

THE BOSS®

ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS MAGAZINE

2012 LAUNCH ISSUE

LIVING LIFE BY DESIGN

BUZWE MABUZA

A BOY FROM THE TOWNSHIP VOSLOORUS IN
THE EAST RAND ON A JOURNEY TO
DISCOVER HIMSELF

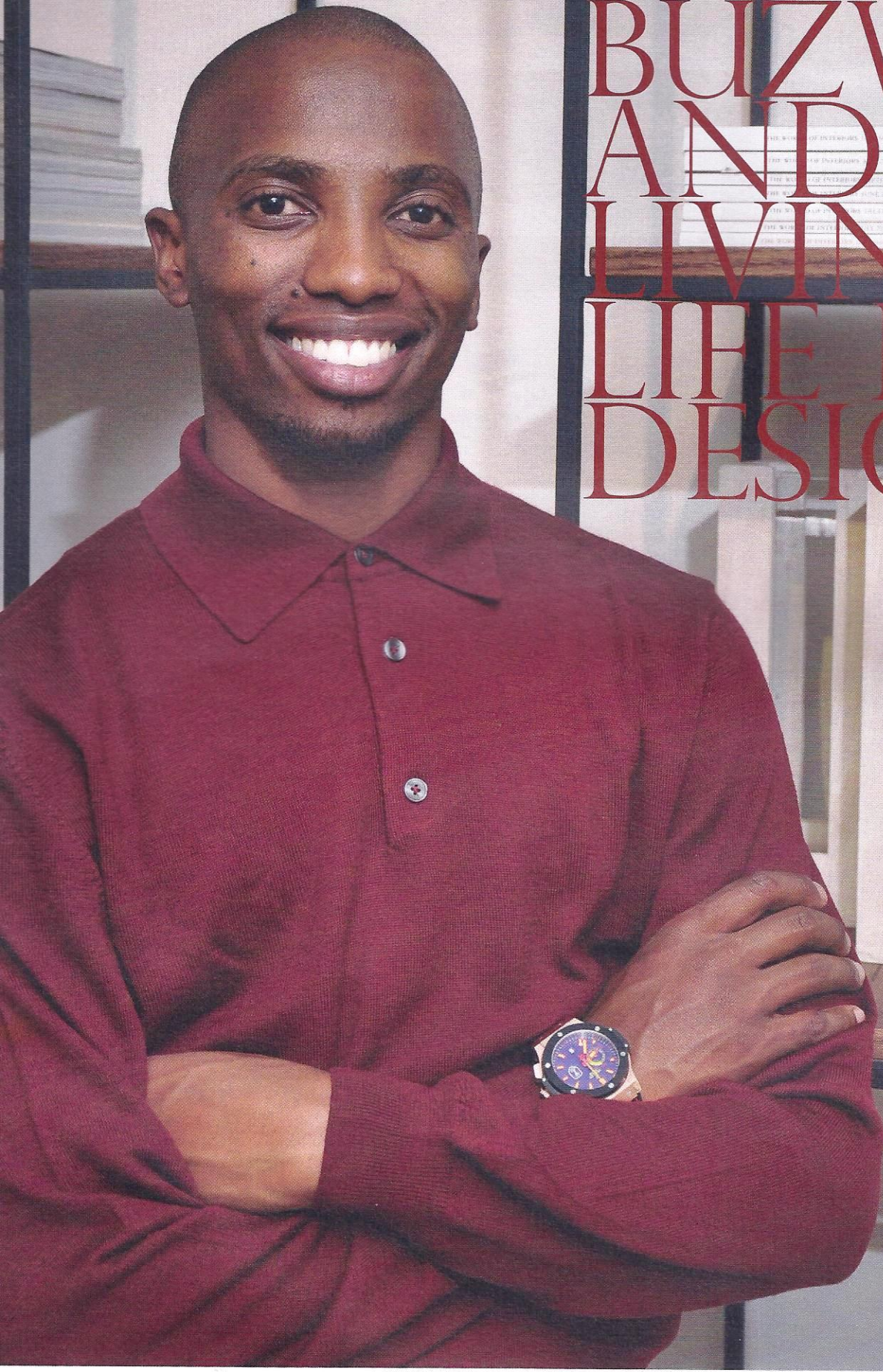
A MILLIONAIRE BY AGE 22 AND
HALF-A-MILLION IN DEBT BY AGE 24.
"MEET THE PRINCE OF BOUNCE BACKS"



