Company Partners®

DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE

MIND YOUR

BUSINESS

2025 - A YEAR OF STRATEGIC GROWTH & RENEWED PURPOSE

The SME Survival Blueprint & What's Coming Next

CORE BUSINESS VS NEW BUSINESS

SME TOOLS FOR PRACTICAL SUPPORT & REAL BUSINESS GROWTH

#SAStartUpStory

20K GROWTH PACKAGES COMPETITION WINNER!

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LETTER FROM THE MD

2025 - A Year of Strategic Growth Renewed Purpose

By Ilana Steyn
Managing Director

As I reflect on 2025, I'm filled with deep gratitude for how far we've come, and even more excitement for where we're heading. This has been a year of intentional growth, stronger foundations, and bold steps that position us for the exponential journey ahead.

CELEBRATING 2025: BUILDING FOR SCALE

More than a decade ago, we founded Company Partners on a simple philosophy: Register, Empower, Grow. This year, we have lived that purpose more powerfully than ever.

We have now supported over 50,000 entrepreneurs, seeing firsthand how compliance and strategic guidance unlock real economic momentum in South Africa.

2025 was a turning point. Our 80/20 resource strategy reshaped how we serve, strengthening our SME support while expanding through our Virtual Compliance Department and new accountant partnerships. We also formalised SOPs across all departments, ensuring every interaction reflects our values, professionalism and expertise.

Beyond our business, I have been privileged to amplify our mission through leadership roles with Rotary SA (Bellville), the Cape Chamber Tygerberg, SACBW and other platforms, creating a wider voice for South African entrepreneurs.

LOOKING TO 2026: ACCELERATING OUR IMPACT

We enter 2026 with clarity, purpose, and an ambitious vision. Through our Kaizen Platform, we're committed to serving more entrepreneurs, creating more jobs, and contributing meaningfully to South Africa's economic growth.

Our focus for the year ahead is clear:

1. Deepening Expertise: advancing our strengths in registrations, compliance, and consulting.
2. Expanding Reach: growing partnerships so more entrepreneurs, especially in underserved areas, can access the support they need.
3. Empowering Our Team: investing in our 45+ experts through training, growth pathways, and a culture where excellence thrives.

At the heart of everything is the entrepreneur, the dreamer. Behind every registration, every compliance filing, every consultation, stands someone trying to change their world. That purpose will always be our driving force.

I'm profoundly grateful to our team for their dedication, to our clients for their trust, and to our partners for walking this journey with us.

Together, we are not just building businesses, we are building the future of South African entrepreneurship.

Here's to a year of bold moves, meaningful impact, and shared success.

Ilana Steyn

The SME Survival Blueprint & What's Coming Next

By Dawie Roodt
Leading SA Economist

As we look toward 2026, SMEs feel economic pressure first, hardest, and longest. But with the right preparation, the new year offers more stability and opportunity.

WHAT HIT SMEs THE HARDEST IN 2025

1. A Weak Economy

Slow national growth remained the biggest strain on small businesses. When customers cut back, SMEs immediately feel it in sales, cash flow, and day-to-day liquidity. ***When the economy stumbles, SMEs don't just feel it; they feel it first.***

With limited reserves and fewer revenue streams compared to large corporations, small businesses had no buffer against declining demand.

2. High Interest Rates

Borrowing remained expensive throughout 2025. For SMEs dependent on credit to manage operations or expansion, this created sharp financial pressure.

High interest costs meant:

- reduced working capital
- slower expansion
- higher risk of financial shocks

3. Political and Global Uncertainty

Unstable political conditions in South Africa, and shifts in global policy, weakened business confidence. For SMEs, uncertainty translates directly into delayed investment and cautious customer spending.

WHERE DEMAND SHIFTED

While most sectors weakened, solar and renewable energy surged as load shedding, high electricity costs, and failing infrastructure drove the push for energy independence. ***The takeaway: businesses that solve real pain points thrive, even in a weak economy.***

WHAT SMEs CAN LEARN FROM 2025's BEST PERFORM

- Service industries that invested in technology and skills stayed competitive.
- Infrastructure-dependent sectors struggled.

THE 2026 ECONOMIC BASELINE

Forecast for 2026:

- Inflation: 3%–4%
- Interest rates: 0.25%–0.5% decrease
- Growth: Around 1%

SME PRIORITIES FOR 2026

As SMEs head into 2026, strengthening internal capabilities will be essential. Upskilling teams and diversifying services can help stabilise revenue in a slow-growth economy, while disciplined cash-flow management, avoiding unnecessary debt and large capital spend, will protect businesses from shocks. Compliance remains non-negotiable as regulations tighten, and technology will play a decisive role. AI can streamline operations and reduce admin pressure, while strong cybersecurity safeguards business continuity.

REASONS FOR CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

A shift toward better governance could unlock improved infrastructure and investor confidence, but even without major change, SMEs that operate efficiently and invest wisely are well placed to grow.

Great businesses are built in difficult years.

