

wood and coal-selling business in the Mpumalanga province where he lives.

“We had wattle wood at our homestead and I told my siblings I was going to sell that wood for us to get money to buy bread. Like everybody, we also use the wood for cooking and to keep ourselves warm,” said Njabulo. The family has been hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic, with no source of income. Njabulo himself lost his internship because of the virus. The new venture was the step that gave Njabulo a chance to show his mettle.

“I sold almost six wheelbarrows in a week. That was my first success,” said Njabulo. Soon the family needed to make some important adjustments. “We decided as a family to sell the family bakkie to buy a truck so we could sell more wattle wood. Soon I added coal to my stock that I sell in the township.” Njabulo gets wood from three local farms, and coal from the coal mines around Ermelo.

Njabulo has learnt from his failed business ventures. He has a plan that will ensure that Compte, his current company, does not suffer the same fate. “I want to take advantage of the digital space to grow my business. I will use Google and social media to promote it. I will also lease stands around Ermelo where my target market will reach my products. This will also ease my delivery costs,” said Njabulo.

A very confident Njabulo said he was planning to sell the wood to some of the big chain stores in the area, but was still working on branding his plastic packaging. He said he would use skills he learnt in class to build his business. These skills, particularly door-to-door selling and social media, have given his customers confidence to purchase his products. “I have decided to post at least three messages a day on Facebook using humorous status updates about my products. This helps to engage my customers, and bring awareness about what I sell,” said Njabulo.

Cultivating a future through entrepreneurship

None of us has control over the economy, the job market, or anything else in the global sense; however we are 100 percent in charge of how we respond to the challenges that come our way. Given the shrinking job market in South Africa, it is time for our youth to create their own opportunities and to look where others are not looking.

Entrepreneurship has been advanced as a solution for youth unemployment and wealth creation. The role of entrepreneurship in economic development is being recognised by MUT marketing graduate Yandisa Mdolo, 27, who after taking up a few unrelated jobs for a couple of years, relinquished the security of employment and created his own opportunity using the skills he acquired at the University to penetrate the business market. Mdolo acknowledged that starting a business is “a bold step that will need sacrifices, taking risks and having the willpower to overcome obstacles”.

After two years of intensive research and crafting his ideas, Mdolo was finally funded by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). He recently won the SmartXChange Best Newcomer of the Year at the small business incubator’s annual awards ceremony.

Mdolo is now the CEO of Black Cotton Marketing, a marketing business solution tailored to help small



Yandisa Mdolo

enterprises to reach new heights. The company provides digital advertising space via electronic TV screens installed in minibus taxis on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast. Mdolo envisions his company as a full-service marketing agency in the next five years. He has a gifted and highly motivated team behind him that is working on creating innovative marketing solutions to suit brand personalities.

“My own path to marketing was not planned. I was led by talk shows and activities that used to be organised by my residence at MUT. There is more than one way that leads to success in marketing,” he concluded. In order for South Africans to compete globally, he said we need to become trend setters, inventors and global suppliers. “Yes we can,” he concluded.