

UCT GSB teaching case study on alcohol-free G&T, The Duchess, wins top international award

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The 25th CEEMAN & Emerald Case Writing Competition has been won by a team from the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB). The case study by Fran Heathcote and Professor Geoff Bick beat 27 cases from 11 countries (Australia, France, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and USA).

The case, *Drink The Duchess: Marketing challenges and opportunities encountered when SMEs internationalise*, looked at the remarkable success story of South African entrepreneurs, Johannes le Roux and Inus Smuts, who, within two years of launching their product, The Duchess (a non-alcoholic gin and tonic drink), branched out internationally and won two awards.

Heathcote, an MBA student at the time of working on the teaching case, said she was extremely happy about the win. "It is just such a great story, about two South African *homeboytjies* and their incredible success. It is local and *lekker* and it promotes South Africa in an extremely positive way." Case study co-author, Professor Geoff Bick, agrees, "We feel very honoured as we know the quality of these teaching cases is very high and to be recognised in this way is really wonderful."

Behind the teaching case is the story of the Duchess G&T brand and the two founders who saw a gap in the market for a non-alcoholic, sugar-free and trendy drink for adults, that also tied in with a growing worldwide interest in gin. "It was very hard and there was blood, sweat and tears involved in launching The Duchess," says Heathcote. "But they were incredibly hands-on and put a lot of work into taking the product to customers, marketing their product properly and being shrewd with budget."

Heathcote said it also helped that Le Roux had previous experience with launching another beverage product while Smuts had a strong design and advertising background, which was instrumental in shaping their online and digital marketing campaigns. Both also had insight into the local hipster culture and how to promote a craft, non-alcoholic G&T for this niche segment.

Claire Barnardo, Case Writing Centre Manager at the UCT GSB said, "We are thrilled to be recognised for the type of research we are doing at the UCT GSB." She said the teaching case had not only been well-written and informative, but also contained clear learning objectives for the classroom with videos and interactive content that would make it a fun classroom exercise. Barnardo will be collecting the award on 27 September 2019 on behalf of the UCT GSB in Wroclaw, Poland, at the annual CEEMAN conference. She said the example of The Duchess brand was also an affirmation of what local South African businesses can do, and showcased this to the rest of the world.

CEEMAN director Olga Veligurska said the organisation supported the development of high-quality case materials relevant to the local and regional needs of its members in dynamic societies. "The judges noted that *Drink The Duchess* is an excellent and robust case that offers many opportunities for active learning and discussion, with an equally excellent teaching note in terms of clarity around specific discussion themes and approaches, while recognising there is a 'messiness' to solving real-world problems."

The UCT GSB Case Writing Centre was established in 2016 with a joint investment from the Harvard Business School Alumni Africa Club of SA and the UCT GSB, and set out to produce and publish teaching case studies that reflect Africa and the emerging market landscape. "We aim to bring the relevance and strength of local business lessons to life by profiling businesses and exploring actual, complex situations," said UCT GSB Interim Director Professor Kosheek Sewchurran.

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