

iFixing the quick-throwaway culture

 By Lauren Hartzenberg

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Do SA consumers have an always-upgrading, quick-throwaway culture when it comes to electronic devices? Or is it just that there hasn't been enough reliable service providers around to repair one's precious gadgets?



 Alex Fourie

In 2007, when Alex Fourie's iPod broke and he battled to get it fixed through traditional channels, he consulted the internet and repaired it himself. He soon became the go-to-guy for broken Apple devices at Stellenbosch University, operating out of his dorm room. iFix was born. Nine years later, the company now has more than 25 stores nationwide, with 15 more planned for this year, and employs nearly 200 people.

Fourie, a serial entrepreneur, was nominated last year by *Forbes* magazine as one of the Top 30 Young Entrepreneurs in Africa, and also featured on the *Mail & Guardian's* Top 40 under-40 young South Africans list. We got in touch with the serial entrepreneur to discuss iFix's steady growth.

What inspired the creation of iFix?

I never set out with the thought in mind to start a national retail chain; I was merely trying to sort out my own issue. Often, business ideas come to life from real life situations and frustrations.

iFix has evolved from only fixing Apple devices. What other services are now on offer?

We now fix all Apple, Samsung, Huawei and LG products as well as sell our own accessory ranges. We're launching sales and service of DJI drones within our stores within the next few weeks as well.

To what/whom do you attribute iFix's growth?

I think my team has played a major role in making it a success. There are hundreds of FOH girls and guys that put on a smile everyday and deal with customers and it is thanks to them that we have made such a success of this business.



Tell us about some of the other entrepreneurial projects you've been involved in...

Jeez, many hey. Before iFix I started an online music download store, an events company that did international tours and a stage rental business. Within iFix we've launched Houdt, that's the first organic tech accessory brand as well as RiCharge that offers public charging solutions.

▣ ***Any expansion plans going forward?***

Sure, you've always got to challenge yourself and see how you can grow and do things better.

▣ ***What practical advice would you give other young and hopeful entrepreneurs?***

Just go out there and do it. Whatever your idea is, just start with it and it will lead to something great!

ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

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