

**Allon Raiz**  
**Short Resume**

Allon Raiz is the founder and CEO of Raizcorp, the only privately-held, unfunded, profitable business incubator on the African continent, supporting in excess of 200 businesses. He is an author, a radio show host, and has written and hosted a primetime reality TV show, all in the field of entrepreneurship. Allon is the co-founder of Entrepreneurs' Organisation South Africa and Rural Roots and sits on the advisory and judging boards of numerous local and international NGOs and Entrepreneurial Awards. He is an accomplished international speaker and is completing a Doctorate in Entrepreneurial Studies and Innovation. Allon has also been appointed, by the South African Cabinet, to the board of the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), South Africa. Allon's passion and focus on the development of entrepreneurs attracted the attention of the World Economic Forum which, on 11 March 2008, awarded Allon as a Young Global Leader.



## Allon Raiz Profile



Allon Raiz was born, to entrepreneurial parents, in Johannesburg in 1967. Schooled in Durban, he went on to complete his B.Comm (Honours) Degree in Marketing at the University of Natal. Allon is currently studying toward a Doctorate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Allon began his working career in his parent's umbrella-manufacturing factory. During this time, he moved around, spending time in each department in order to learn the many facets of running a big business. He finally ended up running the factory floor where, at the age of 22,

he was responsible for supervising over 200 workers.

Allon soon realized that he needed to succeed in his own right – not in the shadow of his parents and so, in 1991, he decided to leave the family business (with major personal consequences) in order to develop experience in the retail sector. Finding himself unemployed, he approached a friend for a job in his ailing retail clothing chain. It was here that Allon truly found his niche. He redesigned the stores, restocked the shelves and started running innovative promotions. The stores began to boom. The local press did an article on one of his whacky promotions. As fate would have it, this article was read by a local multibillionaire businessman.

In late 1991, Allon was given the chance of a lifetime by this businessman - to start any business of his choosing, whilst being mentored through the process. The “New York Sausage Factory” was established in early 1992 as the first retail hotdog chain in South Africa. A year later, the business was sold and Allon was appointed Marketing Director and tasked with turning around an ailing vehicle security company.

Within one year, the company had grown to ten times its size. Allon spent the next seven years at this company before leaving to set up Raizcorp. During his time at the vehicle security company, Allon managed to turn around another two small companies which would go on to become the two pioneering companies within Raizcorp. Today Allon is directly involved in over 40 different businesses and 100s indirectly through Raizcorp. It is important to note that Raizcorp was started without any external investment.

It is clear that the lucky break, that Allon received as a young man, drove him to create an organisation that gives other young (and not so young) entrepreneurs a much greater chance of success. Business development specialists from around the world have visited Raizcorp to further understand the unique model. Allon's work now extends into the development of rural entrepreneurs.



Raizcorp is the only privately-held, unfunded, profitable business incubator on the African continent. This is borne out of Allon's belief that organisations, which teach people how to make profit, should themselves be profitable; they should not always be waiting for external funding.

In a world in which 96% of all entrepreneurs fail, within ten years of opening their business, Allon has made it his life's purpose to turn this statistic around. With Raizcorp as his platform, Allon's mission is to increase the survival rate of small businesses by providing them with a proven model, capable of both scaling and adapting to various economic and socio-political environments. The 4% of small businesses which are surviving are doing something right; the foundations of Allon's achievement lie in Raizcorp's ability to identify and capture this entrepreneurial spirit, thereby building and growing successful and, most importantly, profitable entrepreneurs.

Business plans do not interest Allon – it is common knowledge that they are not predictors of success. In their stead, Allon looks at the psychological makeup of the entrepreneur. For, it is the heart and mind of the entrepreneurs that will, ultimately, determine their success.

The nature of Raizcorp's interventions is such that entrepreneurs are exposed to high-level contact with guides, each specialising in a key area of business. The focus at Raizcorp is on quality, not quantity. It is a model built on measuring efficacy; Raizcorp prides itself on its ability to measure the impact of its interventions across each of its key focus areas – sales, marketing, strategy, finance and personal development.

