

## 5 tips for business success

Serial entrepreneur, Ian Fuhr, is South Africa's unlikely king of cosmetology. Yet today, his unconventional resume has resulted in 200 salons, 3,500 employees, 180-plus franchisees, and half a million loyalty club members all devoted to the Sorbet brand.



Marnus Broodryk and Ian Fuhr

Speaking to Marnus Broodryk's on his "Making SMEs Matter" podcast, Fuhr made it clear that to succeed today, you cannot be afraid to fail.

*“Entrepreneurs face incredible challenges. They need to be resilient. They need to be innovative. They need to be inspired. They also need to know that they are in it for the long haul and have the determination to see it through overtime.”*

Fuhr shares 5 tips for business success:

### 1. Understand the social, economic and political environment in which people are living

It's important to take cognisance of the external environment your staff live in because it has an impact inside the business. Issues of race, religion and culture are as relevant in today's workplace if not more than they were previously, and they have an enormous impact on productivity.

“If you wonder why South Africa isn’t up there in the productivity stakes when we come up against other countries, it’s quite clear it’s because we haven’t been able to address our melting pot of diversity.”

## **2. Don’t go into business to make money**

If your business is just about making money, it’s not customer-centric, which means you will cut costs on things that are important to people. Rather go into business to serve the needs and wants of people – if you do that well, the money will come.

## **3. Do something different**

“Sameness is a disease,” says Fuhr. “When people tell me it can’t be done, that really spurs me on, that’s an exciting challenge. All I was trying to do with Sorbet was to find every differentiator in the market. From the name to the look and feel, to the branding and staffing. I realised that culture at the end would be the real differentiator, never copy a culture.”

## **4. Ignorance can be wisdom**

Coming into a business or an industry with fresh eyes so that you are not contaminated by the conventional wisdom of what works and what doesn’t. Come in with what your gut tells you.

“When I started Sorbet, I tried not to ask too many questions. I decided if I’m going to do this, I’m going to blunder in and make it happen. Whatever was out there, I was going to do it differently.”

## **5. Be intuitive, be courageous, be determined and don’t be afraid to fail**

Intuition is essentially knowing that something is right, even though you don’t have the proof that it will work. “To be an entrepreneur you need to be able to ‘vasbyt’, even when you want to throw in the towel.”

“These exclusive conversations between top South African entrepreneurs are a great way to garner insights from those that have walked the path and are able to share their experiences with those who find themselves in similar situations as they build their businesses. Business owners are hungry for content and by finding the right information and partners that allow them to drive opportunity across their business is exactly what they are looking for today,” concludes Sean Jackson, head of business cash solutions at Investec.

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