

Pride Factor launches academy in lockdown



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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#TheLockdownSeries explores the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses, how they prepared for lockdown and its impacts on operations and employees, as well as lessons learned that we can take into the post-Covid-19 era.

[Pride Factor](#), the life-skills academy dedicated to inspiring young minds, has launched an online platform to provide South African teenagers and young adults with the vital skills required to build successful and fulfilling careers and enhance the quality of their lives. The free courses include a four-part series on how to thrive during the lockdown, titled *Cocooning Like a Boss*, and two 13-part courses on life skills, one for teenagers and the other for young adults.

Dene Botha, managing director of Pride Factor, took some time out to share how the nationwide lockdown has impacted the social enterprise...

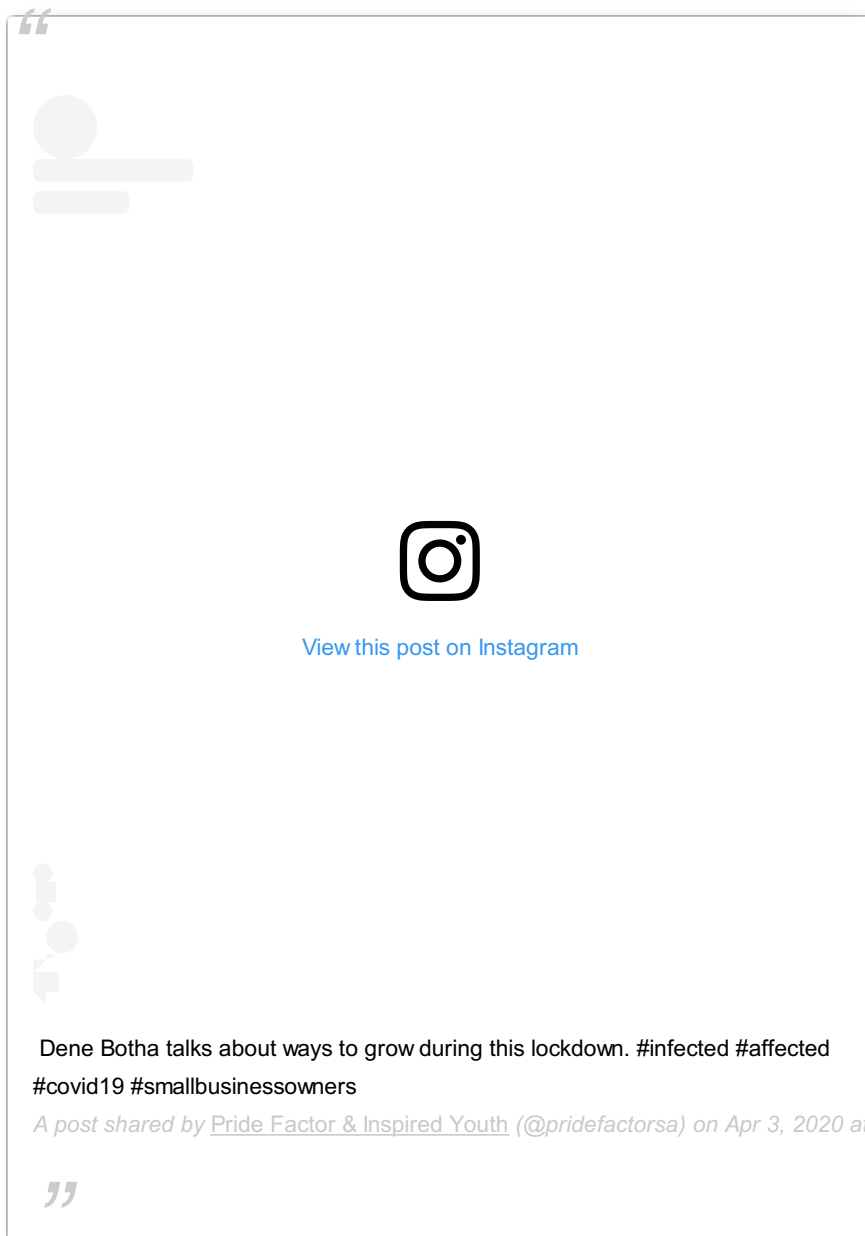


"The next six months are going to be extremely challenging for everybody as we try to adapt our behaviour and value systems, alter the way we learn, conduct business and earn a living," says Dene Botha, MD of Pride Factor

How has Covid-19 impacted your business?

The pandemic has had a significant impact on Pride Factor's business model, forcing us to mothball our entire live events programme and shift all our focus to providing similar services via our innovative online platforms.

Before the lockdown, our mission to 'Inspire Young Minds' by motivating and guiding teenagers and young adults on how to enhance their career and lifestyle opportunities relied heavily on running workshops hosted by motivational presenters and celebrities. We entered 2020 with a healthy order book of established and new large-scale events, activations, University roadshows and the like.