Currently, Raizcorp is involved in projects from deep rural environments to its headquarters in urban Johannesburg. This is testimony to the adaptability of the model and Allon's belief that entrepreneurs hold the key to the unlocking of wealth in the developing world. Allon's passion for transformation and entrepreneurship has resulted in his being appointed to the board of the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) by the South African Cabinet. It is this passion and focus which attracted the attention of the World Economic Forum when awarding Allon Raiz as a Young Global Leader, on 11 March 2008.



**Allon Raiz**  
**Achievements**

**Milestones**

Allon founds **Raizcorp**, the only unfunded for-profit business incubator model in Africa - the world's first "prosperator". (2002)

Allon is a founding member of the international **Young Entrepreneurs Organisation** (YEO) in South Africa and serves on the board for two years; this chapter wins best start-up chapter in the world award. (2002)

Allon is the founding member of **Rural Roots**, an organisation focused on bridging the rural-urban divide and bringing more economic activity to the rural areas. (2006)

With his team at Raizcorp, Allon designs a programme – **REAP** (Rural Entrepreneurial Accelerator Programme) – to train and grow seventy entrepreneurs in deep rural KwaZulu Natal. The programme is so successful that it is mentioned in the Minister of Environment's speech to Parliament the following year. (2007)

Allon advises the Mauritian Government on their Incubator and Entrepreneurship Strategy. (2007)

Raizcorp opens its **second prosperator** in the Johannesburg Central Business District. (Jan 2008)

Raizcorp opens its **third prosperator** in Richards Bay. (2009)

Raizcorp opens its **fourth prosperator** in Meyerton. (2009)

Raizcorp signs **MOU with the IFC** to roll out Raizcorp in Rwanda and nine other African countries. (2009)

Allon is chosen to attend **Harvard University's** programme on Global Leadership and Public Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. (2010)

**Judging, Boards and Advisory Roles**

Allon is appointed to the pioneering EXCO of **SABTIA** (South African Incubator Association). (2004)

Allon is appointed to mentor for the **ABSA Incubation Fund**. (2005)

Allon is a judge for **ABSA's Internal Innovation Awards**. (2005/6)

Allon is an adjudicator for the **TWIB** (Technology for Woman in Business) awards (DTI). (2006/7/8/9)



Allon is a Judge (and Chairman of the Judging Panel) for the prestigious **Ernst and Young Emerging Entrepreneur Awards**. (2006/7/8/9)

Allon is appointed by the South African Deputy President's Office to the **ASGISA** working group of **BUSA** (Business Unity South Africa). (2006)

Allon is invited by **MIT** (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) to be a panellist at the **MIT Global Start-up Workshop** in Trondheim, Norway/Cape Town South Africa. (2007/9)

**Endeavor** (International NGO) appoints Allon as a panellist (judge) for the **International Selection of Endeavor Entrepreneur**. (2007/8)

**Technoserve** (International NGO) invites Allon to become a member on the board of advisors for the **National Business Plan Competition (Believe, Begin, Become)**. (2007/8/9)

Allon is invited by the **Business Women's Association** to be a member of the judging panel for the Entrepreneur Category in the **Business Women of the Year Awards**. (2008/10)

Allon is invited by the dti to judge the **Cell C GEM Technogirl Programme**. (2008)

Allon judges the **HIT-Barcelona '09 Global Entrepreneurship Competition**. (2009)

Allon is appointed special advisor to the Board of **FNB's Enterprise Development Trust**. (2009)

Allon is appointed to the board of the **National Empowerment Fund** (NEF), South Africa. (2009)

Allon is selected a judge for the **Johnnie Walker - Celebrating Strides** competition. (2010)

Allon is appointed to the advisory board for the **Citibank Micro-Entrepreneurship Awards** presentation. (2010)

