

How small businesses in Belgium have been impacted

The Future of Business Survey is an ongoing collaboration between Facebook, the World Bank, and the OECD to survey SMBs on Facebook globally biannually. Over the next six months, SMBs in more than 50 countries and regions will be surveyed monthly regarding business operations in the context of COVID-19 to capture the impacts of the pandemic on the financials and challenges of SMBs, as well as adjustments being implemented in response to the crisis. The objective of this research is to amplify the voice of SMBs and assess how their situations are changing.



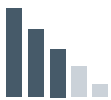
77%

of female-led SMBs on Facebook (vs. **84%** of male-led SMBs) are operational or engaging in any revenue-generating activities



30%

of operational SMBs on Facebook expect cash flow to be a **challenge** in the next few months



68%

of operational SMBs on Facebook report that their sales this year are **lower** than last year



37%

of operational SMBs on Facebook report **25% or more** of their sales were made digitally in the past month



14%

of operational SMBs on Facebook have **reduced** the number of employees/workers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic



40%

of operational SMBs on Facebook feel **optimistic** about the future of their business

The first 2020 wave of the Future of Business survey among owners and employees was conducted on the Facebook platform between May 28-31, 2020 with at least 271 respondents in Belgium. In order to qualify for the sample, respondents were required to be an administrator of an active Facebook business page. Statistics are reported for those who owned or managed an SMB. Respondents were asked their opinions and experiences regarding the impacts of COVID on business operations. Respondents were invited to the survey and took it within the Facebook app, with participation completely optional and non-compensated. For more details on the methodology and sampling, visit: dataforgood.fb.com/global-state-of-smb

Les Moussors de Awa



📍 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Awa Seck

Facebook: /Lesmoussorsdeawa

Instagram: @Lesmoussorsdeawa

“

With Facebook, we launched @1Sénégalais1Masque to raise awareness about COVID-19, protect Senegalese people, and, above all, preserve jobs through a group of creators called Atelier221. It helped us to inspire Senegalese citizens.

— Awa Seck

Senegal-born Awa Seck founded her business in 2017, selling her eco-responsible, reimagined version of traditional headscarves, known as moussors, online and at a reseller's shop in Dakar. Just a year later, she was able to open her Brussels showroom, offering an expanded product range that includes Senegal-made, ready-to-wear fashion, showcasing a hand embroidery technique native to Diourbel, the region where Awa was born.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced Awa's Brussels store to temporarily close. She saw a reduction in sales and orders. But Awa's focus was on the bigger picture: She swiftly galvanised her Senegalese artisan network through her membership in Atelier221, a collective of creators. She did this by leading communications for a local initiative, #1Sénégalais1Masque, focused on supplying reusable, cloth face masks. In just over one month, 1,000 volunteer tailors produced and distributed over 130,000 masks. They were able to preserve jobs and work with organisations that redistributed the masks for free to the community. In parallel, Awa's Belgian team was also busy sewing, so that she could include a free mask with every order.

Facebook and Instagram have enabled Awa to connect with her customers across the world on a daily basis. She shares colourful images and upbeat video messages that generate positive engagement. When Awa's customers post pictures of themselves in their stylish masks, Awa reposts on her Facebook Page and Instagram feed. Since Awa doesn't have an ecommerce website, the Facebook apps and technologies were her primary communication, operations, and sales channels while her store was closed.

For example, one local Brussels company purchased 100 of her masks after seeing the work she was doing on Instagram. In another case, a local nurse insisted on paying for masks to support Awa's business, even though they were being distributed for free.

Awa reopened her Brussels showroom on May 16, 2020. Now, as she welcomes her customers in person once again, she also benefits from a strengthened online presence and deeper connections with customers and followers around the world — thanks to consistent, authentic communication with her community.

FACEBOOK