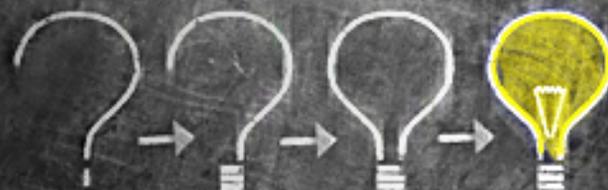
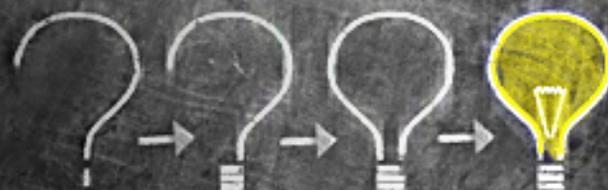


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In business, it's all about asking the right questions.



# 'If you plant a small seed you will grow a small tree' – Dikeledi Mosime

The entrepreneur of the week, Dikeledi Mosime is passionate about empowerment and job creation

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BY **LEBOHANG THULO**



## Company Profile

Name of company: **Tin-Pac Promotional Packaging**

Years in existence: 2 years

Position: CEO and founder

Location: Cape Town

## Can you tell us about your company and what you do?

We do promotional packaging. We started with just two clients, BOS Tea and Woolworths. But now we have a variety of customers from wine estates, retail like Pick n Pay,



Shoprite/Checkers, to food, general merchandise and cosmetics manufacturers.

**Can you tell us a little bit about your background – personal, educational and professional?**

I hail from Diepkloof,

Soweto. I went to Durban to study and obtained a BA degree in Economics and Political Science.

I started working at a bank, then went on to Foschini Group, where I worked my way up to an area manager. My next move was to the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry. This includes positions at Ocean Fishing Brands, Sales and Marketing and Pioneer Foods Group, as Exports manager and then General Manager.

I did an Executive Development Programme at USB-ED and an MBA at the USB. My MBA was the best thing I've ever done.

I have always wanted to be own boss, and wanted to build legacy. Along the path of working for someone, I decided I wanted to give more to many people. I set up an organisation called the Green Network Coaching where I coach young women to help them succeed in the corporate world, but it wasn't enough. I need to build even bigger opportunity like creating jobs.

I was retrenched as general manager in my previous company. It is then I came across the opportunity to start TIN-PAC, the promotional packaging company previously owned by Nampak.

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**"South African businesses have no confidence in local SMEs"**

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As part of their enterprise development initiative, they were looking to support an entrepreneur to take over a business that they had just closed down. The rest as they say, is history and I have since reemployed the staff that was retrenched.

### **What were some of the obstacles you faced starting out, and how did you overcome them?**

Acceptance in the market was one of the biggest challenges. You tell people about your product and because you are not a big name they don't give you the opportunities. Most continue to import from China. South African businesses have no confidence in local SMEs.

Access to finance was, and still is, another challenge. I went to the Department of Trade and Industry and their requirements don't accommodate new businesses. They want at least two years of audited results which is difficult because you are a new business. Banks also don't look at you until you prove yourself.

In my industry compliance is another important factor. Our products carry food products so we need to ensure that our facility is compliant.

### **How many people does your company employ?**

Seventeen permanent and plus 60 casual and seasonal employees. They all know the business and product because they worked in the company before it closed down. So there was no problem with continuity.

### **What is your overall vision for your business?**

My vision is in the next three years is for us to export into the Southern African market. I also want to diversify the business into unique markets. I would love to have 10% share of the South African promotional tin packaging market.

### **What do you think it takes to establish and run a successful business in South Africa?**

It takes guts to pick yourself up every time a door closes. It's also important to have the information and business know-how. You need to understand all aspects of running business including business models, human resources, costing and everything that makes up a business.

Networking is also important, opening yourself up to meet other business people and organisations so people know about you and can give you support. It's also important to be a driven person who knows what they want and to stay motivated.

### **How did you finance your business, how difficult or easy was the process?**

The process is forever difficult. The business is completely self-funded. I found the processes of securing funding to be lengthy and requirements are ridiculous for business that's just

starting out. Otherwise you have to give equity to get funding.

### **When did you know that you were an entrepreneur?**

I was selling pancakes at school when I was in grade 5. My grandmother was a domestic employee and on weekends when she was home, she would make us treats like pancakes with jam. This was what I started selling.

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## **"Learn to work with fear and don't let it stop you"**

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I used to tell her how beautiful and tasty they were and would ask her to make more so I would sell them at school.

I come from a humble beginnings. I would sell sweets and oranges to generate extra income. My mother used to sell stuff she bought on sale to supplement her income, she was also very entrepreneurial.

