

Benji Coetzee's EmptyTrips revolutionises logistics



By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

17 Aug 2017

The EmptyTrips platform connects those with spare capacity on their vehicles (truck, boat or plane) with those who require goods transported in Africa. I chatted to founder, Benji Coetzee, to find out how her idea creates accessibility for individuals and business to leverage existing logistical networks at reduced transport costs, whilst supporting logistical services providers with the opportunity to reduce empty space, save, and earn new sources of revenue.

■ ***Tell us a bit about yourself and your company, EmptyTrips.***

I have nearly a decade experience in top tier management consulting (The Boston Consulting Group), banking (HSBC) and insurance (Hollard). My key focus industries have included mining, transport, infrastructure projects, and financial services with a regional focus throughout Africa, Middle East, and Europe.



Benji Coetzee

I am now full-time entrepreneur aiming to disrupt the African business status quo through innovative and exponential technologies. I am South African born, passionate about reducing waste, minimising costs, enabling trade, connecting Africa, and empowering young people through technology.

EmptyTrips is Africa's first smart online transport marketplace connecting transporters, brokers and shippers for cargo. We open the market and region for trade by enabling smart transport. Using integrated systems and algorithmic matching, EmptyTrips connects spare capacity on vehicles to those who need goods transported. This way, transporters and companies reduce costs - a win-win for everyone!

■ ***How did you identify a need in the market?***

Approximately two years ago, I was driving down the N3 from Durban passing empty trucks, rail waggons and thinking of how my consulting clients complain about expensive transport costs eating into profit margins. Applying economic theory, it simply didn't make sense; excess supply should lead to lower prices, therefore the market needed an orchestrator to better-matched demand and supply toward a better equilibrium price... Technology held the key, and EmptyTrips was the idea.

■ ***EmptyTrips is only about four months old. How has the uptake been and are you***

feeling positive about the future?

The logistics industry is very old and traditional. One of the key challenges we are facing is educating people and convincing experts that technology will assist them with reducing space wastage and costs. But we remain committed as we know this is the way of the future. We have first-mover advantage and have come this far. We will keep on pioneering!



■ What do you foresee as the major hurdle in helping businesses see the value in this first-in-Africa solution?

A lot of businesses do not like change, especially if they have been using the same systems successfully for years. Technology and new business models can be daunting for many, however, it is our duty to educate and enable the industry. We are open to pilots to ensure companies see our value add and we want to be part of their journey through disruption.

■ In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing women in transport?

Stereotypes, legacies, and fear.

The transport and logistics industry has historically been male dominant, as are most “industrial” industries. However, we believe that with some female flair, a smart model, and innovative technology we can refresh the industry. We are earning a seat at the table.

This said, we have received such a warm welcome and commentary from male executives such as: “Wow, it is super to see

a woman taking such a risk. Well done, madame.”

■ ***Has there been a female figure/role model that has had a positive impact on your life?***

I must say that I have admired many women, some super successful and some not as fortunate due to many inequalities in our country. I do, however, try to instil selected traits that bring peace to my soul and that, I believe, a leader should resemble. My gogo Hilda's perseverance, my mother Janie's passion, my sister Chaney's kindness, my aunt Nettie's generosity (similar to Princess Diana), my mother-in-law Heather's patience, Tina Turner's spunk, and Michelle Obama's humbled ambition.

■ ***What is your message for Women's Month?***

Be bold.

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ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work [here](#) and [here](#). Contact Ilse through her website [here](#).

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