

# STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

The Jewellery Council of South Africa



# WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

This series of articles, kindly supported by the MQA and the Jewellery Council, focuses on the business side of setting up and running a jewellery enterprise.

The series of articles is loosely based on the New Venture Creation Qualification, which has over 160 minimum credits. By keeping all your completed exercises and all your well-researched and well-argued answers, you will have the beginnings of a solid portfolio of evidence towards achieving this qualification.

This is the fifth instalment in a series that will run until the end of the year. Remember, the content of the series is not to increase or improve your technical skills in jewellery manufacturing design, as I know very little about that. The series focuses on business skills that you will need to be able to successfully design and manufacture jewellery for profit.

Remember also that at the end of each article there are a number of questions for you to consider and record your answers. Store these with all your other answers. At the end of the series of articles, if you have completed all the exercises and answered all the questions, you will have the beginnings of a good business plan.

Despite trying to cover all aspects of business, we won't be able to in this series – so some things are bound to fall through the cracks. Other things will be considered and dropped because we don't think they will be relevant or important enough. Having said that, you might want more information on an aspect that we have covered quickly, or perhaps you would like to know more about something we mentioned in passing. We are more than happy to try to accommodate your queries. Sometimes we will deal with them separately; at other times, they will be covered in an upcoming piece.

If you think an issue that is worth mentioning, please feel free to email your questions, comments (both the good and bad) and suggestions to [articles@spi.org.za](mailto:articles@spi.org.za). I might not be able to tell you the melting point of an alloy, but I will be able to tell you the ins and outs of turning that alloy into a saleable product.

Becoming an entrepreneur can be incredibly lonely. While there are some people around who have managed to successfully start their own businesses, it is understandable

that you don't always feel comfortable asking them to help and advise. Surprisingly, small business owners are a font of knowledge and often extremely willing to share their insights, struggles and opinions with anyone who is willing to listen. One of the difficulties, however, in asking for this input is sifting the good advice from the bad. For a young start-up looking to get the best advice that comes with no hidden agenda, there are other options.

This month we're going to look at some of the sources of information that you can access for advice and assistance in starting your own business. Some of the sources are free; others must be paid for, while still other sources are heavily subsidised by Government.

Sit back, relax and enjoy the read.

Please note that, in this series of articles I mention a number of Government departments, or Government-supported institutions. Before I get a flood of letters of complaint, let me make it clear that they haven't paid me to write about them. In fact, if they were going to choose someone to do so, it would probably not be me. When it comes to small businesses I have crossed swords with most Government departments.

But this series of articles is not about Government departments – it's about how to utilise every possible tool available to improve your business. One of the sets of tools available is Government departments and Government-sponsored organisations. Use them – that's what they're there for.

*Gordon Freer has worked in the field of small business development for the past 10 years and has a slightly irreverent, yet realistic, view of the field. Gordon is a founding trustee of the Platinum Trust of South Africa and managed the planning and set-up of the SEDA Platinum Incubator ([www.spi.org.za](http://www.spi.org.za)), an initiative of the Platinum Trust, supported by the Seda Technology Programme.*

*Gordon has now handed over the Incubator to a very capable team and instead sweats blood for Insight Strategies ([www.insight-strategies.net](http://www.insight-strategies.net)).* ■



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# SO WHY DO YOU NEED HELP?

Running your own business doesn't mean that you have to do everything yourself.

Business owners are a funny lot. In many cases, because they started their own business, they think that they know how to run them. That's the same as thinking that if you know how to start a car, you also know how to drive it. Turning the key in the ignition and hearing the engine turn over and catch is just the beginning of the journey. Being able to co-ordinate pushing down the relevant pedals, knowing how far to turn the wheel in order to be able to navigate a bend, being able to engage the clutch, change gears, continue to steer in the right direction and at the same time keep your eyes on the road requires quite a bit of practice.

Even once you get a driver's licence,

and after years of driving experience, there might still be areas in which you need assistance. It might be something as basic as being able to change a tyre. Perhaps you need help in maintaining your car with regular services. Maybe you're not sure how to fill up your car with petrol. And even if you know all of these things, you might still want to improve your skills by going on an advanced driving course. The point is: being able to turn a key in the ignition and being a safe, competent driver are not one and the same thing. There are many people who are available to help you get from one point to the other.

The same is true for starting your own business. I know I said this in one of the

earlier articles, but it's worth repeating. Running your own business doesn't mean you have to do everything yourself. It means that you have to co-ordinate a range of different skills, to benefit your business. You will have some of these skills, but most will belong to other specialists.

