

# BBO

BLACK BUSINESS QUARTERLY



**Manzini Zungu**  
CEO of Pacinamix, leading a  
new generation of disruptors

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SOUTH AFRICA'S PREMIER  
BLACK BUSINESS  
LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE  
FOURTH QUARTER 2018

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# BBQ

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## FOREWORD

### The spirit of giving



*Sine Zungu*

**D**ecember is the month of giving. A festive month where we all, as a people, from every corner of the globe, reflect on the year passed, celebrate and relish our successes and victories—big or small—and hope for a better year ahead.

In the context of our beloved country, South Africa, we have seen a rather eventful year. From the demise of some of the big corporates to significant changes in the political landscape but more positively, the youth rising up with a sense of responsibility and ownership

of the country's tomorrow and actively engaging with all stakeholders to ensure that they "leave the (world) better than they found it", as South African actress Nomzamo Mbatha perfectly enthuses. It is remarkable to witness and be a part of this generation of doers.

When reflecting upon the past year, let us be reminded that December is not the benchmark of giving; giving back to our communities, giving of ourselves to our families and loved ones, giving to our neighbours and giving back to South Africa with the vision of creating a South Africa that's conducive for all to live in. The eleven months of the year are just as critical and welcoming to a giving hand as is the month of December. Let us be reminded, this December, that giving is an act of love, commitment and service.

As corporate South Africa, let us continue to give. Not as a policy requisite, but give with an open heart and a genuine care for the country, its people and the future of this land. The responsibility lies greatly on this sector to give in whatever form, whether it be in uplifting communities, empowering the youth through training programmes, internships and similar initiatives or affording the less fortunate the opportunity to be educated for future involvement in the country's economy.

In the words of Bonang Mohale, CEO of Business Leadership SA, "Lift As You Rise" and let this be our mantra.

Wishing a joyous festive season to you all, fellow South Africans. And may the new year bring about change and a new hope. And remember, you CAN!



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**Shoulder rubs**  
 Mix it with the country's captains of industry  
 and senior government ministers

**Celebrate 2018**  
 Pay tribute to your team's performance  
 in 2018, or applaud your clients

**Be inspired**  
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 award-winners will make it a night to remember...  
 and to inspire you towards even greater things in 2019

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Gratitude is the gift that keeps on giving

*If you want to know what a man's like, look at how he treats his inferiors not his equals."*

*—Sirius Black, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*



**E**arlier this year during a dispute, someone close to me asked, "Why do you expect to be thanked for doing your job?"

And even though I found the question very problematic and was ready to launch into a barrage of reasons why it was one of the most absurd questions, I took a breath, remained silent and left it at that. However, for months, the question plagued me.

As we reach the end of the year, this magical unicorn that we yearn for shortly after each new year starts—and when it arrives, we question where the time went—the topic of reflection

rears its repetitive head once more.

I suppose that it is an unavoidable part of human nature to look back and reevaluate the role we played throughout the year—how did we matter? We scrutinise every challenge faced, every success, every failure, the work accomplished and the expectations. And in the midst of vowing to make 2019 the year where "things will change", we reflect on whether we were appreciated and thanked for our contribution.

A simple thank you can go a long way. It is something that I, personally, truly believe. Yet it has become a point of contention for many, making questions such as "Why do you expect to be thanked for doing your job?" a common utterance. But the undeniable fact is that gratitude truly is a gift that keeps on giving.

A simple thank you can inspire, motivate and elicit confidence, a sense of achievement and, most importantly, a sense of purpose. Having a purpose is an integral part of living and having a healthy outlook on life. Without it, we lose our way, become demotivated, unhappy and develop an attitude of defeat. In the workplace, a simple thank you can inspire loyalty, better resilience to stress and can be the difference between employees doing a great job and a mediocre one. In short, a small thank you can go a long way.

As I make my exit as the Editor of BBQ magazine, I would like to take the opportunity to name and (not) shame, to highlight with the spotlight and mention to get attention, my support team.

To my day ones, Monique Jacobs, Ralph Staniforth, Kevin Michaels, Ché Vigus, Dale Rother, Simon Lewis, Greg Penfold, Tahlia Wyngaard, Linda Tom and Carlo Hudson, who all contributed to both the publication and my sanity, a big thank you.

To the loyal advertisers as well as all the contributors, including, of course, the South African business and leadership stars featured in each edition, I express my gratitude. And, finally, thank you to our readers, who provide us with the constant inspiration to produce engaging content and maintain BBQ magazine's position as the top transformation publication in the country.

The team wishes you a safe festive season and a prosperous 2019.



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# Market

To be  
conventional  
is never  
**DISRUPTIVE**

The value of being a disruptive business has its undertone in being innovative enough to transform the market or at the very least influence its key trends



*BBQmedia*

**T**his is the firm conviction of Manzini Zungu, the visionary leader and Chief Executive Officer at Pacinamix—a 100% black female-owned creative, digital and communications consulting firm, that does not believe in conventional wisdom, but rather has the courage to build its business model to be disruptive in order to get to the solution.

Pacinamix at its very core, is a disruptive business having achieved sizable growth in the past couple of years while holding firmly to the ideals of black excellence.

