

## What is your number-one funding tip?

Local investors look for a strong idea, a prototype that has some take up, and a plan to scale quickly.

## Your number-one lesson for growth?

I learnt my biggest lesson when I started my first business at age 19. I employed students to deliver pamphlets, but the more business I got, the more people I had to hire. It was not very profitable and it was hard work finding and managing all those people. I learned that a business is not a business unless you can scale quickly. The biggest thing that hinders the profitability of agencies in my industry is that every time they get a big job they have to employ more people to service the client. We've worked very hard on developing underlying mechanisms to ensure our business is profitable and scalable – without having to employ dozens of new people when securing new work. This is a very hard balance to strike, but imperative to the sustainability of the business, and your sanity.

## Name a business you admire

My role-model business is 37signals, a company that started as a web design firm that evolved into a creator of digital products like Basecamp and Highrise. Locally, I'm a huge fan of Saratoga – the software company that bought a stake of our business in 2013. We chose them because they are ambitious and smart. They are successful, yet humble in their approach. Saratoga is part of Sekunjalo, led by Dr Iqbal Surve. I'm amazed at Sekunjalo's ability to make money out of a diverse range of investments. **YB**



## No clients, no money? No problem!

The success story of entrepreneurs Anisa and Kabelo Kale demonstrates that a little ingenuity and an in-depth knowledge of your market can help you build a thriving business...

In 2009 seasoned advertising execs Anisa Kale and her husband Kabelo, started a journey which would eventually satisfy their passion for marketing while giving back to the people in the very township in which they were born.

The idea for the business was conceived when the entrepreneurial pair realised there was a gap in the market for an advertising medium that allowed big brands to reach township households. And so Keys Communications, a company that specialises in township wall media, was born.

"Getting the artwork right was a key challenge as corporates were wary that their logo and brand colours would be distorted," says Anisa. They met this challenge by investing heavily in the necessary equipment and expertise.

"We really pioneered high definition airbrushing and now have a product that can be used just about anywhere and

really sells itself," she says. A portion of the proceeds from the wall "billboards" is funnelled back into the local community.

### The funding challenge

Finding the funding to launch their start-up was a further challenge. "We had started a business that the market did not believe in initially and that no-one would fund," Anisa says. "It doesn't get any more difficult than that!"

The pair did not let this stop them, however, and used their available resources, even selling their cars, to fund their business. Today the business is five years old, counts some of South Africa's biggest corporates as clients and is looking to expand into our neighbouring countries and beyond.

"Keys Communication really is proof that where's there's a will there's a way. We believed in our product, knew our market, and backed ourselves to turn it into a successful business," says Anisa.