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**Article 24: Jade Wyngaardt aka 'The Digital Warrior', co-Founder of Click Digital Africa shares her moving story of triumph and hope in overcoming unimaginable odds.**

### Setting the scene

My entrepreneurial journey began almost 9 years ago when I started dating my husband, who at the time was interning at a digital marketing agency. He decided he would leave a promising and safe career in the call centre industry to take on an internship that paid him considerably less. This puzzled me, yet I was moved by his passion to learn, to improve and to become the best in his field. He often shared his new knowledge with me and after he was promoted, he encouraged me to take up an internship as a copywriter.

We both understood that the world was changing in a way we could never have imagined and that there was an opportunity for us to get in early on the 'gold rush'. The next 5 years were jammed with new experiences, great learning and growth opportunities as well as an evolution in our careers.

### The pivot that would start a journey

There was no shortage of jobs within the digital marketing industry, however there seemed to be quite a lot of retrenchments going on. It was then that I also started noticing a change in my husband. He grew increasingly frustrated within the agency environment, as most agencies back then were structured to focus on delivering outputs, and not outcomes. They were answering client briefs with predetermined solutions based on their existing capabilities, instead of offering them a personalised and effective solution.

Together we started to carefully study the deficiencies in the digital marketing industry and formulated strategies around improving them. I started doing a lot of freelance gigs, and clients were quite happy with the quality of my work. I began with simply writing blog posts and then went on to designing websites for small businesses. Soon, other agencies started outsourcing work to me and I decided to build a small team, and in 2016 *Click Africa Digital* was born. My vision was to build something that broke away from agency tradition, something that solved the problems of the 'people' and created real value for our clients.

To be honest, I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the challenge. I had no experience in running an agency, or a legitimate business for that matter. I had no formal qualifications, no funding, no capital and no support from my peers. The journey was tough, and it took years before I felt assured in the bold decision to go solo.

## The year everything changed

Little did I know that 2016 had big plans for me! I had just started a business and cancer decided to disrupt my dream. I was diagnosed with Stage 3 Breast Cancer which was aggressive and hormone sensitive. A few weeks after hearing that devastating news, I was told that I was pregnant with twins. My doctors advised me to terminate the pregnancy as it would be extremely risky for both myself and the unborn babies. I allowed God to lead the way and decided to fight and keep my babies. I was not going to turn my back on this challenge.

During my pregnancy, I had to undergo surgery and chemotherapy all while building my business. In a twist of fate, my husband was retrenched from his job which allowed him to be at home to look after me and the kids. With God's grace, I gave birth to two beautiful healthy babies on the 1st of February 2017, but unfortunately my business was not able to survive. I decided to go back to work just three months after giving birth and my husband found a new job at a local startup. I worked 10 hour shifts during the day and at night I worked on rebuilding my business. It was extremely hard, but I was determined to push through mentally, physically and emotionally.

Just when things were starting to look promising, I received another blow, the cancer was back. This time I would have to do the full treatment plan which included radiation. I was left feeling defeated, scared and frustrated, my business and life would have to be interrupted again. Chemotherapy felt like I was slowly being poisoned to death, I lost so much weight and my hair fell out to a point where I was completely bald. People would make fun of me, but I decided to stand proud and 'own' the look.

## Resilience is a superpower

There were days when I found some extra strength, from deep within, to put on a brave face, hide my battle and attend some workshops and incubator programmes to gain extra skills and knowledge to one day 'gift' my business. In the middle of all of this, my husband was retrenched from his job yet again but this time we decided that we would both commit to building *Click Africa Digital* up again from scratch, together. His experience became extremely critical in driving the business into the right direction.

By 2019, our company had grown to 15 staff members and our revenue and client based grew as well. We started becoming a force to be reckoned with in the digital industry, the small company with a big heart! We won #YouthStartCT and graduated from the SAB Tholoana programme. This helped us to launch our creative studio, after school sports programme and digital academy for disadvantaged youth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought obvious challenges during 2020 and to some extent has stunted our growth. However, this is not holding us back, we are pushing through and make a conscious effort each day to look for the great opportunities that all these challenges have brought us. Through my entrepreneurial journey, I have learnt to see failure as the beginning and the middle, but never the end and I'm not sure what God has planned for me next. I used to think that I was just another statistic from Mitchells Plain, a place that sometimes feels like a graveyard of wasted talent but I used the hurt and pain of my experience to shape me and washed away all doubt with my tears.

There are so many opportunities for young people today within the digital world as aspiring entrepreneurs, vloggers, creatives, inventors or techies. I urge young people to take accountability for their success and not settle for only failures. You are worthy, you deserve success, you are the future.

**How to connect:**

To find out more about Jade and *Click Digital Africa's* services, please connect with her via <https://clickafrica.co.za>