“As a business, our mere existence is disruptive. We live in a country where the failure rate of black businesses is at 75%. This means there is greater probability for black businesses to fail rather than to

succeed and that has become the expectation,” says Zungu.

“Yet as a business we find ourselves achieving mercurial-like organic growth in a highly competitive and concentrated discipline. Our dynamic internal organizational processes have been the driver of this sort of growth.”

However, as with any other growing business, Pacinamix has reached a level where expansion can be achieved inorganically through significant business acquisitions.

“A healthy business is one that places emphasis on growing organically first. Once this organic growth has reached its optimum capacity, then the business can contemplate other means of increasing output and business influence by acquiring new businesses—however, acquisitions

## Disruption is defined as a disturbance that interrupts an event, activity, or process

and business transactions must come from a foundation of strong organic growth,” explains Zungu.

“So, in this regard, Pacinamix has already disrupted the current status-quo and expectation that is predominant in the black business entrepreneurial space,” he further highlights.

Disruption is defined as the disturbance that interrupts an event, activity, or process. However, Pacinamix views disruption as an opportunity to do things differently and most importantly to challenge the status-quo. Disruption entails knowing what the rules are and then breaking them to set the trend and to optimize distinctiveness.

Disruption was the architect for our global client McDonald’s where Pacinamix married the global quick-service restaurant chain with one of South Africa’s most glamorous fashion designers. The result was a combination of two elements unparallel to anything that has never been done before—a disruptive combination of fashion and food to position McDonald’s as a premium lifestyle brand.

“You have to embrace a disruptive attitude. As a business we have learnt how to not only be disruptive, but to be effectively disruptive. Through this understanding we are able to steer our clients to new and exciting territories they have never been before,” explains the Pacinamix CEO.

A growing business such as Pacinamix relies heavily on its nimbleness and agility





## “Pacinamix understands the rules of the game and this gives us the vantage point of seeing and understanding where things are going”

to identify innovative and game-changing methodologies in their business approach.

This intentional disruption filters into all our clients. From a local perspective, we have gained the trust of an organization such as the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU)—an equally disruptive Trade Union that has positioned itself to be progressive in a stifled unionist market.

In their own right AMCU is a disruptor in the South African labour representative sector. “Our industry-shaking partnership with them has enabled us to transform one of the country’s fast-growing labour Union to become a global brand and a protagonist of how to execute effective trade unionist practices in South Africa’s labour market for the international audience.” Explains Zungu.

Pacinamix’s role as highly-skilled and proficient advisors to AMCU has led to the co-creation of AMCU’s distinctiveness as a credible Union whose trade unionism models have become case studies to the global market.

To lead and inspire a disruptive company you must be a disruptor yourself. For Mr. Zungu this translated to growing up at his grandparents’ home in rural KwaZulu-Natal. His grandparents involved him in farming activities from a young age, and he cultivated vegetables to sell around the township. Symbolically, this cultivation birthed the entrepreneurial spirit in him from an early age and he knew that his path was one that would lead to owning businesses.

“I believe in legacy and I knew that I wanted to build something that will last beyond my own life. I lead my colleagues

according to this principle because I want them, both in their private and professional capacity, to have a positive impact on the lives of everyone they encounter. This is what I want for Pacinamix. I want it to be a business of legacy.”

The Pacinamix CEO started the communications and marketing business and admits that although it wasn’t much at the time, it helped him to learn how to invest in resources that were crucial to the day-to-day running of a business. Once the company secured its first project, the wheels started turning and the business expanded to offer more to its clients.

Pacinamix has expanded to encompass Human Capital and Development as well as Enterprise Supplier Development (ESD) offerings aimed at assisting their clients to attain true transformation and sustainability.

“I’m very excited about our ESD wing, which ties in with the principle of building black excellence. Our ESD business is about co-creating shared value in the supply chains of our partners. To safeguard the ethics that black businesses must form part of a supply chain and that they are correctly incubated, developed and eventually skilled enough to become strong and sustainable entities that add value where they operate. As a thought leading firm, we are always at the forefront of the sectors in which we operate, meaning that Pacinamix is an ever-expanding business,” elaborates Zungu.

To effectively ensure that black business can rise and stand firm on their own there must be true transformation and sustainability – which is a disruptive narrative within the sphere of procurement.



“Pacinamix defines Co-creation as journeying with our clients and partners. Our business believes in more than just delivering solutions. We believe in a shared experience—where learning and growth happen both ways in order to optimise the outcome. Our clients are part of our decision-making process and in turn, we are part of theirs and in doing so, we co-create disruptive solutions that empower our clients to reach their business objectives. When our clients meet and exceed their business objectives, then we would have achieved our core objectives as a business,” he explains.



One of the most vital aspects of brand management is getting consumers to believe and trust in the brand. Equally important is the incorporation of world-class infrastructure, custom-developed campaign management solutions and research, i.e. gathering the latest trends and insights from around the world and integrating them strategically.

"I believe that sincerity and transparency are key factors in making brands 'real' to consumers. No one appreciates a spin-job or a spin-story. Over and above engaging with our clients, we ensure that through our activations, we engage with

their consumers and customers as well. This positions us to have a holistic or 360-degree insight of our clients' brands and allows us to develop campaign management solutions that best align with our clients' business and strategic objectives.

