

Tipping the tide of youth unemployment with EvenMe

 By Leigh Andrews

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'Screenagers' are in their natural habitat when interacting with content on their phones, so why not make it entrepreneurially educational? That's exactly what the new EvenMe portal and app have in mind.

With the perfect surname for someone whose life work is to empower the youth, Jill Young is owner and founder of Corporate Fundamentals. Together with business partner Gavin Jones, they launched the EvenMe youth education and employment portal and app late last year to resounding success.



Jones and Young.

Fired by her passion for making a difference to South Africa's youth unemployment issue, Young clearly believes the answer lies in providing access to digital solutions – hence [EvenMe](#), which has three years in the making and takes youth career support to a new level by incorporating popular culture through memes and offering career and entrepreneurship advice and tips.

In this exclusive interview, Young shares the lessons she learned on her own path to entrepreneurship and the benefit of the EvenMe “communal platform” where anyone with entrepreneurial ambition – particularly the youth – can bounce ideas, connect with the right people and formulate solutions.

Filtering entrepreneurial information

As entrepreneurs, Young and Jones know first-hand that there's an overwhelming amount of information out there, but it's not all in one place and not written in a user-friendly way. They also realised the way in which youth consume information, specifically educationally, is very different to how it has been done in the past. So they took these insights and ensured there's entrepreneurial information in one easy-to-access place, along with a virtual guide.

“EvenMe was developed as a legacy project to change the way in which education is delivered, linked to how it is consumed – in a fun, short and succinct way to give the users what is required to get to the next step in their lives.”

EvenMe does so by arming the youth with the confidence and life skills to help them move into the working world, with or without a formal qualification. This is driven by different levels of engagement through sport, music, e-learning, entrepreneurship, business, internships, global mentoring engagement, career planning and job guidance, radio podcasts and social media.

Matching the mobile youth’s educational needs

And as everyone wants to be successful and has the ability to succeed, this concept formed the foundation for the name ‘EvenMe’. It stands for the fact that there’s a fundamental unifying factor across South African youth at all levels: everyone wants to attain their aspiration, and so the colloquialism ‘EvenMe’ emerged through focus groups and youth engagement.

The app set to further assist budding entrepreneurs on their mission through the global Entrepreneur Mentoring Program, which allows ‘EvenMe’ers to search for, and connect with global mentors in their specific industry. This is crucial as the message needs to be taken where the youth are – on their phones.

“It is rare to see anyone in South Africa between the ages of 18 and 35 without a mobile device. This means that the majority of our youth have the ability to be online. While the cost of data can be a barrier, mobile operators have introduced a zero rating of educational data. To truly enable the youth, digital education on their handsets is the way to go,” explains Young.

Screenagers and the rise of free online learning



EvenMe ambassadors. Back row, left to right: Kyle Jones, Zylvah Makola, ACE and Wernando Stoltz. Front: Ryan Rae. Image by Sean Brand.

That’s excellent news, especially as free online learning revolves around the screen and youth love the screen, so much so that they’re dubbed ‘Screenagers’, in their natural habitat when interacting with their screens. EvenMe taps into this by letting them study on their mobile devices, laptops, tablets and more at their own pace “empowering interaction even for shy individuals by having digital dialogues, and of course, to have a variety of choice to enrol in many different spheres of interest as its free and increases the ability to become holistically skilled for a better change in the workplace, explains Young.

Clearly a win-win as this isn’t set to replace traditional communication – digital communication is just more efficient in reaching more people in a shorter period of time. EvenMe’s brand ambassadors and mentors supplement the digital communication to ensure traditional communication is not lost as it’s still a required

skill in the workplace.

[Click here](#) for more on EvenMe, which has plans for an enormous, interactive career-planning section and personalised,

user-specific content pushes. [Click here](#) for more on Young's view that the solutions to youth unemployment are literally at our finger tips. You can also [download the mobile app](#) and follow [on Twitter](#) for the latest updates and activations.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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