Allon is selected to be part of the task force hosted by **French President, Nicolas Sarkozy**, to identify key propositions for the G20 summit in France in 2011. (2010)



## Nominations and Awards

Allon is nominated for the **Jonnie Walker Entrepreneur of the Year Award**. (2004)

Allon is a semi-finalist of the international **Schwab Foundation Social Entrepreneur** of the year. (2007)

Allon is grand winner of the **Champion of Entrepreneurs in Africa** award by the **Africa Heritage Society**. (2007)

Allon is awarded as a **Young Global Leader** by the **World Economic Forum** in Geneva. (2008)

Allon is recipient of the **EO (Entrepreneur's Organisation South Africa) Award for the most outstanding personal achievement of the year**. (2008)

Allon is recognised by GIBS as one of **South Africa's Top 50 Thought Leaders**. (2009)

## Media

Allon runs the first weekly national radio show on the subject of entrepreneurship called **Raizen Entrepreneurs**. (2004/5/6/7)

**Oprah Magazine** has a regular monthly feature with Allon as the Entrepreneurial Coach. (2006)

Allon writes and hosts a prime time reality television show called **Rize Mzansi**, taking nine small businesses through an incubation process, one ultimately winning R1 million. This is the largest prize ever on this TV station. The show won a Silver Award at the Rose D'or Festival out of 1100 entries across 23 countries. (2007)

Allon is a regular contributor for the magazine **Whizz Kids**, writing on the links between Attention Deficit Disorder and Entrepreneurship. (2007)

Allon is a monthly columnist to the **Business Report** on the subject of Entrepreneurship.

## Published Works

Allon authors the **Entrepreneur's Inspiration Pack**, the **Young Entrepreneur's Inspiration Pack** and the **Female Entrepreneur's Inspiration Pack**. To date, 30 000 units have been sold. (2005/6/7/8/9)

Allon co-authors **Sharing the Passion – Conversations with Coaches**. (2006)

Allon is published in the Enterprise Development & Microfinance Journal, Volume 20 Number 1, March 2009 on **Business incubation in the private sector, South Africa**



## Talks

Allon has been invited to speak on topics related to entrepreneurship and incubation in over 40 cities in the world.

He has addressed audiences in the following countries:

- Dubai
- England
- Ghana
- India
- Kenya
- Nepal
- Norway
- Pakistan
- South Africa
- Malawi
- Rwanda
- Brazil

The organisations and government departments that Allon has addressed include:

- AAA School of Advertising
- ABSA
- Business Unity South Africa
- Business Women's Association
- Deloitte
- DeMonteford University
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Entrepreneurs' Organisation (EO)
- First National Bank
- Gordon Institute of Business Science
- Homecoming Revolution
- HIRS
- Kaya FM
- Klipdrift Premium Brandy
- Lonza (Switzerland)
- Microsoft
- Midrand University



**Allon Raiz**  
**Life's Purpose**

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The nature of Raizcorp's interventions is such that entrepreneurs are exposed to high-level contact with guides, each specialising in a key area of business.

Allon's goal is to reach as many entrepreneurs as possible in the developing world. On his way to achieving this goal, Allon has mobilised his team at Raizcorp to use technology to measure the efficacy of the model; Raizcorp prides itself on its ability to measure the impact of its interventions across each of its key focus areas – sales, marketing, strategy, finance and personal development. It is this commitment to both quality and quantity that place Raizcorp at the forefront of initiatives to bolster entrepreneurship in South Africa.

Currently, Raizcorp is involved in projects from deep rural environments to its headquarters in urban Johannesburg. This is testimony to the adaptability of the model and Allon's belief that entrepreneurs hold the key to the unlocking of wealth in the developing world. It is this passion and focus which attracted the attention of the World Economic Forum when awarding Allon Raiz as a Young Global Leader, on 11 March 2008. In recognition of this award, the Entrepreneurs' Organization of South Africa (EO) recognized Allon with an award for the most outstanding personal achievement of the year in 2008.