"As cross-sector experts, we make it our business to know the environments that our brands operate in from a PESTEL—political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal—perspective. This allows us to develop the custom-developed campaigns and solutions for our clients from the in-depth studying of trends and insights," says Zungu.

He believes that the key to successfully optimising brand activation strategies is twofold.

"Firstly, brand activation is about maximising consumer engagement. This speaks to making the brand come alive to the consumers, allowing them to interact with the brand at a tangible level—brands should never be abstract.

"Secondly, and, perhaps, more importantly, a brand must tap into the emotions of the consumers. We are emotional beings at the end of the day. We use our emotions, whether we want to admit it or not, to make decisions and to form opinions. An

optimum brand strategy is one that is fully cognisant of that and strives to ensure the emotional connection between the brand and the consumer," he says.

Other solutions that Pacinamix offer include video production and animation, multimedia design, branding, photography, audio-visual content, art direction, graphic design, copywriting and creative direction.

"These are just some of the creative and production solutions we provide. As experts, we have often noted that one of the biggest challenges in the creative process is articulating an idea and translating it into a visual. Our creative teams thrive on the challenge of bringing creative concepts to life, thus, enabling our clients to have various touchpoints to engage with their own customers through the creative collateral we help develop," says Zungu.

In terms of how Pacinamix encourages creativity in the workplace, he says that he is a firm believer in cultivating environments where people can thrive and grow, both individually and as teams.

"At Pacinamix, we have a very entrepreneurial culture that recognises qualities in all the colleagues who make up the Pacinamix family. I believe the best way to foster and cultivate this environment is to allow colleagues to be forefront of building this company. Our ethos is Co-creation, and this does not only apply to our clients, but also to our internal colleagues as well," explains Zungu.

"We are the ones who build this company together, to make it the success that it is today. This means sharing our weaknesses and our strengths—this is how Pacinamix has become the formidable force it is," he adds.

"From my ExCo, which advises me on major business and operational decisions, to all the colleagues in the various departments, I really appreciate them. I'm blessed to lead an organisation filled with highly-skilled individuals who are not only good at their jobs but who are always wanting to grow. Ask anyone from my team, our clients demand excellence and we only give them excellence. Each one of my colleagues understands that our clients are more than

clients, they are partners who we journey with and it is the same with all my colleagues. At this point in their careers, all my colleagues are journeying with Pacinamix and I couldn't ask for more from them," says Zungu.

A team is only as strong as its leader. Zungu cites honesty, integrity, having a very thick skin, the ability to motivate others and actively engaging with employees, as the core elements of an effective leader.

"I know the concept of a CEO for most companies is this big boss who sits in his office and attends meetings all day long.

## We are now at a stage where our clients trust us completely with their brands

And, to be honest, I do have an office and I'm fairly busy in meetings for most of my time. But I also make sure that I engage with my colleagues, from both a personal and professional perspective."

"I believe it's important to give people the platforms to shine and be successful. When my colleagues need me, I have an open-door policy; they can come in at any given time. I often joke that I never lock my office so, essentially, people are welcome to enter my office, whether I'm there or not. On a serious note though, it's about trust. I trust my colleagues to deliver the work I expect to see, and I also hold them accountable for both their successes and failures," he explains.

"We have been blessed with many successes, however, Pacinamix is a business that never rests in the comfort zone of previous successes. We are always seeking growth. For a business owner to create

sustainable wealth, they need to make a point of reinvesting in the business and growing it, which includes growing the skills base and becoming part of the global community in order to remain at the top of their game, for themselves and their clients," explains Zungu, adding that an insatiable desire to learn is an integral cornerstone of entrepreneurship.

"You can't grow if you refuse to expand your thinking beyond a limited vision. My decision to keep learning has automatically broadened my horizons in a way I could never have imagined. Knowledge always leads to personal and financial growth," he says.

In addition, Zungu advises people who are entering business for the first time to treat entrepreneurship as a long game. "Know that it's not a short-term venture. A business needs to pass the three-year mark in order to have a chance of flourishing, but you're likely to fail at your first attempt. Keep persevering and don't be hard on yourself if things don't work out—if you don't succeed in the entrepreneurial space, there are other opportunities to create wealth. From personal experience, I'd also advise aspiring entrepreneurs to remember that the money the venture makes isn't their own. It belongs to the business.

"I also believe that success is measured by the level of trust and faith our clients have in us. As a company, we are now at a stage where our clients trust us completely with their brands to the point where we are part of their internal decision-making process," he says.

"Our mandate as Pacinamix is solidifying black excellence on a global stage, ensuring that we lay the foundation for other black businesses to compete on the same stage," concludes Zungu.

As a disruptor Pacinamix is a black business that has emerged to be a business that is not afraid to instigate and adopt cutting-edge business practices that both re-invent and demonstrate the possibilities for South African black-owned businesses to have their rightful place on the global business stages and not be tied down by past inequalities. **BBQ**



# Putting pen to paper

The 24-year-old Contemporary Artist, Lebo Tladi, creates ingenious hand-drawn artworks with significant detail meant to inspire the mind and encourage imagination

**S**aturated with detail and a feast for the mind are probably the best ways to describe his artwork, in which elements of mysticism, scientific imagery, nature and narratives meet in creative harmony.

