

CHARGED FOR GROWTH EDITION

STREET LEGACY

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NTSAKO MAHLAULE

Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Charged Up,
Author & Speaker



STREET LEGACY FOUNDATION

CHARGED FOR GROWTH EDITION

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Letter From The CEO



Awethu Magobongo

Dear Street Legacy Foundation Community,

Welcome to this special edition of the Street Legacy newsletter, themed “Charged for Growth.” This month, we celebrate the unstoppable spirit of young entrepreneurs who continue to rise, innovate, and build, even when the odds are stacked against them. At Street Legacy, we believe in creating platforms that open doors, shift mindsets, and nurture the incredible potential that already exists within our communities and this edition is a beautiful reflection of that mission.

Over the past few weeks, we watched young people step forward with courage as they pitched their business ideas and participated in our skills development programmes. What moved us most wasn’t just the ideas they shared, but the stories, dreams, and determination behind those ideas. Every pitch carried a journey. Every presentation revealed a dream worth fighting for.

And every young entrepreneur reminded us why development work matters so deeply because when youth are given space, support, and the right tools, they rise beyond expectation.

This edition captures those journeys and the work being done to strengthen our entrepreneurial ecosystem from the ground up. Through capacity building, storytelling, business development, exposure platforms, and pitching opportunities, Street Legacy continues to walk with young entrepreneurs as they transform their ideas into sustainable and impactful ventures. We honour every young person who showed up, who dared to pitch, who chose to grow, and who keeps pushing forward no matter how tough the path becomes.

“Charged for Growth” reflects the energy pulsing through our programmes an energy of possibility, resilience, and readiness. Our youth are no longer waiting for change; they are becoming the change. They are redefining township entrepreneurship, creating community-rooted solutions, and proving that greatness can emerge from any corner when the right support meets determination.

As you read through this edition, we hope you feel inspired by their stories and encouraged to continue uplifting and supporting the next generation of leaders. Together, we are building an ecosystem where young people are not only seen and heard, but truly empowered to grow.

Enjoy this edition

From Bushbuckridge to the Continent: The Charged Up Journey of Ntsako Mahlaule



Ntsako Mahlaule

Ntsako Mahlaule Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Charged Up, Author & Speaker

Ntsako Mahlaule's entrepreneurial journey is a story of resilience and a heart that refuses to give up.

Inspired deeply by her role model, Theo Baloyi of Bathu Sneakers, Ntsako has followed his journey since her university days long before she knew what her own path would look like, but certain that she, too, was destined for leadership and entrepreneurship.

During her university years, the dream was already forming. By 2018, she boldly coined the name CHARGEDUP, a name she chose for its limitless potential. She envisioned a group company with many divisions, even at a time when she had no roadmap, no plan, and no resources, just belief. After completing her studies and returning home in 2019, many expected her to seek a traditional job as the firstborn

Instead, Ntsako stepped into entrepreneurship. She began by buying and selling clothing, outsourcing branding and embroidery, and soon after, she launched **Charged-Up Events**. Her fashion shows became a groundbreaking addition at her home in Bushbuckridge, where such platforms had never existed before. Demand grew rapidly, and the shows became seasonal highlights for Easter, winter, and spring. She later opened her first shop, which allowed her to run operations while she sought new opportunities to grow.

In 2021, Ntsako made one of the boldest decisions of her life: she moved to Mbombela. With no prospects, no job waiting, and not knowing a single person in the city, she still chose to take the risk. Her parents and brother accompanied her, full of pride yet deeply worried about leaving her in an unfamiliar place.





To find her footing, Ntsako volunteered at Lokuhle FM, hosting a show centred on entrepreneurship. She interviewed entrepreneurs across Mbombela, slowly building a network in a city where she had once known no one. She recalls how difficult it was to gain recognition during those early days how often she felt underestimated but she refused to back down. In 2022, she released her first book, **The Journey of Becoming**, and continued raising awareness for her brand however she could. She often stood outside the **Promenade in Nelspruit**, selling on the pavement with a humble setup. People laughed. Others questioned her. But Ntsako kept moving, rooted in purpose and vision.

As opportunities arose, her business expanded into a multi-division powerhouse. By 2023, ChargedUp encompassed clothing, events, photography, and branding. She acquired key equipment that allowed her to bring more production in-house **a digital printing machine, an embroidery machine, and professional photography equipment** for her studios. As her brand grew, so did her influence. Ntsako began attracting powerful collaborations, including working with **Miss South Africa Organisation & Mofaya**, as well as **Forbes Women Africa**, a milestone that affirmed the national and continental impact of her work.

