



Press Release – Tsogo Sun – 26/08/2016

Tsogo Sun's Entrepreneur of the Year finalists announced

With South Africa's entrepreneurial activity being rated as low for a developing nation and only a quarter of that of other sub-Saharan countries, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, support for entrepreneurs by the nation's private and public sectors is essential for economic growth. Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs has been committed to entrepreneurial development for more than a decade, revealing countless small business successes, providing practical support through a 12-month development programme, and recognising excellent entrepreneurial performance through the prestigious annual Tsogo Sun Entrepreneur of the Year Awards for the programme's top performers.

This year's Tsogo Sun Entrepreneur of the Year Award finalists run businesses in a range of market sectors, and include Carol Senosi, owner of cleaning services business, Lefa Cleaning Services in Gauteng; Nqobile Nkosi, whose business, NQ Jewellery Design, operates from Soweto; Lucille Cremen, who owns Cresco Tours in Gauteng; Zinzi Masina, owner of La Emme Guesthouse; and Meisie Nkosi, owner of Bella Bonni Guesthouse, both situated in eMalahleni in Mpumalanga.

Says Marcel von Aulock, Tsogo Sun CEO, "To meet the national requirements for job creation in South Africa, we need to cultivate an environment that is conducive to establishing and developing small businesses. Tsogo Sun contributes towards this social and economic imperative through our empowerment programmes such as the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs, which assists emerging enterprises to grow and thrive so that they can become active participants in the economy."

He adds that the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs programme forms part of the group's sustainability and growth strategy, with particular emphasis on delivering value to small and medium sized businesses in the communities where Tsogo Sun is present. "The programme harnesses decades of our group's experience and expertise and makes this available to entrepreneurs in all industries across the country to support them in their efforts to become successful. Over the years, the programme has become an important part of our supply chain and many of the registered entrepreneurs have become suppliers to the group."

Entries to the 2016 Tsogo Sun Entrepreneur of the Year Award were open to 152 Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs who have benefitted or are benefitting from the 12-month development programme. Says Candy Tothill, Tsogo Sun's GM of Corporate Affairs, "Entrants were required to complete a comprehensive entry form to be considered for the Awards. These were shortlisted using a stringent evaluation method that included 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."

The finalists will be interviewed by a panel of nine judges, who include Tsogo Sun executives, change agents, thought leaders, and past Entrepreneur of the Year winners. The 2016 Judges are: Marcel von Aulock, CEO of Tsogo Sun; Vusi Dlamini, Group HR Director of Tsogo Sun; Laurelle McDonald, Corporate Finance Manager of Tsogo Sun; Ravi Nadasen, Tsogo Sun Operations Director;

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Ella Bella Leite, Founder of Generation Earth; Adriaan Groenewald, CEO and Co-founder of Leadership Platform; Carol Sanderson, 2014 winner and owner of Casambo Exclusive Guest Lodge; Emmah Makatu, 2013 winner and owner of Zwinoni Lodge; and Salome Tshungu, 2012 winner and owner of The Orchards.

Adriaan Groenewald, judge and CEO and Co-founder of Leadership Platform, comments, “Growing new entrepreneurs is one of the greatest ways to empower individuals. It is the best way for us to grow the SA economy. We all know this, but do we all actually do something about it? Tsogo Sun does. I have personally interviewed several Tsogo Sun entrepreneurs and have been highly impressed by their comments on how the programme assists them. We are honoured to be involved with this initiative in some form.”

Tsogo Sun hosted the five finalists at Montecasino for a three-day leadership workshop, during which they were announced to the media on 25 August. Tothill says, “Panel interviews with the judges are being undertaken during the leadership workshop on 26 August to assess each of the finalists using a system that enables our judges to score results against the same set of criteria. While there can be only one winner, being a finalist in these awards puts the entrepreneurs on a bright path towards an even more successful future for their businesses.”

The Tsogo Sun Entrepreneur of the Year Award winner will be announced at the Annual Awards Dinner on 20 October at the Riverside Sun, during the annual conference that will place from 18 to 21 October. At the Awards Ceremony, the Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, will give the keynote address.

Prizes for the winner include R30 000 from Tsogo Sun, a business bursary from Tsheto Leadership Academy and a professional business image experience from tweak&STYLE, while also providing a platform for the winner to promote their business and contribute to the development of other SMMEs in South Africa. In addition, the winner will be the Ambassador for Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs for the year.

Vusi Dlamini, Tsogo Sun’s Group HR Director, says the company is proud of what Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs is achieving. “Entrepreneurial development is critical for the growth of the South African economy, particularly in these challenging economic times. The value of the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs programme is immense. Apart from showcasing the good work that’s being done by the entrepreneurs themselves, it assists participants with skills development and exposure to the markets that Tsogo Sun serves; it helps them build self-confidence and finally, it breeds success. It is definitely an invaluable programme that empowers entrepreneurs to hold their own in the business world.”

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