Tladi's debut solo exhibition took place in 2015 at the prestigious Lauber Gallery in Brooklyn, Pretoria, marking a successful start to his career. Since then, his works have been showcased at the renowned Luvey 'n Rose Gallery in Cape Town and at +27 Café and Gallery in Pretoria. Yet, surprisingly, he ended up in the art world accidentally.

"I was actually applying for medical school and business school but, sadly, got rejected by both of the universities I had applied to due to the dismal mathematics mark I got on my final high school exams.

"At the time, I was beaten down and didn't understand how I was still rejected even though I just missed it by 3%. I was bleak when I received the results that day but, luckily, a friend suggested I study something creative, which I would be able to monetise postgraduation, and I spontaneously applied for graphic design. People tend to say that things happen for a reason. You may not see the reason at the time but you will see it later. These days, I definitely see the reason why I failed maths. For some people, life truly begins after a major failure," explains Tladi.

From a young age, Tladi has always been considered as someone who finds joy in exploring the deepest parts of his imagination. Having read voraciously and watched



a lot of cartoons as a child, he credits many of the visuals in his mind to these elements, "because it taught me that our reality is only a constructed reality and a far more powerful reality exists in our minds", he explains.

"Tapping into a different reality can bring about fresh perspectives and it enhances

your creativity. Combine those together and you often develop recipes for solving problems in a new light. Also, I honestly feel that it is essential for everyone to set some time aside for escaping. The pressures of life can get overwhelming at times, so it helps to clear the mind with different thoughts and see things differently," Tladi adds.

Describing his creative process, Tladi says that he always starts off by putting his ideas down on paper, which entails making points of the themes that he wants to explore. This is usually followed by conducting research on the theme and subject matter.

"Once that's all done, I sort out a musical playlist, which I listen to throughout the project. I then create my 'playground', which is essentially a map on my canvas or paper where I will place certain elements,

"Next, in pencil, I roughly sketch out what needs to go where. Lastly, I go into execution mode, which entails me drawing in the first layer of pen, then a second layer of pen. Then, afterwards, I add details, which is followed by micro-details. Once that's done, I paint with ink where needs be, then I clean the artwork and go over it with another layer of ink before it goes off for scanning and framing. This is my process for planned artworks though. If it's freestyle, I just attack the canvas or paper and react to my emotions," he says.

Tladi explains that, depending on the size of the work, it takes anywhere between three days to five weeks to create a single work from start to completion. Although, he adds that not too much focus is placed on how long it will take to complete the work but rather on the quality of the end result.

Because his work is a continuous extension of his imagination and thoughts—two things that never quite reach an ending point—he says that determining when a piece is complete is all about balance.

"Balance in the work is always a key indicator and that's usually felt intuitively. It should be aesthetically pleasing and, most importantly, get the message across if there is a message to it. But when you get a hunch, you just know that you're done," explains Tladi.

Art is very diverse in that there are many ways of understanding it. While he hoped that he wouldn't have to face the question of how he defines art, he says that, without a doubt, art is an act of expressing feelings, thoughts, ideas and observations.

"It's a form of communication, which appeals to our senses and feelings, our ideas and emotions and, most importantly,

our imaginations. Honestly, it's an intrinsic human trait to create and consume art. Without it, life would be so dull... I can't imagine that," he says.

In order to maintain his creativity and remain inspired, he sets aside time to draw daily.

"Some days, I get a higher output than others but I do my best to get some art done every day. I've been doing this diligently for about four years now so it feels like it's very much a part of my life. Being able to pay your bills from an honest living while doing what you love is a blessing.

the plan as I go about creating the work. From time to time, I freestyle and it always turns out to be a fun and pleasant challenge when I go that route," Tladi says.

His work allows the viewer to create their own story behind the art and he encourages the audience to do so. "If I always share the stories and tidbits about my work, I feel like I am denying the viewer the chance to have their own interpretation. I realised I draw multiple images in each artwork and in some cases, intertwine multiple narratives. I usually don't share the story behind most of my

## Because his work is a continuous extension of his imagination and thoughts—two things that never quite reach an ending point—he says that determining when a piece is complete is all about balance

That, along with the willingness to challenge myself and constantly improve, keeps me motivated," says Tladi.

On how his work represents him as a person, he says that more than anything, it showcases his level of patience and perseverance. "I never thought I'd say this, but I've been learning so many life lessons from drawing, such as paying attention to the little things and learning to see things through, no matter how challenging the project may be," he explains.

As with most artists, he says that his work evolves every time he practices to improve. "I'm a huge advocate of deliberate practice. The Japanese concept of Kaizen is applied to my daily life—constant improvement is crucial in what you do and in life in general. With projects, I tend to have a vision in mind. I'm also always open to modifying

work, so it's always fun hearing people's comments and stories about the work. After all, if the art is engaging and sparks conversation, then I know it serves a good purpose. I also enjoy knowing that my work can entertain a person's mind every time they engage with it," he enthuses.