www.thebossmag.co.za

DESIGN IN STYLE

BUZWE AND LIVING LIFE BY DESIGN



BUZWE'S SUCCESS HAS NOT BEEN A ROCKET RIDE; IT WAS THE PROVERBIAL WAVE WE ALL DREAD. A MILLIONAIRE BY THE AGE OF 22, BROKE, BATTERED AND HALF-A-MILLION DEEP IN DEBT BY AGE 24.

It is perhaps an injustice to skim through the vast English language, only to come up with a simple colloquialism to describe this designer extraordinaire, it cannot be denied, Buzwe is THE MAN.

He's as suave as they come, with a classic cosmopolitan New York-style dress code. Wicked shoes, snazzy shirt and pants, he's got it all down to an art. "I always make sure I look good, when you look good – you feel good." He says.

Buzwe has low-key presence. His movements are

leisurely but deliberate. This Vosloorus township boy, speaks softly and thinks things over. But when there's something to laugh about, he comes to life. After you've spent a minute with him, you'll know why he is successful.

Even though his enthusiasm is controlled, it's highly contagious. The Boss Magazine met up with this game-changer at his plush decor studio based in Killarney Mall, apart from picking his brains, we were hoping to steal some design secrets.

Buzwe is not your usual, Interior Designer, apart from the fact that, he's straight. Now why would a township boy, choose Interior Design as a career path?

"I didn't get in this business because I saw a niche, I am doing this because I want to do this. This is MYTHING!" He says.

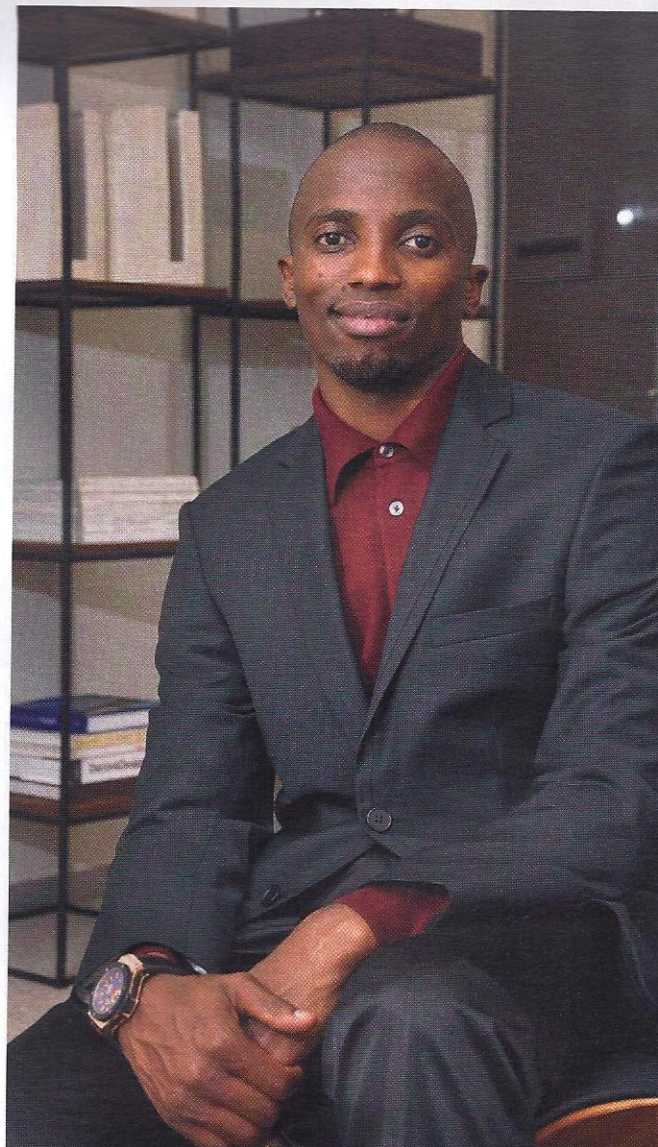
Buzwe's story begins after Matric in 2000, reality hit hard when he discovered he didn't do well enough to attend the BMW Academy. He wanted to be a car designer, a dream he shared with his dad. So when most of his friends started enrolling for tertiary studies in 2001, not knowing what to do, he also jumped onto the bandwagon and found himself studying Tourism.

