

Love what you do, believe in it and strive to serve more and more people

By  Juanita Pienaar

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Cape Town-based, award-winning entrepreneur, business and life strategist, leadership expert and international speaker Sandras Phiri is the director for Startup Grind South Africa, which educates, inspires and connects entrepreneurs, with a focus to connect small business owners and share skills. He is also the CEO and founder of Africa Trust Academy, a productivity and high-performance consulting company.



Award-winning entrepreneur, business and life strategist, leadership expert and international speaker, Sandras Phiri.

Here, Phiri lists a few traits he says entrepreneurs need to be successful, he shares some pain points on what the industry can improve on and elaborates on why entrepreneurship is so important, especially in a country such as South Africa.

■ ***What are some of the challenges you've faced getting your business off the ground?***

Some of my challenges included finding consistent customers, trying to find the right pricing for my services, and finding product/market fit.

■ ***What are the best and worst things about being an entrepreneur?***

The best things about being an entrepreneur are knowing that you're working towards creating something that can potentially positively impact a lot of people and also that can create a legacy.

The worst part is when your dreams don't come at the time you thought they would and when you realise that most of your dreams about controlling your own time and determining your own income were not exactly correct.

■ **What has been your proudest achievements thus far?**

My proudest achievements include speaking in Silicon Valley with many notable founders, including the co-founders of Facebook and YouTube; hosting over 60 founders at Startup Grind stages; and travelling to over 21 countries.

■ **What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?**

“ To be a successful entrepreneur you need to love what you do and believe in it. You need to strive to serve more and more people. You need to balance determination with being teachable as there is a thin line between being visionary and being crazy. ”

This is important so that you don't burn through your personal and investors' money without generating any returns. You need to always update your goals and adjust your business to move with the times.

■ **List a few pain points you think the industry can improve on.**

Starting a business is hard and unpredictable so early-stage entrepreneurs should be given more flexibility on hiring and letting go of employees, as most of them don't have the resources to keep non-performing employees and to comply with labour laws.

We also need more organisations and regulation to support companies that have moved out of the startup phase to help them grow. Currently, there is a lot of support at the super early stage and so most small companies struggle to scale when they leave the incubator stage.

Incubators should measure their success based on the ability of their startups to graduate successfully and/or to raise funding, not just counting the numbers in their intake. Demo days and pitching competitions should give real value to entrepreneurs as opposed to just being a show.

■ **What is the importance of entrepreneurship, especially in a country such as this?**

In a country with high unemployment rates like South Africa, entrepreneurship is very important to create income and jobs for people who cannot get jobs. In addition to this, entrepreneurship also helps people have purpose and worth, which is important in improving emotional and physical well-being.

■ **Why would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?**

I'd encourage someone to become an entrepreneur because it can be fulfilling when you create something that takes on a life of its own and positively impacts other people.

For more details about Startup Grind Cape Town, click [here](#) and follow Phiri on the following social media platforms: [Twitter](#); [LinkedIn](#).

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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