2024 became a defining year, both beautiful and heartbreaking. She launched her second book, *Beyond Boundaries*, in the same month she lost her mother to cancer. Speaking about this moment, Ntsako became emotional, her voice softening as she remembered her mother's words: **"Ntsako, you always knew your life was not just for me."** These words became her anchor. Even while grieving, she moved forward with her book launch and her new store opening, knowing her mother would have wanted her to continue.

It was also in this season that Ntsako began receiving national recognition

- She was honoured with the **Best Woman in Digital Business Award by MTN**
- She ranked **Top 2 Best Entrepreneur** with the Hollywood Foundation
- She was named among the **Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans**, one of the most prestigious youth honours in the country.

Yet despite these achievements, what stands out most is her humility. One of the most beautiful moments in her story is how openly she shares her vision. When asked about the future, Ntsako didn't hesitate her eyes lit up as she described her plans with a soft certainty: expanding her business, hosting another Charged-Up Event, pursuing an MBA with the dream of becoming a Doctor of Business Administration before 40, launching a podcast on her birthday, and, if God allows, starting a family and settling down.



Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Charged Up

Now in 2025, Ntsako describes this season as a time when “I don’t have to prove myself.” She has been honoured by the **Iconic Global Summit**, where she now serves as a council member. She has also elevated the **Charged Up Entrepreneurship Pitching Competition** to new heights far beyond what it was when she first hosted it in 2023. In this newsletter edition, we will be unpacking the entire Pitch event, its milestones, its partners, and its inspiring journey.

Through every chapter, Ntsako Mahlaule’s story reminds us that success is not about the applause, but about the courage to walk into the unknown, the strength to rise when life collapses, and the heart to keep dreaming even when the world doubts you. Her life continues to inspire countless young entrepreneurs, especially those daring to dream beyond their circumstances.

Charged-UP Entrepreneurship Africa Network Pitching Competition



UMPCFERI Auditorium

October was a month of energy, learning, and inspiration as the Street Legacy Foundation brought together a group of bold, ambitious young innovators for the Charged-Up Pitching Competition. More than just a contest, this was a journey a four-week masterclass programme carefully designed to build confidence, sharpen skills, and give young entrepreneurs the tools to bring their ideas to life.



Charged-Up Entrepreneurship Africa Network: Igniting Change Through Pitching

The journey kicked off on 7 October with Pitching Fundamentals. This first session was all about setting the stage: helping participants find their voice, craft a clear message, and communicate their ideas with confidence. It was here that we saw nerves turn into determination, and tentative beginnings transform into bold statements. By the end of the session, each participant had the foundation to deliver a three-minute pitch that could capture attention, tell a story, and leave an impression.

By 14 October, the focus shifted to Business Models & Storytelling. Participants rolled up their sleeves, refining their business models and discovering the power of storytelling. They learned that a pitch is not just about numbers or ideas it's about connecting with your audience, making them feel your vision, and showing them why your solution matters. The room buzzed with energy as young entrepreneurs shared, debated, and polished their ideas, learning from each other and building a sense of camaraderie that would carry them through the competition.

The Investor Readiness session on 21 October took things a step further. Here, participants dove into the world of investors, learning how to craft pitch decks that speak, anticipate tough questions, and demonstrate real business potential.

They explored financial fundamentals, positioning strategies, and the confidence needed to face discerning judges. It was a session that bridged the gap between great ideas and viable businesses, preparing each entrepreneur to step into the spotlight fully equipped.

The penultimate session, the Final Rehearsal on 30 October, was where preparation met performance. Each participant delivered a full run-through of their pitch, receiving constructive, targeted feedback to fine-tune delivery, timing, and Q&A responses. It was intense, focused, and electric. By the end, the young innovators weren't just competition ready they were pitch-ready, investor-ready, and ready to inspire.

The climax of the journey came at the University of Mpumalanga's Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubator (UMPCFERI). The Charged-Up Pitching Competition brought together a room full of creativity, ambition, and entrepreneurial spirit. Participants stepped up to the stage with polished pitches, innovative solutions, and the confidence that only weeks of preparation could build. Judges from the Charged-Up Entrepreneurship Africa Network, supported by partners and sponsors including ABSA, MEGA, SEDFA, Vutomi Energy, and TT Attorney,



Charged-Up Entrepreneurship Africa Network: Igniting Change Through Pitching



Entrepreneur

listened intently as participants delivered pitches that blended creativity, strategy, and heart. From clever business models to engaging storytelling and strong financial reasoning, every pitch reflected not just talent, but hours of hard work, learning, and personal growth.

But the competition was more than just about winning. It was about growth, courage, and possibility. It was about seeing young South Africans step into their power, believe in their ideas, and present solutions that could truly make a difference in their communities. It was about creating a platform where ambition meets opportunity, where mentorship meets action, and where innovation meets impact.

