

# Four common marketing mistakes SMEs make

 By [Sophie Baker](#)

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You could be inadvertently setting yourself up to fail with your newly-developed marketing plan...



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There are some mistakes regularly made by SMEs when they start marketing their businesses. Read on to find out what they are and how best to avoid these common pitfalls.

## 1. Going in without a plan

You cannot market without having a clear strategy or plan in place. This means making sure you know your target audience, as well as thinking about what your target market want from you and how you can offer it to them. Finally, you have to have a clear idea as to how you will reach your target audience. If these key areas aren't clear to you, your marketing will have no obvious goal.

## 2. Making changes hastily and without preparation

If you have spent hours coming up with a strategy, choosing suppliers and generally making sure everything is ready to go, try not to make last minute changes. It is highly unlikely that a last minute change will beat a decision made after a lot of consideration. If change is completely necessary, make sure to inform everybody who is involved in the business. This is especially true if you are changing suppliers or similar, which may have an impact on costs, production, or shipping and delivery.

## 3. Focusing too much on new customers

Although building your customer base is undeniably important, it is equally important to remember your existing clients. They are the ones who have got you to where you are, and neglecting them will be more harmful than neglecting customers who don't yet exist. Keep your clients up to date with new and existing products, as well as specials and offers. Email is a cost-effective and efficient way to keep in contact with existing customers, which will help to keep them loyal to you. At the same time though, be sure not to spam your customers with daily email updates - they will simply start to ignore them and take their business elsewhere.

## 4. Building a poor website

Either pay somebody to build you a professional-looking and easy to use website, or make 100% sure that yours is up to scratch. There are lots of sites and packages allowing you to build websites easily nowadays, so check out something like Vigo's offer. Customers find it very off putting to click through to a website, only to be faced with a disorganised interface, poor spelling and grammar, and the prospect of having to hunt high and low for the information they need. They will close the browser window and look for a professional service instead.

All of these are marketing mistakes that are commonly made by SME's and start-ups. After all, you're new to the game and want to get started quickly and do the best job you can. Luckily, these are all mistakes that are easy enough to avoid with a little bit of forward planning and careful consideration. Consider reading our [marketing guidelines for start-ups](#) for a guide on how to do it the right way. When you're implementing your marketing plan, keep these in mind (along with these [other marketing mistakes](#)) and avoid, avoid, avoid!? If you're on a tight budget, consider our [shoestring marketing tips](#).

## ABOUT SOPHIE BAKER

Sophie Baker is the content producer at Biz4Afrika, a Microsoft-owned online hub providing help, information and networking opportunities for small businesses, through Content Studio.

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