



## The Challenge

Black Umbrellas is one of South Africa's most respected SME incubator programmes, backed by the Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation. For graduating entrepreneurs, the moment of completion carries real significance – it represents years of hard work, mentorship, and commercial development. The assets they receive at graduation need to reflect that significance.

The brief required three deliverable categories – certificates, corporate gifting, and branded apparel – all designed to reflect the prestige of the programme and the credibility of the foundation behind it. Beyond design, everything needed to be manufactured, packaged, and delivered to specification. A poorly produced certificate or generic gift item would undermine the very achievement it was meant to celebrate.

## My Approach

I led the full creative and production process through Dikwe.Agency, treating this as both a brand design and a physical production project. Design decisions were driven by two questions: does this look worthy of the moment, and does it look like it belongs to a Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation programme?

Once designs were approved, I managed the entire manufacturing and fulfilment process – coordinating printing, framing, packaging, and delivery end to end. Quality control was applied at every stage, with no item leaving the production process unless it met the standard set at design sign-off.

## What I Did

- Designed branded graduation certificates for the graduating entrepreneur cohort –
- Designed branded corporate gifting items aligned to the Black Umbrellas brand identity
- Designed a branded apparel catalogue for the organisation
- Printed, framed, and delivered all certificates to specification
- Manufactured, packaged, and delivered all corporate gift items
- Manufactured, packaged, and delivered all branded apparel

## Results & Impact

- Every graduating entrepreneur received premium, professionally produced brand assets befitting the milestone
- Elevated corporate investor and donor confidence through a polished, well-executed brand presence
- A sense of belonging and professional identity for incubated SMEs through quality branded materials
- High-visibility brand advocacy through well-designed apparel worn beyond the graduation event
- Consistent visual identity maintained across all national incubator hubs through standardised asset production
- Seamless end-to-end fulfilment with no production or delivery failures

### Skills Demonstrated

Brand Design | Certificate & Document Design | Corporate Gifting Design | Apparel Design | Print Production | Manufacturing Management | Packaging & Fulfilment | End-to-End Project Management | Brand Governance

## How this translates to any organisation

This engagement demonstrates the ability to manage the full lifecycle of a brand production project – from design concept through to physical delivery – with the quality control and attention to detail that high-profile work demands. That capability is directly transferable to any organisation producing branded materials for events, graduations, corporate gifting, or employee recognition programmes.

The project also demonstrates cultural and contextual sensitivity – understanding what a Black Umbrellas graduation certificate needs to communicate, and designing accordingly. That ability to read the brief at a deeper level than the literal deliverable is what separates a senior brand professional from a production designer.

For any organisation with a corporate social investment mandate, an events function, or a staff recognition programme, this engagement shows that I can handle the creative and the production side – delivering the finished physical output, not just the design file.

### Reference Period

Woodman – Black Umbrellas  
2022–2023

Contacts available upon request