



SIYABULELA SOPHI
a groundbreaking entrepreneur.

[Dec 2017] As we share the story of a young innovative entrepreneur and a versatile deep house Dj. The founder of Makhaza lifestyle and the informational portal slash networking event called Makhaza Lifestyle 1st Friday Conversations...

Please introduce yourself...

The name is Siyabulela Sophi, fondly known as DJ Mocca J, a visionary that overcame many obstacles to start a business that is a catalyst for change. Born June 23 1990 and originally from Mount Fletcher in the Eastern Cape.

Take us through your life journey before the DJ Mocca J brand and entrepreneur was born?

Siyabulela Sophi, can be best described as a philanthropist at heart, a selfless individual that values positive change. Having grown up with both my parents presented me with an incredible, a supportive family that did not afford much but managed to take us where we are today. I come from an entrepreneurial background, my mom was/is one entrepreneur that inspired me to be who I am today, the way she hustled for our daily bread an experience which would then open me up to the realities of our socio-economic standing as a family, little did I know that it would inadvertently breed the entrepreneur in me.

I grew up like any other kid from a disadvantaged background, where everything was all about helping at home and being beaten for playing outside till late (Laughs). **My life as a kid wasn't that fun, I learnt most things the harder way, "you can tell growing up in an environment where other kids had all sorts of good things and you had none", I didn't know much about sense of ownership because I didn't own much but my parents always ensured that I appreciate life and its challenges, I'm thankful for the way they raised me, the struggle they went through to ensure that I'm dressed, I have eaten and I'm neat.**

I was one of those focused kids at school, not a genius but I would work hard **to earn a couple of A's (Laughs), One thing I know about myself is that I wasn't perfect, I made several mistakes, I affiliated to wrong associations just to look cool in the society, but all these were challenges one faces when growing up in an economically depressed society, a society that has no opportunities and resources for people.**

Before I became a revolutionary entrepreneur and a corporate deejay I wanted to become a Chartered Accountant (CA), Accounting was one of my favourite modules from high school to tertiary, I remember 2008 in my matric year I was awarded Excellent Performance **award in Accounting, tertiary as well I'd nail couple of A's in Financial Accounting** and my mentor was vocal about the bright future I have in the field. As I grow up, I started seeing things in a matured manner; I started developing skills that led to who I am today.

After developing major entrepreneurial skills, I didn't waste any time in starting my business. I spend some time doing a market research about the nature of my proposed venture; I was still employed that time. When the calling started to take much of my time, I had to leave fulltime work to pay more attention to

the business that is a catalyst for change. It was a calling simply because not every day you see people sacrificing their daily jobs to initiate or to use their entrepreneurial skills to create a better and opportunity driven society.

Before my business I was just a survival employee, I was employed and I had to go to work just for survival, no passion nothing. This is the other reason **that motivated me to start my company; I needed to do something I'm** passionate about. This was an opportunity for me to experience the sense of **ownership since I never had such opportunity before. Fulltime work wasn't** challenging and I realized that **doing something I don't love is emotional torture and I wasn't ready to spend several years torturing myself while god** has showed me the way to a more challenging and fruitful engagement.

How did you get into the Dj music business and what kind of music do you play?

While I was doing my 2nd year I developed eagerness to be a disc jockey. From that point, I conducted a research on to how to acquire such skills. Later that year I met Sir Vincent & War,. War taught me the technical side of things while Sir Vincent had a massive influence in the business side of things. I am a versatile spinner who mostly prefers deep house; I am able to accommodate several ears who have a different taste in the house scene.

Can you describe the time when you first realized that creating was something you had to do?

Undoubtedly Africans are born creative; it's a matter of recognizing such creativity. As an African I was born creative. The minute I developed major entrepreneurial skills I knew that my creativity earns an opportunity to be seen and experienced at 1st hand. Entrepreneurship as well as the deejay scene **requires high level of creativity, this came to me as a challenge I'm more than** willing to overcome. I was ready (Laughs)

Makhaza lifestyle, what are you trying to communicate with the brand?