Now we are devoting all our efforts to upgrading and adding to the range of Pride Factor Academy online courses in life skills and work readiness so we can continue to inspire and guide the youth while still providing an excellent return on investment for our clients in both the public and private sectors who need to reach the youth demographic in authentic and meaningful ways.

📊 **How did you prepare for the lockdown?**

We prepared by revisiting our business model and identifying the opportunities where we could continue and improve our unique selling proposition. Fortunately, all our staff already work remotely, so we didn't face any major challenges on that front.

But we did have to improve our skillsets for communicating effectively by using management systems like Monday.com and Zoom, enhancing our social media platforms and online distribution systems, employing and incentivising a top-flight ITC manager and reaching out to expert content creators to provide courses that replace the messaging we previously provided via live events.

📊 **What's the biggest challenge you are facing during this pandemic?**

The biggest challenge is undoubtedly maintaining cashflow as we ramp up the online offerings. Our 2020 budget has been decimated by the inability to run live events and nobody has any idea when that part of Pride Factor's business will come

back on stream. While we're extremely confident that the shift to online operations will meet our ambitions in the medium term, it is uncharted territory for us.

“ Who would like to learn how to beat lockdown and Cocoon Like A Boss? Learn how to use this [#lockdown](#) time to your advantage and gain a little insight on how to grow yourself & your BANK ACCOUNT! Visit <https://t.co/eNNRQMmJNa> & enroll. Free courses available [#CocooningLikeABoss](#) pic.twitter.com/E9rNvdwtdF— Pride Factor (@PrideFactorSA) April 28, 2020 ”

■ **What sort of assistance will you need going forward?**

We need the assistance of the decision-makers in the public and private sector entities who have successfully partnered with Pride Factor on mutually beneficial projects in the past. Early indications are that several are ready to embrace the fact that in the 'new-normal' of reduced face-to-face activities, online content will deliver improved outcomes for the youth and generate great ROI and goodwill to meet their own marketing objectives, and create enduring brand loyalty long after this crisis passes, as it surely will.

In a broader sense, everybody needs more assistance from the Government. In our case that includes delivering on their promises to provide the youth with connected devices and to open up more spectrum so data costs can be reduced. This will lay the groundwork for the country's youth to participate in the much-vaunted Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is right on our doorstep.

■ **If you are able to operate, What steps are you taking to continue operating?**

We are as busy as we have ever been right now! As mentioned above, to implement the switch in focus of our business model we have taken on additional staff, providing a wide range of opportunities for experts in their fields to create customised, relevant and much needed online content while we have considerably enhanced our own levels of expertise in the online education paradigm.

■ **What measures have you put in place for your employees?**

We have improved our communication with our employees and kept them informed while changing the company's focus and adding additional deliverables to their job descriptions. We've also been forthright in discussing the financial constraints that could possibly result in them having a percentage of their salaries deferred in the short term to ensure the long term survival of the company, which is tantamount to asking them to work harder for less pay!

■ **Are you communicating with your customers? If so, how?**

The frequency and quality of content on all social media platforms has been stepped up to ensure Pride Factor continues to provide inspirational and relevant messaging for our youth audience and to elicit vital feedback on what they need to improve their circumstances.

“ We also regularly reach out to business and government entities to establish their requirements for maintaining contact with their constituencies, and to offer them access to the content marketing and communication platforms we are developing in the online space while face-to-face contact is not possible. ”

■ **How are you offering assistance to your customers who rely on your services?**

For our youth audience, we're launching an exciting new state-of-the-art Pride Factor Academy website this week. Teenagers and young adults will have free access to two 13-part Life Skills courses, as well as a new four-part series titled Cocooning like a Boss, for as long as the country's learning institutions remain closed.

“ For our business clients we've developed a methodology that enables all the courses to be branded and then offered to students at no cost in the form of bursaries, thereby providing their target market with genuine benefits while reinforcing brand loyalty among both existing clients and attracting future business. ”

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This white-labeling technique with embedded brand messaging can be applied to all the Pride Factor Academy courses including personal financial management (Show me the Money) and Entrepreneurship 101, as well as a raft of new topics such as Starting an Online Business, Social Media Marketing and many more currently being compiled to address the ongoing feedback we are receiving from the youth.

■ **What do you predict the next 6 months will be like?** **The next six months are going to be extremely challenging for everybody as we try to adapt our behaviour and value systems, alter the way we learn, conduct business and earn a living.** Change creates stress for most people, especially the financially disadvantaged, so those who are able to need to provide positive motivation, hope and opportunities for people who require assistance to improve their current situation.

■ **What has been your biggest lesson from all this?**

The biggest lesson from this crisis is that change is the only constant in life! One needs to prepare for the unexpected, challenge your assumptions, broaden your horizons and then be nimble in devising and implementing win-win scenarios that produce positive solutions!

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