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**Woman who almost became a statistic after an accident,
feels blessed**

Lucia Mabasa, managing director Pinpoint One with the 3D printed frogs that are part of #LoveMeLoveMyFrog campaign. PHOTO: Supplied

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Written by

Opinion

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On Easter Sunday, I became a statistic. I was in a car accident. It was traumatic. The airbags all deployed as the other car hit me on the motorway. I was lucky, the last time I was in an accident many years ago, I spent weeks in hospital recovering.

I won't say this time it was down to the little frog on my dashboard, but one thing the little chap did was to stop me from ever feeling sorry for myself.

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The little frog, it really is tiny, is part of the #LoveMeLoveMyFrog that my great friend and colleague Clive Viveiros conceptualised as a way to commemorate our company's 23rd birthday.

The story started with a 17-year-old boy in England who is besotted about printing little animals on his 3D printer.

He began hiding them around his school as a prank, but it quickly morphed into something far more. It became an act of pure kindness, showing others that they mattered and were being thought about in a time when Covid-19 created a lot of loneliness, a lot of angst and a lot of desperation.

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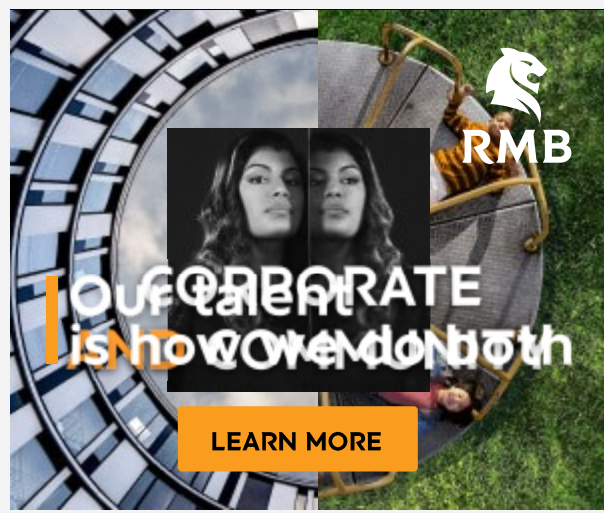


What would happen, Clive wondered, if our company started making our own frogs and giving them to people who were important to us – even if they don't know they were? It certainly worked for our staff, boosting morale. And it worked for me only a couple of weeks ago, when I was caught in the middle of something that could have been catastrophic.

I've been thinking of that and, most importantly, our company and what I've learnt during the pandemic over the past couple of weeks as our company anniversary approached.

I have had to manage a small business in South Africa during challenging economic times in a country that does not provide an enabling environment. I've had to learn to make a plan in a country where the policies are great but the implementation lets them down – and there are no consequences for that.

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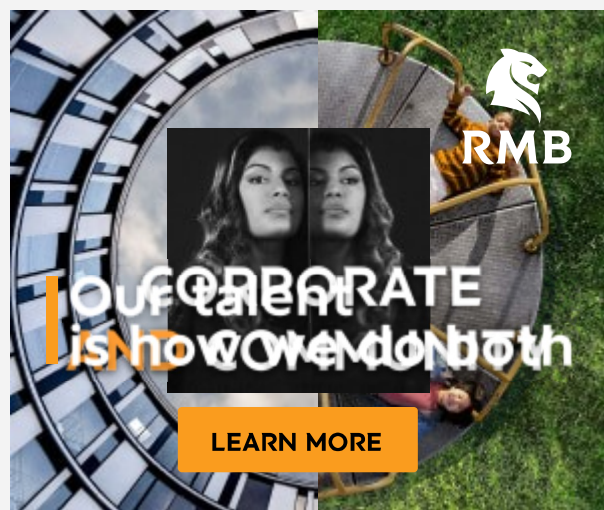


I've learnt to make a plan when public and private clients demand the best service but then fail to pay on time.

But I've also learnt to take the win and rejoice when there's that one client who meets our excellence and quick response, with excellent service and commitment of their own, by settling their account in seven days.

I have learnt that irrespective of the pressure or the demand, not to discount to get the work because that means compromising ourselves and what we stand for.

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I've learnt not to overpromise and underdeliver and to always keep my word. I have done all of this even though there are competitors aplenty waiting in the wings to pounce if we stumble. In fact, I've done all that precisely because there are bigger players hoping we fail.





Lucia Mabasa, managing director Pinpoint One with the 3D printed frogs that are part of #LoveMeLoveMyFrog campaign. PHOTO: Supplied

I've learnt to lift as I rise, helping others wherever I can and having them lift me in turn. I've learnt again that our country can be a minefield of different cultures, booby trapped for the unwary unless you lean into the fear and respect people's differences by learning what it is that they hold dear.

I've learnt to fight back when I come up against traditional prejudices and patronising patriarchy – and I've won. I've learnt to savour the victories, share them with my colleagues, yet be gracious to those I've bested, so that they too can learn and lift as they rise.

I've learnt that I am because of others. If anything, Covid-19 taught us all that companies are the sum of all their parts, not the personification of their leaders. Our greatest asset has been and always will be our human capital and the relationships we forge with our clients.

I've learnt to be patient and to give second chances, because there was no playbook for the pandemic. Sometimes we all need a little bit of tender loving care. It's been wonderful to learn from our founder members and see how they've poured their hearts and souls into the business and the community; through CSI programmes supporting struggling artists to training people and getting each one of them a job all the way through to giving people opportunities to fly their own flag after starting with us.

I know, I'm one of them. I took my chances and 12 years ago, I got my dream opportunity to become managing director. I've learnt a lot over that time, but I've come to appreciate just how much in the past two years when the entire world shut down to fight a silent, invisible though deadly enemy.

I've learnt to appreciate that age is just a number, being too young or too old doesn't impact on how you do your work or adapt to new technology or conditions – it's all down to your attitude. It's never too late to learn and you're never too old to put your hand up and admit you don't know that answer – even if you're the MD.

I have realised how blessed I have been to flourish in a country despite its challenges that has enabled me to dream and accomplish everything my heart desires.

Most of all, I've learnt how lucky my journey has been to be blessed with the kind of people who've shared their lives with me and entrusted me with their futures; staff and clients who have become friends and even as close as family. There's only one way to show them how much I appreciate that – I'm going to give them each a little frog. They'll know exactly what it's about.

* Lucia Mabasa is the managing director of pinpoint one human resources, a Johannesburg executive search firm.

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