

Life after rugby

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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After 10 years of professional rugby playing for the Lions, Stormers and Stade Francais in Paris, Anton van Zyl hung up his boots. Now he's a commercial architect at Dimension Data by day and co-founder of a start-up called BizList SA by night.



Anton van Zyl, co-founder of BizList

What is Bizlist?

“Our vision is to be the preferred platform for willing buyers and sellers of businesses. We are building a single platform where interested parties can view business for sale. In addition, we offer an unbeatable service offered to sellers that is tailored to the nature of their business as well as their immediate needs.”

How did you come up with the idea?

“My passion for entrepreneurial projects that make a difference actually extends way back to before I played professional rugby, around the time I was a student at Maties. I was always interested in the possibilities offered by fintech and the disruptive opportunities offered by the growing digital economy. Together with my business partners, Bruce and JP we came up the idea having gone through a rigorous process of attempting to buy a business when relocating from Johannesburg to Cape Town. Unable to find a singular platform that provided key info for buyers and sellers, we set out to change the way businesses are bought and sold in the world, and Bizlist is the start of that.”

What advice would you give any one starting out with their own business?

“If you don't do it, someone else will.’It’, in this case, is turning your idea into a reality. Plan as best as you can, but be prepared to admit you are wrong, and when that is the case, quickly redirect your compass. Most importantly, though, don't be afraid to ask for help.”

What is the scariest part of being an entrepreneur?

“Two things. First, the number of times you are required to make decisions based on imperfect and incomplete information, you learn to trust your instinct quite quickly. Second, you get paid last!”

▣ ***What is the best part of being an entrepreneur?***

"Again, two things. The freedom to be the master of one's own destiny, to map the journey of an idea to something that will make a tangible difference in the lives of others, or change the world, some will say. Second, the opportunity to work with exceptionally skilled, enthusiastic, driven and energetic people who challenge the status quo and in doing so provide a constant source of learning and inspiration. The latter is probably my favourite."

▣ ***What is the most important lesson you have learnt so far?***

"The most important thing is that you never stop learning. In fact, the rate of learning probably accelerates over time. But I would say the ability to prioritise certain key initiatives, whether they are operational, or go to market, is critical, as well as staying in constant contact, or on the same page, as some would say, with your teammates."

▣ ***Where do you see yourself in five years' time?***

"Farming vegetables in the south west of France, haha. In business, five years can be a lifetime, particularly with the rate of change in technology and resulting digital revolution. I believe that in the next five years, BizList will be operating in numerous countries around the world as the cornerstone of online markets for businesses."

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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