

FROM THE KASI, FOR THE KASI

PUT YOUR BUSINESS ON THE MAP

A SMALL BUSINESS GUIDE TO GETTING CUSTOMERS ONLINE

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Soweto Business Directory

Free to download and share - sowetobusinessdirectory.co.za

PUT YOUR BUSINESS ON THE MAP

First, the Soweto Market in Real Numbers

Soweto is not a side market. It is one of the biggest markets in South Africa.



Original artwork made for this book.

1,271,628 people called Soweto home at the 2011 census, making it the biggest township in the country.

R5 to R6 billion a year. That is Soweto's consumer spending power, as reported by the Sowetan.

More than half a million people in Soweto work in small and micro businesses (2021 SA Township Marketing Report).

Over 150,000 spaza shops trade across South Africa. Together they contribute about 5.2% of GDP and employ 2.6 million people.

Over R900 billion a year. That is what South Africa's township economy is worth (Standard Bank Township Informal Economy Report, 2025).

75% of township residents prefer WhatsApp for communication, far ahead of Facebook, Instagram or Twitter (2021 SA Township Marketing Report).

Almost half of city South Africa lives in townships and informal settlements.

Your customers are here. They have money. They are on their phones. The next chapters show you how to reach them, one small step at a time.

Sho't left, do this today

Look at your own street. Count the businesses. Every one of them is part of a R900 billion market. So are you.

Chapter 1: Your Customers Are on Their Phones

Walk down any street in Soweto. On the taxi, at the rank, in the queue at the shop. Yebo, everyone is on their phone.

Your customers are there too. They look for a salon on Facebook. They ask for a plumber in a community group. They check a WhatsApp status before they buy lunch.

This is good news for a small business. You do not need money for billboards or radio. The phone in your pocket can reach more people than a flyer ever could.

Big companies pay agencies thousands of rands for this. You can do it yourself, for free, with the tools you already use every day.

This book shows you how, step by step.

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Open WhatsApp and look at your own status views. How many people see your status every day? Those are your first customers.

Chapter 2: Start with the Phone You Have

You do not need a laptop. You do not need wifi at home. You need three free things:

1. **WhatsApp Business.** The free business version of WhatsApp. Download it from the Play Store or App Store. It lets you set up a business profile, a catalog of your products, and quick replies.
2. **A Facebook page.** Free. This is your public face. People who are not your contacts can find you here.
3. **Your camera.** The one already on your phone. Clean photos sell your work better than any words.

That is the whole toolkit. Everything in this book runs on these three things and a bit of data.

Worried about data costs? Do the heavy work when you have wifi, and use WhatsApp's low-data settings. Photos you take can be compressed before you send them.

Sho't left, do this today

Download WhatsApp Business and fill in your business name, hours and address. Ten minutes, done.

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Chapter 3: WhatsApp Is Your Shop Window

For most township businesses, WhatsApp is not just a chat app. It is the shop.



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Your profile. People check it before they buy. Put your business name, what you do, your hours, and your area. Add a clear logo or a good photo of your work.

Your catalog. WhatsApp Business lets you add products with photos and prices. A customer can browse your whole menu or price list without asking you a single question.

Your status. This is your free billboard, sharp sharp. Post your work every day: today's plate, a fresh set of nails, the car you just fixed. Your status reaches people who already know you, and they are the ones most likely to buy.

Quick replies. Save answers to the questions you get every day. "How much?", "Where are you?", "Are you open?" One tap sends the answer.

Broadcast lists. Send one message to many customers at once, like a special or a holiday notice. Each person receives it as a private chat. Use it once or twice a week, not every day, or people will mute you.

Sho't left, do this today

Add your five best products or services to your WhatsApp Business catalog, each with a photo and a price.

Chapter 4: Facebook: Where the Community Gathers

WhatsApp is for people who already know you. Facebook is how new people find you.



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Make a page, not a profile. A page is for business. It shows your hours, your location, your reviews, and a call button. Anyone can follow it.

Post where people already look. Soweto has active community groups on Facebook: area groups, buy-and-sell groups, job groups. Join the ones for your area. Read the group rules before you advertise. Some groups allow business posts on certain days only. Respect that and the admins will keep you.

Post like a person, not a company. A real photo of today's work beats a designed flyer. Write the way you talk. "Fresh kotas from 11am, come through" works better than a paragraph of marketing talk.

