

Echoes of empowering partnerships: ECOH's supplier development journey with Innovator Trust

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Innovator Trust engages in a candid conversation with Neo Lesia, the visionary behind ECOH Multimedia Solutions. Together, they delve into the evolution of ECOH's journey, from their inception through to joining the Innovator Trust's Enterprise Development Programme, to their current role within the Supplier Development Programme.

Please give us a bit of background to your business; what's the why behind your ECOH?

I've always had a burning desire to establish a business, but I struggled to pinpoint precisely what it should be. I explored various projects before ECOH. However, we faced the same commonly known challenges as everyone else when obtaining financial support from banks due to my limited experience and lack of collateral. I got a job to gain the required experience and build a solid foundation.

From the outset, I was transparent with my boss about my intention to leverage my current job as a steppingstone towards starting my own business. I maintained an excellent, open professional relationship throughout my four-year tenure with her. She understood my aspirations and provided the necessary flexibility to lay the groundwork for my entrepreneurial venture.



As the fifth year approached, I knew the time had come to take the leap and establish my own business.

That's a true example of supporting entrepreneurs in meaningful ways. Why did you venture into multimedia solutions in particular?

I've always had a deep fascination with technology. Initially, I envisioned myself pursuing a career as a technician, but as I delved deeper into IT, I quickly realised its vast potential. IT encompasses a multitude of elements that go far beyond mere repairs. I identified an exciting opportunity to integrate diverse multimedia aspects and create comprehensive multimedia solutions.

It's like shouting something from the mountaintops and hearing the echo return to you. That's the feeling I had when envisioning my business - I wanted to establish something that could thrive independently, even without my direct involvement. I aimed to build a company that had a lasting impact, continuously delivering value to clients and fostering long-term relationships.

Where does the name ECOH come from?

That's where the name "ECOH" comes into play. It symbolises a business that resonates with its customers, generating a sense of familiarity and trust. It hints at the essence of repeat business, where clients repeatedly return to us, knowing they can rely on our solutions.

What a beautiful name and meaning. As wonderful as the birth of the business sounds, entrepreneurship is not a linear journey. What is the driving force that keeps you going?

What truly fuels my passion is my family. They are my unwavering support system and the driving force behind my

determination to keep pushing forward. In addition to my family, I have a remarkable team whom I consider to be like family. Their dedication and contributions have been instrumental in the growth of our business.

I constantly think about their futures and how they would be impacted if I were to slow down the development of our company. Together, we share a shared vision and purpose, which motivates me on the days I need it most.



The heart of the entrepreneur is growing with others. Regarding growing with others, how did you come across the Innovator Trust IT enterprise development programme?

It's one of those stories where you can't help but feel that everything was meant to fall into place. Picture this: I'm working on an installation project for one of the clients of Innovator Trust, and then, out of the blue, I receive a call from a friend insisting that I attend an event. Now, I was skeptical at first.

I've been through countless entrepreneurial initiatives that were nothing more than casual meet-and-greets, leaving me disillusioned. But my friend managed to convince me, and guess what? It was the Innovator Trust, the very same organisation whose client we had just serviced.

From the moment I stepped into their induction programme, I could sense that this initiative was unlike any other I had experienced. There was a clear sense of authenticity and genuine support surrounding the Innovator Trust. This realisation struck a chord, and I knew deep down that this was a turning point.

Their unique approach and unwavering dedication set them apart from all the other initiatives I had encountered, and I couldn't be more grateful for the opportunities they have provided.

Yes, we sense how your paths were meant to cross when you connect the dots. What made the Innovator Trust so different?

What truly impressed me about the Innovator Trust is its approach to every step of the journey. It's not just a one-way street; it's a genuine co-creation. They guide you and equip you with the necessary tools. But they don't stop there - they go the extra mile to help you uncover your untapped potential for growth and offer access to exceptional and relevant skills development. That's what truly set them apart in my eyes.

The Innovator Trust's team doesn't simply act as facilitators; they become your mentors. They provide guidance, support, and invaluable insights based on their expertise. It's a partnership built on trust and a shared commitment to your success.

You become part of a community that believes in your potential and invests in your growth.

Growth within a community and mentorship have proven critical to entrepreneurial success. How did the programme benefit your business?

One of the significant advantages for our business has been the enhanced competitiveness we have gained. The Innovator Trust has played a pivotal role in equipping us with the tools and resources to thrive.



You've worked through the Enterprise Development Programme and transitioned to the Supplier Development Programme. What has this particular journey meant for your business?

I've always had an eye for spotting mutually beneficial opportunities; I grab them with both hands. It dawned on me that there was something more beyond just enterprise development - there was vast potential for fostering deeper and more meaningful relationships. I was eager to explore if we had the capacity and capability to meet the needs of companies from a supplier development perspective.

From my standpoint and what I have learned, supplier development is about established companies actively seeking out smaller companies that align with their goals and objectives. What this has meant for our business is intimately understanding partnerships that enable both parties to fulfil their mandates and thrive together.

What are the benefits of being part of the Supplier Development Programme?

The benefits have been holistically invaluable. Other than the upskilling and access to young, bright minds, one notable benefit has been their invitation for us to participate in the 360-degree health and safety programme.

Through this programme, we realised we needed to improve our diligence in maintaining a safe work environment. Understanding the importance of prioritizing the well-being of our human capital has been an invaluable takeaway from our involvement in the programme.

Furthermore, the Innovator Trust has taken us through concrete steps for actual growth. They have provided financial assistance and facilitated training and upskilling opportunities. From first aid certification to sales representatives and even firefighter training, they have empowered us to safeguard our environment and protect our people. The support we have received has been genuine, practical and has propelled our business forward.

Thanks to the Innovator Trust's support and guidance, we have positioned ourselves for even more significant achievements, establishing a stronger foothold in the market. h a stronger foothold in the market.

What's it like having come full circle, hosting youth interns within the programmes at Innovator Trust? What do you enjoy most about that particular opportunity?

For me, it goes beyond just giving back - it's become about making a meaningful impact. I became acutely aware that many interns come from disadvantaged backgrounds and saw an opportunity to create space for them within our organisation.

Becoming a hosting company means we can provide valuable internship opportunities spanning 12 months. We aim to empower these young individuals, equipping them with skills to enhance their employability and set them up for a brighter future.

Simultaneously, hosting interns allows us to identify and address gaps within our business operations. We advertise positions and allow interns to apply when we have specific needs or vacancies. It has been a gratifying and mutually beneficial relationship. We can bridge the unemployment gap, one youth at a time while facilitating a transfer of skills and knowledge.

Visit <http://ecoh.co.za> to find out more about ECOH Multimedia Solutions.

To find out more about the Innovator Trust and incubation initiatives, visit www.innovatortrust.co.za.

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The Innovator Trust



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