

5 minutes with Sandras Phiri, founder of StartupCircles

 By Evan-Lee Courie

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#TheLockdownSeries explores the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses, how they prepared for lockdown and its impacts on operations and employees, as well as lessons learned that we can take into the post-Covid-19 era.

[Sandras Phiri](#) is a man with many titles. Not only is he a business strategist and startup coach, but is the director for [Startup Grind Cape Town](#); the CEO and founder of [Africa Trust Academy](#) and the driving force behind [StartupCircles](#), the community that enables people to launch startups and scale.

Piri has founded many successful companies in IT, entertainment and startup education. He has worked with over 25 organisations, lectured at over 17 universities and been to 22 countries. He's shared the stage with Dustin Maskovitch, co-founder of Facebook; Steve Chen, co-founder of Youtube, and even the likes of Guy Kawasaki and Steve Blank to name just a few.



Sandras Phiri, business strategist and startup coach

He shares some insight into how his latest venture StartupCircles has adapted to business in a time of Covid-19.

How has Covid-19 impacted your latest project?

We have had to shift everything online. Our income has dropped significantly as most of our clients are not operating or still haven't adjusted to remote work. However, on the positive side, we have accelerated our mastery of online delivery of programmes and we're reaching more people as geography is no longer a huge factor.

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■ ***How did you prepare for the lockdown?***

It was hard to prepare for lockdown. Most of the people and businesses in the world were blindsided by the pandemic. We just had to adapt quickly.

■ ***What's the biggest challenge you are facing during this pandemic?***

The biggest challenge that we are facing is that our income has dropped.

■ ***If you are able to operate, what steps are you taking to continue operating?***

Fortunately, our team is able to work from home.

■ ***Are you communicating with your customers? If so, how?***

We continue to communicate via digital channels

■ ***How are you offering assistance to your customers who rely on your services?***

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www.startupcircles.ai

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We have also reduced our membership price from R286 to R50 to allow anybody access to world-class mentorship and guidance wherever they are in Africa.

🔴 **What do you predict the next 6 months will be like?**

There will be a huge change in behaviour. Things are not going back to "normal" So businesses that are impacted now should consider innovating on their business model instead of waiting that things will get back to the way they were. Before doing things that require physical presence, people will ask if they really need to.



Love what you do, believe in it and strive to serve more and more people

Juanita Pienaar 8 Nov 2018



🔴 **Now is the time to innovate and experiment. What is StartupCircles doing?**

We hosted huge online events with speakers from Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, Lagos, Jersey, Dar es Salaam and Cape Town with a team in Cape Town, London and Johannesburg. We are launching fully online programmes and offering a lot of free content and support to entrepreneurs via our website startupcircles.ai

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📊 ***What has been your biggest lesson from all this?***

That it's time to reprioritise what we consider important both in terms of professions, people and also what's important in our personal lives.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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