

Three things you need to know about small businesses

By Dan Martin, Editor, **businessZONE**

Small businesses have always been the engine room of the economy but given the current public sector cuts, the power of entrepreneurship is more important than ever.

Sift Media's BusinessZone.co.uk and [UK Business Forums](#) are home to hundreds of thousands of these very important businesses so here are three things you need to know if you're looking to reach them.

Small businesses are social

Many studies have shown that small business owners spend more time using social media communities than their large corporate counterparts. Working on a tight budget, entrepreneurs have discovered the power of using online networks to promote their brands and gather knowledge. They spend hours every day doing it and are used to communicating in online social communities. [UK Business Forums](#), for instance, receives 60,000 posts a month from small company owners sharing and gathering knowledge on how to do business better.

Small businesses love a good debate

Most entrepreneurs are not backwards in coming forward when sharing their opinions on issues which affect them. [Recent claims](#), for example, by a software business owner that Cloud Computing vendors are "ripping off" their customers generated thousands of reads and almost [40 reader comments](#). Similarly,

an [article outlining Lord Sugar's](#) suggestion on BBC TV's The Apprentice that engineers don't make good business owners generated a big response. Get the issue right and small business owners will give you the feedback you require.

Small businesses come in all shapes and sizes

'Small businesses' are not one single thing; they come in various guises. Some are one man or woman-bands, some are innovative start-ups aiming to be the next Twitter, some are social enterprises out to make the world a better place and some are lifestyle businesses run by people who aren't looking to make millions but just to have a better standard of life. Bearing this in mind when communicating with the small business community will stand you in good stead.

A recent article on BusinessZone.co.uk illustrates this perfectly. Entitled '[I am not an SME, you patronising ***!](#)' it has received almost 10,000 reads and more than 20 comments from entrepreneurs calling on big businesses to recognise the differences. The corporate world was able to respond when we invited O2's head of small business to [respond on camera](#).

For more on how you or your client can reach our small business audience contact **Catherine Evans** on [0117 915 9625](tel:01179159625) or email catherine.evans@siftmedia.co.uk.