We are trying to communicate African inspired solutions to all the challenges facing our disadvantaged societies. The brand itself came to life as an immediate solution to major socio-economic issues facing Africa. Makhaza Lifestyle seeks to inspire an opportunity driven society, this is achieved through our dedication in enhancing innovative learning.

What does it mean to you and the community at large?

To me it means progress, it means the youth is ready to take a stand for **positive change** "We Are Ready to lead". To the community it means they should be ready to be led by innovative minds, they should be ready to entrust the youth in major solutions.

1st Friday Conversations, how did the concert stem about?

Makhaza Lifestyle 1st Friday Conversations, an informational portal slash networking event that brings together professionals, innovators, entrepreneurs and the general public to share ideas and insights in their respective sectors. Each month we focus on a certain topic, our topics are derived from an in-depth market research we conduct prior session.



The project came to life after we saw the significances of information sharing, Information allows us to make major decisions, decisions that would be constructive to our future. We believe in the absence of information there will be no learning and no proper decisions to be taken. Our societies are now transforming to a digital environment where important information is mostly shared online, people who have no means to be connected are excluded in the new society, we seek to be a solution to such challenge.

What is your take on the African youth and development at this stage?

African youth is inspired and ready to embark on journeys that will ensure sustainable developments in Africa. African youth is now telling African inspired stories, we now working towards African inspired solutions. As said before we are ready to lead our societies to better. Africa is developing dramatically, everyone is playing a certain role and the youth is active. We are born creative. African youth speaks development and they are change agents. The government and other role players should consider giving us the necessary attention and they should start investing in us as we are the future of this continent.

If you had to change anything about Khayelitsha or South Africa, what would it be?

The one thing I'd love to have a positive influence on is the way of thinking of other people. Sadly, where I come from, people see problems more than opportunities. Yes, we come from an economically depressed society and I **believe it's now time to change things to better.** In Khayelitsha there are tremendous opportunities but the problem lies to the people who have the information about such opportunities, they just not willing to share to others.

We have forums and Agencies who speak development in their mission and vision statements but they just not delivering as per their visions, if they would change their way of doing things, I promise you the society would be better. **We don't have much resource but the small things we get are withheld or only benefit the so-called leaders who kind mislead the society.** We need to inspire people to start seeing things positively and to work towards an opportunity driven society, together we can. Corruption is a huge illness that denies us major opportunities.

Describe a real-life situation/person that inspired you?

Mom inspires me a lot. Her hard work made me who I am today, Life wasn't easy but she remained humble and focused. One thing that inspires me a lot about her is that she's an open person who values positive change; she's one entrepreneur that motivated me to be this person I am today.



What project are you working on now?

Currently I am piloting Makhaza Lifestyle 1st Friday Conversations, the project is growing daily. This project seeks to inspire an opportunity driven society **through information sharing. I'm also an active member of a newly initiated movement, New Ways to play** which is a corporate movement that seeks to bring new innovations in the entertainment scene of South Africa.

Where would you like to see your brand and business in the next couple of years?

One of our projects “Makhaza Lifestyle 1st Friday Conversations” will be piloted across Africa. Zimbabwe is ready to launch the project and we are in talks with Angola. The idea is to see Makhaza Lifestyle 1stFriday Conversations hosted across the continent. This is a solution for African problems. In the near future, our strategic plan indicates that we will be able to create sustainable job opportunities and it also reveals to us that the community will be shifting to an opportunity driven one. Our growth proposition lies up on the number of people we develop; in the near future, we seek to be a reference to many people.

What's your working time? Anytime is working time for me, I do the normal working hours of 8 to 5 but I also don't hesitate working at 00:00 till 05:00.

Favorite music/musician? Jazz - Tatu Hugh Masekela.

On my spare time? I read books,mentor the young ones, spend time doing research on business strategies.

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The graphic features a man in a white shirt and blue jeans sitting on a wooden bench, looking directly at the camera. The background is a light, neutral color. The text is overlaid on the image in various colors and fonts, with some text in white boxes. The 2 Oceans Vibe radio logo is in the bottom left corner.

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