

Gusta Bukenya, the owner of Beautiful Engineering and Equipment Limited, supplies equipment for research in agriculture, medicine, forensic and DNA. He spoke to **David S. Mukooza** on how this business has grown.

How Bukenya has grown his supply business

At the age of 32, Gusta Bukenya owns one of the biggest equipment supply companies in Uganda.

Bukenya's journey in entrepreneurship started way back where he would show movies in school with colleagues for money. However, he did not restrict himself in a particular line and one thing led to other.

"I then joined a company called GNLD and this was dealing in the sale of items especially household material. I did marketing in this company and for a year I interfaced with so many people. This gave me traits of confidence, marketing skill and above all intelligence," Mr Bukenya says.

Bukenya loved reading about business. After reading 'Rich Dad, Poor Dad,' his enthusiasm for business increased.

Starting out

In 2006, he started a company named Image Care which mostly dealt in portraits. He continued his struggle by organising Makerere University students' social events such as the Bazaar and other events around Kampala.

In 2008, Bukenya transitioned from this and registered Beautiful Engineering and equipment Limited. This company supplies specialised equipment. Before the company was fully established, Bukenya was as a middle man between supply companies where earned a commission out of the deal. But he met a major obstacle: The suppliers would not pay.

Expansion

Mr Bukenya who is passionate about entrepreneurship knew he had to work hard.

"Our major aim was to be the number one supply company. Therefore, we started a strong partnership with financial institutions and through a lot of financial support, we started calling for serious business opportunities," Mr Bukenya says.

Bukenya then hired more specialised staff especially to help in the procurement processes such as preparing bid documents. Procurement officers were also engaged to look out for business opportunities.

After raising some money and using his contacts, he started supplying specialised equipment through Beautiful Engineering and Equipment Limited. With a boost from organisations such as Makerere University, United Nations Development Programme, ministry of Energy, Eskom Uganda, Uganda Virus Research Institute, Civil Aviation Authority, among others, his clientele has grown.

Worth of business

Beautiful Engineering and Equipment Limited has been growing financially over time. After running several contracts Mr Bukenya's company is worth Shs1 billion. It employs 13



Gusta Bukenya, the owner of Beautiful Engineering and Equipment Limited, explains how the supply business has grown. PHOTO BY GODFREY LUGAJU

permanent staff and some few on contract-based employment who come in to execute

particular assignments. Some of these employees are administrators, business development officers, in-house engineers, accountants and business executives among others.

Mr Bukenya credits the company's success

to high integrity, hard work, marketing, high-quality standards and passion for what he does.

"Business has become our hobby," says Mr Bukenya. Emerging among the top 20 companies in the Top 100 SME competition ran by Daily Monitor and KPMG is one of Mr Bukenya's greatest achievements.

Plans

Having spent nine years in the procurement field, he hopes the company will diversify.

"I have the love and passion of manufacturing and this is the direction the company prospects to take. We are still exploring the business to find out the highs and lows and how this kind of business can be handled especially in Uganda," Mr Bukenya says.

The company also hopes to join the franchising business. I'm reading several books about this business and it looks interesting to engage in.

Aside from that, Mr Bukenya wants to do hospitality business because there seems to be a lapse there.

"We want to set up an equipment supermarket. When it comes to electrical, mechanical and all equipment we want to be a household name," Mr Bukenya hints.

SUCCESS TIPS

Read business books especially those that touch your points of lack or failure.

Business is beyond money. It is about passion and is not for everyone. When it gets tough, the passionate will hang on.

Achievements

The company boasts of supplies equipment for research in agriculture, medicine, forensic and DNA.

It also has exclusive partnerships in Rwanda and Uganda with more than 10 big companies.

Mr. Bukenya says building a competitive company that has won some sizeable contracts is a milestone.

Employing many people plus youth of his age look up to him is another achievement.

Challenges

"The business we do is very capital intensive and when contracts flood, we get financially constrained," he says.

Accessing finance is another hurdle. "The cost of getting money whether by loan or from partners is expensive and this slows business," he says.

Being a supply company, Mr Bukenya's company mostly supplies organisations on credit.

"Due to the bureaucracy in organisations, payments take long to come yet the company has to continue moving," Mr Bukenya says.

Competition is so high especially from multi-national companies because they have an advantage of being financially steady. Therefore, this threatens our business opportunities.

Mr Bukenya adds that the cost of getting business is high.

Why Top 100 SME competition?

As beautiful Engineering and equipment limited we are honored to be part of this competition because it

in the competition and this was a great motivation to the team," Bukenya notes. The competition has been

interacting with top business people in the country. The certification by KPMG makes us credible and it becomes

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