

## **SMEs can boost festive season sales with Digital Marketing**

**30 November 2015:** Small business owners that use social media and other digital marketing platforms to promote and market their products and services will be in a better position to attract more customers and generate sales during the festive season.

“As consumers increasingly tighten their belts due to decreasing disposable income, only those small businesses that adapt, keep up with industry trends and the changing needs of consumers, by taking advantage of platforms like digital marketing will thrive,” says Sanjeev Orie, CEO of Business Value Adds at FNB.

With the world going digital, small businesses can no longer just rely on traditional marketing channels to communicate with existing and potential customers. Consumers now expect businesses to have a presence in digital and social media platforms like twitter, facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube as well as online and mobile websites.

“SMEs have predominantly struggled with traditional marketing campaigns due to a lack of skills and failure to plan properly, set timely objectives and target the right customers.”

Orie says the same concept should be followed by small businesses that want their digital marketing campaigns to do well this festive season. The first step is to identify digital marketing platforms that meet your business’ objectives.

“Secondly, the importance of research should never be underestimated when developing an effective digital marketing strategy. It is essential to fully understand your customers, competitors, business environment and match that with the appropriate digital marketing tools that will help the business to reach its objectives.”

“Digital marketing is not a “one size fits all” platform. It forms part of a broader marketing strategy, targets a specific audience, has a purpose, as well as advantages and disadvantages in some cases,” cautions Orie.

He advises small businesses to consider these tips when formulating their digital marketing campaigns for the festive season:

- Investing in a good and effective website will help you retain and attract new customers. This is where small businesses can showcase their products and services.
- Make sure that the digital marketing campaign's objectives are aligned to the broader business' marketing plan.
- Always create new and uniquely branded content and never compromise on quality regardless of budget constraints.
- Do not produce content for the sake of populating a platform. Make sure that the content matches your customers' needs.
- Consider developing a blog and provide customers with useful and relevant information which appeals to them. This will help you to regularly drive customers to your website.
- Be consistent in your social media engagement with customers and never leave the platforms unattended for too long.

“Lastly, using the right tools to determine Return on Investment (ROI) for a digital marketing campaign is very important. This helps small businesses to establish whether a campaign has been a success through its impact on sales and attracting new customers,” concludes Orie.