Core Business vs New Business

HOW A STRATEGIC RESET CAN RESTORE GROWTH

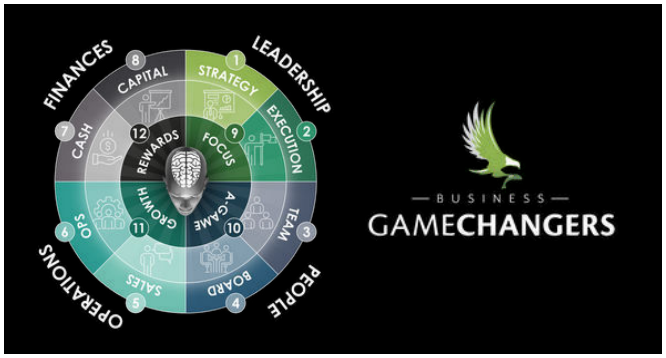
2025: THE TURNING POINT

After many years of growth, Company Partners hit a maturity stage where our old way of working no longer helped us reach growth targets. We were spread across too many services, client types, and projects; serving clients outside our core business, those we weren't equipped to help profitably; and lacked clear measurement and focus on where money was going.

The Result: *We were busier than ever, but not growing.*

We brought in a Growth Consulting firm, Business Game Changers (BGC), who specialise in scaling businesses. Together we dug deep to find the root issues and start changing the business.

The Main Problems: *We lost focus on our core business and bet on too many opportunities.*



WHAT WE LEARNED (TOP 3 LESSONS)

1) Focus is everything: Wrong focus cost us millions, but clarity restored speed, confidence, and alignment, and the systems, habits, and roles that got us here could not take us forward.

2) Core must come first: 80% of our revenue comes from repeatable SME compliance services where we control quality and delivery. This is our strength and our brand.

3) Choose ONE big new bet: We stopped spreading resources across many ideas and invested in a new and improved online system to serve SMEs with compliance as our single long-term growth investment.

THE STRATEGY RESET

We acted quickly and decisively. As Directors and leaders, we aligned on what needed to change.

We cut services outside the "SME Must-Have Compliance Services" box, doubled down on improving our core services, stopped building unrelated new projects, and focused our growth investment on a new system designed to drive 500%+ growth over the next 10 years.

WHAT YOUR BUSINESS CAN TAKE FROM OUR 'SCHOOL FEES'

- ***Make time to plan your business strategy annually***.
- ***Get buy-in from leaders and staff*** *on the vision, the core business, the growth opportunities, and the changes ahead. Be clear about every person's role.*
- ***Make the hard choices.*** *You'll need to cut problem services/products and even people who are not pulling their weight.*
- ***Invest in your biggest growth opportunity.*** *Don't hold back, go big, stay focused, and measure progress monthly. Adjust quickly if things drift off course.*

> ***"Clarity isn't just strategy; it's the difference between being busy and actually scaling. Focus turned our turning point into a launchpad."***

By Liam Stander
Strategic Director

#SAStartUpStory

20K GROWTH PACKAGES COMPETITION WINNER!

In September 2025, Company Partners hosted the #SAStartUpStory competition to celebrate South African entrepreneurs and the real stories behind building a business: the setbacks, the problem-solving, and the breakthroughs.

Our winner, Tsebo Lephuthing, founder of Smart Cycle Solutions, stood out for his resilience, innovation, and strong growth potential.

Smart Cycle Solutions is a lean e-waste recycling startup tackling South Africa's electronic waste challenge by collecting discarded devices from homes and businesses, recovering value responsibly, and issuing digital ESG certificates to support organisational sustainability reporting.

What impressed us most is how Tsebo built Smart Cycle with no funding, no transport, and limited industry recognition. He created momentum through partnerships, pitching at competitions, securing letters of intent, and designing a resource-smart model that works without expensive machinery upfront.

Well done, Tsebo! We're excited to support your next phase of growth.

Local Business Owner Tsebo Lephuthing

"In South Africa, resilience and creativity are more valuable than capital, the ability to adapt, negotiate, and use limited resources effectively can open doors that money alone cannot."

Official Winner of our **R20,000 Business Growth Package**, which includes **compliance upgrades**, a **business plan**, **marketing support**, and more to help take Smart Cycle Solutions to the next level.

Smart Cycle Solutions
Turning E-Waste into Clean Value

www.smartcyclesolutions.co.za

SACBW
SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR BUSINESS WOMEN
EST. 1988

Ilana Steyn

FROM BOARDROOMS TO EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Our Managing Director, Ilana Steyn, was honoured as the **2025/2026 National Business Woman of the Year** by the South African Council for Business Women.

This award recognises Ilana's decades-long commitment to empowering SA entrepreneurs through expert business registrations, compliance guidance, and her unwavering belief in the potential of SMEs. She has dedicated her career to helping businesses become fully compliant, credible, and ready to grow; a mission that continues to shape the heart of Company Partners.

More than 100 inspiring women from across the country were celebrated at this event, but Ilana's achievement stands especially close to home.

"This award belongs to every entrepreneur. we've served. Your success stories are what truly matter."