### **How would you describe your leadership style?**

I'm an inspirational leader. I believe that all of us have talent and gifts to share. I offer opportunities for people to show off what they are capable of, so they can shine in their own way. And I constantly challenge them with bigger responsibilities.

I love participation and believe in having a balanced life. Play and work. There must be time for both. I am also new age employer. I don't believe in measuring hours spent on a job, but more about the output and the quality of what you deliver.

### **What three pieces of advice would you offer young entrepreneurs starting out today?**

Dream big, believe in yourself and finally, in life, what you put in is what you get out. If you plant a small seed you grow a small tree. When I got retrenched I saw the universe propelling me to something bigger.

### **What do you wish you had known starting out?**

Fear. I wish I had learnt how to conquer fear early in my life. I was always ambitious, but fear was always present.

Learn to work with fear and don't let it stop you. It's a constant but don't let it conquer you.

### **And finally, do you believe in luck, hard work or both?**

I believe in working smart. I've seen people work hard and long hours and nothing comes out of it.

Luck has a lot to do with what happens in background. It's the seed that you cultivate. We call it luck when it all falls in place.

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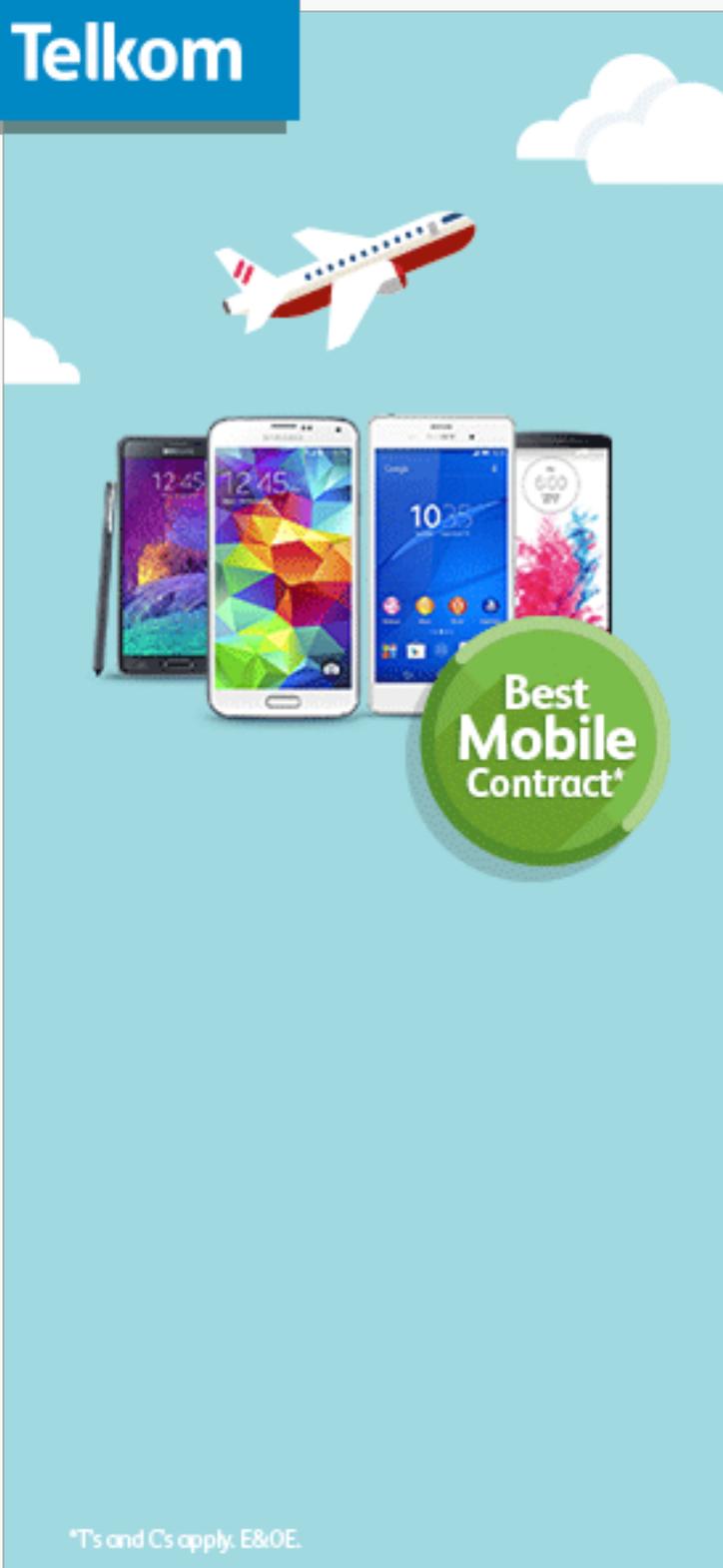
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