

Accidental trigger for success

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The way Chris Ogden tells it, a car accident involving his secretary and a funeral parlour owner in 2004 led to the launch of a lucrative business venture.



Photograph by: Robbie Tshabalala

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Ogden, the founder of Rubiblue, an Internet-based software provider, says the funeral parlour owner mentioned to Ogden's secretary that he had problems with fraud in his business. His accounting systems were not automated, which meant he had difficulty keeping accurate records. This made it hard to know whether his employees were stealing from him. It would be easy for some of his agents to keep two sets of invoice books: one for themselves and another for the business.

When Ogden heard this, he saw an opportunity to provide smaller firms with the kind of automation that was generally only available to large financial firms and medium-sized companies - and the move paid off. Ogden's business now provides systems that manage 1,2m policies for over 150 companies in four countries and bring in more than R65m/month.

Ogden says his group managed to get a foothold in part because of its ability to integrate its system into different devices. For example, a policy provider can keep an accurate record, irrespective of whether its agent is using a laptop PC or a cellphone to record the transaction. The Financial Service Board's keener oversight of funeral policy providers has also helped, as insurance providers of this kind need to comply with financial regulations and ensure they can be more easily audited. Ogden says the system has been adapted for use in other industries. He is also in talks about managing a vehicle fleet.

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