

Queensland Communities in transition

Digital businesses – where location is no issue

It can be a challenge trying to make a living or running a small business in a regional or remote community. For bricks and mortar businesses there may be higher operating costs due to transport and logistics, lack of labour, higher energy charges and possibly reduced access to water. But, depending on the line of business, location can be no problem for hosting a digital on-line enterprise that could be marketed locally, nationally or internationally.

People living in remote and regional areas often have reduced job opportunities. For those in the service or manufacturing sectors, there may also be issues with a limited and/or seasonal customer base as well as high freight costs -unless products are high value and/or low weight/volume commodities. Digital businesses have the potential to overcome some of the challenges.

As with any small business, it is important to develop a business strategy which assesses who/what/where your market is and determines what the costs are to service that market and how you can do it. For a digital small business, there are low start up and potentially low ongoing operating costs. Of course, having a reliable and secure internet connection is an essential part of the equation.

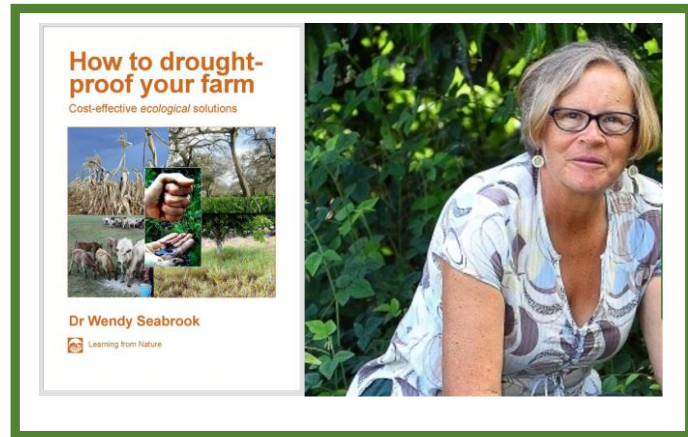
HIGHLIGHTS

- Low start-up costs
- Low operating costs
- Ability to sell a niche product
- Ability to market nationally and internationally
- Potential to attract clientele to your community
- Can value add to an existing business
- Linking business with regional talent



Learning by Nature

Wendy Seabrook is a resident and business owner based in Cooktown. Through her online business, Learning by Nature, she has managed to carve out a digital presence and business which is being marketed both in Australia and internationally. As a highly skilled individual, Wendy can promote her expertise in regenerative agriculture, regardless of her regional location. Wendy does this via targeted online marketing of a package of online resources including videos and downloadable resources and publications. Distribution costs are minimised through getting hard copies of any resources printed and posted out via print-on-demand in Peterborough in the UK! Wendy has customers around the world including Australia, South America, Africa, India, Europe, USA and Canada. See www.learningfromnature.com.au



Shop My Town

Melody Jarvis is a 2017 Qld Government Community Digital Champion, awarded for her Shop My Town initiative. Her vision is to *'save small towns for the future of our children'*, through the Shop My Town Foundation. Shop My Town is a local online hub. Its marketplace is the eBay of a regional community, with only local products. To reach the local region and beyond, local business stories are shared via social media. Shop My Town is now seeking venture capital to build a 'software as a service' platform for supply chain logistics for retailers. See shopmytown.com.au



Wholesome food products from regional Queensland – Vicky D's Kitchen

Vicky D's Kitchen, is located on the Gregory Highway at 'Victoria Downs', 75 km south of Charters Towers. With a passion for cooking wholesome foods, business owner, Jodie Pollock, launched the online enterprise in early 2017. Vicky D's Kitchen produces a range of delicious products including jams, sauces, relishes, chutneys, herb mixes and meat rubs, hampers and kitchenware. Her motto is 'Making the World a Tastier Place'. With a social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn, Vicky D's Kitchen currently has customers stretching across Queensland and into the New South Wales.



Digital Business Ideas for Regions

- Digital educational products in your area of expertise
- On-line tutoring services using digital meeting software
- On-line financial services (bookkeeping, tax returns etc)
- Virtual personnel assistant
- Air Tasker for regions
- Shop My Town or equivalent
- Backpacker employment services
- Local tourism services
- Digital shop front for a product
- Car Next Door
- Air BnB
- Digital Tourism Trails i.e. local digital information that complements an existing attraction
- Indigenous experiences or information complementing existing attractions



Linking Business with talent in remote communities

Pointer Remote Roles links businesses with talented professional employees and contractors from all over Australia. Founder Jo Palmer looked at her network of highly qualified, professional friends who were living in rural areas. She recognised that there was a talent pool that the Australian workforce was missing out on as there was no easy way to connect with these professionals. Jo is passionate about connecting, educating and empowering rural businesses so they can access the skills and experience they need to grow tapping into this talent pool. See pointerremoteroles.com.au/



Digital Capability and Strategy

Of course, there are many examples of how an existing business can benefit from improving their own digital capability and developing their own strategy. For some ideas visit getonlineqld.initiatives.qld.gov.au/ and read more about the numerous Queensland Digital Community Champions who are operating in a variety of sectors to promote digital capability. Also visit: www.business.gov.au/news/lets-get-digital

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