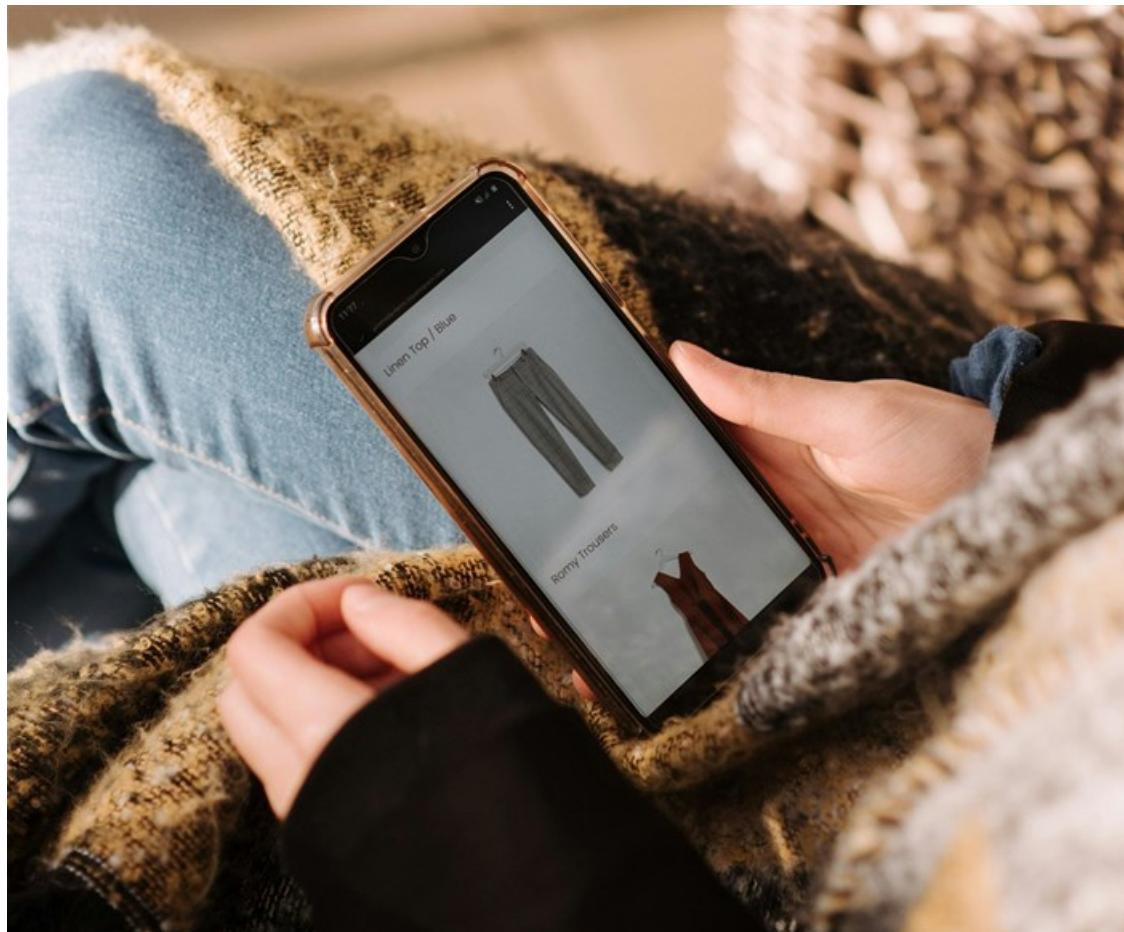


Massmart exec shares 5 tips to grow your SME business online

The growth of e-commerce marketplaces in recent years has given small and medium enterprise (SME) entrepreneurs greater, more cost-effective market access. By making their products available for sale on major retailers' platforms, these SME entrepreneurs are better able to market their products to consumers who are highly motivated to take advantage of the greater variety of products available online.



Source: [Pexels](#)

Although e-commerce can be daunting to the uninitiated, marketplaces offer a low-risk, cost-effective way to build expertise and leverage the marketing, fulfilment and logistics capabilities of specialist e-commerce teams.

For the past seven years, third-party sellers have been able to sell their products on Makro.co.za for example. Seasoned industry expert and current e-commerce marketplace executive at Massmart, Laura Hartnady, has extensive marketplace experience, gained both locally and internationally, including as CEO of a boutique online retailer.

Her experiences have informed her top five tips for SMEs to boost sales and grow their online businesses.

1. Range

Build your range over time by testing customer demand with new products and investing in those that deliver sales with a sustainable profit margin. Your own brand will be more noticeable and credible as part of a coherent range of products. Strive to deliver better value than your competitors, or offer products that are unique.

2. Product information

Providing customers with as much information as possible about your product will influence their purchase decisions.

Focus on multiple high-resolution product images, a detailed description with all the relevant features and benefits, unambiguous product specifications and a clear title that includes relevant information to support online search.

Ideally, search information should include product name, brand name, size and colour. In addition to enticing customers with this information, search engines such as Google's shopping feed only display products that meet their data standards.

3. Price competitiveness

The online environment is characterised by price democracy and is highly competitive. It's therefore essential to regularly check and adjust prices relative to your competitors or to highlight value differentiators such as additional features, higher specifications, upgrades or longer warranties.

4. Reliability

There are a number of checkpoints involved with getting an item to a customer. From picking and packing, to handing over to a courier, for final delivery. A key element here is gearing up your operation to consistently deliver to customers within your promised lead time.

This starts with ensuring product availability so it is imperative that you maintain and display accurate stock levels to avoid cancelling orders and disappointing customers, which will result in poor customer reviews.

5. Promotional and marketing activity

E-commerce marketplaces can have millions of products online. This means that you need to do all that you can to increase the discoverability of your products. One way to do this is to participate in promotions offered in the marketplace.

Price-driven promotions are very impactful because they create the opportunity for your products to be featured on website banners and carousels, as well as in promotional emails to customers.

You should also supplement promotions by using your own social media to direct your customer following to your marketplace product pages.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>