

# Passion in business

Four South Africans tell us how they turned their passions into business opportunities.

AS TOLD TO LYNNE GIDISH AND DEBORAH HERD

## 'I MAKE CAKES FROM THE HEART'

**KHENSANI PETERS (33), from Johannesburg, gave up a job in information technology to set up a cake-making business, Ntshovelo Cakes.**

I HAD NO IDEA WHAT TO DO after matriculating so I decided to follow the crowd and study information technology, the buzzword of the day. I finished my studies even though mid-diploma I discovered it wasn't for me – my parents had invested a lot in my education and I didn't want to let them down.

For the next six years I worked in a government department as a programmer and dreaded going to work. I'm not technical by nature and deep down I knew that it was not what I was born to do. When you're doing what you should be doing in life it comes naturally. I had no passion for my job and without any drive it wasn't difficult to see I wasn't going anywhere fast.

In 2006, I realised I couldn't carry on. Being miserable at work affected every aspect of my life and it was time for me to start doing something I enjoyed. The only thing I'd been passionate about all my life was baking, but I never dreamt I could use it as a career path. I've baked since I was a little girl – I was the queen of making queen cakes at the age of eight – and suddenly a lightbulb switched on. What I needed to do had been right there in front of me all the time. I went back to my roots and created Ntshovelo Cakes, which means "harvest", supplying scones, muffins and cakes to the tuck shop where I worked.

The response was so positive that I realised I was onto a

good thing. A year later, I took the plunge, resigned and went into baking full-time. It was a scary move as I was dependent on my salary, but I've never looked back. I continued to supply the tuck shop for about six months and then, needing a challenge, branched into wedding cakes despite never having made one.

I found myself a mentor and shadowed her as she went about her work. Once I felt confident, I started making them myself. My business grew via word of mouth and I soon found myself baking Christening, baby shower, children's birthday and African wedding cakes while enjoying every aspect of my job. Finally, I had found my niche.

Right now, I have one assistant and am hoping to expand my business this year by employing more people and finding bigger premises – it's challenging working from home, and I don't like having to turn clients away. At night, I lie awake dreaming up different designs, trying to be as innovative as possible, fuelled by the excitement about what each day is going to bring my way. There's nothing more fulfilling than doing what you love and living your passion. It fills you with happiness and you live your life looking forward to – instead of dreading – the future.

**Visit [www.ntshovelocakes.co.za](http://www.ntshovelocakes.co.za) or call Khensani on 082-551-4094.**