

Sage Pastel Business Incubator Programme



About the Business Incubator Programme

The Business Incubator Programme was created by our Training Department as a trial programme in 2013 for the learners at St. Stithians Boys' College.

This initiative arose when an educator at the school approached us to assist with an entrepreneurial course for their Business Studies learners. The learners had to open a business and they had no idea what to do or where to start.

We allowed them full access to an extensive suite of our business software including:

- our online accounting software My Business Online,
- My Payroll Online,
- LegalWrite for the supply of all legislation-aligned documentation,
- BEE123, and
- online marketing through MyWebspace.

Having built our company from scratch, our MD, Steven Cohen, said he understood the challenges faced by entrepreneurs. "Small business owners need as much support as possible. Basic business knowledge is not always part of an entrepreneur's skill set and this programme will provide that insight and support. Teaching future entrepreneurs how to use these tools is the greatest gift we can give them."

The educator at the school's aim was to bring the real world into the classroom. "Increasingly, South Africans will have to create their own jobs, and entrepreneurial skills are vital. Few teenagers have access to this kind of learning and I believe that it offers the most important life skill they will learn at school. Even at university, students are taught each specialisation in isolation and they're not equipped to tie every aspect of a business together as an entrepreneur is expected to do. The fact that Sage Pastel uniquely offered entire business support is what makes our business incubator programme so unique."

Steven Cohen also said the comprehensive lesson plans that were developed were very exciting. "I would have loved something like this at school. Although we're making our software available at minimal cost, the teams will be required to write an exam at the end of the process. Those who pass will be registered as licensed Sage Pastel users."

The programme was a huge success for all of the learners that opened businesses and we have now made the Business Incubator programme available to both educational and adult entrepreneurs alike.