

The bigger picture of 'small business'

By [Bruce Parker-Forsyth](#)

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I've always believed that the words 'small business' is misleading. I've managed a 'small business' for 24 years, which has delivered world-class feats in sports and entertainment. Where others measure the success of a business based on size, I have found comfort in this concept of being a 'small business'.



Bruce Parker-Forsyth, CEO of WorldSport South Africa

As with wealth and happiness, I have always believed the success of a business should be based on its outputs and approach – its attitude towards its stakeholders – rather than the number of people it employs or its annual turnover.

If nothing else, the impact of Covid-19 has had an enormous equalising effect on business. At this time, we have to challenge the notion that a company's success is defined by the address of your office or the decor in your boardroom.

Suddenly **what** you have to say is essential since the **how** is no longer packaged in a decorated box and pretty ribbon. The sudden changes experienced by the eventing industry in particular, drove home to me that we are in the 'people business' – our clients, staff and event participants should always remain at the fundamental core of our business ethos – which is only achievable through quality servicing and clear, effective communication.

Too often brilliance and creativity have been overlooked because the criteria of what defined a successful business automatically excluded those who preferred 'small'. In fact, for many years I steered clear of referring to it as a 'small business' as I was acutely aware of the ease with which one would be overlooked.

It's time *WE*, and by that, I mean **ALL** small businesses owners, stood up and affirmed why smaller is better.

To me this is not merely an opinion, but **fact**.

- **Focus:** 'Small' means less noise, less clutter, less diversion. Small means getting to the destination as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- **Agility:** 'Small' means having the freedom to easily adapt and change while maintaining the same core values and principles – thereby promising consistent service delivery and quality no matter what the circumstances.
- **Capability:** 'Small' means dealing directly with world-class skills and experience through the engagement of best in class resources as and when needed.
- **Truth:** 'Small' means everything but small. It's simply big thinkers who choose to focus on what really matters – the customer.

This is my affirmation: *My name is Bruce Parker-Forsyth and I AM a small business owner.*

A small business founded in 1996 which, in the 24 years since, has delivered the Cape Town Stopover for every Volvo Ocean Race that's graced our shores, has brought the FIFA Fan Fests to Cape Town and Durban and has supported a nation in mourning by delivering the Nelson Mandela Memorial Concert in Cape Town. We've spearheaded community support campaigns on behalf of brands like Pick n Pay through the Cape Town Cycle Tour, the Women's Walks obo Pink Drive and Fire Relief for the Knysna Community in 2017.

The 'new normal' in which we find ourselves has had devastating effects on our industry and those who work tirelessly to open the gates and light up the stage every time an event is hosted.

Yet, I'm encouraged at the manner in which so many have chosen to seize opportunities, re-invent the landscape and find ways of supporting one another.

The fight for survival is brutal and exhausting yet non-negotiable. Because we must survive, we must be ready to offer the world its entertainment and distractions, its gatherings and camaraderie, as soon as we're allowed.

I am not as naïve as to believe that the status quo will return and that we'll all simply fall back into the 'normal' way of gathering the crowds, but gather the crowds we will, not because we need it to maintain a 'successful' business, but because our customers, athletes, fans and friends need the comfort that comes from sharing a moment and creating a memory with others.

My small business, like so many others, has and will continue to deliver great things!

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