

Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneur of the Year Award – 2015 Finalists

Nomsa Mazibuko

Visit Vakasha Guest Lodge

Mpumalanga

Vital statistics

Years in business	: 9
Employees	: 20
Annual growth	: ↑ 20.9%
Annual turnover	: < R10 million
Business classification	: Exempt Micro Enterprise (EME)
Nature of business	: Accommodation establishment

“Visit Vakasha Guest Lodge was named to encourage guests visit us and return again and again,” says owner Nomsa Mazibuko. The guesthouse specialises in accommodation, catering and conferencing for both the public and private sectors. The guesthouse started with eight rooms and due to its popularity, has grown to the present 24 rooms over the last few years. The conference centre is in the process of being expanded from its current capacity of 150 people to 250.

Nomsa, who was cleaning rooms as a housekeeping attendant for Tsogo Sun in 1998, had no idea at that time that becoming a business owner was the direction that life would take her. But she is quick to recognise and make the most of opportunities. “I am enjoying every moment of it. I don’t feel like I am working, I feel as if I am just having fun all the time! I am people-orientated and I treat customers like family. We have made our guesthouse homely, friendly and intimate to make sure that it is truly a home away from home,” she explains.

Nomsa’s people skills have seen her helping other local guesthouses to improve their businesses to build up their clientele. “They didn’t know how to run their businesses and they didn’t have passion. We decided to approach them and help them meet industry standards. That means that when we get more customers than we can accommodate, we can confidently refer them to the other guesthouses we are working with.”

“Loving people and wanting to spend time with them is my skill. I do it so easily and this industry allows me to have a connection with people. I am passionate about it!” She says that when she started, she didn’t have the skills to do what needed to be done so she taught herself and studied through the University of Cape Town, doing courses in guesthouse and restaurant management.

Her employees have been with her for a long time and she has seen to it that they too have received adequate training to ensure that they understand the industry and are able to provide the best service. “If they do leave, I know that I will have contributed to their development and they will always remember that Visit Vakasha had a positive impact on their lives.”