Facebook Marketplace. Selling things? List them on Marketplace. It is free and people search there first.

When to post. Early morning before work, lunchtime, and evening after 6pm. That is when people scroll.

Sho't left, do this today

Find three active Facebook groups for your area and request to join.

Chapter 5: Show Your Work

A clean photo sells better than any flyer.



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You do not need a camera. Your phone is enough. What matters is light and background.

Light. Take photos outside or next to a window, in daylight. Never use flash on food. Never photograph against the sun.

Background. One clean surface. A plain wall, a wooden table, a neat cloth. Move the clutter out of the shot.

Before and after. If your work changes something, show both. Salon: the head before, the head after. Mechanic: the broken part, the fixed car. Gardener: the yard before, the yard after. Two photos side by side tell the whole story.

Video. A 15-second video of the plate arriving, the hair being styled, the engine starting, does more than ten photos. Keep it short and steady.

Keep a photo habit. Every job, one photo before you finish. In a month you will have a gallery that sells for you every day.

Sho't left, do this today

Photograph your work three times this week, in daylight, on a clean background. Post the best one.

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Chapter 6: Be Found on Google

When someone in another part of Soweto searches "salon near me" or "mechanic Protea Glen", Google decides what they see. You want your business in that answer.

It is free. It is called a Google Business Profile.

How to set it up. Search "Google Business Profile" on your phone and sign in with a Gmail address. Add your business name, category, area, hours, and phone number. Add photos of your work. Verify when Google asks (a code by SMS or a short video).

Why it matters. Your business gets a pin on Google Maps. People tap to call you, get directions, or read your reviews.

Keep it alive. A profile with fresh photos and recent reviews ranks higher. Add a photo every month. Reply to reviews, even the short ones.

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Check if your business already appears on Google Maps. If it does, claim it. If not, create the profile.

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Chapter 7: Your Free Listing on the Soweto Business Directory

The Soweto Business Directory is a free online home for Soweto businesses. Customers search it by area and category, and contact you straight on WhatsApp.

Why list. It is free, forever. It puts your business in front of people who are already looking for what you sell, in your own neighbourhood.

What a good listing looks like. A clear name, the right category, your real area, a WhatsApp number you answer, and a good photo or logo. One line that says exactly what you do: "Coding and robotics classes for school learners" beats "Education services".

Keep it fresh. Changed your number? Moved? New service? Update the listing. A stale listing loses customers you never knew about.

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List your business free on sowetobusinessdirectory.co.za, or check your listing if you are already on it.

Chapter 8: Prices, Replies and Trust

People trust what they can see.

Show your prices. A clear price list on your wall, your WhatsApp catalog, or your status stops arguments, saves time, and brings customers back. Hiding prices makes people think you charge what you feel like on the day.

Answer fast. On WhatsApp, speed is service. A customer who waits two hours has already asked someone else. You do not have to reply in one minute, but same hour wins business. Use quick replies so speed costs you nothing.

Handle complaints in the open. Someone complains in a Facebook group or a review? Reply once, calmly, in public: sorry, here is how we fix it. Never argue in public. Take the details to a private chat. People watching how you handle a complaint decide whether to trust you.

Keep small promises. Open at 8 means open at 8. "Ready Thursday" means Thursday. Online, your reputation is the sum of small kept promises.

Sho't left, do this today

Post your price list somewhere your customers can see it: status, catalog, or a pinned post.

Chapter 9: Reviews Are the New Word of Mouth

Word of mouth built township business. Reviews are word of mouth that strangers can read.

Ask. Happy customers almost never review on their own. Ask right after the good moment: the fresh install, the perfect braids, the plate finished. One line is enough: "If you are happy, please leave us a quick review."

Make it easy. Send the link or the exact steps. On the Soweto Business Directory, customers tap stars and write one line. On Google, send your review link.

Share them. Screenshot a good review and post it to your status and page. It is proof, not bragging.

Bad reviews. You will get one eventually. Reply once, fix what you can, move on. A business with only perfect reviews looks fake. A business that fixes problems looks honest.

Sho't left, do this today

Ask your next three happy customers for a review.

Chapter 10: Selling Past Your Street

Online, your customer does not have to walk past your door.



Original artwork made for this book.

Take orders on WhatsApp. Let people order by message: the kota for collection at 1pm, the nails booked for Saturday, the part ordered on Tuesday. Confirm every order with one message: what, when, how much.

