

Meet Bunkr, your fuel wallet



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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PAPPI & OUTA in South Africa and the Yellow Vest Movement in France are just a few examples of people being fed up with the high cost of fuel prices. South Africa is a special case, because not only do we pay the highest portion of our salaries towards fuel, we do not have reliable and alternative modes of public transport we can use.

According to a survey in November 2018, South Africans spent approximately R4,500p/m (two cars) and R2,180p/m (one car) on fuel and many of us can agree that that's a lot of money. The honest truth is life in South African is tough, and there is no service currently available that can protect consumers from fuel price increases, save them money and help them budget better for their fuel needs.

It was for this reason that Nqobile Vundla, founder of Bunkr, developed a mobile payment solution that aims to help South Africans save money on fuel.

We chat to Nqobile Vundla...

■ **Can you tell us a bit about Bunkr?**

Bunkr is a mobile app that allows South Africans to buy fuel in advance and store that fuel in their "Bunkr wallet". When someone needs to fill up, they simply drive to any filling station and use the app to fill up.

This helps in three major ways. Firstly, it saves South Africans money, and we are working on different solutions that will allow South Africans to connect different loyalty programs to the app to help them save on fuel. Buying fuel in advance also protects you when fuel prices go up.

Secondly, it helps with budgeting. Not only will your fuel budget for the month be set aside, but the points you accumulate in other stores will help you buy fuel.

Thirdly, it's a more secure and fun way to buy fuel and we are working on other exciting features like being able to send and receive fuel from friends and family.



Ngobile Vundla, founder of Bunkr

■ **When, how and why did you get started?**

I was working for a startup that was trying to help people budget better. I quickly realised that most people had the same struggle that I had when it came to budgeting for fuel.

South African is a special case because South Africans spend the highest portion of their salary towards fuel than any other country in the world. The average South African, we asked, spends almost R2,000p/m on fuel. That might not seem like a lot of money for some people, but consider a single mother with kids who need to manage that money every month. Not only that, she accumulates different points from different programs and we are simply trying to connect all of them so she can save money when buying fuel.

■ **What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?**

Interesting question. I feel I have been the greatest obstacle in this journey. My thinking has had to change from "This cannot be done" to "How can this be done".

Talking about a change of thinking, I have also had to challenge my natural biases. One good example is sharing ideas. We've often been taught to keep our ideas to ourselves or else other people might copy us, right? I've had to learn, the best way to grow is to share ideas.

Thankfully I am surrounded by people that cultivate and challenge my thinking daily. I figured, if my thinking changes, then everything else around me changes too.



■ ***What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?***

Firstly, I would ask them what dreams they have. I think, Bunkr is not just a company, but a movement. We are dreamers, young people with a dream to help South African become a better place. We are saying it doesn't matter where you come from or what circumstances have brought you to where you are, what matters is the future.

Secondly, I would ask them what future they want for themselves and for the country. Sadly the future we want might not come from our government, because the same government is making us pay almost R5p/ltr on taxes and levies. The future will be the one we create for ourselves and for others.

■ ***What has been your proudest achievements thus far?***

The proudest moment was the first day I woke up to take a pen and paper and started writing down my ideas for Bunkr. I keep that paper sealed in a drawer because I think that's the day I said to myself, today I am doing this. Today, I am making a commitment to make South Africa a better place.

■ ***What does the future of entrepreneurship look like to you?***

I see a future in which South African tech entrepreneurs are developing solutions that are being adopted throughout the world.

■ ***What is the importance of startup accelerator/incubator programmes?***

To be honest, I am not sure, I haven't been though to any one of them yet. I am really about learning but learning practically. To be honest I don't know.

■ ***What would you like to see changed in the South African startup landscape?***

It will definitely be networking. I feel there are a lot of successful South African stories and entrepreneurs like myself starting out on this journey who lack the support they need. That support isn't just financially, but it is also just sharing ideas with people that can help guide your ship in a different direction. I once sent an email to a guy who told me he charges for advice.

I think we don't have the culture of sharing ideas because we think other people might steal them. I would definitely love to see an ideas hub where people share what ideas they are working on and the challenges they are facing. (Wait, let me write that down, it's actually a great idea).

■ ***What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?***

Great question. I would say listening. Most people I meet are interested in sharing their ideas and talking about themselves but in the process, they miss out on learning from others. The best way to learn is from listening, not talking.

The second most important trait I'd say is wisdom. The best way to grow is to read, and I cannot begin to explain how many ideas I have had just from reading about other peoples experiences. I have just finished reading *Zero to One* by Peter Thiel, there are great insights in that book!

■ ***Tell us about your biggest struggle as an entrepreneur, as well as some major highlights.***

I would say our greatest struggles are coming when we launch sometime mid next year, but so far it's been having to listen to our users. It's hard for people to explain what their needs are. The challenge as an entrepreneur is then trying to figure out what the user is not saying. It's often what they are not saying that they need the most.



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The second struggle has been challenging my biases. I am constantly thinking of everything that I know and believe and

asking myself if I cannot believe differently.

■ **Why would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?**

One of my life turning points was when I listened to a guy called Jim Rohn, and he said:

“*Learn to work harder on yourself than on your job. The only way it gets better for you is when you get better at yourself.*”

Most people are good at working hard on their jobs but never good at working hard on themselves, and I was one of them. Seems the best way to grow, is to become better at me. Now, I work hard on myself. I have goals to grow me, which I guess is what led me to entrepreneurship. Most companies I've worked for would have never given me the opportunities I have given myself.

■ **What is the importance of entrepreneurship - especially in a country such as South Africa?**

Entrepreneurs are dreamers, well at least I am. They are the guardians of our future so to speak and see things that most people don't see. I think our role is to prepare the country for the future. The countries that will make it, are those that were ready and prepared for what's coming.

■ **Where would you like to see Bunkr in the next five years?**

It's hard to imagine what life was like before Facebook and Instagram, harder to imagine what life was like before the internet. We hope that in five years time Bunkr is so engraved in peoples lives that people wonder how life was like before Bunkr. We are also not blind to the electric car revolution that is taking place, and we plan to have solutions for that market when the time comes.

The plan is to make something that works here, and given the complexities of the market in South Africa, we believe that whatever works here can then be replicated elsewhere.

Join the Bunkr revolution at www.bunkrapp.co.za

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