What we'll be looking at in the rest of this article is a few ways in which to tap into the skills of those other specialists. To do this, I'll be dividing the article into two. One part will look at how to tap into technical skills to ensure that you're always delivering the best quality possible. The second part will look at how to tap into business-related skills to ensure that your business is running as effectively as possible. ■

# TRAINING PROVIDERS

## HET TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

### CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**Contact Person:** Vassiliki Konstandekellis  
**Telephone Number:** (021) 460-3632  
**Fax Number:** (021) 460-3421  
**E-mail:** konstandakellisv@cput.ac.za  
**Physical Address:** Cape Town Campus, Keizersgracht & Tennant Street, Zonnebloem, Cape Town, Western Cape, 8000  
**Courses offered:** Jewellery Design and Manufacturing  
Diploma – 3 years, B-Tech Degree – 4 years

### DURBAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**Contact Person:** Chris de Beer  
**Telephone Number:** (031) 373-6673  
**Fax Number:** 086-674-0308  
**Cell:** 083-321-7797  
**E-mail:** chrisdb@dut.ac.za  
**Physical Address:** City Campus, Cnr Smith & Warwick Str, Durban, KZN, 4000  
**Courses offered:** Jewellery Design and Manufacturing  
Diploma – 3 years, B-Tech Degree – 4 years

### HARMONY JEWELLERY SCHOOL – CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY DIPLOMA COURSE

**Contact Person:** Alta Wessels  
**Telephone Number:** (057) 231-2229  
**Fax Number:** (057) 217-2592  
**Cell:** 082-477-5727  
**E-mail:** alta.wessels@harmony.co.za  
**Physical Address:** Harmony Jewellery School, Old Virginia Road, Virginia, Free State, 9435  
**Courses offered:** Jewellery Design and Manufacturing  
Diploma – 3 years, Computer Aided Design Level 1 & 2

### TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**Contact Person:** Nina Newman  
**Telephone Number:** (012) 382-6006/7  
**Fax Number:** (012) 382-6006  
**E-mail:** newmann@tut.ac.za  
**Physical Address:** Arts Campus – Tshwane University of Technology, Building 25 – Room 42G, 24 Du Toit Street, Pretoria, Gauteng, 0001  
**Courses offered:** Jewellery Design and Manufacturing  
Diploma – 3 years, B-Tech Degree – 4 years

### UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

**Contact Person:** Marius Nel  
**Telephone Number:** (011) 559-1122  
**Fax Number:** (011) 559-1396  
**E-mail:** mariusn@uj.ac.za  
**Physical Address:** FADA Building, Auckland Park, Bunting Road, Johannesburg, Gauteng  
**Courses offered:** Jewellery Design and Manufacturing  
Diploma – 3 years, B-Tech Degree – 4 years, M-Tech Degree – 2 years

### UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

**Contact Person:** Tarine Terreblanche

**Telephone Number:** (021) 808-3047

**Fax Number:** (021) 808-3044

**Cell:** 084-406-6137

**E-mail:** tt@sun.ac.za

**Physical Address:** Private Bag X1, Matieland, Stellenbosch, 7602

**Courses offered:** Creative Jewellery Design, Metal Design

## FET COLLEGES

### COLLEGE OF CAPE TOWN

**Contact Person:** Esmarie du Plooy  
**Telephone Number:** (021) 462-2053  
**Fax Number:** (021) 461-2053  
**E-mail:** emduplooy@gmail.com  
**Physical Address:** College of Cape Town, Longmarket & Buitekant Str, Cape Town, Western Cape, 8000  
**Course offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment

### NORTHERN CAPE URBAN FET COLLEGE

**Contact Person:** Kevin Fairweather  
**Telephone Number:** (053) 802-4700  
**Fax Number:** (053) 802-4777  
**E-mail:** k.fairweather@inext.co.za  
**Physical Address:** Moremogolo Kampus, 777 Nobengula Rd, Galeshewe, Kimberley, Northern Cape, 8301  
**Course offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment

### ORBIT FET COLLEGE

**Contact Person:** Beverley Boekhoud  
**Telephone Number:** (014) 597-0736  
**Fax Number:** 086-688-1011  
**E-mail:** elandsburg@orbitcollege.co.za  
**Physical Address:** ORBIT FET College, Corner Fatima Bhayat and Bosch Str, Rustenburg, North West Province, 0299  
**Course offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment

