

Michanic, the on-demand car repair service



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Michanic is an innovative "Uber-like" technology platform that brings qualified and trustworthy car mechanics right to your doorstep, at a time that fits into your own daily schedule.



Lesetja Dikgale, the brainchild of Michanic

[Michanic](#), approved by the Retail Motor Industry Association (RMI), aims to disrupt the automotive repair industry by providing an online offering that takes the hassle out of car repairs -so you can rest assured that their mobile mechanics are suitably qualified.

Lesetja Dikgale, the brainchild of this unique South African startup, shares more.

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

Michanic is an online on-demand car maintenance and repair service and is trying to change the way people book for car service and repairs for their cars with our easy to use online platform which provides customers with an upfront, transparent pricing and the peace of mind that a qualified, trusted mechanic will be attending to their car needs.

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

Like, how many startups started, it all stemmed from a personal experience. I had my car repaired, (well, an attempted repair) at my local garage where I was disappointed by firstly the process of booking my car in and having to wait for it, to the uncertainty of the costs when I eventually pick it up and the fact that it still had issues. The inconvenience was to say the least frustrating and I thought to myself, "Well there must be a better way to do this and ensure quality".

It was sometime in 2016 when I was introduced to a specialist mechanic who specialised in my car make at the time by a friend. I suggested that he comes to my house and fixes my car there so that I can see what he is doing as my trust levels for mechanics had been at the lowest.

The mechanic agreed, and my car was fixed in no time, at my house *nogal*. I was elated by the fact that I could talk to the mechanic and ask questions, and at that time, I asked myself, “Is there a market for this type of service?”

I then immediately went to work. I negotiated with two mechanics, one was the one who fixed my car and the second one was introduced to me by my dad. I promised them to get them customers and when I do, we share the revenue of which they agreed to.

I then went to work and built a one pager website, sort of a Minimum Viable Product for car services and repairs and I called it CarCareClick.co.za. In the first few hours after the launch, I had had more than three enquiries and five bookings. This validated my theory to a certain extent and the rest is history.

■ ***What is the core function of Michanic?***

Our core function is to make car repairs and maintenance easy and fast, while ensuring the highest quality of workmanship, accountability, customer service and transparency in pricing.

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

After the launch of the MVP, I felt like there was some level of product market fit, however the whole process was manual and cumbersome and needed some major improvements. I had to find a way to make it easier and automated from an administration point of view and easy to use from a customer's point of view.

To achieve this, I needed seasoned developers (and they do not come cheap) this meant I would naturally also need capital to pay for the development costs.

“ To overcome this obstacle, I identified potential partners and I pitched my idea to 2 of my friends, who are now my partners, Rustum Tavarua and Thabelo Mulelu and they instantly fell in love with it. ”

This allowed me to secure development resources as well as financial resources for equity to start building what is www.michanic.co.za today.

■ ***Covid-19 and the national lockdown has impacted many businesses. What impact did it have on Michanic?***

Like many businesses, the pandemic disrupted our expansion plans and many other plans and slowed us down dramatically. During lockdown level 5, with disaster management regulatory uncertainty, our business came to a halt, however, since transportation is the “lifeline” of any country, car repairs and maintenance were allowed in mid to late level 5 lockdown.

“ The fact that the nature of our offering provided limited exposure for individuals, we were well placed to provide a safer and more convenient car maintenance and repair services as compared to traditional garages during these times. ”

There is certainly some positives and negatives for our business, however thus far, the positives outweigh the negatives and we are grateful.

■ **How did you prepare for the lockdown?**

From an administrative point, our business operations were designed for mobility from inception. This means that as a business, we are able to operate from anywhere, and from any device. This has made the transition of working from office to working from home an easy one.

“ In hindsight, it seems like our mobility strategy, was a blessing in disguise for what we now know as “the new normal”. ”

In terms of service fulfilment, we had to train and continue to train our partner mechanics in Covid-19 safety protocols to ensure the safety of our customers as well as our partners when performing services. I think that we are lucky to still have no reports of Covid-19 from work place and teams.

■ **What's the biggest challenge you are facing during this pandemic?**

The biggest challenge we are facing right now is that we are unable to execute on some of our growth plans.

■ **What sort of assistance will you need going forward?**

As a small business, we are always looking for some sort of assistance, whether it's access to capital or access to markets. We will continue to seek the assistance going forward.

■ **What has business been like thus far?**

We are fortunate in that we are currently operating at 100% capacity and this can be attributed mainly to the systems and processes we have put in place during inception of the business. We recently launched Michanic in Cape Town during the lockdown level 3 and this is a proud moment for us to be able to expand into new geographies despite the challenges we face as a country.

■ **What precautionary measures have you put in place for your employees?**

All our administrative and operations staff is currently working from home, and have been since day one lockdown. Our partner mechanics are trained on how Covid-19 spreads and prevention thereof for our customers and partner safety.

■ **What do you predict the next 6 months will be like?**

I think in the next 6 months, more and more automotive repair and maintenance businesses will see value in being online and mobile, and by so doing, we will experience more and more competition and perhaps some traditional garages adopting a mobile only strategy to save on costs and improving revenue margins. I also see Michanic being seen as an important player in the transformation of the industry in preparation for 4IR, which is already here.

■ **What has been your biggest lesson from all this?**

The biggest lesson we have learned is that plans can change abruptly, we may not know when and what the change will be,

however we should always stay prepared and be agile enough to adapt quickly to these changes.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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