Tools for SMEs:

Practical Support for Real Business Growth

Proudly Sponsored by Company Partners®

Running a business in South Africa means managing constant pressures, compliance deadlines, legislative changes, cash flow, and the need to make informed decisions quickly. Company Partners launched two practical tools for SMEs that simplify compliance and strengthen business confidence.

01

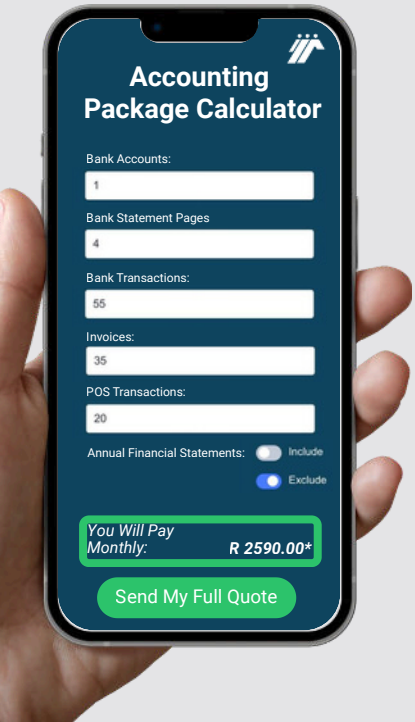
Accounting Package Calculator:

Smarter Financial Planning

We've seen too many SMEs caught off guard by unclear or unpredictable monthly accounting fees. That's why we launched the ***Accounting Package Calculator***.

This tool helps SMEs:

- Choose what level of accounting, tax, payroll and VAT support they require.
- Get a Instant Quote in less than 5 minutes.
- Plan ahead confidently with a clear cost estimates.



Our Accounting Quote Calculator removes the guesswork. By answering a few simple questions about your business, you'll receive a personalised monthly cost estimate in minutes.

It's fast, clear, and tailored to your business needs. Most importantly, it shows you that at Company Partners, we believe in transparent, predictable pricing that grows alongside your business.

02

CP Webinars:

Compliance Made Simple

Our monthly Free Compliance Masterclass breaks down complex legal and regulatory requirements into clear, practical steps. With frequent SARS and CIPC updates, staying compliant can be challenging. These webinars give SMEs direct access to experienced specialists who provide reliable, up-to-date guidance.

What You Get From Attending:

- **Latest updates on SARS, CIPC & compliance regulations.**
- **Practical tips to grow your business.**
- **15-min topic deep-dive + 15-min Q&A with a guest expert.**
- **Free resources after the session.**

Thousands of SMEs have used these sessions to resolve tax issues, update Beneficial Ownership, submit Annual Returns and prepare for funding. For many, it has become a trusted monthly resource.

Company Partners remains committed to building tools that save SMEs time, reduce risk, and support real, sustainable business growth - one tool at a time.

TESTIMONIALS

Here's what our Clients have to say...

Efficient, Proactive and Exceptionally Reliable Service

★★★★★

"I've had an excellent experience working with Bronwyn and her team at Company Partners. Their service is consistently efficient, proactive, and well-executed with timely follow-ups that allow you to focus on other pressing business matters. I highly recommend them to anyone seeking a reliable and professional partner who delivers with precision and care."

Quick, Professional and Highly Supportive Registration Service

★★★★★

"I had a great experience with Company Partners. They handled my company registration quickly and professionally, and kept me updated throughout the process. Their support team was clear, responsive, and very helpful. I look forward to working with them on the rest of my company compliance services. Highly recommended!"

Service Beyond Expectations Aligned To Our Core Company Values

- Service Excellence
- Integrity & Compliance
- Empowering Entrepreneurs
- Accountability
- Innovation & Continuous Improvement
- Transparency
- Respect & Client-Centricity
- Collaboration
- Reliability
- Growth Mindset

Outstanding Professionalism From Start to Finish

★★★★★

"I'm very grateful to the entire Company Partners team for their outstanding service and professionalism. From start to finish, the process was handled efficiently and with great communication. Special thanks to the consultants and support staff for their guidance and patience throughout the updates and compliance process for our company, Horn of Africa Entertainment (Pty) Ltd. The service was smooth, reliable, and truly professional. I highly recommend Company Partners to anyone looking for trusted business registration and compliance support!"

They Solved in 2 Weeks What We Couldn't in Months

★★★★★

"Was very happy and impressed with the service I received from Company Partners. We had been struggling for months to try and get a UIF registration number from the Department of Labour, and Company Partners stepped in and helped within 2 weeks. You get regular updates via email and they are very quick to respond to any queries! Very satisfied customer!"

Friendly, Dependable and Always Willing to Explain

★★★★★

"Very helpful and dependable people that you can rely on, and they are so friendly in such a way they don't know that by talking to them they are making you understand the business and you have a picture of what they are talking about. We love their attitude and friendliness."

THANK YOU!

Company Partners®

Thank you for taking the time to go through our Company magazine and we hope this shows the capabilities of our company and the integrity we have towards our quality of work and to our clients and consumers.

Don't hesitate to give us a call!

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