

Episode 19: Faith Kabende – Fay Designs, Zambia



Fashion Designer Faith considered designing, making and selling clothes nothing but a weekend hobby, until it dawned on her that she was getting enough orders to start a business, and so she did. Faith started Fay Designs in 2007 with a borrowed sewing machine. Today, she exports afro-centric haute couture clothes to every continent, runs Fay Fashion Design School and plans to manufacture printed cotton fabric (Fay Fabrics) from the cotton grown on her cotton farm. The fabric factory will also purchase cotton from over 500 women cotton farmers in Zambia's copper belt. Faith dreams of Fay Designs becoming a global brand.

What you'll hear in this episode:

- How Faith used her vacation pay to turn her weekend hobby into a business.
- Starting out in her sitting room with one tailor and a borrowed sewing machine.
- The value of women's saving circles.
- Her focus on tailored, afro-centric, unique gown designs for special occasions.
- Faith's marketing strategy – targeting college students and turning them and their families into lifetime customers for all their important family occasions – graduations, weddings etc.
- Her later decision to focus on Zambia's high end market and Zambians living outside the country. Fay Designs has customers on every continent.
- The joy of designing clothes for Zambia's president and cabinet ministers.
- Faith's thoughts about making ready-to-wear clothes for the Zambian market.
- Her dedication to supporting the fashion design community in Zambia by offering clothes for fashion shows.
- Opening Fay Fashion Design School to train young Zambian designers.
- Leveraging technology for marketing - Instagram, Pinterest, E-Bay.
- Lowering production costs through backward linkages – growing cotton to produce printed cotton fabric (Fay Fabrics).
- **Challenge:** the high cost of imported inputs drives up the cost of her final products.
- **Faith's dream:** Fay Designs becomes a global brand.
- **Lesson Learned:** Be careful whom you trust.
- **Words of Inspiration:** Everything is possible. Talk to a role model. Have a plan and focus.

Useful Resources

E-Bay: <https://www.ebay.com/>

Fay Designs

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/fay2007/> (Fay Designs)

<https://www.facebook.com/faydesigns2017/> (Design School)

Pinterest: [fay designs](#) by Faith Kabende

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Twitter: @bizchatshub

Website: <https://bizchatshub.com/>