

# KENNETH GUANTAI

Kenneth Guantai is the Chief Executive Officer and innovator of Auto Truck. Kenyan-based Auto-Truck develops environmentally-friendly electric mobility solutions. Operations began in 2015 when Kenneth quit his bank job to focus on developing a green solution to Kenya's small-scale handcarts (commonly known as mkokoteni) which are essential for the livelihoods of young people in Nairobi but currently run on polluting fossil fuels. Auto-Truck gained local and international acclaim and has won several awards, including the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurships Programme, the Royal Academy of Engineering's Leaders in Innovation Fellowship Programme and Africa Prize.

## LESSONS EARNED

- 1 INNOVATION IS NOT FOR THE FAINT HEARTED.**  
You MUST be highly passionate about what you want to do and fight for it.
- 2 CHANGE IS ALWAYS PAINFUL.**  
It is very difficult to transition from a comfort zone. Leaving a secure bank job for the uncertain innovation journey was the hardest decision to make in my life.
- 3 LEADERSHIP SUCCEEDS WHEN YOU LEAD FROM THE FRONT AND LEAD BY EXAMPLE.**  
You must accommodate different points of view.
- 4 LIFE IS A JOURNEY, WALK THROUGH IT WITH A LOT OF DETERMINATION.**  
Make wise decisions regardless of how difficult they are and never look back in pursuit of your dream.
- 5 MAINTAIN YOUR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.**  
Have time to relax, play and visit friends. Be refreshed to tackle your next assignment.
- 6 LEARN FROM PAST MISTAKES TO REALISE YOUR SUCCESS.**  
Never shy away from making mistakes. They define your resilience and ability to weather storms in order to succeed.
- 7 ALWAYS THINK ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE GOING AND DON'T LET THE PAST DEFINE YOUR FUTURE.**  
The past is gone but it is what you do in the future that will shape your destiny. Remain focused and your eyes pivoted towards your dream.
- 8 NOT EVERYONE WILL BUY INTO YOUR IDEA, YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO TRULY UNDERSTANDS THE NEED FOR IT.**  
Go forward and offer a solution and avoid the naysayers as much as you can.