"I felt lost where I was and with what I was doing, I started asking God questions like who am I? What was I created for? And what am I suppose to be doing with my life? I received a vision in my walk with Jesus." He recollects.

Like any other young man, he did Woodwork as a subject in Grade 11, however there was this one particular day; he and a few class mates had just finished building a chess table. They had varnished it, and left it in the sun to dry. "The pride and joy was so overwhelming, I couldn't believe I was witnessing the product of the work of my hands." He reminisces with intense focus as if it was yesterday.

It was in the midst of his quest of self-discovery and confusion, when God took him back to Grade 11 in a vision; he was given an opportunity to relive that moment. That's when he decided to drop out of his Tourism studies and pursue a career in furniture.

Now the next step was to let his father know that he's decided to drop out of tourism and pursue a career in interior design. However, Buzwe's father wasn't willing to go through another year of wasted tuition.



DESIGN IN STYLE

Now, he found himself stuck with a dream, with no means to realise it. However, Buzwe is not the type that gives up easily; he drew up a plan to work and acquire all the resources he needed. The goal? As dreamy, as it may sound, he wanted to start his own factory.

Then, the plan came. "I had R16 in my pocket, bought screwdrivers and a hammer." He then started working around the neighbourhood repairing broken doors and everything he could fix. But he soon realised that with the kind of money he was making, it would take a century before he built his own factory. So he ventured into other businesses, including garden services.

As time went on, because of his love for furniture and all things beautiful, he would frequent the most expensive furniture shops and interior design shops for inspiration. This led him to meeting a man who later became his mentor in the world of interiors.

As life would have it, his mentor introduced him to his heroes and inspiration in the furniture game, the Bakos Brothers. "They loved me at the first sight and hired me on the spot," He recalls.

Now, think of an 18 year old township boy, working as an interior consultant for the best furniture store in Africa. He finds himself dealing in ridiculous sums of money, with South Africa's A-listers in his client list. As a consultant, he earned R650 0000 per month on average.

The turn came when he decided to leave his dream job at Bakos Brothers to join his mentor who had started his own interior store. However, things didn't turn out the way he had hoped for, he and his mentor had to part ways. He takes a fair share of the blame for the separation.

Now with no job, his life seemed to have taken a plunge, he had lost everything. He constantly fought with his father who didn't understand the choices he was making. Buzwe professed Christianity, and didn't have any interest in ancestral worship; his father took this as disrespect.

Buzwe would soon get on his feet again, he managed to secure employment through another Design House called Design Plus. In 2006 he met a friend who became a positive influence in his life, and played a role in his leap into business. This friend encouraged Buzwe to leave his job to start Buzwe In Decor.

Buzwe In Decor did so well in its first year with a turnover of R1.2million; he was still at the tender age of 22.

"Things were great as I was living la vida loca, buying the cars, clothes and eating in places I had only dreamed of."

In 2008 he took a loan with his bank to start his own factory, where they manufactured custom made furniture

and shop-fitted items. That unfortunately was the year the recession hit hard and everything just dried up, his business went on its knees.

He tried everything he could to survive, even borrowed from Peter to pay Paul. While putting out his best efforts to keep the company afloat. He also discovered that his partner was stealing from the business.