### PORT ELIZABETH COLLEGE

**Contact Person:** Sarel Voss  
**Telephone Number:** (021) 404-6700  
**Fax Number:** (021) 404-6701  
**E-mail:** sarel@rrc.ac.za / sarelvoss@gmail.co.za  
**Physical Address:** The Richmond, Richmond Park Drive, Richmond Park, Port Elizabeth, 6000  
**Course offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment

## OTHER FET TRAINING PROVIDERS ACCREDITED BY MQA

### ATTERIDGEVILLE JEWELLERY PROJECT

**Contact Person:** Fana Maseko  
**Telephone Number:** (012) 373-6158  
**Fax Number:** (012) 373-6158  
**E-mail:** ajpjewellery@telkomsa.net  
**Physical Address:** Tshwane South College, Atteridgeville Campus, 15 Khoza Street, Atteridgeville, Gauteng, 0126

**Course offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment

#### GLITTERATI JEWELLERY SCHOOL

**Contact Person:** Francisca  
**Telephone Number:** (012) 811-1550  
**Fax Number:** (012) 811-1550  
**Cell:** 082-563-5085  
**E-mail:** glitterati@absamail.co.za  
**Physical Address:** 82 Luigi Street, Grootfontein, Pretoria, Gauteng, 0056  
**Course offered:** Jewellery Manufacturing and Design

#### HARMONY JEWELLERY SCHOOL PROJECT – LEARNERSHIP

**Contact Person:** Alta Wessels  
**Telephone Number:** (057) 231-2229  
**Fax Number:** (057) 217-2592  
**Cell:** 082-772-4623  
**E-mail:** alta.wessels@harmony.co.za  
**Physical Address:** Harmony Jewellery School, Old Virginia Road, Virginia, Free State, 9435  
**Courses offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment, Level 4 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment

#### IMFUNDISO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

**Contact Person:** Isaac Nkwe  
**Telephone Number:** (012) 734-0245  
**Fax Number:** (012) 734-2846  
**E-mail:** imfundiso@mweb.co.za  
**Physical Address:** No 8 Oak Avenue, Cullinan, Gauteng, 1000  
**Course offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment

#### INTSIKA SKILLS BENEFICIATION PROJECT

**Contact Person:** Stanley Mkize  
**Telephone Number:** (011) 873-2261  
**Fax Number:** 086-415-2088  
**Cell:** 083-563-1666  
**E-mail:** intsika@telkomsa.net  
**Physical Address:** Rand Refinery, Refinery Road, Germiston, Gauteng, 1404  
**Course offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment

#### KGABANE – MINTEK

**Contact Person:** Busi Ntuli  
**Telephone Number:** (011) 709-4034  
**Fax Number:** (011) 709-4721  
**Cell:** 082-579-3811  
**E-mail:** busin@mintek.co.za  
**Physical Address:** Mintek Block 7 Level 8, 200 Malebongwe Drive, Randburg, Gauteng, 2125  
**Courses offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment, Level 4 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment, Rural Jewellery Skills Programme

#### PNEUMA JEWELLERS CC

**Contact Person:** Michael Pneuma  
**Telephone Number:** (011) 702-1462  
**Fax Number:** (011) 702-1462  
**Cell:** 073-166-4375  
**E-mail:** Pneuma@telkomsa.net  
**Physical Address:** A2 1st Floor, Crowthorne Shopping Centre, Cnr Arthur & Main Road, Kyalami, Gauteng, 1684  
**Courses offered:** Graduate Development Programme, (RPL) Recognition of Prior Learning, Pre-trade Test Assessment

and Training, Level 3 & 4 Learnerships, also offers training for both Jewellery Manufacture & Diamond Setting

#### UMJINDI JEWELLERY

**Contact Person:** Flicka Goslett  
**Telephone Number:** (013) 712-5807  
**Fax Number:** (013) 712-5807  
**Cell:** 082-294-1163  
**E-mail:** flicka@vukani.co.za  
**Physical Address:** BIAS Building (Museum), Pilgrim Street, Barberton, Mpumalanga, 1300  
**Courses offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment, Level 4 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment

