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This Christmas, think of the 99% - how small businesses can grow with EchoCo

There's now a record number of SMEs in the UK, accounting for 99% of all private businesses. However, less than 1% of small businesses have transgressed to a medium sized enterprise

Currently a record number of 4.5 million businesses in the UK, and SMEs form the 99%. Not only do SMEs account for the lion's share of businesses, they also provide 59% of private-sector jobs and 49% of business turnover. So, when distinguishing between small and medium sized enterprises, why has the number of medium enterprises remained static at 30,000 since the '90s?

There is a huge leap from setting up as a freelancer or running a small business, to diving into a bigger pond and competing with national or even international brands. However, it's now an ideal time for the 99% to take up the challenge and break-up the monopolies. The Federation of Small Businesses has shown that large businesses' share of employment fell from 45% to 40%, with SMEs picking up their slack: it's time to support these job creators, and help grow small saplings into larger enterprises.

Individually or via business procurement, customers can help shift the balance of spending. But how can small enterprises themselves grow their following, build brand awareness *and* instil loyalty from their customers and employees? One method is to offer loyalty membership offers, which is how EchoCo helps businesses grow.

Small businesses often offer in-store membership discounts, whether via collecting coffee-stamps or offering discounts to members of local business support enterprises such as the Bristol £; and large businesses typically trump these offers via impressively branded, bespoke employee and membership discount packages that provide discounts in a dauntingly large number of stores.

EchoCo are changing the flow. Their new product provides businesses the opportunity to create their very own membership and employee discount schemes; emulating the professional appearance of big businesses and offering a multitude of external discounts, but at a fraction of the cost with packages starting from £200.

Whilst EchoCo have worked with bigger businesses, such as David Lloyd Leisure, they're geared for SMEs. Their transparent pricing is based on a small fixed-fee, rather than per employee, allowing businesses to plan their finances and not worry about growing or fluctuating staff or member numbers. This is ideal for small and mid-sized retailers, businesses aimed at the tourist season, health & fitness centres and so on.

Incorporating a professional-looking loyalty membership benefits scheme allows SMEs to capture and reward people wanting to shop local or support smaller corporations. It gives new customers and staff a tangible demonstration of trust, dispelling their misconceptions that small businesses are

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unprofessional, might not be around for long or don't offer the same value as their larger counterparts.

EchoCo find, negotiate and incorporate offers from local and national firms; helping filter those most suitable to a business's staff or target audience, and keeping small businesses delivering their product. The list of high-street offers that their clients can include runs from Asda to Marks and Spencer; Starbucks to B&Q. EchoCo can present hand-picked offers on an actively-managed or static site, sculpted to suit a businesses' branding, with a trio of mobile marketing solutions seamlessly integrated with iOS and Android platforms.

If you operate, work for or are aware of a small or medium sized business that could benefit from building brand loyalty and grow their humble beginnings into a competitor of the big fish - visit <http://echoco.co.uk/> or email info@echoco.co.uk to learn more about how EchoCo can help the business grow.

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