

Red Lipstick and EWP; the secret to Riette's entrepreneurial success

Riette Botha (58) is the proud owner of Red Lipstick, an Image and Beauty Consultancy as well as a graduate of the [Enterprising Women Programme](#) as hosted at the Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University (NWU Vaal).

Riette joined the Enterprising Women Programme (EWP) in 2014 and hasn't looked back since. She describes her journey on the eight month entrepreneurial course as *"life changing"* and says that she not only *"found herself and her true calling"*, but also received the necessary skills and knowledge to run her business with confidence. The EWP is a flagship initiative of the [bhive Enterprise Development Centre](#) (bhive EDC) and assists female entrepreneurs to achieve their goals and realize their business potential.

The journey started in 1985

Riette's entrepreneurial journey started way back in 1985 when she opened a hair salon after enrolling for a hairdressing course at the then Vereeniging Technikon. She soon, however, found that juggling a business and studies were no easy task and subsequently she had to quit her studies to attend to the salon on a full-time basis. *"I am a creative being and since I can remember I wanted to help others to look their best and by doing so make a positive impact on their lives,"* says Riette. Struggling to keep the hair salon afloat, she had to sell the business and find formal employment – first as an office administrator and later as a shop assistant at the then OK Bazaars and finally as a cosmetics and fragrance consultant at Meyerton Pharmacy. After 9 years in the formal job market, the longing to give flight to her artistic and creative side did not subside and she made the conscious decision to become a full-time start-up entrepreneur.

"As any entrepreneur will tell you, entrepreneurship teaches by means of trial and error," says Riette and says that she initially found a niche market for imported silk flowers. With the global financial crisis and the subsequent decline in luxury spending, this venture – however lucrative, did not stand the test of time. All throughout her journey she continued with her nail salon on a part time basis and completed a professional make-up course. In 2007 Riette's world came crashing down, when she lost her son due to cancer. *"Although a horrific time for any parent, the seven months I spent looking after my son were the biggest blessing I could have asked for since it led me to my true calling"* says Riette. It was within this time that she realised that she had the skill and know-how to positively impact the way in which other individuals viewed themselves – despite the fact that she – at that stage, suffered from a low self-esteem. Doubting her ability as an entrepreneur, she continued casually doing nails and make-up for special occasions.

A turning-point

"In 2014 I heard about the Enterprising Women Programme, and something just clicked for me! Before I knew it, I had enrolled for the programme - armed with only my skills in the beauty and cosmetic industry and a passion to succeed." According to Riette the EWP changed her life dramatically. *"I have always been self-conscious but through the programme I was empowered beyond my wildest dreams."* It was in this time that Riette decided upon a name for her entrepreneurial venture: Red Lipstick. *"Think about it, whenever a woman needs a pick-me-up or has to present herself with confidence the first thing she does is to put on lipstick. And, the redder the shade, the more powerful the impact!"*

"Through the programme and the support networks I had access to, I was able to really focus on paving the way forward in terms of my new venture whilst being granted the opportunity to look back on my previous attempts. I have always been an entrepreneur, but now I am a confident entrepreneur with a clear vision and business concept."

More about EWP

The bhive EDC is committed to not only provide female entrepreneurs with the skills to grow their businesses, but also to serve as a platform from where these businesses can be launched as long-term building blocks for economic sustainability.

The Enterprising Women Programme is an eight month programme geared to provide business support services to women who wish to establish their own businesses. During the course of the programme,

participants will be taken through a programme to explore ideas, develop business models and subsequently initiative their businesses with confidence and entrepreneurial know-how.

According to Mr Johan Landsberg, manager of the EDC, an enterprising woman can be described as an individual who dares to think big, take calculated leaps, and follow their dreams. *“An enterprising woman works hard every day to bring her dreams to fruition,”* explains Landsberg and adds that this drive to succeed is fuelled by the quest to support not only her immediate family but also the community at large. *“Individually and together, enterprising women have the potential to create positive change – regionally, nationally and internationally, and by doing so contribute towards the strength and sustainability of the country’s economic well-being.”*

For more information about the Enterprising Women Programme, contact Leonie at 082 412 9123 or send an e-mail to leonie@aequis.co.za