

National Business Awards finalists uploaded

For a decade and a half, South Africa's National Business Awards has recognised outstanding achievements by companies in a host of focus areas: sustainability, customer focus, tech innovation, fast growth and more. Also among the awards' *alumni* are hundreds of individual business champions who have taken home the trophy for *Business Leader of the Year*, *Entrepreneur of the Year* or *Top Young Executive*.

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This year's ceremony (**16 November, Emperors Palace**) marks the 15th crystal anniversary of the National Business Awards. A flood of entries came in from companies looking to outshine the competition and position themselves strongly ahead of the December business wind-down. One category that got the most "hits" - in tune with the growing omnipotence digital technology - is new to the roster: *Digital Company of the Year*. In contention for top honours are integrated ICT provider [Gijima](#), digital marketing agency [Liquorice](#); [Microsoft SA](#); mobile solutions provider [Morpheus Commerce](#); digi-fashion phenomenon [Superbalist](#) and online education powerhouse, [GetSmarter](#). The latter's meteoric rise is worth reading about; in the biggest-ever deal for a local edtech company, US-based firm 2U recently concluded a R1.4 billion acquisition of the Cape-based company - which has been in operation for less than a decade.

Among those flying the green flag for *Sustainability* this year are heavyweights [Alexander Forbes](#), [Coca-Cola](#), [Hyundai](#), [Massmart](#), [Woolworths](#) and [Old Mutual](#). Companies up for the Awards' crowning accolade, *National Business of the Year* include [BrandsEye](#), [Britehouse](#) (a division of Dimension Data), [Discovery Health](#), [Hetzner](#), [Woolworths](#); Top 500-listed [Ca](#)

Meanwhile, in line for individual award trophies are almost 30 business innovators including Get Smarter's co-founder San Paddock, property powerhouse Xoliswa Daku and Gautrain's Tshepo Kgobe. Altogether, well over 100 finalists are confirmed across 15 organisational and individual categories. [View the full list of awards finalists here](#).

Their success is South Africa's success

In the wake of their public acclaim on the national stage, many past finalists and winners of the National Business Awards have experienced a positive business impact ([international research](#) supports the value of such business awards). Of course their success is already substantial - when combined, the annual turnover of 2017's awards finalists runs in the multi millions. As a collective, they are also essential job providers for thousands of South Africans - in a year when unemployment has breached 27%.

To qualify as Finalists, entrants had to submit a range of impressive performance metrics and data to awards host [Top Media & Communications'](#) research and nominations team - along with powerfully-written motivations outlining their vision, their journey and their impact on society. Some excerpts:

"Dell's passion for youth development and community upliftment stems directly from our leaders and legacy. We understand that youth development is not just about technology but also about preparing our young people for success. The shared responsibility between Dell and youth brings about real learning opportunities and real change. Our ongoing mission will be to continually help youth discover more possibilities through programmes such as [Khulisa Academy](#). The Khulisa Academy is the only one of its kind in South Africa; which stands as a testament to Dell's commitment to bringing new innovative possibilities to the youth in our country."

Dell Computers: *Innovation through Technology Finalist*

"I am a young, black South African who has worked really hard to achieve what I have, becoming an Executive at the young age of 28. The furniture industry is a tough one dominated by males, so to be so triumphant is indicative of the hard work that has gone into building such a career. Apart from my career, I have built a reputation for honesty, integrity and fairness. They say that you are only as successful as your team and many of my team have moved on to bigger and greater positions; indicating that it was because of my leadership skills. That is something I am proud of."

Natashia Smith, Bradlows: *Top Young Executive of the Year Finalist*

"Eight years ago, Noelene Kotschan, Founder and CEO of PinkDrive, identified the issue within the cancer space, specifically with women's cancers (breast and cervical), that not enough was being done in South Africa to fight this dreadful disease. Today, we are offering our FREE breast, cervical, prostate and testicular cancer screening services to the medically uninsured in South Africa. Without a doubt, we are making an impact in communities and drive the message that 'Early Detection Save Lives'. To date, PinkDrive has done more than 12,000 mammograms, educated more than 340 200 people regarding breast cancer and conducted over 114,900 sessions on 'how to DIY a clinical breast examination.'"

PinkDrive: *Top Performing Public Service Finalist*

Top Media and Communications' Marketing and Events Director Karla Fletcher said, "Our judges were seriously impressed by the calibre of entries they received. Divining winners from finalists will not be easy for them. Every leading business has a core priority that it pursues, whether it's to be an employer of choice, a sustainability champion or to improve the quality of ordinary South Africans' lives. The marketplace should know that every finalist qualified for our awards has been astutely researched and shown to be the best at *what they do*."

That's a view endorsed by this year's first-rate Judging Panel ([read about them here](#)), which includes the likes of Isilumko Nritika Singh, Netcare's Dr Nceba Ndzwayiba

and Integr8 IT's Lance Fanaroff, who commented that "the calibre of this year's finalists will definitely be a much-needed boost to South Africa's business confidence. These awards showcase and recognise the finest talent and businesses that South Africa has to offer. This year's list of finalists exemplifies the phrase 'the Oscars of South African Business', which has become synonymous with the National Business Awards."

Top Media and Communications and its partners congratulate all finalists and wish them a summer of sustained success. For award category sponsorship or media enquiries, email rose.setshoge@topco.co.za or call 0860 009 590. To book an award table online, [click here](#). Visit www.nationalbusinessawards.co.za for more information and [watch a video overview here](#).

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