

My Brilliant Career

What do you do at work each day?

The challenge of being an entrepreneur and leading a business is that you need to create the work for yourself. You don't have somebody explaining to you what direction the business needs to take or which strategy to employ regarding company growth — you need to define and implement the work yourself.

I like to start the day by not going directly to the office, but rather to a place where I can plan three to five tasks I need to accomplish in the day.

While it's easy to get drawn into operational tasks, my role is to drive the vision of the business, ensure the team is motivated and working well together, and assist in the sales process.

What drew you to this particular career?

I ended up in the logistics/IT space purely by accident. All three founding members of Parcelninja studied IT together in Port Elizabeth, moved to Johannesburg for work and ended up working together in 2006 at an online gaming company focused on the US market.

I started my career doing IT work at a major bank, after which I moved to a credit bureau to look after an insurance product. After all that, I ended up working at an online marketing company, prior

IT self-starter on the start-up trail

Justin Drennan is founder and CEO of Parcelninja, an outsourced e-commerce warehousing and delivery service. He tells **Margaret Harris** that being an entrepreneur means he needs to ensure his business is doing the disrupting, not getting disrupted

to starting WantItAll.

After starting WantItAll.co.za, we invested in a business that rebranded as Superbalist.com, and was sold to Takealot, then started Parcelninja.

What did you want to be when you were a child?

My focus was always on mechanical and technical products, and I've always enjoyed the sciences. I only really thought seriously about my career when I was in high school, when my natural affinity for computers led me to study IT in Port Elizabeth.

What about your job gets you out of bed each day?

People, problem solving and helping our clients. We are

essentially a business that helps our clients solve problems. We need to ensure we are the smartest guys in the room, and make sure we are able to add value for our clients each and every day. For that reason, I do a lot of reading, research and networking to ensure we are always on the cutting edge of technology and solutions.

At the same time, we run our business like a family. A number of our staff were previously domestic workers, and giving them the space and training and allowing them to grow gives me great pride and joy.

What about your job keeps you awake at night?

As a business owner and

entrepreneur, I feel you always have to be paranoid about the business and constantly wanting to improve what you are doing, and making sure the "moat" around your business is constantly increasing. Our biggest worry is the disruption taking place within a number of industries, and ensuring we are disrupting, not getting disrupted.

What would you do if you could not do this job?

I've always been inquisitive, had a passion for learning and understanding how the world works. This was afforded to me through my parents and schooling, and I'd love to give others the same gift. Teaching would be something I'd enjoy.

What qualifications do you have, and how do they help you do your job?

I studied at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and achieved a national diploma in IT.



SOLUTIONS GUY: Justin Drennan got into IT in Port Elizabeth

This helped me with my first job application in Johannesburg, working for BoE Merchant Bank.

This was paramount for my career and allowed me to get an understanding of corporate culture and work.

What qualities do you need in this industry?

Resilience, honesty, integrity and adaptability are needed across most industries. However, in IT, with the ever-changing landscape, you need to be able to adapt to change.

How has the e-commerce

landscape changed in South Africa recently?

Over the past three years, we've seen the number of individuals shopping online increase dramatically. This has been driven by the investment in e-commerce from bricks-and-mortar stores as well as pure-play e-commerce sites.

Stores such as Makro.co.za as well as Takealot.com have delivered superior shopping experiences to clients, and have helped customers trust the e-commerce experience. Suddenly, there are a lot more people shopping online.