

## New Jan Innovation Academy to share food industry learnings

South African Michelin-star chef Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen has announced the launch of the Jan Innovation Academy. The academy, in partnership with Checkers, allows access to a range of personal stories and teachings by van der Westhuizen and fellow restaurateurs, entrepreneurs, chefs, creatives and other industry experts.



Source: Supplied

The platform, steered by video lessons and other supporting material, aims to teach soft skills that can improve marketability in the workplace, and help learners to achieve their personal and professional goals while being entertained during the learning process.

Through access to a smart device, anyone could have access to the developmental content curated in the courses available through the academy.

### **Education a top priority**

The academy believes that online skills development must be a special focus in South Africa, where education must be a top priority. All industries – especially the hospitality and creative industries – need more diverse educational offerings to reach a wider audience, and enable more people to enter the job market.

The challenges, demands and psychological impact of the modern working world was one of the key reasons why van der Westhuizen and his team set out to develop a series of courses that allows access to his knowledge and skills, especially those who have less time to themselves due to longer working hours and other demands.

"I had to figure a lot of things out as I went along, without having a blueprint or a manual – or someone to teach me the soft skills I needed," says van der Westhuizen. "So, I failed at a lot of things. But I've had

some great wins. I've learned a lot through this process that I can now, hopefully, through the Jan Innovatic Academy, share with others – the ones who have the passion and creative energy to turn their dreams into something real."

## **Encouraging innovative entrepreneurship**

"My dream is for the academy to be a place where the stories, insights and lessons my friends and I share can be the difference in whether someone opens that restaurant, starts painting that canvas... or not. We want to inspire others to take that leap of faith and to show up for their dreams," says van der Westhuizen.

"Through our partnership with Jan Innovation Academy, Checkers hopes to encourage and inspire more people to learn about the food industry, and ultimately to become innovative entrepreneurs within this space. Not only do we share a love of food, but Jan Hendrik does not compromise on quality, and neither does Checkers. It, therefore, made sense to join forces on this exciting initiative," says Willie Peters, general manager: marketing at Checkers.

*The [academy](#) is launching a range of courses over the next ten weeks, starting September 2021, which include restaurant entrepreneurship, mental resilience in the workplace, building a personal brand, and creative thinking through food.*

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