

How a hobby turned into a successful business for Corium Skincare's Vuyi Zondi

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Natural skincare company Corium Skincare started as a hobby and has now developed into a flourishing locally-based, Black-owned beauty business. Its products are made from natural and botanical ingredients and are inspired by traditional African, Himalayan and Ayurvedic beauty practices.



CoriumSkincare founder Vuyi Zondi. Source: Supplied

The brand was formed on the premise of reintroducing age-old beauty practices and ingredients passed down from mother to daughter in order to precisely develop effective and reasonably priced skincare products.

Our interview with Corium Skincare's founder, Vuyi Zondi, reveals more about how the company came to be.

 ***Tell us a bit about yourself and your background prior to starting Corium Skincare.***

My name is Vuyi Zondi, and I founded Corium Skincare as a hobby. I had an interest in grooming products and started experimenting with DIY natural skincare ingredients such as shea butter. With enough courage, I advertised these on social media and found there to be an interest in the products; this is where the process of formalising the business, getting a name, CIPC registration and finding a skincare formulator started.

My background is in management consulting particularly strategy and business improvement consulting. I have worked on a number of turnaround projects which equipped me with a generalist cover of aptitudes and skills to help me run a business. Educationally, I hold a BSc. Hons and a postgraduate diploma in business administration, all from Wits University.



Source: Supplied

■ Can you tell us about some of the key challenges you've faced in starting your business?

You don't know how little you know about business until you decide to start the business, from opening a bank account to filing for registration to trying to put together a team and products; so much is just experimental at the beginning. That has been the greatest challenge - accumulating enough knowledge to follow all the steps.

Finances and capital are also great problems in the beginning. You need to prioritise what the business can afford and have a piecemeal approach to starting the business.

■ How important is it to you that Corium Skincare products are made locally?

Very important, to revitalise the economy and create employment opportunities. It is a way of giving back.



Source: Supplied

■ What impact did winning the Top Newcomer Award at the first Small Business Excellence Awards have on your company?

It gave us credibility as a startup and also validated our efforts. It was a recognition of our work and its value to external stakeholders.

■ ***Your products are accessible at retail shops around the country. Was this a simple and straightforward process?***

This has been the hardest part of business, trying to migrate into retail stores is an expensive and daunting jump as a business. It is a complex and expensive exercise.



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■ ***What are your hopes for the brand's future growth or evolution?***

For greater retail presence, for a greater footprint on the continent, international shipping and product range extension. The brand should be synonymous with quality, credibility and affordability.

■ ***What advice would you give to someone aspiring to be an entrepreneur?***

Do as much research as possible and take everything as a piecemeal approach. Always take your audience along with you.

ABOUT NTANDOKAZI NTOZAKHE

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