

Brand recognition is vital to success: SMS can help small businesses build it

 By [Greg Chen](#)

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Smaller businesses face numerous obstacles when it comes to surviving, never mind taking on the bigger players in their fields. One of the biggest of those obstacles is brand recognition.



Image credit: Jason Leung on Unsplash

That doesn't just mean that people won't know what the business is when they spot its logo. Brand recognition is more than that.

It's the expectations people have when they hear the name of the business and the feelings that gives them. But it's also the values and emotions that the thought of the business evokes.

It is, in other words, what keeps customers coming back time after time.

A large part of the reason successful companies grow so big is that they excel at brand recognition, but technology is making it easier for smaller businesses to catch up.



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The value of brand recognition

An easy way to understand the value of brand recognition is to think about your own day-to-day life.

If you're hungry, how often do you find yourself going to the same national or international fast-food franchise you always go to rather than that cool hole-in-the-wall place you discovered one Saturday?

Even if the food's better at the latter, you've come to associate the former as the place you go whenever you're hungry.

With that in mind, it's worth looking at how smaller businesses can build the kind of brand recognition that not only gets customers coming back to the business time after time, but also recommending it to their friends and family.



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Tell a story, make it personal

One of the most powerful ways to build brand recognition is to tell a story. Who started the business? Why did they do it? What is the business trying to achieve?

These are all things that should be made clear to a customer from the first moment they interact with the business.

Customers are much more likely to remember brands that reach them on a personal or emotional level.

But it's also important to remember that if a business wants to retain customers, they need to feel like they're a part of the business's ongoing story.

That doesn't just mean keeping them up-to-date with any new hires, expansion efforts and community initiatives. It also means providing them with offers and insights that are unique to them as individuals.

While it's possible to achieve this to a degree with social media, a much more effective way is to build up a database of customers you can contact through SMS.



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The magic of SMS and the web

That's not to say social media and other channels aren't important. They undoubtedly are. But when it comes building brand recognition, SMS is still the ultimate weapon in any small business's arsenal.

This is especially true in a mobile-first market like South Africa, where there are an estimated [90-million mobile](#)

[connections.](#)

SMS also doesn't require the customer to be online and, importantly, doesn't cost them anything to receive.

Moreover, it's incredibly effective. Research shows that [98% of all SMSes are opened](#) and that, on average, it takes someone [90 seconds](#) to respond.

As such, it's vital that small businesses focus on building customer databases that include phone numbers from the start. Providing incentives in the shape of specials and discounts is a great way to do this.

And once they've built those databases, businesses need to understand that rather than viewing the SMS as the medium for delivering their message, they should see it as the hook for something more personalised and visually appealing.

Using Smart SMS technology, SMEs can direct customers to personalised web pages – with specials, offers and discounts that are relevant to them.



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Appealing to me

Creating that sense of relevance is vital. Today's customer constantly has companies of all sizes begging for their attention.

The brands they'll latch onto, no matter how big or small, are the ones they feel fundamentally understand them as individuals.



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Using the right combination of technology and nous means that small up-and-coming businesses can do this just as effectively as their much larger counterparts.

ABOUT GREG CHEN

Greg Chen is the CEO and co-founder of Mbbiz. He has a long history in the South African mobile space and is passionate about the role technology can play in engaging the country's people across the spectrum.

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