

STARTING A BUSINESS REQUIRES PASSION, NOT A LOT OF MONEY

By Thando Ndlovu



»» Athenkosi Tima, entrepreneur and founder of ATMamtolo Enterprise.

A little goes a long way, as long as one is passionate about their business idea and is willing to go to great lengths to see it come to life. This is according to Athenkosi Tima, an ambitious entrepreneur based in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape.

According to Tima, one does not need be a millionaire to establish and run a successful business. All that is needed to start, in terms of funding, is what one has in their possession and build up from that. "I started my business with only R3500.00 in my bank account," she explains.

Tima is one of the eight entrepreneurs who went through an entrepreneurship training programme at Falsebay College, funded by the merSETA. She is the founder of ATMamtolo Enterprise, a business that sells clothes online.



»» Tima explaining how she started her business with little capital.

Upon completing matric in 2012 at Kuils River Technical High School, Tima worked as a promoter, moved to retail and also worked as a call centre agent. She started her business in 2018, while studying Public Management Falsebay College.

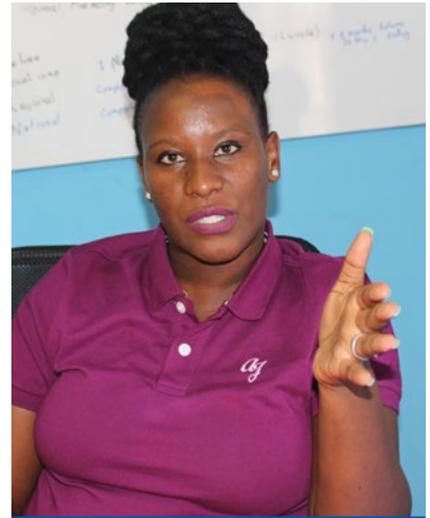
“Although I’ve always had great passion for entrepreneurship, I realised that one must always have something to fall back on. Studying expands one’s knowledge, so as to be in a better position to explore all avenues,” she says.

Tima explains that her business idea was inspired by wanting to help school children and teenagers in her community. She witnessed school-going children abstaining from school because they did not have uniform or casual clothes for Fridays, and teenagers not being able to attend matric dances because their parents could not afford to buy them clothes for those occasions. “Through my business, parents are able to purchase clothes for their children and pay monthly installments at no interest,” she explains.

She adds: “I do not yet have a specific shop from which I sell the clothes and do most of my marketing through social media. I purchase the clothes from different places, such as Durban, Johannesburg, China and Turkey. At the moment, I have a container where I store the clothes. My plan is to secure a place where I can build a warehouse and sell the clothes in bulk,” she explains.

Tima says running a business such as hers requires that one is trustworthy and available to respond to customer needs at all times. “People trust me with their monies. I have to ensure that I deliver as per their expectations. I also have to ensure that my social media pages are attended to at all times, because that is what drives my business and I have to respond immediately to all queries,” she says.

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» Tima explaining the importance of partnerships for small businesses.

Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA), Small Enterprise Development Agency and the likes,” she says.

Tima explains that during the training, these organisations gave presentations, offering valuable information for startup businesses and how they can access their funding.

“With the rate of unemployment in the country, not everyone can be an employee. Our businesses help put food on the table for our families. I was even able to buy a car through my business and I see it expanding day by day,” she concludes.

She explains that through interaction with young aspiring entrepreneurs, she came to realise that many of them have innovative business ideas and plans, but lack the necessary information to see them to fruition.

“For me, this is where the entrepreneurship training programme became of essence. It was during this programme that I got to rub shoulders with representatives from the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA),



» Tima explaining how she plans to expand her business.