As pen is a very unforgiving medium, it forces Tladi to be more creative, especially when mistakes occur. "Unlike a pencil, you can't erase your mistakes and unlike paint, you can't paint over them. I enjoy that though—building on my mistakes and learning how to improve my drawing style in a demanding way—as you're really doing yourself a favour when you force yourself out of your comfort zone. Which is funny because pen and ink have somewhat become comfortable mediums for me... I need to start painting," he muses.

Recently he has been experimenting with other mediums and learning the ropes of scaling the work to a wider audience. At the beginning of October, he had a solo exhibition, "Equilibrium", at The Art House Gallery in Johannesburg. In this exhibition, he delineated multiple narratives through the use of his preferred medium, pen and ink. However, the exhibition also served as a platform for the artist to showcase his recent and more experimental artworks.

"Equilibrium was beautiful to witness but tough to set up and prepare for. Considering that I churned out about 20 new works in six months, I was pleased with myself to have achieved this. It proved to me that if you put your mind to something and work relentlessly at it, you can do much more than what you expected. People loved the new work I had on display and were highly intrigued by seeing it on other formats such as cushions, skateboard decks, kakejikus, maple wood and Perspex," says Tladi.

"For a while now, I've been thinking about how I can commercialise a few of my works annually to get a number of affordable products in the hands of those who can't afford the original art pieces and their replicas. It's also a way for me to relate with people from other markets like skaters. By breaking away from the conventional pen and ink on paper, I now see how I can make the most of my skills. As a result of all of this, people have been responding extremely well to my work and I am thankful for that because it reconfirms my feeling that I'm on the right path and direction," he says.

Tladi explains that what excites him the most about the contemporary South African art scene is that it has come a long way. Clear examples of this are the Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town and the CIRCA Gallery in Johannesburg.

"I love that it's a bit more inclusive now. People like myself, solely due to skin colour, who otherwise wouldn't have had the chance to compete in the global art scene, can now do so. I also love its potential for growth and the attention that it has been garnering from global collectors. As Africa's most advanced country and economy, so

many people from all walks of life tend to flock to South Africa. Add to that the fact that South Africa itself is so diverse and you end up with a fusion of creativity you likely won't get anywhere else in the world. I love that it's so diverse, inclusive and has something everyone can relate to," he says.

However, he does add that he believes there is room for improvement and room to expose art to many other people who wouldn't otherwise have access to it. He also

## Art is very diverse in that there are many ways of understanding it

believes that making opportunities available to diligent and rising artists, irrespective of gender and race, will make a significant difference, along with educating people about art and its importance in society.

"Furthermore, we should foster an environment and culture of collecting art and seeing it as an alternative investment option as well," says Tladi.

While he loves what he does, Tladi says that his experience as an artist so far has definitely been tough as it is a challenging and cut-throat industry to be in, especially because no one gives you validation.

"You don't get a license or certificate from art school, which gives you permission to be an artist, like a lawyer, doctor or engineer needs. I'll admit, though, the rewards are often high and they remind me why the late nights and early mornings are worth it, especially at this stage in my career. One thing I've learnt is that any journey is slightly easier and more endearing when you love what you do and pour your whole being into it," he explains.

Tladi says that, within the art space, there are plenty of opportunities for creative minds if one applies themselves diligently to their craft, works hard and brings something unique to the table. He has developed his career by seeking out opportunities, building solid relationships with the people he engages and the utilisation of the Internet, which has proven to be an effective tool in the art industry.

"I'm usually not one for trends but one art world trend I have jumped on is using alternative online platforms to sell my work. It's a billion-dollar industry, so there's an abundance of collectors and money to go around. I've also started collecting art seriously. For me, this is more of a long-term 'trend' and not a fleeting one," he says.

In terms of artists he admires and why he does, Tladi says that, off the top of his head, he'd have to say, James Jean, Augustine Kofie, KAWS, Anish Kapoor, Takashi Murakami, Diane Victor and Tatenda Chidora.

"I admire and respect a strong work ethic, discipline, a unique style and innovation within your own work and the art industry. The artists above possess these characteristics and most of them have mastered how to make a business from their craft without compromising who they are and the quality of their work," he says.

For Tladi, the best part of being an artist is the freedom to do what you love, which he describes as a blessing and privilege. And while it's not easy, it brings a lot of joy.

"For me, creating striking visuals means I am able to explore my creative and imaginative sides and I am able to bring these ideas and thoughts to life to share with others. I'm no doctor or engineer but what I make can entertain and move the soul, and I think that's just as important as being in any other industry. **BBQ**

*Shannon Manuel*

*For more information about Lebo Tladi and to view his artwork, please visit [www.lebotladi.co.za](http://www.lebotladi.co.za) or instagram @lebztladi*





### Shards

I created this drawing, so it makes sense if you rotate it 90° clockwise and 90° anti-clockwise. With both my signature and thumbprint at the back, there'll be no telling which way is the right way up. It's such a lovely way to confuse people who will regularly engage with it. Don't you think?

