

Rocky Brands takes top prize in 2020 DCC Business Accelerator Programme

Johannesburg-based company Rocky Brands secured the top prize in the third staging of the [Durban Chemical Cluster \(DCC\) Business Accelerator Programme](#) for 2020, winning R50,000 in prize money. Five winners were announced at the end of the two-day contest, each of which will now receive mentoring from a top South African business leader.



L-R Cedric Hlongwa, BAP South Africa; Trevor I'Ons, MD and sponsor, NCS Resins; Mmonni Sehlapelo, Mamoa Skincare; Daniel Souchon, MD and sponsor, Ferro Coatings; Rishav Juglall, Rocky Brands

Cedric Hlongwa of BAP South Africa walked away with second place and a R20,000 prize and the third spot and a R10,000 prize went to Mmonni Sehlapelo of Mamoa Skincare. The judges selected two additional companies for mentorship: Bantek Engineering, headed up by Bandlelihle Tikayo, and Bokang Muso which is owned and operated by Mmamuso Dithakanyane.

"There were some very innovative entrepreneurs at the event which makes being selected as the winner a great honour," said Rishav Juglall, MD and founder of Rocky Brands. "While the prize money is welcome, I am really excited about the opportunity to work closely with a business mentor. This will be game changing for my business," he explained.

Ready to expand

Rocky Brands imports, manufactures and distributes a premium range of household products currently stocked by some of South Africa's major retailers. "We have three warehouses in major cities and employ 24 people. But we are ready to launch a range of new products which is going to expand our business exponentially. By working with an experienced mentor, I am confident that we will be able to scale the business successfully. So the business mentorship really is a massive win for my company," Juglall added.

Open to entrepreneurs, small businesses and established SMMEs nationwide, the DCC Business Accelerator Programme attracted more than 100 entries and the selection panel was hard-pressed to whittle these down to the final 20 candidates.

These qualifiers were invited to the programme's one-day capacity-building workshop held on Wednesday, 8 December in Durban. A highly interactive session, the qualifiers not only had the opportunity to network with experienced business people and learn from them, these experts also helped them fine-tune their business pitches which they submitted at the end of the day.

The top 10 pitches qualified for the second round of judging modelled on the "Dragon's Den" concept. The entrants pitched their innovative growth concepts to a team of four judges, including entrepreneur Luvuyo Rani, vying for the opportunity to win not only seed capital for their businesses, but also an intense business mentoring programme.

Unlocking preferential loans

Daniel Souchon, MD of Ferro Polymers and one of the judges, said that while the mentoring is critical to ensure the sustainable success of these small businesses, it also has a greater purpose.

"Starting in January 2021, each of the five winners will receive one-on-one support from an experienced business leader. Their goal will be to help these entrepreneurs develop a solid business plan that can unlock up to R2m in preferential loans. The decision on which businesses will qualify for the requested loan funding is expected in April next year if we are not delayed by Covid-19 interruptions," Souchon said.

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