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Keynote address

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To all the entrepreneurs I am incredibly humbled and privileged to be the key note speaker today - to the organisers and sponsors, a huge thank you to you all for your massive support -our emerging entrepreneurs here today have a wonderful opportunity to learn and grow together.

Eight years ago my brother was somewhere in a cotton farm in the Eastern Province, probably Nyimba, trying to convince a small scale cotton farmer that rather than get paid in cash, she should agree to be paid onto a cell phone - it was a tough sell. We had been battling to get any customers or any traction. In a moment of last ditch saloon Owen, an early employee, went to the lady – “but it’s ZoonA”... With this the mood swung and we got our first customer. Given Brett’s lack of Nyanja ability it was only when he got back to the car and asked – “what is ZoonA” - and the answer was ... “It is real”, “it is true” [and] our company name get its roots.

My brother and I had a vision that we could start a business based on entrepreneurship, mobile technology, unreasonable innovation and working with awesome people and that it could fundamentally change the African Transactional Landscape. Everyone told us we were crazy - no one first to market in a Fin Tech Business is Zambian, you will be eaten by the big companies, the regulators will never allow you, no one will trust you, no one will give you money, there are not enough talented people - I could go on and on about all the reasons we were given for why we would fail.

Since we started more than 2.5 million Zambian adults have trusted us and transacted over a \$ 1billion dollars on our platform, we have created over 1,000 entrepreneurs and paid them over \$ 10 million dollars in commissions - and 70% of these same entrepreneurs are women under the age of 25 years old. Today we have over 1.5 million active 90 days users and over 1,500 active agents

What is important to remember is we started from humble beginnings. I saw Siphon Phiri's name down as one of the speakers today - ZoonA started out by renting one room from Siphon 8 years ago. My first desk was home-made - I went to Bauleni and bought 20 clay bricks and I went to Kalingalinga and bought a door and I put the door on top of the bricks and that was all the furniture I had in my office for 6 months.

In spending time with you today and thinking about this keynote speech: I thought I would share some fundamental truths that I personally believe that have guided me in challenging times...

My first truth

When you sit down and have bacon and eggs for breakfast the hen is involved (it lays the egg) but the pig, well the pig is bacon, it is truly committed... I believe that to be a successful

entrepreneur you have to be truly committed and focused - committed in passion, energy and time. You cannot play at being an entrepreneur - it is full time and all consuming. People often say to me that they want to start a business but it is just not the right time - it is never the right time but sometimes you just have to jump in and learn to swim. Our team have sweated, bled and sacrificed to build Zoono. It did not happen by luck or accident but hard work, resilience and commitment - you need a lot of things including luck but sheer effort is a non-negotiable.

My second truth

I believe that for the entrepreneurs here today: your ideas (as just ideas) are worthless and raising money is not your biggest challenge or problem right now. In Africa today no one will invest in an idea and to be honest no real investor will sign an NDA. Capital and investment flows to one type of business and one type only - business with a proven track record of winning and ones that have a great team. So you should only focus on two things - your customer and delivering value that customers will pay for so you can generate revenue and cash and talent. The biggest success factor in your business will be your first 10 hires. They will define the culture and set the tone. One of our first employees and now our CEO and partner took 50% of his wages for three years and every month put them back into the business to buy shares from us

My Third Truth

I believe the greatest threat to the entrepreneurs here today is totally in your power to control and remove as a threat. In simple terms it is our inability to focus - truly focus with razor like discipline. This is a threat for three reason:

- 1) we see opportunities everywhere, we are like a kid in a candy store - thinking "i can do that, I can do that..."
- 2) we try and assimilate risk by doing lots of different things - thinking if this one fails, maybe this other one will work but
- 3) all the research shows that if you try and do 10 things you will fail at all of them. If you try 5 you might do one or two with average results. Exceptional results are only achieved when you try and do less - in doing less you achieve more.

We built Zoono focusing all our attention on this one business, in one market and with one simple product. We removed complexity and opportunity and adopted relentless focus. My advice to you is focus on one business, focus on who your customer is and focus on doing what they want.

My fourth truth

I believe people spend far too much time thinking about how big something can be and not enough time in the trenches proving it will work. The only person in your world should be your customer and your focus should be understanding their needs and pain points and working with them to solve them. Every industry has a choke point - one thing more than anything that unlocks real customer value or solves real customer pain points. Understanding that one thing and then with relentless focus absolutely owning that niche is all that matters. Your key drive must be to commit to being 10X better than anyone at that one thing that matters most to the customer. And then you will own the industry. At Zoono that one thing that customers wanted was a seamless, simple ability to cash in and cash out

- so we focused on owning that experience and being 10X better than our competitors at that. Our mantra was to deliver a customer experience so that they never bounced at a green box - or in layman terms, that they were always able to cash in and out in a simple, quick, safe way. We deliberately did not compete at advertising or promotions - or even price - we relentlessly competed where it mattered most and that's where we won the battle and why we were able to grow

My fifth truth

I believe nothing great was ever created or built when things are easy - scarcity and necessity are the mother of innovation and invention. So yes, as Zambian entrepreneurs, you can honestly say you are not starting your business in a hot spot of entrepreneurship but you can use it as an excuse or flip it on its head and use it as motivation.

Environment has such an impact and we are in a harsh start-up business environment here but take that scarcity and own it. Use it as your drive - people have built far greater things in far tougher times, and this same struggle and resilience is your advantage.

When we started Zoono everyone would ask with surprise - why did you start Zoono in Zambia? And then we would say we are from Zambia and they would go, ok that makes sense, as though the only reason we would start here is because we were from here. We rather took the approach of proactively and deliberately changing our environment - not just for us but for our agents too.