However, the real reason I created this drawing is that it served as a reaction to my past heartbreaks. It's titled "Shards" and it delineates the fragments of the broken heart I had (the multiple floating objects). Which is silly because I've always thought of the heart as an organ, which pumps blood, I'm just practical like that! With words being so woefully inadequate for a guy like me, I decided it's best to let the pain out through drawing... creating. Well, this drawing is actually Shards I and Shards II neatly framed together to form one work. The butterflies in the drawing represent the butterflies one would normally feel in their stomach when they think about someone they love. You know? The warm fuzzy feelings. The blooming flowers also represent new life, a new beginning... much like a butterfly experiencing

life after its cocoon stage. Both the flowers and the butterflies represent my girlfriend, and show that there is beauty to be appreciated, regardless of the heartbreaks you've gone through.





### Ikari Kuruu Nami (Raging Waves) and Seijakuna Kigi (Silent Trees)

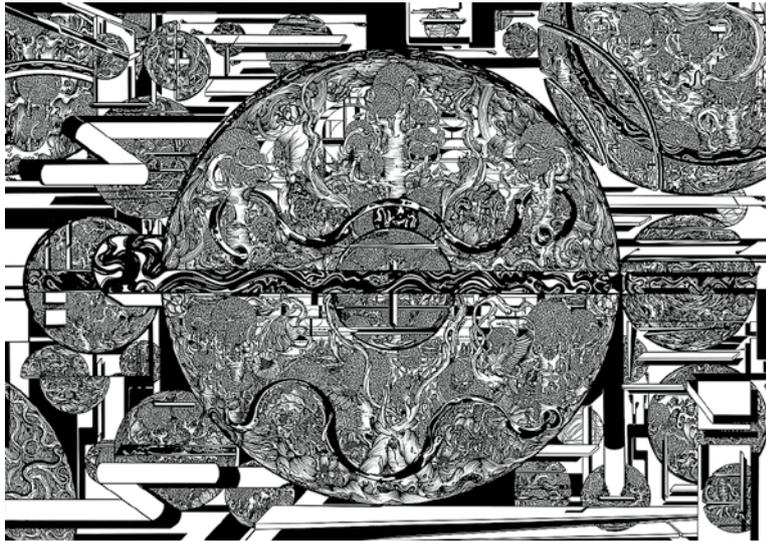
I created these drawings to experiment on how to make kake-monos/kakejikus—a traditional Japanese method of creating art or calligraphy on a scroll. I chose to get mine made on cotton twill (I'm always a supporter of natural fabrics). Besides the experimentation aspect, the drawings were also created as a reaction to my emotions at the time. With "Ikari Kuruu Nami", I was going through a tough time. I felt overwhelmed by life and kept thinking how my problems were flowing in like a great wave. Unless you're a surfer

or have fish-like swimming abilities, waves can easily consume you—much like feeling consumed by your life and emotions you don't want to experience. In contrast I created "Seijakuna Kigi" when things were going uphill for me. I'm a fairly reclusive person, so I enjoy silence and serenity and always show it in my drawings when I experience those emotions. The butterflies in the drawing also represent me breaking free from the "Ikari Kuruu Nami" phase—transcending from dark to light.



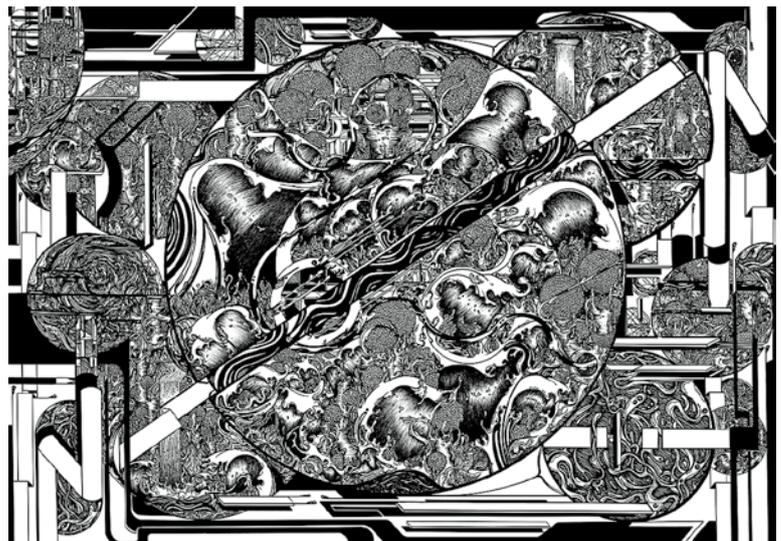
### The Tree Part I, II, III

The Tree is undoubtedly my biggest and most ambitious drawing project to date. So far, it measures at 3m x 0,7m and will measure at 3m x 1,5m when I complete the second row over the course of the next few months. This has definitely been the drawing, which catapulted me to be where I am today in my career. The magnitude of



they engage with it. I also made this drawing to prove a statement: that I am able to push myself out of my comfort zone, and to show the world, especially collectors, gallerists, curators and art aficionados that a young South African is able to produce works of such a calibre.

the drawing, along with its many intricate details, makes it all the more captivating. The artwork is split into six segments, which predominately have either water, earth, fire and air in all of them (air works well with all the elements). It's created to represent human emotions in the form of nature and the four elements, and to really give the viewer a better appreciation of nature whenever



# Qhubeka Forensic Services

A top industry player in forensic auditing and investigation services for over a decade

**Q**hubeka Forensic Services was established in 2005 as a small entity focusing on forensic investigations and probes within the medical sector. Its birth was motivated by the rise in white-collar crimes within the said sector and the need for black-owned entities to play a significant role in being specialist investigators.