Delivery. Start with what you can manage: your own bicycle, a guy you trust, a local delivery service. Charge for it or build it into the price, but say it upfront.

Getting paid. Cash still works. EFT works. SnapScan and similar QR payments are free to set up and save the "no change" problem. Give customers at least two ways to pay.

Preorders and deposits. For anything you make or book, take a deposit by EFT or wallet before you start. It stops no-shows and buys your stock.

Sho't left, do this today

Decide your payment options and put them in your profile and price list.

Chapter 11: When You Are Ready for a Website

A website is not the first step. It is the step you take when your WhatsApp and Facebook are working and you want more.

What a website adds. It is yours. No algorithm decides who sees it. It works while you sleep: prices, menu, photos, directions, a button to WhatsApp you. It also makes you look established to bigger customers and sponsors.

What it should cost. A simple one-page site for a small business should not cost thousands. Be suspicious of anyone quoting big money for a basic site, and of "free" sites that lock you in or show someone else's adverts.

What to avoid. Do not pay for a site before you have photos, prices, and a clear idea of what you do. A website cannot fix an empty business profile. Fix the free things in this book first.

Sho't left, do this today

Nothing. Unless your WhatsApp Business, Facebook page, Google profile and SBD listing are all live and fresh. Then you are ready.

Chapter 12: Count What Works

Money that is not written down gets lost. Marketing that is not counted gets wasted.

Write down every sale. A small book or a note on your phone: what you sold, for how much, every day. On Sunday, add it up. See what really makes you money.

Ask one question. "How did you hear about us?" Ask new customers. Keep the answers in the same book. After a month you will know if your customers come from WhatsApp status, Facebook, Google, or the person next door.

Do more of what works. If most customers come from your status, post more status. If a Facebook group brings nothing after a month, spend that time elsewhere.

The 10-minute Sunday check. Every Sunday: add up the week, check which posts got reactions, decide next week's one thing. Ten minutes, no apps needed.

Sho't left, do this today

Start the book. One line per sale, starting now.

Chapter 13: The 30-Minute Week

None of this should eat your day. You run a business; marketing is a habit, not a job.

Monday (10 min). Post the week's special or plan to your WhatsApp status and Facebook page.

Wednesday (5 min). Post a photo or short video of the week's work.

Friday (5 min). Post the weekend message: hours, special, what is fresh.

Sunday (10 min). The check from Chapter 12: add up, look at what worked, plan one thing.

That is 30 minutes a week. Everything else in this book you set up once.

Start where you are. One chapter, one sho't left at a time, and you are already ahead of most. Sharp sharp.

Plain Words: The Glossary

Algorithm: the rules Facebook or Google use to decide who sees your post. You cannot beat it; you can feed it: post regularly, get replies.

Catalog: the product list inside WhatsApp Business, with photos and prices.

Engagement: people reacting to your posts: likes, comments, shares, replies.

Google Business Profile: your free business card on Google Search and Maps.

SEO (search engine optimisation): making your business easier to find on Google. For you, that means a complete Google profile, fresh photos, and real reviews, not tricks.

Status: the 24-hour posts on WhatsApp. Your free billboard.

Broadcast list: one WhatsApp message that reaches many customers as private chats.

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The One-Page Checklist

Tick them off as you go

- ■ **WhatsApp Business profile filled in, with hours and area**
- ■ **Catalog loaded: five best products or services, photos and prices**
- ■ **Price list visible: status, catalog, or pinned post**
- ■ **Facebook page live, three local groups joined**
- ■ **Google Business Profile claimed, photos added**
- ■ **Free listing on sowetobusinessdirectory.co.za**
- ■ **One photo habit: every job, one photo**
- ■ **The ask: happy customers leave a review**
- ■ **The book: every sale written down**
- ■ **The 30-minute week: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday**

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About This Book

Soweto Business Directory helps Soweto businesses get found. Free listings, ratings and reviews, all at sowetobusinessdirectory.co.za.

Need a simple website for your business? We build one-page sites for R650, once off. WhatsApp 067 552 3598.

Share this book freely with any small business owner who needs it.

Sources for the numbers page: Census 2011, Statistics South Africa (Soweto main place); "Soweto's economy is booming despite headwinds faced by SMMEs", Sowetan, 21 July 2022; The 2021 South African Township Marketing Report by Rogerwilco, Survey54 and Marketing Mix Conferences; Standard Bank Township Informal Economy Report, October 2025.

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