

# Where design meets bytes: Local SMME, Leigh Desai, pioneers creative-tech fusion

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In the bustling world of entrepreneurship, where creativity and technical acumen converge, design guru and the founder of [Innativ Studio](#) (a multi-disciplinary all-female design studio), Leigh Desai, fuses her design technical expertise and creative ability as a skilled and sought-after designer. Beneath this vivacious exterior who loves a good laugh and great company, Desai identifies as an introverted extrovert, finding solace in her own company when the need to recharge arises. Desai understands that her technical skill puts her ahead of the game.



Leigh Desai

"I embraced the opportunity to delve into design software programs and gain a deep understanding of the technical and creative aspects that make me as adaptable as I am today." Despite the challenges with age and gender in what is seen as a "male environment," Desai found ways to empower herself.

## A synergistic alliance: Nurturing women in tech

South Africa's tech industry is still predominantly male. Desai's journey exemplifies the technical skill and creative expression that women bring to the field of UI design. According to a study conducted by Women in Tech ZA, only 23% of tech jobs in South Africa are held by women, highlighting the need for more representation and opportunities for women in the industry.

Amidst the challenges, Desai's path took an encouraging turn when she stumbled upon [Innovator Trust](#), enabled by [Vodacom](#), to support SMMEs in the ICT sector during the challenging times of the pandemic. The [Innovator Trust](#)'s mission to support women in tech and business resonated deeply with her, and she applied. Unexpectedly, another business owner nominated her for their incubation program a year later.

[Innovator Trust](#) is the ideal incubation space as they consciously nurture women in tech to increase the representation of women in the ICT sector. Their unwavering support and individualised care left an indelible mark on Desai's entrepreneurial journey. "Even during onboarding, their care and genuine attention were tangible."

## Nurturing women in tech

The [Hatch Incubation Program](#) brought a myriad of benefits that significantly impacted Leigh's business and personal growth. Through cross-collaborative projects and networking business opportunities, she found herself immersed in a community of like-minded women from diverse sectors. The empowering mentorship and inspiring workshops gave her a valuable sounding board, addressing crucial challenges that entrepreneurship often presents.

The program's emphasis on financial literacy, compliance, and corporate governance proved instrumental in transforming Desai's business. Armed with newfound confidence and refined strategies, she secured more business opportunities and managed her operations more efficiently due to the training. This newfound self-assurance is reflected in her interactions with clients and industry leaders, positioning her as a force to be reckoned with in the design landscape.

Desai has ambitious plans for her business over the next few months. Equipped with a fresh perspective on funding strategies inspired by one of the workshops organised by [Innovator Trust](#), she aims to "complete a significant app project close to my heart. With an influx of work and an expanding business, I'm ready to shift from outsourcing talent to employing

a dedicated additional resource to increase capacity."

As Desai's journey unfolds, she remains steadfast in her pursuit of excellence and innovation. Her partnership with [Innovator Trust](#) has catalysed her business growth. With each stride she takes, she leaves an indelible mark as an African entrepreneur able to compete globally, who embraces change, adapts to challenges, and creates her path to success.

Visit the [Innativ Studio](#) company website for more information on the products and services available:  
[www.innativstudio.co.za](http://www.innativstudio.co.za)

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