

## Heavy Chef's most exciting startups 2021 shortlist

Heavy Chef has announced its 12 finalists for this year's South Africa's Top 5 Most Exciting Startups awards. The shortlist of 12 will be narrowed down to the Top 5, to be announced at a celebration at Workshop17 Watershed in Cape Town on the evening of 2 December.



Fred Roed, Heavy Chef CEO

South Africa's Top 5 Most Exciting Startups is a celebration of our resilient local entrepreneur ecosystem that is brought to you in collaboration with Heavy Chef partners PayFast And Xero. This year, the campaign attracted 517 unique nominations, a massive increase from the previous edition in 2019 and a sure sign of the fighting spirit embodied by our business communities in times of harrowing challenges like the kind the last couple of years have presented.

Says Heavy Chef CEO Fred Roed, "After a brutal 24 months for many businesses, this year's entries were packed with social impact organisations that are making a marked impact in the entrepreneur sector. These are not only businesses that are doing well in the ecosystem; they're businesses that are doing good for our society".

"Entrepreneurs are generally eternal optimists who endeavour to solve social ills while making money," adds judging panel member, Kasi Catalyst's Vusi Vokwana. "The finalists for the Heavy Chef Top Startups 2021 are an impressive group who make me proud to be South African. We will rebuild"

In addition to Vusi's expert eye, this year's entries were assessed by a dynamic group of judges that includes Nthabiseng Makgatho (Xero), Polo Leteka (IDF Capital), Alexandra Fraser (Viridium Africa), Lukhanyo Neer (Heavy Chef Foundation), Yolandi Janse van Rensburg (Heavy Chef), Colleen Harrison (PayFast) and Zinhle Novazi (Heavy Chef Foundation).

## Top 12 Finalists

- **deaftouch** - Founded by Claybourne Appies in 2018. An ICT startup with the goal of providing innovative communication technology solutions for the deaf
- **FCB.ai** - Founded in 2016 by Antoine Paillusseau. An AI-powered chatbot to help financial service providers acquire and retain customers.
- **Hypernova Space Technologies** - Founded in 2018 by Jonathan Lun. Builders of cutting-edge electric propulsion and other innovative infrastructure for space satellites.
- **Kusini Water** - Founded by Murendi Mafumo in 2016. A social enterprise whose nanotechnology and macadamia nut innovation aims to provide safe drinking water to communities in need.
- **Livestock Wealth** - Founded in 2015 by Ntuthuko Shezi. A tech 'crowd farming startup that connects investors with farmers that require funding by using cattle as a type of investment.
- **Musgrave Spirits** - Founded in 2015 by Simone Musgrave. Makers of fine spirits and home to South Africa's first-ever, award-winning pink gin.
- **Naked Insurance** - Founded by Alex Thomson, Sumarie Greybe and Ernest North in 2016. A startup that uses innovative tech to build an insurance offering that is fairer, simpler, more transparent and affordable.
- **SmartWage** - Founded by Simon Ellis and Caroline Van Der Merwe in 2019. A payday solution that enables employees to have instant access to their earned wages.
- **Ukheshe** - Founded by Clayton Hayward, Mike Smits, Jason Penton and Paul Carter-Brown in 2018. The fintech offers accessible, fast and secure payment services using channels like Whatsapp, existing apps, web and USSD using a cloud-based PCI compliant environment.
- **Valenture Institute** - Founded by Robert Paddock in 2019. A private high school offering a rich academic learning experience online and on-campus. The curriculum is designed to enable students with the skills required to build a sustainable future.
- **Walk Fresh** - Founded by Lethabo Mokoena in 2015. A boutique sneaker cleaning and shoe-care startup that offers refurbishing, maintenance, shoe shining and repairing services for all kinds of footwear.
- **WeThinkCode** - Founded by Arlene Mulder and Camille Agonin in 2015. A social entrepreneur venture that teaches thousands of young people to become world-class developers - with a guaranteed path to employment.

As criteria for the entries, only startups that have been transacting and operational as a business entity for seven years or less were considered. All entries own their intellectual property (IP) and demonstrate an ability to scale.

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