

The **esSAY** gifts of our rainbow nation.

A focus on Beatrice Delpierre - wife, mother and Operational Director of the leading gifting company in South Africa.

Tell us more about esSAY Gifts (when, where and how you started the business)?

It all started when we returned to South Africa after spending seven years in the UK, where I successfully converted my South African pharmacy degree to an international one, which allowed me to work as an area manager for the largest pharmaceutical retailer in Europe. I needed a new challenge when we arrived home, and I wanted to do something that really would make a difference in people's lives. I believe that if you create jobs here in South Africa, you will reduce crime and thus follow my philosophy of rather giving people a fishing rod than a fish.

My brother was very involved with charity work at the time. He was full of ideas and inspired me to get involved. Together we started esSAY Gifts – a corporate catalogue of products, each with its own unique story, or esSAY. We buy products from artists with oodles of talent, but not necessarily the marketing, business knowledge and sales skills needed to manage a business.

These products form part of a range that we market to large companies as corporate gifts. All our products are handmade locally; we don't import anything.

Our dream took off when delegates from Johannesburg City noticed our products at the Tourism Indaba in Durban.

The 'Soccer Man' was born out of this and he soon after, in 2006, traveled from the small town in the Free State where he was made, to Germany. There these mascots were presented as the City of Johannesburg's official gifts in the hand-over function, where South Africa officially took over from Germany as hosts of the Soccer World Cup 2010.

Why did you decide to join the Proudly SA Campaign?

I used to commute with the underground in London and it made me so proud to see the Proudly South African advertisements leading up three escalators. Every time I passed, I would wonder what it was about. When we started esSAY gifts, it brought us in contact with Proudly SA and I learnt that we share the same values: high quality, locally made products that respect the environment and are made under fair labour practice.

How do you try to stand out from the competition?

We try to stay ahead of the game by always supplying our clients with innovative, creative products and excellent service. We supply gifts with a heart – gifts that really make a difference to people's lives. People often copy our products and our promotional material, but there are things money cannot buy and that's passion, creativity and hard work.



How did your family background affect your business philosophy?

I come from a long line of business people. My parents and my grandparents all owned or managed businesses in different industries. They all shot straight from the hip and had a solid, no-nonsense attitude to business. I guess I learnt that from early on. My family is close-knit, with strong moral values and work ethics. We were taught to work hard and this is something my three siblings and I apply to this day.

What do you see as the future for you and your business?

I see a bright future for this company. The longer we are in business, the more we will become known for high quality products and excellent service. As the business expands and the esSAY brand becomes a household name, we'll be able to take on more and more suppliers and create more jobs.

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