

Flip Phone is the new marketplace for mobile phones

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Ever wondered how you could buy or sell a pre-owned mobile phone in a trusted environment and not have to use unsafe classified sites or social media? Flip Phone just might be the answer you've been looking for.



Conor Copas

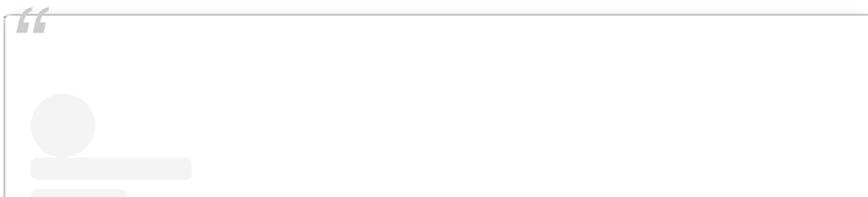
South African-born Conor Copas started his career at Groupon and moved on as a founding member of Hyperli. In May 2020 he made the jump to grow Flip phone on a full-time basis after starting up in 2018.

Copas shares the journey of the pre-owned mobile phone landscape that is [Flip Phone](#)...

Can you tell us a bit about Flip Phone?

Flip Phone is an online service that allows you to easily buy a certified pre-owned cellphone, or sell your existing pre-loved or new phone. Our friendly team will assist you every step of the way to make either buying or selling your phone as easy as possible.

With our pioneering price promise and use of instant EFTs, we changed the landscape when it comes to selling your phone. No longer do you have to meet untrusted third parties from classified sites or social media, or wait up to a week while someone in an office 'inspects' your phone (just to give you a lowball offer!)





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A post shared by Flip Phone (@flipphoneza) on Jun 2, 2020 at 11:11pm PDT



If you're looking for a great deal, Flip Phone has you covered too. We stock a wide range of refurbished CPO and brand new Apple and Samsung devices, at unbeatable prices. Whilst we're based in Cape Town, we've got a national footprint thanks to our courier partners. Together we'll get your package from one side of the country to the other overnight (or even on the same day, if you're in Cape Town)

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

Over the years in e-commerce and understanding the local online landscape, I started exploring ideas behind how to use tech to bring archaic or non-existing services into the present and how to fast track their growth. I originally wanted to build out a platform that catered to selling vehicles hassle-free and safely but the input costs and capital required were exorbitant.

I luckily had great mentors who, after raising the car selling dilemma with, suggested mobile phones.

“ Following on from that came the idea to capture the second-hand phone market which was relatively untouched and a grey area especially when it came to being secure, transparent and ethical. ”

With the rising US Dollar to the Rand, the price of tech was skyrocketing and this opened the doors to a promising used/pre-owned cell phone market. The decision was made early on to be a tech company that buys and sells phones compared to the existing players in the market that sold and bought phones using tech. A subtle but important distinction!

📌 **What is the core function of Flip Phone?**

We are a tech company that buys and sells new and used Apple and Samsung smartphones.

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

There were many obstacles and lessons learnt when we started out. Balancing supply and demand on the platform at first was one of the main obstacles. Another is being self-funded - we've had to box smart and maintain lean startup principles and it has served us well so far, even with the large capital requirements!

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

“ If you've got a good idea, run with it. Don't wait for it to be perfect, it will never be. Simply get a viable product or service out there and take it step-by-step. ”

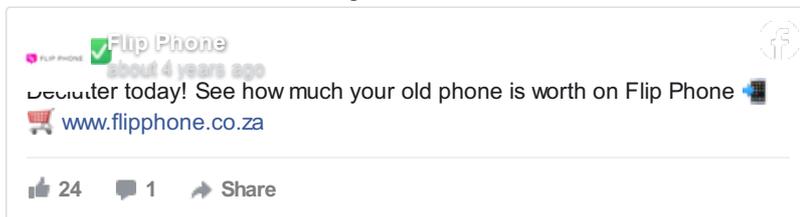
With the current pandemic and lockdown in place, more and more consumers are heading online to satisfy their needs. It's an uncertain time and there is no sign of when life will be back to normal, so if you are in the fortunate position where you have extra time on your hands, put it to good use.

📌 **What has been your proudest achievement thus far?**

It's not a single achievement per se, but rather the reviews and feedback we get from our customers. When we started, we set out to do customer service right - something that's neglected by far too many businesses. It's not always about getting things right on the first go (that certainly helps!) but how you handle yourself when things go wrong.

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

The future of entrepreneurship is extremely bright. Today, tech entrepreneurs have access to great tools and services. With an ever-increasing online market for sales, and an online market for suppliers at the same time. As companies reshape themselves to adapt to Covid-19, one small positive is the spike in online shopping and the adoption of users who otherwise would not be looking online but towards brick and mortar.



▣ **What do you think is the importance of startup accelerator/incubator programmes?**

Accelerators are important for startups as they provide access to mentors and are a source of healthy competition. Mentors can bring a different perspective and by tackling their questions your solution will generally be more robust to the market. The healthy competition between startups on the program helps you do more faster and accelerate your business - a rising tide lifts all ships.

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

Definitely a reduction in the amount of red tape surrounding starting and running companies! At first, it can be daunting to even get started, and the number of people who have ideas but end up not pursuing them is staggering. Nothing quite beats widening the top of the funnel so to speak.

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

Perseverance. Everything else stems from that.

▣ **Tell us about your biggest struggles as an entrepreneur, as well as some major highlights.**

Running an online business, there are certain areas you need to excel in, the main one being tech. Flip Phone is fortunate enough to have a great team and more importantly software developers. This is evident by the seamless customer journey and experience on the site.

The second area to highlight is logistics. It's vital to partner with the right courier company. Many lessons have been learnt since our inception and being partnered with a poor logistics company can have a detrimental impact on your business. Highlights are definitely going live with the site in 2018. Seeing Flip Phone gain traction, filling the gap for second-hand tech is another highlight and rewarding feeling.

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

A sense of accomplishment and ownership is very rewarding. Seeing the results and addressing a need in the market is one thing but also spending a lot of time on someone else's dream and helping them to the top, is counterproductive. Put in the work and reap the rewards.

▣ **Where would you like to see Flip Phone in the next 12 months?**

We've got a great team behind Flip Phone and we know where we are heading and what we want to achieve. The last 2 years have given us key insight into what South Africans look for in a brand and service and on that point, we hope to find out what the rest of sub-Saharan Africa looks for too!

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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