When we started we soon realised our agents could not raise the necessary working capital to start and run a Zoono Booth. So we pivoted our business to provide them affordable financing options to set them up and get them started. Again, after some time we realised that the agents' social and economic environment was putting undue pressure on them and that were "dipping into their business tills" and taking money out of the business to meet the day to day pressures of life and putting their business at risk - and our capital investment at risk too. But rather than retreat, we focused on the real problem. So again we changed the environment - by this time we had a whole bunch of historical data on our agents and, most importantly, a transactional history of what a good agent would do on day one, week one, month one, month six, year one and year two. So our data engineers starting building algorithms and generating cohorts that could predict from day one the trends as to if an agent would one day make it and be profitable. Once we had this data we were able to make a commitment to our young agents ... we committed that, as long as they stayed within our performing cohorts, we would invest in all their short terms costs so that starting a business could also meet and keep their own personal, family and life environment in balance.

My six truth

I believe in today's world and in the future David will always, always beat Goliath. The speed to be able to understand customer pain points and turn them into insights and actions and solve customer problems will be the winners. The speed at which you make things 10X better for customers will be the critical success factor - and speed includes agility and the ability to constantly pivot your whole organisation to move with disruptions and changing times. Speed is an outcome of an agile and change-responsive ecosystem. Traditional big businesses have too much technical debt to move quickly or effectively.

But my key advice to entrepreneurs who want to take on the big dogs - do not go and disrupt their existing business or they will try and eat you (and they can). Rather, go and invent what is not yet there and then they will never ever catch up with you. At Zoona we always focus on attacking the core customer problem and not the competition - we fundamentally are committed to baking a bigger pie, and leaving all players in the value chain whole and rewarded. We foster win:win relationships and not win:lose.

My Seventh truth

I believe that until we learn to embrace that failure is a stepping stone to success, and that failure should be celebrated and shared, we will never be brave enough to truly grow. I appreciate we live in scarcity and failure can be costly but we need to move from assimilating risk and to truly celebrate the tall poppies - those that win but even more so, those that were brave enough to try, and fail. None of the first four businesses my brother and I started are still around today, but in those failings we learnt our most valuable lessons. One of the investors who gave us \$ 4 m in 2012 shared that the battle scars: both the business savviness and humility he saw in us through those tough times were key to him giving us the money. The entrepreneurs most likely to succeed very rarely do so with their first venture - so when you fall, fall with integrity and then get up and start again, and the next time be smart enough to make new mistakes. And remember: mistakes prove that you are trying.

My Eighth truth

I believe that when you fail you are not as bad as you will feel. But equally, when you are winning you are never as good as you think you are. One day chicken, next day feathers. I have met some incredibly successful people and each and every one of them shared the following characteristics: they were humble, they were sincere, they had empathy and they listened with real interest. Good people doing good things can win. So as you reach for the stars, keep your feet on the ground. As an entrepreneur you need to constantly grow and, most importantly, always be learning. I used to think starting a business was difficult but often all it required was resilience - you either kept going or quit. There were very few other options. As Zoona has grown, my role has evolved and it is far more complex and challenging - I have to grow 10X as a business leader just to keep up and stay relevant as the business grows.

My ninth truth

I believe who you surround yourself with – partners, investors, employees and customers – defines your future success or failure. At times, stop and reduce the noise and the pressure of cash flow stress and the need to fill people holes and really focus on choosing partners aligned with you on values, beliefs, vision and dreams; employees who will inspire you and elevate the business to new levels. And most importantly, investors who believe in and are committed to the crazy future you see.

My Tenth truth

One of my favourite quotes is “Those that danced were thought crazy by those that could not hear the music”. I believe that all the Entrepreneurs here should celebrate the music that is bopping in your brain and also understand not everyone can hear it. And I will share why it is important because once you understand this you will not get despondent when everyone tells you that you are crazy - your family, your friends, your bank manager. When

people cannot see your vision and business dreams, rather than be discouraged, celebrate your journey. I was told a story once that if a teacher asks a bunch of young kids if they can sing all say yes. If they ask early teenagers if they can sing about half say yes and by late teens the numbers drops more and by adulthood only one or two people say they can sing. Over the years children are told they cannot sing and so they believe it. It is the same with entrepreneurs. We are told it is too risky or irresponsible or that we will never win - never forget that fundamental belief in yourself and do not let doubters discourage you.

My eleventh truth

I believe that “businesses of purpose” that are built to make a difference and have positive impact matter. It is incredibly tough to start a business so I would challenge the young entrepreneurs to choose one that you can believe in – and, even more importantly, will attract great talent to join you. In today’s world the very best talent want more than just a job. They want to be part of something making a difference and they want to be empowered and challenged, to own their contribution to something real and that has impact. At Zoono every employee has share options and if asked nearly all them would agree that our purpose to help communities thrive is what attracted them to us and keeps them with us.

My final thoughts

People often talk about what will change - I will share two things that I think will not change: the importance of relationships and story-telling.

So to close off today I would encourage everyone to build and foster relationships; to build an entrepreneurial community; and share stories - and given I have talked too much already I look forward to listening to stories from some of our successful entrepreneurs here, and more importantly hearing the dreams and aspirations of our new breed of entrepreneurs who still have to go down the exciting journey of building their businesses.

I was tasked to answer one question: What is the one thing you absolutely need to achieve entrepreneurial success. There are lots of things you need: skill, resilience, hard work, humility, luck but the one thing you absolutely need to do to achieve success - is to start.

So be brave and bold and start.

Thanks