

# Disrupting the status quo

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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In the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic, digital marketing strategist Gidyon Lankers embarked on a bold mission to launch Disrupt, his innovative agency, from the confines of his Sandton studio. With a passion for creating meaningful impact, Lankers shares his journey with us and sheds light on the vision behind his agency.



Gidyon Lankers, the founder of Disrupt and Carmen Powell, the marketing director.

■ ***Tell me a bit about yourself.***

I was born in Joburg, but I grew up in Nelspruit (Mpumalanga) where my parents had moved for work when I was about six years old. After completing school, I spent a year in Los Angeles before returning to South Africa to study at Vega School in Durban.

Once I graduated in 2019, I moved back up to Joburg with a goal to learn about business, as I knew Joburg is the best place to do that. I believed that if I could succeed in Joburg, then I could succeed anywhere in SA.

What really inspires me is the idea of chasing a dream. I'm someone who is always looking for ways to take risks and has larger-than-life ambitions. I'm drawn to people who are willing to carve their own path, and I love solving problems and finding ways to make sense of complex information.

More than anything, I believe in taking action and experimenting in the real world. It's more fulfilling to see the impact of my actions than to talk about them and never put my ideas into action.

### ▣ ***What interested you in marketing?***

Marketing has always been an organic interest of mine. I've always had a natural talent for communication and finding ways to convey information effectively to others. It's a trait that has stayed with me throughout my life and I believe it's what ultimately led me to a career in marketing.

Additionally, I've always had a passion for creating visual content such as videos, music, and designs. This interest in aesthetics has helped me develop the visual aspect of marketing. It's amazing how these seemingly unrelated interests have come together to form my career path.

Despite not knowing what marketing was during my school years, everything just fell into place for me. I trusted the journey and followed my interests, which eventually led me to where I am today. Although it may sound cliché, I truly believe that when you follow your natural talents and passions, it will guide you towards a fulfilling career.

### ▣ ***Tell us a bit about your educational background.***

After graduating from high school, I pursued a BCom Digital Marketing degree at Vega School in Durban, which helped me solidify my passion for entrepreneurship.

I appreciated the education I received from my lecturers, but I felt that my personality was better suited for creating new things rather than pursuing a traditional career path. It was during my time at Vega that I began to formulate the idea of launching my own company.

### ▣ ***When did you start Disrupt? Why?***

I started Disrupt because I wanted to build a company (and a team) that would have an impact on the world. I wanted to

create a place where really talented, driven, hard-working people could come and build a career and become hugely successful.



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My mentor at the time, Marnus Broodryk, helped me register the company in 2019 while I was working for him. However, it wasn't until the following year, 2020, that I began working full-time and the company truly came to life. Unfortunately, this coincided with the start of the Covid-19 lockdown, meaning that most of Disrupt's first year was spent in a tiny studio apartment in Sandton.

### ■ ***What have been the challenges of running this company?***

The first major challenge was learning how to create a product or service that could attract clients. This included learning how to price services, put together deals, close sales, and deliver on promises made. Although mistakes were made along the way, it was an enjoyable learning process.

As the business grew, the second challenge was to develop systems that could support the growth of the company. It was crucial to create proper systems for invoicing, payroll, onboarding, hiring, and delivery. It was necessary to move beyond ad hoc approaches and become more professional to build a strong foundation for growth.

Currently, Disrupt faces a new challenge of scaling the business to something much bigger than the core team. With the new head of growth, Kara Peach, responsible for growing the client base aggressively and the marketing director, Carmen Powell, helping build the 'machine' that delivers excellent work to clients, my role is shifting towards building the team and ensuring they have what they need to succeed.

### ■ ***What have been the highlights?***

Two things stand out as particularly exciting for me. Firstly, I love hiring talented people and working alongside them to solve complex problems. It's really fulfilling to see the team grow and develop over time, and to know that we're making an impact together.

Secondly, there's nothing quite like the rush of winning a big new client. From the initial proposal process to the moment we get the news that we've landed the contract, the feeling is indescribable. It's a tangible validation of all the hard work we've put into building the company, and it drives us to keep pushing forward and delivering outstanding results.

### ■ ***What do you do on a day to day basis?***

On a day-to-day basis, my role is divided between two main areas - sales and delivery. I work closely with my team to pitch to new clients and secure new contracts, as well as overseeing the delivery of our services to our existing clients.

This means that I spend a lot of time on calls and in meetings with potential clients, writing proposals, managing the finances and administrative tasks related to the business, and helping to create content strategies.

Additionally, I stay in close communication with our team to ensure that everything is running smoothly and that our clients are satisfied with the work we're doing.

### ■ ***How many people are employed by you?***

There are currently only three of us working full-time in Disrupt, but with our ecosystem of designers, videographers, web

developers and media buyers, we employ about 10 people in any given month. This varies depending on the scope of work we're dealing with in any given month. Very soon we'll be hiring more talent and building a bigger internal team who are on full-time contracts.

### ■ **What are your future plans for Disrupt?**

Our mission at Disrupt is to help build the biggest brands in the world, and we have no desire to be just another digital agency. We want to be highly specialised, sought-after, and hugely valuable.

Our goal is to build something massive that has a global impact, and we plan to achieve that by staying true to our culture of being rebels at heart who find new ways of solving problems. We believe that by consistently delivering world-class services, dreaming big, attracting the best possible people, and never giving up, we can achieve our vision.

We understand that our approach may not be for everyone, and that's okay. We are not afraid to take risks in pursuit of massive gain, and we believe that this mindset will continue to attract people who share our character traits. Our focus is on being authentic to who we are and delivering exceptional results for our clients. We believe that if we continue to do these things, Disrupt could become a huge success on a global scale.

We're not interested in fitting in - we're interested in disrupting the status quo and making a difference in the world.

## ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

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