#### VUKANI-UBUNTU: HQ

**Contact Person:** Daphney Kgoale – Director of Studies  
**Telephone Number:** (012) 326-3170  
**Fax Number:** (012) 326-3171  
**Cell:** 073-309-0733  
**E-mail:** demos@vukani.org  
**Physical Address:** 2nd Floor Sammy Marks Square, 314 Church Street, Pretoria, Gauteng, 0002  
**Courses offered:** Train-the-trainer, Assessor course – ETDP Seta, Moderator course – ETDP Seta, SMME Development / Entrepreneurship Computer Skills, RPL, ABET, Life Skills, Administration Skills (customer care, office skills, etc), Rapid Prototyping, Jewellery Design & Manufacture in a Production Environment

#### VUKANI-UBUNTU – LIMPOPO JEWELLERY CLUSTER SA

**Contact Person:** Demos Takoulas – CEO  
**Telephone Number:** (012) 326-3170  
**Fax Number:** (012) 326-3171  
**Cell:** 082-772-4623  
**E-mail:** demos@academy.co.za  
**Physical Address:** Limpopo Jewellery Cluster, 120 Rivier Street, Polokwane, Limpopo, 0700  
**Courses offered:** Jewellery Bench Worker, Jewellery Polishing, Jewellery Lost Wax Casting, Jewellery Stone Setting (to be implemented later), Jewellery Design & Manufacture in a Production Environment, Rapid Prototyping, RPL Assessment for Jewellery Skills

#### VUKANI-UBUNTU – GOLD ZONE JEWELLERY PROJECT

**Contact Person:** Colin Campbell – Project Head  
**Telephone Number:** (012) 326-8534  
**Fax Number:** (012) 326-6241  
**Cell:** 082-875-3394  
**E-mail:** colin@vukani.org  
**Physical Address:** Goldzone Jewellery Project, Refinery Road, Germiston, Gauteng, 1404  
**Courses offered:** Jewellery Bench Worker, Jewellery Polishing, Jewellery Lost Wax Casting, Jewellery Stone Setting (to be implemented later), RPL assessment for Jewellery Skills, Rapid Prototyping, Jewellery Design & Manufacture in a Production Environment

#### WORLD OF PLATINUM T/A SEDA PLATINUM INCUBATOR

**Contact Person:** Beverley Boekhoud  
**Telephone Number:** (014) 597-0736  
**Fax Number:** 086-688-1011  
**E-mail:** beve@spi.org.za  
**Physical Address:** ORBIT FET College, Jewellery Training Centre, SEDA Platinum Incubator, Corner Fatima Bhayat and Bosch Str, Rustenburg, North West Province, 0299  
**Courses offered:** Level 3 Jewellery Design and Manufacturing in a Mass Production Environment (awaiting confirmation of new Skills Programmes to be run in 2009)



# KEEPING YOUR AXE SHARP

There are a number of institutions and organisations out there that you can approach for guidance and assistance.

So you have graduated and think that you are now an expert? Not a chance. There are always things to learn and ways to improve what you are doing. Whether it is doing it faster, or more efficiently, or with less wastage, or different tools, or with new technology – the field that you have chosen to specialise in has changed.

One of the shortcomings of business

owners in a specialist field is that as a result of being alone in their own business, they are often isolated in terms of technical expertise as well. We have already discussed the fact that you are not an expert in every link of the jewellery design and manufacture business. Remember the article on the sandwich chain? So you might have lined up a range of friends and colleagues who will be able to add value

to the technical areas where you are not as competent. But what about those areas in which you think you do particularly well? Who is keeping you up to date in these?

A person running his own business normally has a great deal to worry about in terms of managing the business: making sure there are customers and money to pay the bills, stock control and quality checks, as well as marketing and bookkeeping. How are they suppose to fit in keeping up to date with developments in their field? This is not a problem that is peculiar to jewellers. Everyone experiences changes and developments in their field. But the problem with those who run their own businesses – doctors, lawyers, psychologists, engineers, accountants and jewellers – is where do you fit it in? How do you manage to sharpen your axe when there is an ongoing demand to cut trees, trim them, plant more, water them and comply with the necessary environmental requirements?

The simple lesson is – once again – do not try to do everything yourself. There are a number of institutions and organisations out there who can give you the opportunity to tap into their expertise and help you to improve your own. Many professions have councils as representative bodies. These organisations also provide their members with ongoing updates and briefings as to developments in their sector. In some cases, they also run training seminars to keep their members fully briefed as to the latest progress in the field.

So what do you have available in the jewellery sector? Actually, quite a lot. Two organisations with whom you should be in contact on a fairly regular basis are the Jewellery Council and the Mining Qualifications Authority. They perform very different functions, but both of them are interested in promoting development and growth within the jewellery sector.

