

Sectors of opportunity for entrepreneurs in 2017

Despite the tough year experienced in 2016, there are certain sectors that are ripe with opportunity for astute entrepreneurs to capitalise on in 2017.

Christo Botes, spokesperson for the 2017 Entrepreneur of the Year competition, identifies some of the sectors that are set to grow in 2017. “In addition to the sectors that traditionally perform well in South Africa, such as tourism, there are definite opportunities being identified in other, less traditional sectors that show ample entrepreneurial potential.”

Telecoms

The first of these thriving sectors is telecommunications. “Currently, there is much happening in the telecoms sector, with the expanding national rollout of fibre driven by the growing uptake of bandwidth-intensive applications. This has opened up a host of opportunities, ranging from the implementation of cables to technical support services. As bandwidth speeds increase, we are seeing the integration of technology, communication and entertainment to form a whole new industry that has taken off in South Africa and represents a major growth sector.”

Education



Christo Botes

Another industry that shows great potential for South African entrepreneurs is the private education sector. “Internationally, statistics show that around 10% of all schools are privately run. As there are about 26,000 schools across South Africa, and only around 1,600 of those are private, there is currently a market capacity for about 1,000 private schools to be opened in the next few years.

“Locally the demand for private education is on the rise, and that there is an increase in the number of entrepreneurs moving into this space. In addition to being an area that exhibits great potential for profitability, the education sector is also attractive in terms of its social and economic factors. Our country has a major skills shortage which can only be effectively tackled by the increased accessibility of quality education.”

Mining, agro industries

“This year will also likely see some recovery in the struggling sectors of mining and agriculture. At the end of 2016, there was already some indication that the mining sector was making a comeback, as commodity prices stabilised and, in some instances, even increased. It is also predicted that there will be more rainfall in the coming summer season, which will be welcomed by the agricultural sector, having suffered some of the most severe drought conditions ever in 2016.”

“My advice for entrepreneurs looking to make their dreams a reality in 2017 is firstly, remain positive and do not get despondent. Do not allow your dream to go wasted because of challenging factors. Secondly, seek guidance from seasoned entrepreneurs who have already made their way around the block to avoid repeating their mistakes. Finally, do your due diligence, but do not wait around for someone else to make the first move – business conditions will likely get tougher as the industry becomes more crowded,” concludes Botes.