

New digital community for startup founders to launch

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SME South Africa is launching a new, digital community that aims to help early stage entrepreneurs to connect with experienced founders of startups and business owners.



Founders.co.za is an online platform that provides individuals the opportunity to get feedback from experienced founders on business aspects like fine-tuning [a business plan](#) or funding proposal, and validating a business idea, says Velly Bosega, founder of online resources platform for small business owners, [SME South Africa](#), and Founders.co.za, the online membership community for startup entrepreneurs.

"This membership community will provide founders an opportunity to gain insights from each other, help them grow their businesses together, and expand their network."

Learning from the past

One of the lessons learned from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is the importance of collaboration; many entrepreneurs had to collaborate to leverage each other's resources including office space and/or manpower, says Bosega.

The findings of the [NYDA Small Business Impact Survey](#) on the impact of Covid-19 on small, medium and micro enterprises since lockdown, were that more businesses will operate virtually and use coworking structures, and that online learning and telecommunications will increase.

The report gathered evidence from 54 youth-owned small businesses across South Africa, sampled from the 1000 Business in 100 Days beneficiary's initiative pronounced by the president during the State of the Nation Address (SONA).

It was revealed that the pandemic has affected 88% of the respondents. According to the report, more than half of survey respondents found it difficult or very difficult to access information and benefits from government Covid-19-related assistance packages.

Another report, [Impact of Covid-19 on micro and informal businesses, South Africa 2021](#), revealed that 38% of business owners state that they have no formal education or taught themselves, 24% of business owners learn from family members and 11% from a mentor. Only 9% stated that they learned on the job, 2% in learnerships, whereas only 6% went to college and 2% to university and 9% also gained skills in short courses. The report's findings were that the more employment the business creates, the more likely the owner has a formal education.

The report that was released by the [UNDP South Africa](#), revealed that the total number of businesses that were part of this study was 3,746 with an average age of the business just under six years.

"The Founders community will provide a platform for small business owners and freelancers to make connections and find ways to collaborate with each other. It will be a way for them to share useful knowledge with each other, generate ideas, find solutions to challenges, and achieve common goals for their business," says Bosega.

Founders.co.za will offer small, monthly group sessions for its community members, which includes a series of masterclasses that provides business skills training, and entrepreneurs can be part of strategic discussions.

"You also get to learn from industry leaders who will come in as guest speakers," says Bosega.

If the following applies to you, join today:

- You intend to build and grow your company or learn from other entrepreneurs.
- You're building a technology or consumer startup or you run a B2B services company.
- You are a high-performing operator or business leader.
- You're ready to participate in our active community.

Find your ideal business partner

Promising to be a community of like-minded individuals, the platform can be used by small business owners and freelancers to find someone to help carry the load when it comes to their business ideas or overcoming challenges that they face, says Bosega. "You can even find a co-founder for your business in this community! Members will make connections with each other and can look for founding team members based on their interests, skills and location."

How a co-founder can help you succeed:

- They can act as a sounding board to bounce off your ideas.
- You have someone other than yourself to be accountable to.
- They can help increase productivity, because you don't have to do everything yourself.
- You get access to a wider range of expertise.

[Get on the waitlist to be notified of the Founders' launch.](#)

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The SME South Africa is a one-stop-shop for business owners that not only gives the latest business news and [industry trends](#), it also provides multiple [business guides](#) with information that can help small businesses thrive. "We also want to help small businesses find more funding options which is why the [SME South Africa funding page](#) was created," says Bosega.

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