

Business lessons to be learned from 1time airline

 By [Nthabeleng Meso](#)

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In the preceding week I was looking forward to my flight from Cape Town to Johannesburg over the weekend. However my excitement was short lived; on Friday afternoon I was one among the thousand of people who heard via e.tv news that 1time Airline had filed for liquidation.

Upon hearing this on Friday afternoon I frantically went to their website in hope that they would have an explanation for their clients only to find that their website was now offline. I then called their call centre and there was no answer. My next step was to visit their Facebook page, still nothing was said of ticket holders instead their latest post was reiterating what I had heard earlier on the news. There was no notification as to whether or not ticket holders would be accommodated on another airline OR reimbursed. As a customer who had paid for her ticket, I was extremely disappointed by their lack of communication and poor customer service.



Despite my frustration and annoyance at the situation, on Saturday morning I made my way to the Cape Town International airport in hope that since we had not received any communication from them they had managed to make arrangements with other airlines. Sadly this was not the case, rather we all arrived to vacant check-in counters at the airport. On the one hand I empathised with their staff members where their

reality of unemployment was concerned. On the other hand, I was extremely disappointed with the airline's failure to notify us (their clients) of the indefinite suspension of their services.

No communication - just when we really needed it

As a business 1time Airline had succeeded in using a multiplicity of communication tools to engage their clients, yet they failed to use the very same tools to communicate with us when we needed them most. May this experience serve as a lesson for all businesses on what **NOT** to do when you (as a business) are faced with a challenge.

Herewith what I believe 1time should have done:

- Put a disaster management team in place
- Communicated transparently with their clients
- Kept the website functional BUT closed the booking page. And used the home page to inform their clients and ticket holders of the latest developments.
- RESPONDED to telephone calls to avoid creating panic and frustration among clients.
- Not left it up to other businesses to clean up after them. Taken responsibility.
- Used communication tools the company has at their disposal to inform their clients of the cancellation of flights.
- Been active and responded to Facebook posts
- COMMUNICATED with their clients

When all is said and done, the company's ethical conduct remains questionable: they knew of this liquidation and yet they still belied their clients by allowing us to purchase tickets an hour before the public declaration of liquidation. Importantly, we would greatly appreciate knowing when we as your clients can expect to be reimbursed for our tickets.

ABOUT NTHABELENG MESO

I have been in Cape Town since 2003 to pursue my dream of becoming an entrepreneur. I founded Mesong Web Design & Marketing Solutions, which offers web design and development, graphic design, marketing consulting and supply of marketing material. The company believes there are several solutions to challenge, hence its mantra: "Bringing You Light". Not limited to entrepreneurship, I am an athlete, a writer and a blogger inspired by the beauty and challenges of everyday life. Follow @MesonMeso on Twitter.

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