So I have a couple of suggestions for you before you reach for the phone. Do some background reading on these organisations. You can easily get this information from their websites. The Mining Qualifications Authority is available at [www.mqa.org.za](http://www.mqa.org.za), while the Jewellery Council is available at [www.jewellery.org.za](http://www.jewellery.org.za). Figure out which role each of the organisations plays in the industry. See what they have to offer you. Then decide which you think best fits your business. Contact the relevant organisation and ask for more information on that particular issue.

Why do I say all of this? Aren't these



organisations supposed to know what you need? Well, they do know what you need – generically. What they don't know is what you need specifically. Imagine walking into a doctor's office and saying: "Help, I'm sore!" When the doctor then asks you a number of questions relating to your health, your most helpful answer is: "I don't know" or "I'm not sure." The doctor knows what you need generally to be in good health. You need good food, a balanced diet, clean water, exercise, and good sleep. What the doctor doesn't know is what you need specifically to deal with you being sick right now. You need to be able to guide the doctor in the right direction. Have you hurt your toe, have you cut your arm, do you have a stomach-ache?

It's the same with these organisations. They know what you need generally to keep producing good, marketable jewellery. What they don't know is what you need

right now. So think about how they might be able to help you before you give them a call. Both organisations will help you sharpen your saw.

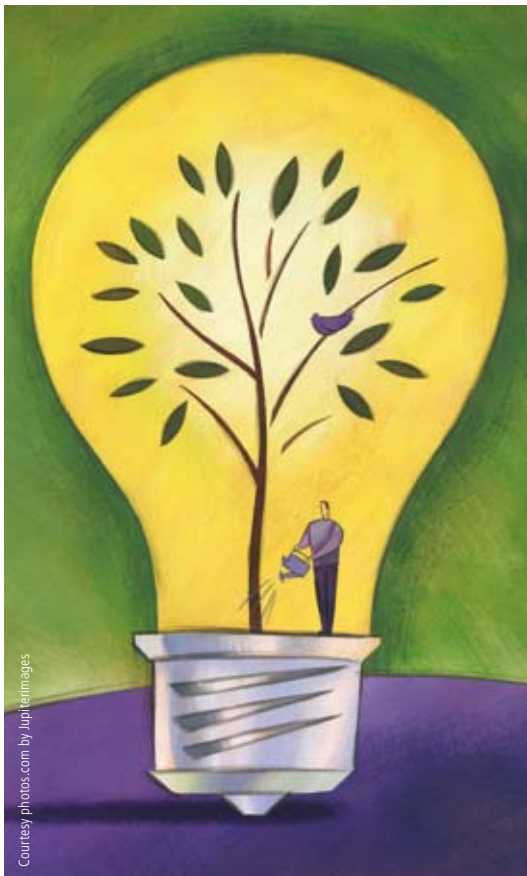
There are also a whole host of other organisations who can help you improve and sharpen your practical skills. Included in this insert is a list of organisations, colleges and projects that train in jewellery design and manufacture. While some of them only train entry-level courses, others train at a more advanced level. Some of the organisations have access to the latest international technology, while others have occasional international visitors who train for short periods in their own specific specialities. Some of the organisations work in partnership with overseas organisations. All of them, however, are committed to improving and strengthening the jewellery industry in South Africa. Do you think they might have something to offer you?

You know your own strengths and weaknesses in terms of technical capability. You might already have established links with colleagues who might be able to help you overcome these weaknesses. How are you going to build on your strengths? How are you going to improve in an area in which you already consider yourself good? One of the ways of doing this is to train more.

In many economic sectors, small business owners do not look after their own technical skills. There are a variety of reasons for this, including the fact that they don't have time. All they're doing over the longer term is slowly slitting their own wrists. By not keeping up with the latest changes and improvements in your field of expertise, you isolate yourself from your area of passion. Isolating yourself from your passion is probably the surest way of killing your business.

Don't let it happen to you! ■

# KEEPING THE SHAFT POLISHED



Governments like new businesses because they keep the economy moving. That's why there are many policies in place to help promote them in any government's venture for economic growth.

This whole series is focused on one main objective: outlining a variety of business skills that you, as a jeweller, may not have. As a result of not having the skills, your business might not do as well as it could. In reaching this one main objective, there is hopefully been one core message coming through all the articles – do not try to do everything yourself.

