

# Entrepreneurship and philanthropy



By [Zimkhitha Mqutheni](#)

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According to Naveen Jain, a business executive, entrepreneur and *Forbes* magazine contributor: "Philanthropy is not about giving money, but about solving problems".



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While well meaning, the idea of writing a cheque and calling it 'philanthropy' is extremely short-sighted and, unfortunately, extremely pervasive." Jain makes a vital point that writing a cheque is short-sighted, though entrepreneurs have less time in their hands to sit and solve the problems other than those that speak to their businesses directly, it is vital that they understand that giving back requires more.

Philanthropy is about going all the way and being a responsible corporate citizen. There are great examples of businessmen and women who understand this: Oprah Winfrey, world-renowned media mogul; Bill Gates, one of the richest man in the world and founder of Microsoft; our own Patrice Motsepe, South Africa's mine mogul and black billionaire. But we do have the young and up-and-coming entrepreneurs like Damian Michaels, CEO of Innovo Networks, who is proving to be a force to be reckoned with; he is the founder and the driving force behind his ICT business and understands that the bottom line is not everything.

He understands Jain's sentiments and practises exactly that, not only to the community where he derives his business, but to other sources as well. He's served time as a board member of the Aids Resource Centre, as well as The Love Revolution, while also mentoring aspiring young entrepreneurs.

Michaels spoke about his philanthropic ventures and what inspires him to give back. "Entrepreneurs need coaching in today's environment and, therefore, I would like to play a role in helping entrepreneurs grow, change habits and behaviours, as well as make a difference in the economy."

He understands that philanthropy in today's business world is a basic requirement as there are so many challenges that are facing our country, access to education, poverty, access to mentorship for young people, drug problems, alcohol abuse,

access to opportunities and mentorship for young entrepreneurs, the list goes on.

Michaels saw these challenges as an opportunity to give back by mentoring young aspiring entrepreneurs to be better prepared when they start their own businesses. Through Innovo Networks he subcontracts some of the business to smaller businesses and ensures that they get paid with 14 days to solve some of their cash-flow problems.

Doing good may cost money and time, but it creates a better world as we take one step at a time. Not only does it bring good to the receiver but it brings good to the giver as well. Oprah Winfrey, one of the world's most powerful self-made entrepreneurs and influential forces in the world of philanthropy said: "The surest way to bring goodness to yourself is to make it your intention to do good for somebody else." Being an entrepreneur should not be self-serving but also about serving others.

## ABOUT ZIMKHITHA MQUTHENI

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