

Oneserv's Jaco Nel wins local leg of international entrepreneurial competition

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Oneserv is not just passionate about supporting their Credit Provider and Money Masters entrepreneurs. They are equally as supportive of their employees' entrepreneurial endeavors as well.



"We are very proud of Jaco Nel's successes at the Startup Weekend in July," says Louzane van Niekerk, Oneserv's Head of division: Marketing. "As a company, we strongly believe in the importance of entrepreneurship and the value that the entrepreneurial spirit brings, not only to our organisation in terms of understanding and support for our Credit Provider and Money Masters entrepreneurs, but for South Africa too. Entrepreneurship is at the heart of our company."

Jaco Nel's Big Idea

Although his background is in auditing, Jaco has always had entrepreneurial tendencies. He has a small consultancy and was one of the last Credit Providers to sign up before the opportunity closed.

He realised that there is a need in the market where public companies can offer their shares for sale without needing to list on the stock exchange or the Alt-X. Jaco explains that for many smaller public companies, the fees to list, even on the Alt-X are a major stumbling block.

Fees can run into millions of Rands to list, and he felt there was an opportunity to offer these smaller public companies a comparatively inexpensive platform on which to sell their shares and at the same time allow members of the public to start investing in up-and-coming businesses to which they might not ordinarily have access.

Jaco's aim when he signed up for Startup Weekend was primarily to network, to engage the IT professionals that he needed to turn his idea into a physical reality. Little did he know that he would lead his team to success, as the winners of the competition.

Jaco's team and startup name is Offexchange (visit the pre-alpha website at <http://www.offexchange.co.za/>)

As the group leader, Jaco was supported by: Tania van Wyk de Vries (Business & Development), Sechaba Ngwenya, (Business) and Hans Christian van Stockhausen (Development & Hosting). The team is continuing with their efforts and will be working on creating the backbone which will run the system.

"Oneserv have been very supportive, they are always about innovation and change and are really hoping that I'm successful with this endeavour," says Jaco.

All about Startup Weekend

Startup Weekend is an opportunity for people with different skill sets (usually in the IT field) to network and to build applications and develop commercially viable businesses. It is an intense 54 hours, beginning with dinner on a Friday night and ending on the Sunday evening. The Sunday afternoon is dedicated to the presentation of the ideas and companies generated by the teams in the competition after which a winning team is chosen.

The weekends are about learning through creating, where participants have the chance to build their own strategy, testing it

as they go. It attracts the communities brightest and best and affords them the opportunity to build long-lasting relationships, find jobs, or even investors. It gives participants the chance to identify potential business partners with which to launch their startup.

The local leg of the competition was sponsored by Microsoft BizSpark, Invenfin, Silicon Cape Initiative, Softline Pastel, Drive Software, BOS, Groupon, Fournos Bakery Benmore, Photo Boxi and SAIEE. To date internationally Startup Weekend has hosted 27 000 entrepreneurs across the globe and resulted in 2450 startups being created from 325 events.

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