



Press Release – Tsogo Sun– 28/09/2017

Tsogo Sun Entrepreneur of the Year finalists announced

Focus on entrepreneurial growth continues to increase in South Africa as unemployment climbed to 27.7% in the second quarter of 2017. The Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute's 2017 report, *The entrepreneurial ecosystem of South Africa*, states that while bottlenecks do exist, such as large-firm dominance, cultural perceptions of entrepreneurship, and structural inequality, "evidence suggests that several targeted actions could address key bottlenecks and further improve the entrepreneurship ecosystem in South Africa".

It is within this unfolding environment that the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs programme was established in 2005, to contribute to employment creation, and towards the growth of the South African economy. The programme comprehensively supports emerging businesses in the tourism sector and other industries throughout the country.

Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs (<https://www.tsogosun.com/citizenship/entrepreneurs>) holds an annual Tsogo Sun Entrepreneur of the Year Award competition for entrepreneurs and alumni benefitting from the development programme – this year 200 were eligible to enter. Entrants complete a comprehensive entry form, which then goes through a stringent evaluation that includes assessing performance in the programme, financial performance, customer knowledge, marketing, innovation efforts, job creation, contributions to the greater community, potential for growth, and overall sustainability.

Five 2017 finalists were selected: Devina Dawkinum, Gemkids Catch-up Programme, from KwaZulu-Natal; Hezron Louw, Sumting Fresh restaurant and gourmet street food, Gauteng; Nicole Msibi, Before Time Indlondlo Events, catering and events equipment and décor hire, Gauteng; Noli Mini, Relax Spas mobile health spa company, Western Cape; and Ronnie Nemukula, Ronem Maintenance Solutions, engineering services in construction, repairs and maintenance, Mpumalanga.

Candy Tohill, Tsogo Sun's GM of Corporate Affairs, congratulated the finalists and wished them luck for the next stage of judging, which will be done by a panel of influential South Africans in business and society, who will rate the finalists using a process that evaluates business performance, self-confidence, presentation, professionalism, knowledge, and overall impression. "Our finalists represent a diverse range of businesses and come from four different provinces, illustrating the growing reach and impact of our entrepreneurs programme. It is encouraging to see the innovative and industrious methods that they have employed to succeed in their businesses in these

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challenging economic times, and we are excited to be able to give them this wonderful Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs Award platform which promises to place them squarely on the map for future success.”

The 2017 winner will be announced at the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneur of the Year Awards dinner on 26 October at Southern Sun Pretoria (<https://www.tsogosun.com/southern-sun-pretoria>). Prizes for the winner include R50 000 from Tsogo Sun and a bursary valued at R30 000 from Tsheto Leadership Academy. In addition, the winner will fulfil the important role of being an ambassador for Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs for the year. This will involve travelling around the country with the Tsogo Sun Corporate Affairs team delivering empowerment and citizenship seminars, public speaking engagements, mentoring other small businesses, and serving as a role model for young entrepreneurs and emerging enterprises. The 2016 winner of the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneur of the Year Award was Nqobile Nkosi, owner of NQ Jewellery Design Services, based in Soweto, who has spent an active and successful year as an ambassador.

“Our far-reaching national enterprise and supplier development initiatives provide business and leadership skills, various business benefits such as equipment and advertising, and preferential procurement opportunities to qualifying predominantly black-owned small enterprises and emerging micro-enterprises. As far as possible, the percentage of black-owned businesses supported is aligned with the country’s economically active population statistics,” says Tothill.

200 emerging businesses are enrolled in the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs full-year development programme, which delivers business foundation skills training, leadership coaching, mentorship, and business benefits such as equipment, discounts, and television advertising. Additionally, 125 SMMEs are supported with business benefits through an ESD programme called the HCI Supplier Club which Tsogo Sun runs in partnership with majority shareholder, HCI Limited.

Of the enrolled Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs, 63% have successfully completed University of Cape Town Business Management Courses presented in collaboration with education company, GetSmarter, co-funded by programme partner CarlsonWagonlit Travel and Tsogo Sun.

Vusi Dlamini, Tsogo Sun’s Group HR Director, says, “We’re very proud as a group of the extent of the progress and achievements of Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs. The value of the programme is significant – to the entrepreneurs, to the group, and to the greater economy.” He adds that 25% of the businesses enrolled in the programme have expanded their operations as a result of Tsogo Sun’s

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interventions, and that each small business employs between one and 50 staff, and reaches up to 30 people in the value chain. “The programme showcases good work by the entrepreneurs, while also assisting participants with skills development and exposure to the markets that Tsogo Sun serves; and it helps them build self-confidence and success. It’s a worthwhile programme that empowers entrepreneurs to hold their own in the business world.”

Tsogo Sun’s portfolio includes over 100 hotels and 14 casino and entertainment destinations throughout South Africa, Africa, the Seychelles and Abu Dhabi. For further information, visit [tsogosun.com \(https://www.tsogosun.com\)](https://www.tsogosun.com), [follow on Twitter and Instagram @TsogoSun](#) or [like on Facebook /TsogoSun](#).

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