At the Street Legacy Foundation, we believe in giving young people more than just tools—we give them confidence, visibility, and a stage to shine. The Charged-Up Pitching Competition was a testament to the resilience, creativity, and determination of South Africa's youth. These entrepreneurs are not just dreaming—they are doing. They are building, innovating, and showing the world that the future of business is bright, bold, and unstoppable.

As we celebrate the success of this year's programme, one thing is clear: when young innovators are empowered with knowledge, guidance, and opportunity, there is no limit to what they can achieve. The Charged-Up Pitching Competition wasn't just an event—it was a launchpad for a new generation of changemakers ready to take the entrepreneurial world by storm.



Entrepreneur

Charged-UP Entrepreneurship Africa Network Pitching Competition 2025 TOP 10 WINNERS



Charged Up Entrepreneurship Africa Network Conference 2025: A Gathering of Visionaries, Builders, and Changemakers



Program Directors, Speaker, Panelists, Moderator and Miss Mahaule

On 1 November 2025, the Emnotweni Arena Conference Centre in Mbombela came alive with the energy of young dreamers, established leaders, and ecosystem partners all gathered for one purpose: to celebrate and accelerate Africa's entrepreneurial future. The Charged Up Entrepreneurship Africa Network Conference marked one of the most significant convenings of emerging entrepreneurs, industry experts, and development stakeholders in the regional day filled with inspiration, connection, and possibility.

The conference opened powerfully with a formal address from Ntsako Mahlaule, CEO of the Charged Up movement, who reaffirmed the network's unwavering commitment to empowering Africa's rising business leaders. Her message set the tone for the day: a call to believe boldly, build intentionally, and transform challenges into opportunities. The momentum continued with an electrifying keynote address from Theo Baloyi, Founder and CEO of Bathu Group (Pty) Ltd. Baloyi shared his journey with honesty and heart from humble beginnings to building one of South Africa's most recognizable footwear brands.

His reflections on entrepreneurial resilience, brand authenticity, and purpose-driven leadership struck a deep chord with attendees. Many described it as a "moment of awakening," a reminder that African entrepreneurs can build globally relevant brands without compromising who they are. A major highlight of the conference was the high-level panel discussion, which brought together thought leaders from Buscor, Absa Group, the Sam Nzima Foundation, Lady Foods, the EBL Institute, MTN, SEDFA, and MEGA.

The panel unpacked critical issues shaping today's entrepreneurial landscape: leadership development, access to funding, sustainability, brand positioning, and pathways for inclusive economic growth. Their insights offered young entrepreneurs both clarity and courage, empowering them to navigate the business world with strategy and confidence. Beyond the formal programme, the conference buzzed with vibrant networking, spontaneous collaborations, and rich knowledge exchange.





Theo Baloyi

On The exhibitions and business showcases created a powerful platform for entrepreneurs to tell their stories, demonstrate their products, build partnerships, and strengthen their market visibility. For many, the day brought new clients, new opportunities, and new confidence to keep pushing forward. This year's event reaffirmed why the Charged Up Entrepreneurship Africa Network continues to grow so rapidly across the continent. More than a conference, the network is a movement—a space where African entrepreneurs are seen, heard, supported, and celebrated. By fostering innovation, strengthening ecosystems, and igniting entrepreneurial spirit, the initiative drives meaningful participation in the economy and builds pathways toward job creation and sustainable growth.

The success of this milestone gathering was made possible through the generous support of the network's committed partners and sponsors, including: Absa, Buscor, MTN, MTPA, Mpumalanga Women in Tourism, Dizana Funerals, EBL Institute, Ebundu Lodge, Ngobe Media, TT Attorneys, Vutomi Energy, the University of Mpumalanga, Street Legacy Foundation, and Garden City Motors (Mercedes-Benz Mbombela).

Together, they helped deliver a conference that brought in over 100 entrepreneurs and professionals, showcased 40 exhibiting businesses, and created a meaningful space for entrepreneurs to learn, sell, connect, and grow. More importantly, they helped cultivate an environment where ideas were taken seriously, dreams were validated, and the entrepreneurial spirit was celebrated in its fullest form.

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The 2025 Charged Up Conference did more than host an event; it strengthened regional networks, amplified innovation, and reminded us that Mpumalanga's entrepreneurs are not just participants in the economy, they are drivers of the continent's economic future. The impact of this gathering will continue to echo long after the conference lights have dimmed, as young builders carry forward the knowledge, connections, and confidence gained. With every conversation, every pitch, and every handshake, the future felt a little brighter. And if this year's conference is anything to go by, the African entrepreneurial ecosystem is not just growing it is charging forward, unstoppable, inspired, and ready for continental impact.



Ntsako Mahlaule & Dr. Nora Fakude

Charged Up Entrepreneurship Africa Network Conference 2025: Network Exhibitors

