMMEs. Don't promise your client that you will make them as big as Coca Cola within a year, don't tell your client that you guarantee them first page status every week. Only do these if you are certain you can, and at that; tell them how much it would cost to get to that place.

SMMEs really want to be big, so feeding in to that need will only result in an epic fail from your side. Tell them what you can offer, which is at least a second page on the bottom corner of the Provincial Newspaper and a steady slot on the local radio station. With doing this, PR is able to regain its reputation as an industry and also prove to be a need for any growing SMME.

ABOUT THORISO KOLOBE

Thoriso Kolobe is a passionate communicator. One of her preferred methods of communication is through writing. She is a PR lifetime student and a Managing Director of her own PR agency; RPR Agency.

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