

Members of the Entrepreneurs' Organisation have shared their experiences of running a business when they were either children or students at university and how they are helping their own children run their own businesses. These stories have been shared to spark inspiration among South Africa's youth and encourage a spirit of entrepreneurship.

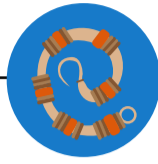
Waheed Adam (51) An EO member since July 2016 and CEO of Prime Group



My first entrepreneurial venture happened when I was nine or ten years old and came from necessity.



My dad was supporting two families after he remarried and had a total of six children. I decided to support myself as much as I could and started with earning my own pocket money.



I learnt how to make copper-wire beaded bangles that uniquely (at the time) could expand to fit all sizes. I began the venture and mainly sold to the public.



A point came when I had retail shops requesting my product, however, the very first one I supplied failed to pay me. It was a small fortune which I lost in terms of materials but learnt the hard lesson and started all over again.



“ The feeling of earning money, irrespective of how little it may have been, gave me a deep sense of independence and also satisfaction knowing I did not have to burden my father with requests for cash. And that led me to the next phase of running my own business today. ”

Mike Scott (35) An EO member since July 2016 and owner of Nona Creative



My first 'business' was when I was seven years old.



I would load a picnic basket with washing materials, tie it to my skateboard and walk around my suburb washing cars for R2 a pop.



I was constantly told how 'enterprising I was'.



These very first steps led me to build Nona Creative and we operate across five continents.

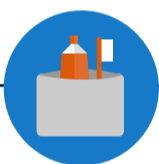


“ You are never too young or too old to start your own business and the lessons you learn along the way will help make you a better entrepreneur in later life. ”

Ian Ashforth (35) An EO member since June 2015 and CEO of Bland Event Life



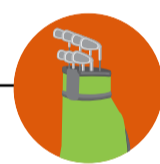
My first foray into entrepreneurship was sales: anything I could get my hands on I sold.



It started with selling the contents of airline hospitality bags which my dad received whenever he travelled business class which was quite often.



I also started hustling my mother for old clothes and those went on sale.



My best achievement was selling an old turquoise golf bag to someone who was passing by my house – I had no idea what he planned to do with it.



“ If you can sell, you can be an entrepreneur. Sometimes it's not about the product or service you sell. Just so long as people want it and you have it. Or have the ability to convince them they need it. ”

Richard Rayne (38) An EO member since April 2012 and CEO of iLearn



I was always on the hunt for ways to make money.



In high school, I won a prize for the most sales in advertising spots in the annual school magazine and this was the first bite of being an entrepreneur.



Together with a friend, I also created parties at clubs with a well know DJ and convinced brands to sponsor.



Finally, at university, to earn extra money, I sold computer equipment and computer training which turned into what iLearn is today.



“ Opportunities for businesses are all around us and sometimes it is easy to identify a gap where you can either offer a product or service. It is worthwhile trying out as many ventures as possible while you are young because you never know which one could land and become a long term successful business. ”

Murray McWilliams (48) An EO member since July 2013 and owner of Tractor Outdoor



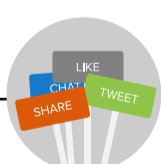
I have encouraged my children who are ten and seven years old to start their own businesses.



What they do is make kombucha, a fermented health drink infused with tea, that is becoming increasingly popular among health conscious consumers. The kombucha is then sold to friends and yogis.



To market the health drink, one of my children used it as a raffle. We made a short video of her explaining what the raffle was about and how to make the tea. This was shared on Whatsapp and she sold the most raffle tickets at the school. It was a great marketing exercise for her and showed the power of digital marketing.



This is something so important which entrepreneurs can forget, and that is how they will actively market their products.



We also saw a gap in the market because the home-made kombucha they sell is at a better price compared with the health shops. There is also a great entry into the target market as my wife is a yoga instructor.



“ Combining a trendy product at a competitive price with an effective digital marketing approach can really boost a business. Young people are savvy with communications tools of today and can use this to power their entrepreneurial ambitions. ”