The founders, coming from distinctly different backgrounds, SAPS and corporate, sought to create a partnership that would marry investigation expertise and a corporate culture, thus, establishing a high-quality firm founded on good principals and committed to producing excellence.

"In the 12 years of operation, Qhubeka has seen steady growth," says Sinenjabulo Zungu, the Chief Executive Officer.

"We started small, doing the right things right. Our focus has shifted from mainly investigations to becoming a more holistic forensic firm providing more comprehensive forensic investigation services, and it has been a fulfilling journey.

"We are continuously looking to expand our service offerings, using our current expertise as the base. We stay abreast of new developments within our industry and continuously strive to maintain and improve on our existing services, approach and quality," she explains.

Zungu began her journey as the CEO of Qhubeka Forensic Services in 2017, following her tenure as the Marketing Manager at the same company.

Having worked in marketing and sales roles in her young career, Zungu promises to usher in a new managerial flair, focusing especially on transformation on all fronts and unrivalled service delivery.

Born in Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal, Zungu matriculated at St Mary's DSG, Kloof, in 2005 and is a University of Cape Town Business Science (Marketing Honours) graduate. She started her career in outdoor advertising as a Marketing Analyst where she was also a representative on the industry board, Out of Home Media South Africa (OHMSA), as part of the marketing committee. In 2013, she co-founded a biometric technology business, which saw her exploring her entrepreneurial flair. In 2015, she changed industries and had a stint in the FMCG space in one of South Africa's most recognised grocery brands. She is also currently on the board of Pacinamix, a marketing and strategy consulting firm.



*Sinenjabulo Zungu, Chief Executive Officer*

Raised by strong women, Zungu sees herself playing a significant role in the upliftment and empowerment of young women in the workplace as well as in the South African context at large.

"I am a firm believer in serving and leading by example. Great communication, exhibiting compassion towards your staff and allowing for conversation(s) go a long way because, when difficult decisions have to be made, it makes it that much easier to deal with. I do not believe in micromanagement. Allow your employees the liberty to perform beyond your expectations and motivate and reward them accordingly," says Zungu.

Qhubeka has achieved major successes in a variety of forensic disciplines and prides itself in executing its services with the utmost integrity, excellence, impartiality and accuracy, and, as a result, has become reputable in the industry for its quality services.



"Qhubeka's core objective is to provide dynamic and effective forensic auditing and investigation services that are timeous and cost-effective and, ultimately, setting the standards in the forensic auditing and investigation space. The company has a national footprint as well as some clients in Namibia and Botswana. In terms of the clients we service, we cover all sectors—public, local and provincial governments, SOEs and private (healthcare, logistics, FMCGs etc.)," says Zungu.

Qhubeka Forensic Services core services focus on forensic auditing and accounting, forensic investigations, fraud risk management, legal support and data analytics.

"Fraud risk management is a proactive and ongoing practice of managing fraud, corruption and theft. It entails putting systems and procedures in place in order to circumvent and eliminate procedurally and unlawful behaviour in the workplace," explains Zungu.

"With a holistic approach to our audit investigations, Qhubeka addresses client's requirements in terms of policies, procedures and practice. Qhubeka further aims to not only identify and report on maladministration, corruption, theft, fraud, and/or negligent action through investigative processes, but also to detect and prevent the occurrence thereof."

In terms of litigation support, she explains that the Qhubeka team has a vast legal expertise, emanating from years of experience in private practice as admitted attorneys, as well as from investigations that lead to legal proceedings in both the public and private sectors. The strength and effectiveness of Qhubeka's litigation support services come from the fact that the incumbent resources are not only legally qualified, but are also practising forensic specialists.

"Qhubeka's specialised computer forensic skills encompass both computer forensic services and data analytics. The larger, more complex disputes and investigations usually involve volumes of electronic documents, electronic mails and other forms of data. Qhubeka professionals are equipped with the tools and expertise to assist with analysing the various data and extracting the relevant and useful information with evidentiary value," explains Zungu.

"Services include compiling trend analysis, identifying anomalies through large data sets, data mining and analysis, data interrogation and the utilisation of quantitative and qualitative techniques and processes," she adds.

Qhubeka provides a solution-based approach, tailoring services to meet the clients' individual requirements. "It is absolutely critical that we understand our client(s) and their needs. Our clients have very diverse businesses and areas of operation; a solution for a government department will differ from that of the healthcare industry, for instance. Therefore, a general, one-dimensional approach is, in our opinion, not going to address our respective clients' concerns or add the required value that we strive towards," explains Zungu.

Qhubeka's forensic professionals have proven ways to help clients address the risks and challenges of doing business in today's environment, which include risks related to fraud, corruption and theft, and the challenges regarding how to proactively mitigate against these risks in the environment your organisation operates in.