New, small businesses are one of the areas that promote economic growth in any country. New businesses generally employ new people far faster than older, more established ones. New businesses tend to be more innovative. New businesses tend to grow quicker. And while the failure rate for new businesses is obviously higher than that of older businesses, governments like new businesses a lot. They keep the economy moving. They keep people employed. They pay taxes. Small businesses generally feature quite prominently in any government policy that aims at promoting economic growth. The South African Government is no different.

In an economic age when larger, more established businesses have reached the limits of their growth, the South African Government is looking to small businesses to take up the slack, in terms of employment.

If I were setting up a new jewellery business today, one of the first organisations I would contact the Mining Qualifications Authority. Why? This SETA is in charge of promoting skills development in the jewellery industry. Many SETAs struggle to work with smaller businesses, mainly because the smaller businesses struggle to

work with the SETAs. As a result, many of the SETAs have specific plans in place, and special deals available for small businesses. How do you get access to the special deals? That's part of your homework.

If I were younger, and had more hair, I think the next organisation I would contact is the Umsombomvu Youth Fund ([www.uyf.org.za](http://www.uyf.org.za)). This organisation was set up specifically to promote small business growth among the youth. The Fund has a fortune of information available on how to start your own business, but – perhaps more importantly – will point you in the right direction of someone who is able to help and will subsidise the cost of hiring that person. The reason for all of this is that Fund recognises that everyone starting a new business is not fully equipped and capable of doing all the tasks necessary. So it's compiled a list of approved service providers who are able to assist you.

How does this work? The Fund will be able to give you the exact workings, but basically, you need to fill in an application form stating that you want help with a specific task and, at the same time, apply for your subsidy; in Fund language it's called a voucher. When your application is approved, you will receive a voucher. You might have to pay a percentage of the value of this. Some of the vouchers are worth R1 000 and you will be required to pay R100. You can choose the service provider you want to work with from the list provided by the Fund.

So what type of help will you get from the Fund? There's a whole list available on

its website, but I can tell you that almost any service you need for setting up and starting a small business is available. It has service providers who are able to help you develop your marketing plan. It has service providers who are able to design and print your business cards. Others will be able to help you set up your accounting systems or register your company. Some will set up stock control systems, some will draft business plans, and some will design your website. If you're interested in buying a business rather than setting up your own, there are service providers that will help you conduct due diligence.

What are your obligations in terms of accessing funding? Go to the website, do research about the services available, and decide which services are most applicable to your business at this moment. There should be a Fund office close to you, so once you've decided on the help you need, go in and apply for your voucher. You only have access to a limited number of vouchers, so don't waste them.

The third organisation I'd contact is a Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA). This is part of the Department of Trade and Industry. The number of programmes and opportunities available from this organisation are tremendous. Although the amount of paperwork involved in accessing grants can appear ominous, one of the reasons it's so thorough is because of taxpayers' money that it's utilising. In other words, it's your money. So in a round-

about way, the agency is actually looking after your best interests.

So what does it have offer you?

SEDA's function is to help facilitate small business growth in the country. As a result, it has a number of different offices around the country which are linked to service providers who will be able to assist you. This agency also offers opportunities to small businesses to access markets, raw materials and technology. In some cases, this is done through its parent department, the Department of Trade and Industry. Go into your local SEDA office. Tell them who you are, what you are doing and what you want to achieve. Ask for help.

The next organisation I would look to join, or at least to link up with, if I were starting my own business is my network of local businesses. Most small businesses have recognised that they can't do everything on their own. As a result, they are natural networkers. Most communities have some type of small business network, either at the Chamber of Commerce or an informal network that gathers on an irregular basis. Whichever one applies in your situation, you could do a lot worse than linking up with people who have already walked small business paths. They have stumbled, fallen and learnt the lessons that you still have to prepare for. It's a great opportunity to learn from their experience. One of the best online small business communities I have come across is Business Warriors ([www.businesswarriors.co.za](http://www.businesswarriors.co.za)). ■

## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW?

If you've read this far, you will know that there are a number of different organisations out there that can help you achieve a far more successful business than you can achieve working on your own. Remember, you need to keep working on your business and technical skills. Keep improving both or find people to assist you with them.

## YOUR HOMEWORK FOR THIS MONTH IS THE FOLLOWING:

1. Visit all the sites mentioned in the articles.
2. Find out what the organisations do.
3. In terms of your business, decide how each of the organisations might be able to assist you.
4. Contact each of the organisations and find out the name and contact number of the person who will be able to help you.
5. Write down these details, as well as what you expect from this organisation.
6. File this information with the rest of your homework.

Next month we'll be looking at the marketplace out there and how to determine where you fit in.