



Kudoti Solutions

ENTREPRENEURS: Gift Lubele & Matthieu de Gaudemar

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TEAM: Est 10

LOCATION: Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa
Operational – India, South Africa,
Columbia, Kenya & Ghana

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“We haven’t designed our current supply chains for circularity. We have designed them for a linear economy, consumption, throw away, consumption, throw away. That needs to change. We must redesign our supply chains to enhance and accelerate circular economy applications.”

Words and photography by Chris de Beer-Procter

Kudoti is a data-driven digital platform which digitises waste operations, records and quantifies sustainability efforts and connects stakeholders in one centralised place. Using the platform as the digital infrastructure for a circular economy, the company foregrounds waste as a valuable resource and activates new supply chains to help industries unlock the power of circularity.



ABOUT THE BUSINESS

We can't solve a problem we haven't fully defined. It's a simple assertion, but one which Gift Lubele, the co-founder and COO of Kudoti, sees as the key to transforming our economy from the exploitative and wasteful linear model in use today to the sustainable and thriving circular economy of the future. This is why he and business partner Matthieu de Gaudemar set about creating Kudoti, a platform which digitizes waste operations to form the technological backbone of a self-sustaining, circular system.

With the power of data, Kudoti helps stakeholders track waste, measure their environmental impact and unlock new supply chains, creating new networks and opportunities for circularity. "We work across the entire value chain," says Gift, "working with informal waste pickers, buyback centres, waste companies and manufacturers, essentially bringing them all into our platform."

The capabilities of such a platform are threefold. Firstly, as brands attempt to comply with extended producer responsibility laws, data captured on the platform is crucial to

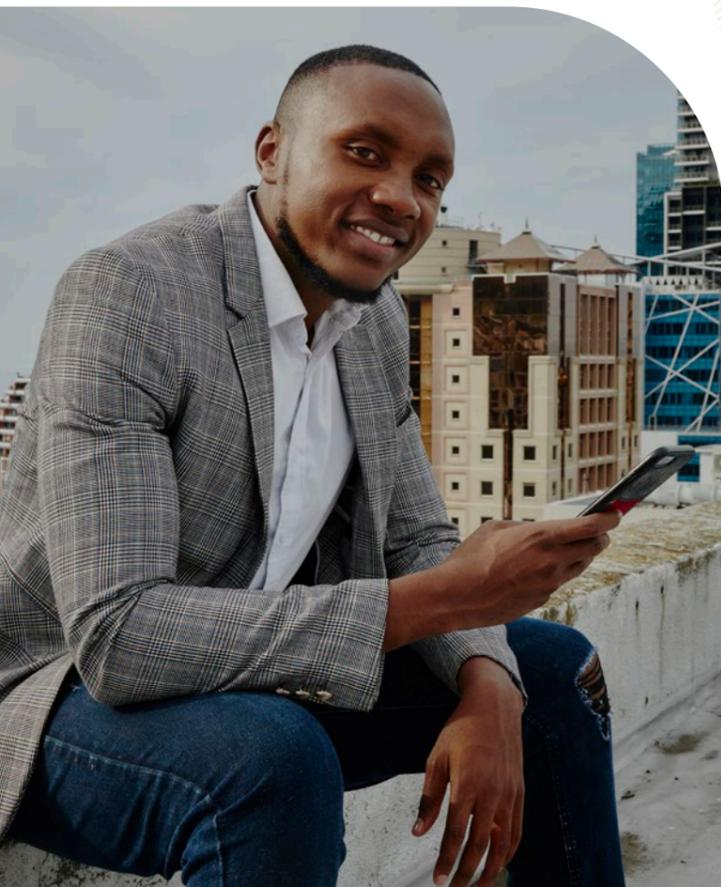
quantifying their impact and efforts in reporting and allowing them to plan better for the future. Secondly, Gift says, the platform encourages brands to move away from virgin materials in favour of recycled ones. "The idea is to start making companies aware that any type of waste can be a resource," he explains. This is helped along by the platform's third capability, which is to map out and establish new supply chains for integrating these materials in new circular applications. Gift says that Kudoti's capabilities help us make better informed decisions like where to direct investment.

"The only way we can achieve a fully circular economy is if we revisit all our processes and redesign them for recycling. Brands need to prioritise circularity from the start in their operations."

When it comes to transitioning our economy towards sustainability, Gift acknowledges that the will is there. What Kudoti hopes to provide is the way. "It's not that people aren't doing anything, they're trying their level best to fight the good fight but it's useless when you're up against an established system," he says. It is a system which he notes is still critically fragmented and lacks collaboration. "[with Kudoti] We've built a system that centralizes these efforts across industries and various stakeholders," he continues, "and that's what is going to have a big impact."

Connecting the industry players and opening up capabilities for new supply chains also creates exciting opportunities to incentivize circular activities. Take for example a recent project the company ran with Nestle in Thembisa township, where they recommended that the brand award top performing waste pickers with food parcels. In the end, this resulted in a 30% increase in recycling in the community.

Since the company became operational in 2020, it's seen 9 million kilograms of material tracked on the platform, over 500 companies registered and around 400 waste pickers impacted in 5 different countries. It's an impressive start for the young company who knows it is no small thing to transform an economy. Luckily, with the power of big data, Kudoti is providing the technological backbone for a new, better, way of doing business.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

"I'd really love to see Kudoti become the biggest waste company that doesn't handle waste. We want to touch across all sectors and industries.

For society, I hope to help people see their impact on the world. Understanding that, I'd like to believe that the majority of people will start living more sustainably, especially if they have information."



ADVICE ON CIRCULARITY FOR ENTREPRENEURS

"Choose something that serves a purpose bigger than you. This journey is tough and on those days when you feel like giving up, purpose will push you. Do something that is not just good for you, but for humanity."

Secondly, learn in the field. Be a student of the real world. There isn't always a class or a book to learn from. Sometimes you are the pioneer and the best way to learn is in the field. But make sure you learn quickly.

Lastly, keep learning. If you don't, your business will stagnate or outgrow you. Listen to podcasts, read, go to summits. These days it doesn't even have to cost much, all you need is mobile data to access so much knowledge.