

Lessons learnt from our digital marketing boot camp for insurance SMMEs at Momentum

We had another super exciting and engaging digital marketing boot camp at Momentum offices in Centurion. About 20 insurance SMMEs from all over Gauteng were in attendance. Our mission was simple. We were expected to help them understand the digital marketing ecosystem and how they could leverage inbound methodologies to generate leads, increase sales and retain their existing customers.

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The boot camp was held as part of our ongoing partnership with incubation hubs in South Africa through which we provide digital marketing training to SMMEs. It is a transformative agenda that we are proudly pursuing after recognising that digital marketing skills are in short supply. In fact, the SMME sector is of great importance to us as it is a key driver of the economy. The statistics speak for themselves.

A 2010 study conducted by Abor and Quartey estimates that 91% of the formal business entities in South Africa are SMM and they contribute between 52-57% to GDP. Additionally, SMMEs account for approximately 61% of employment in the country.

Our interaction with the Insurance SMMEs was insightful insofar as it revealed to us the state of digital marketing within the sector as well as the attitude of the entrepreneurs towards online marketing.

Below are the key things we learnt:

Most entrepreneurs currently run digital marketing campaigns but most lack the requisite knowledge

Digital marketing works differently from its traditional counterpart. Entrepreneurs have to deal with new tools and radically different approaches to marketing. This is a completely different universe to them and it is not surprising that most feel like fish out of water.

However, whilst most have added digital to their marketing mix they are not getting the anticipated benefits and they are also losing money in the process from poor strategies and bad execution.

Ignorance is very expensive in digital marketing. Fortunately, our boot camps are structured to equip entrepreneurs with the right skills.

Entrepreneurs are eager to learn

Most of the entrepreneurs exhibited a hunger to master the craft. This is a positive thing because digital marketing is not a function or department. It is a way of doing things and covers every aspect of the organisation from customer service management to product/service development. When entrepreneurs buy into it then it becomes easy for digital marketing to be adopted by SMMEs.

There are lots of impostors in the industry

Plenary discussions revealed the depth of abracadabra techniques that are being peddled by pseudo-digital marketers. The group preys on unsuspecting entrepreneurs to whom they offer often dubious but expensive services that are built to fail. Our mission is to provide enough knowledge that will flush them out.

What gives us confidence in what we do is the fact that we are skilled and experienced in managing digital marketing

campaigns. We have a solid track record of managing campaigns for brands like MTN, Standard Bank, Telkom, Lexus, Le Rover, Savanna, Eskom, Sanral and Audi, just to name a few.

Digital marketing is the present and future of marketing

The more we interact with SMMEs the stronger our conviction grows that digital marketing holds the key to their growth. Our confidence is based on its traits as outlined below:

- Digital marketing is extremely targeted. Businesses can reach the right person, at the right time and in the right context.
- It is cheaper in comparison to other forms of marketing. This is a big plus as most SMMEs do not have big advertising budgets.
- Its performance can be measured.
- It has a wide reach. The internet has changed the way customers look for information or kill their time. Most spend their time online and this represents an engaged and addressable audience.

Our mission is to ensure that SMMEs in South Africa become literate in digital marketing. There's an old African proverb that says "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." We would like to go far and thus are calling on all incubation hubs to partner with us in this great cause.

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