

# What I wish I knew as an entrepreneur - Bruce Dube

Bruce Dube is the founder and MD of Nine80 Digital, a pan-African digital media publishing company. Its presence includes South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. This is his journey so far...



Bruce Dube, founder of Nine80 Digital.

## 1. Tell us about one of the toughest situations you've found yourself in as a business owner.

Being bankrupt and in debt was a tough phase of my entrepreneurial journey that impacted many personal and professional relationships negatively.

I overcame the challenge by adopting a more frugal approach with the overall business model, [thereby] fostering a business that focused more on giving value to consumers at lower costs by stripping down all the excess that doesn't speak to the core of the business and translate to revenue growth.

## 2. Which business achievement are you most proud of?

Establishing a pan-African digital publishing business targeting Africa's fast-growing youth demographic. A business with more than 15 digital assets and a footprint in [South Africa](#), [Kenya](#), Botswana, Zimbabwe and [Nigeria](#) that reaches millions of African youth, is something I'm extremely proud of. Also, making the *Forbes* Africa Top 30 was an important milestone for me.

## 3. Describe your greatest weakness as an entrepreneur.

My biggest weakness as an entrepreneur is that I'm introverted, so I struggle in areas like pitching, presentations, marketing and networking, which are core to the success of any business. I overcame this by establishing a team that complements these weaknesses.

## 4. Which popular entrepreneurial advice do you disagree with?

I think any entrepreneurial advice that seeks to perpetuate the notion there is a formula to doing things in business is unnecessary generalisation. I don't believe there is a particular approach or "conventional way" of doing things in business. A lot of strategies or approaches in business should always speak directly to one's reality and there isn't a set formula.

## 5. Is there anything you wish you knew about entrepreneurship before you got started?

I wish I had a mentor to help me navigate some of the constraints I faced starting up. I think a lot of mistakes I made could have been avoided (mostly the costly ones), had I had someone who was familiar with my sector.

## 6. Name a business opportunity you would still like to pursue.

I would say [manufacturing](#), and processing of Africa's raw materials is a sector that needs to be urgently tapped into for the

continent to draw value from its resource base. The continent exports a lot of its materials for little and then imports these back as products at absurd prices.

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