

Durban entrepreneur crowned winner of 2022 Engen Pitch & Polish

Luvo Gugwana from Durban was named the winner of this year's Engen Pitch & Polish competition for his social enterprise Green Arch Innovations, which adopts smart and sustainable food-production systems, such as aquaponics, to help alleviate poverty and food insecurity in rural and urban settlements. Gugwana also offers a franchise model for his aquaponics system.



2022 Engen Pitch & Polish competition winner Luvo Gugwana | image supplied

Gugwana walked with R650,000 in cash, which will be paid out over two years as he achieves the business milestones he laid out in his pitch, as well as a bursary worth R350,000 for a full two-year Raizcorp incubation programme.

"I am earnestly grateful for the recognition I have received for my work. I recognise that winning comes from taking action. I have faced several challenges on my way here but each one of them has only strengthened me to make me the person I am today...and the person I am going to be tomorrow. To my fellow contestants, we are all winners in our ambitions of making the world a better place," says Gugwana.

The first runner-up was Lucky Mnikathi who takes home R100,000 in cash, while wildcards Sibusiso Twala and Thabane Ledwaba walked away with R50,000 in cash.

Judge and Raizcorp CEO Allon Raiz remarks, “Engen Pitch & Polish isn’t just about the pitch; it’s also about the substance of the business and whether the entrepreneur will be able to effectively use the prize money to help scale the business to the next level. That means that the judges had to consider more than the actual pitch, and spent several hours before the pitches scrutinising a range of documentation submitted by the contestants, including their financials.”

All three finalists delivered incredibly strong pitches. First to pitch were the two wildcards who were then followed by Gugwana and Mnikathi. Deciding who should be the ultimate victor was no easy task for this year’s judging panel, Bulela Mkandawire (Engen), Alan Shannon (Nedbank) and Allon Raiz (Raizcorp). Both Mnikathi and Gugwana demonstrated their growth throughout the competition, while the two wildcards delivered a compelling and confident debut pitch to the panel.

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