

# 4 ways to prepare your business for the new normal

By [Mohamed Majapa](#)

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How many times have you heard "I can't wait for things to get back to normal" in the past few weeks? Let's be honest, there is no going back to the way things were before.



Mohamed Majapa

While no one could have anticipated a black swan, an event that has had catastrophic repercussions the world over, it is now time to prepare for the new normal.

Here are tips to how you can get ready to do business in a new way.

## 1. Communicate

Just pause for a minute...The coronavirus outbreak has taken everyone by surprise.

You might be feeling overwhelmed by the sudden closure of your business and the fact that the rent is due and salaries have to be paid. But remember that people do business with people. You might not know what to say to your stakeholders, but you do need to communicate with them.

The lives of your staff, suppliers, creditors, and customers have changed. Everyone is feeling anxious. Not communicating with them can be perceived as insensitive and uncaring. This is the time to show people you care, listen to their concerns, and start a dialogue.

## **2. Strategise**

Use your time wisely. Take a close look at your business model - it might need panel-beating to make your business more relevant. The world is changing and your business must innovate and adapt as well.

As yourself, "Is there a way you can pivot to provide other, essential products? Is there an opportunity to scale up or down?"

If your customers have migrated online, then that's where you should be too. You might also be able to offer free webinars. If you can't be operational, you and your staff can improve your skillset with online courses and podcasts.

## **3. Have a battle plan**

How fragile your business is during this crisis has shown you where the holes are in your bucket. It's time to draw up a plan to plug those holes by putting proper systems and procedures in place. Some crises cannot be anticipated, but others can. Therefore, do as much as you can to model such scenarios and prepare in time.

Businesses are competitive, but this would be a great opportunity to look at how collaborating with other businesses can help both of you survive.

For example, Vodacom recently partnered with Discovery to provide a free, online, Covid-19 consultation facility for all South Africans. This will allow Discovery's team of medical doctors to reach mobile phone users all over the country.

Lockdown has also given business owners the chance to look at the effectiveness of their website and social media channels and how these can be improved. It is also a great way to stay in touch with your customers and encourage them to share your content.

## **4. Virtual Workplace**

Most businesses think that if they are not in an office space, they are not able to work. Covid-19 has proved this theory wrong. This crisis has encouraged businesses to look at productivity and efficiency differently.

Remote working is not a new trend. Those companies who have a remote workforce are more agile during the lockdown. They have proper policies in place and are certain that regardless of where their staff work from, their output will remain the same. One way to ease into this would be to allow staff to work from home for a week at a time.

The coronavirus outbreak has revealed that businesses that do not allow for a virtual workplace will be sorely tested during any crisis that limits physical contact.

There is no doubt that small businesses have been hit the hardest. But those who invest in the right tools, processes, teams and have the right attitude will be better prepared to do business in the new normal.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mohamed Majapa is an entrepreneur, MBA graduate and mentor at Fetola.

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