

Go out there and do something that you love



By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

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A startup born in a dorm room in 2007 is now a successful business with 36 stores around the country. To date, weFix has expertly repaired smart devices such as smartphones as well as tablets, laptops, and DJI drones for over 700,000 customers.

In addition, earlier this year, [weFix](#) entered into a partnership with one of SA's leading youth and adult training providers, [Drone Racing Africa](#) (DRA), to offer a repair and training network to drone flyers. While the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) [has published rules](#) around the flying of [drones](#), the vast majority of people are unaware of where they can fly their drone legally and of the various options for certification to fly.



We chat to weFix founder, Alex Fourie, to find out more about his journey as an entrepreneur.

What is the story behind weFix? Was it really born in a dorm room?

Yes, it all started in my dorm room in 2007, and slowly the brand grew to a drop-off service with a team of six people in 2009, and then 14 in the first store in Rhee-de Street Mall, Gardens, in 2010, repairing 10,000 Apple devices. In 2011, the company introduced Mac repairs, and over the next few years, the brand that became iFix started to fly.

In 2014 the first iFix Express was opened at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, as the company hit 100,000 device repairs.

And then after a round of venture capital, we took the brand from "I" to "we", and shifted from eight stores to more than 30. The injected cash and support shifted the focus to explosive growth through a team of 150 technicians nationwide which have serviced over 700,000 units - as of September 2017 - now across 36 stores.



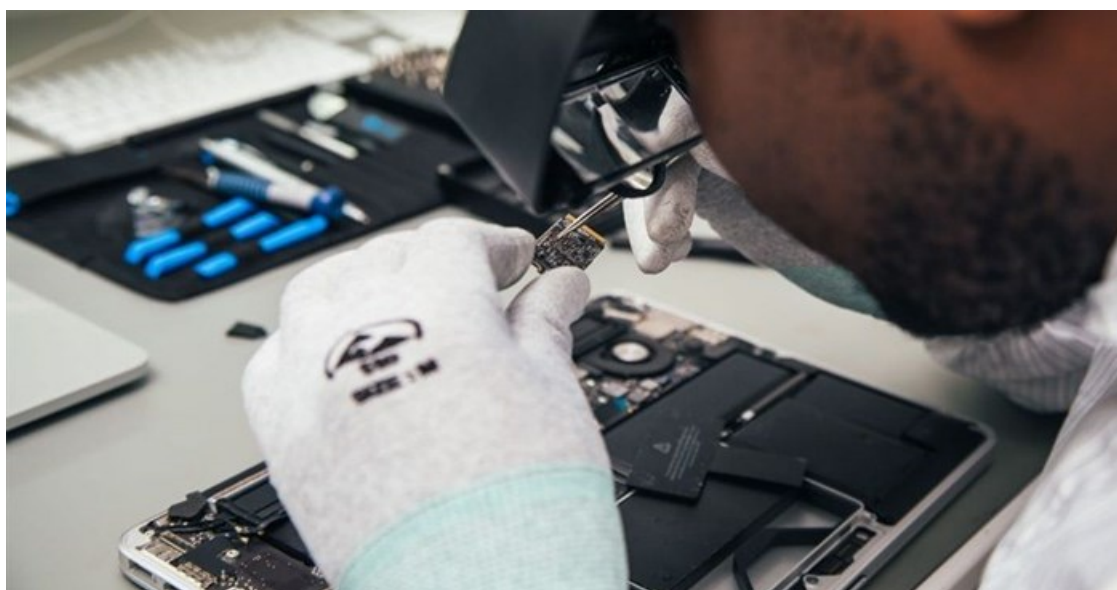
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■ **Why the decision to change the name from iFix to weFix?**

There were a few reasons, firstly that we were offering more than Apple products and now act as the authorised warranty repair centre for Samsung, LG, Huawei, and DJI drones. But more importantly perhaps, it became about the "we" culture that we have developed and not about my dorm room beginnings.



With a business of this size, we made a shift in our culture to "we make it better" and it's about our 500 staff of which 150 are trained technicians. To achieve this, it has to be a unified effort across the business, and we need to recruit with that in mind too. Trust is essential these days so we continually work on training the best lab technicians using the best tools, and the most stringent safety protocols and measures, put in place to protect customers precious personal information and hardware.

■ **What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?**

Jeez, honestly, a blind amount of faith in your idea and abilities and laser-focused dedication to wanting to achieve whatever goal it is you've set your mind too.

■ **Tell us a bit about your biggest struggles as an entrepreneur as well as some major highlights.**

I've had a tough journey and might have become a bit disillusioned throughout. Every day there are challenges. Literally every day. I think success depends on how resilient you are and how you approach those challenges. Do you see them as struggles or do you crumble under their weight?

Some personal experiences: Growth management was a big one. Cash flow management was, and is, a major struggle. If I had a dollar for the amount of time I've come to the 24th of the month not knowing how I'm going to pay the large salary bill, I'd not be in that position in the first place. The first few times this happened I freaked out. Nowadays if this happens, it doesn't phase me as much, as I've been through it so many times. Some of the best experiences have been seeing people that you've encouraged or given opportunities to, flourish. That's really great seeing how it's possible to make a difference

to someone's life.



■ **Why would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?**

Unless you have balls of steel I wouldn't! [laughs] Seriously though, I encourage everyone as far as possible to go out there and do something/start something. It's probably one of the hardest things you can do, but so rewarding if you get it right. But you need balls of steel. The thing is, failure is only failure if you stop there. If you fail, and try again, all that the failure was, was another step in your journey.

■ **What is the importance of entrepreneurship - especially in a country such as South Africa?**

It's crucial. They don't teach enough about these things in schools etc. 'Jobs' are becoming irrelevant. The world is becoming an entrepreneurial place and with the platforms available now to launch anything at hardly zero cost I can't encourage it enough. Go out there. Do something. Anything that you love. And if you fail, so what. Stand up. Shake it off. Try again. Until you succeed. Period.

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work here and here. Contact Ilse through her website here.

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