"It was a kick in the face as I put up 100% start-up capital in the business and then gave him a 40% share as a partner, thinking I'm doing my little bit for the BEE cause, kanti mxm." He says that with a big smile, clearly he's forgiven and moved on.

Buzwe then decided to buy his partner out. He was then left on his own to run the factory. Like any ambitious entrepreneur, he did everything; the drawings, calling clients, finding new business, deliveries and installations (literally a one man-band). Then the stress took its toll. He did all he could to sustain the business but it was just not enough. Eventually things went belly-up and once again he lost everything; the cars, the businesses and the lifestyle.



Photographs - All rights reserved by Blue Media





“You wake up one day and realise you’ve hit rock bottom.” He muses.

He literally went from driving a convertible to riding taxis in a blink of an eye. Some friends made means to try and help get him get back on his feet; they clubbed in together and bought him a small car to get around. Another friend gave him a job in his business.

“Still I did my best to keep my head up and work my way back to the top. Even when you are at the bottom, life doesn’t take a break, I still endured further challenges with family, friends and outstanding debts.” He says.

As if he had not been battered enough, the blows kept on gunning at him at a time when he needed all the faith to push himself through.

Within a space of two weeks, he got summoned to court to appear on some of the debts totalling to just under half-a-million

rands. And then his girlfriend broke up with him. “She just couldn’t take it anymore, my life was full of baggage, and my car broke down every second week, bless her heart shame, she once had to endure us being pushed in the parking lot at Sandton City after my Sgedlembe broke down”. He then bursts out laughing, remembering the dark days.

On the 4th of October 2010 he attempted to take his life, but yet again failed as he didn’t have the guts to go through with it.

This 28 year old hardworking Christian devotee has earned the title: He is truly, The Prince of Bounce Backs. Late that year he decided to go back into business. This time with a renewed spirit and now, knowing what he knew, he started doing things differently.

Two years later, he is now known as a talented interior designer, turning normal homes into gems. By the time this issue went into print, he would have had his second feature on TOP BILLING.

“We’ve just been extremely blessed, the business is getting so



Buzwe is a bit of an architect in that regard – not because he can create an infallible project every time, but because he takes a disciplined approach to his CRAFT and business. And that raises the odds of success. “There’s nothing that gives me more pleasure than seeing a satisfied customer.” He says. This young entrepreneur takes nothing for granted; he is annoyingly efficient and just oozes professionalism.

“Imagine if you had a consistent attitude at work and in life. Deliberate. Patient. Gentlemanly. You wouldn’t have to own every room you walk into. You’d simply own goals. You’d plan. You’d play the course, not the play the other guy. And when success arrived you’d know what to do with it: build on it.” He says.

We asked him, the question every entrepreneur wannabe would ask. How do you start? **“Closet entrepreneurs romanticise business, and the truth is... in business you simply provide a service or sell a product and get paid for it!”** He then exclaims, **“That’s it!”**

There you have it, consistent success doesn’t happen in a straight upward trajectory, and realising this will teach you patience to endure the times when nothing seems to be happening. It will also teach you to make better choices in the first place. As Buzwe would have it, “You can’t let chance rule over your life, you need to Design your own destiny”.



much exposure, and we can only be grateful.”

Business is great and life couldn’t have been better, he married the girl of his dreams and she’s expecting. The dad thing seems to have driven this go-getter even deeper into his determination reserves. “My baby’s supposed to arrive somewhere around the 10th of June. I can’t wait,” he says with a big smile while resting on his armchair.

Buzwe’s a self-confessed workaholic with a set of traits imparted by his faith, Jesus Christ, whom he often credits for his foundation of success.

Buzwe has certainly capitalised on that foundation, he understands that success doesn’t happen by accident. Well, maybe it does once, but the consistent, sustainable success that lets you live life on your own terms must be DESIGNED.

Buzwe In Décor

011 646 6607
072 900 3442

Office 203B,
Killarney Mall
34- 54 Fourth &
Riviera Rd
Killarney,
Johannesburg
2193