"We have fraud prevention initiatives to assist in this regard, which would include preventative initiatives i.e. fraud awareness training, detection initiatives i.e. hotlines, and responsive initiatives i.e. investigate irregularities.

"Fraud risk management is a proactive approach to managing fraud risk within an organisation. It starts with the 'tone at the top' and all the people within an organisation must subscribe to it. Proper policies, procedures and monitoring will ensure the success of a risk management methodology," she explains.

The company is invested in their personnel and staff. It endeavours to recruit specialists with the required skills and knowledge for their respective areas of speciality.

"We also have an internship programme, where we take undergraduates with limited experience and provide them with an opportunity to be mentored and to grow within the business. We have quality control processes in place on all deliverables that go out to clients, and this process further transfers skills to the rest of the team," says Zungu.

Recognising that the empowerment of the previously disadvantaged is critical to the progression and transformation of the country, Qhubeka is committed to making a meaningful contribution in this regard through development programmes and initiatives.

"Our social responsibility and black economic empowerment initiatives are geared towards promoting accountancy and forensic investigation as a profession to previously marginalised individuals.

"Qhubeka is passionate about education and related subject matters, and believes in investing in the dignity of our youth and empowering them in order for them to one day lead with integrity. As such, we have adopted a school in KwaZulu-Natal that we assist in various ways, from infrastructure through to educational material," says Zungu.

On what sets Qhubeka Forensic Services apart from its competitors, she says, "We are a medium-size B-BBEE forensic services practice. We are, therefore, not too small to fulfil large assignments, and we are not too big to have uncompetitive rates. We can service clients nationally from our offices. Qhubeka has experience in a myriad of sectors, there is no sector it has not dabbled in. We have a passion for what we do and an even greater passion for uplifting and empowering the youth through training.

"Our vision is to be the beacon for setting optimal standards in the forensic auditing and investigations services and to provide best value services and solutions," concludes Zungu.

# Matatiele Grain Company

## Smallholder farmers become successful competitors within the agribusiness sector

**T**he Matatiele Grain Company (Pty) Ltd (MGC/ GRAINCO) is a black commercial farmer-owned company. The business is a private company, which was registered in 2014 (Reg. Nr 2014/194546/07). The company was formed to service a grain cluster established by the Masisizane Fund (an Initiative of Old Mutual) to develop and cluster grain growers in order to achieve economies of scale and exploit the grain value chain.

"Matatiele Grain Company was established to provide mechanisation services, which are critical to any grain cluster. The primary role of the company is to hire out agricultural plants and equipment to its members and the external market at affordable rates, which may not be afforded by smallholder farmers," explains the Chief Executive Officer, Wandisile Makwabe.

The Alfred Nzo District Municipality is the company's main area of operation, and some work is performed in the Harry Gwala District Municipality. There are plans to expand to the OR Tambo, Chris Hani and Joe Gqabi District Municipalities.

"Our vision is to be the preferred and ever-growing agricultural plant and equipment hiring company that is owned by black commercial farmers within the Alfred Nzo district borderlines by 2020 by any measure," says Makwabe.

Matatiele GrainCo's core business elements lie in agricultural mechanization, with a number of additional services offered such as:

- Ripping;
- Disking;
- Planting;
- Spraying;
- Top dressing;
- Harvesting; and
- The delivery of grain to various markets

Matatiele GrainCo has established a network of professionals and experts in various spheres in order to stay abreast of globalisation. "These individuals include funders who provide affordable financing and business support to farmers such as the Masisizane



*Wandisile Makwabe, Chief Executive Officer*

Fund (Old Mutual); commodity organisations that provide funding and research support such as the Grain Farmer Development Association (GFADA), the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) etc.; and government departments that provide extension services, land for farming and grant funding to ensure blended funding is achieved," explains Makwabe

He explains that there are a number of new global trends and standards that they are currently witnessing in the agricultural



sector. "We've witnessed volatility of the commodity price, markets and exchange rates; policy uncertainty, due to land debates, resulting in the instability of the sector and a shift in programme support for farmers; and an ever-increasing demand for food security and, more alarmingly, ever-increasing occurrences of food insecurity. Additionally, we are also seeing a lower output of research and development and an influx of technology in the sector," says Makwabe.

"New technologies have definitely played an important role in the agricultural sector by enhancing operations significantly and reducing operational costs. More importantly, with the introduction of technology and the understanding of the importance of food security, youth participation has improved. The agricultural sector has many opportunities for new young farmers and it is important that young people are interested in farming. Where there is technology, agro-processing, logistics and retail, agriculture attracts a lot of youth. Technology has enabled Matatiele Grain Company to employ youth and has enhanced the overall efficiency," he adds.

Makwabe considers price and economic issues (demand and supply), adverse risks such as climate, crime and genetic improvements of cultivars to withstand adverse risks as the biggest issues that the grain, seed and feed industries face globally. He also believes that the greatest challenges smallholder farmers face in terms of being successful are access to affordable finance, a lack of agribusiness skills, access to productive lands and security of ownership, access to sustainable markets and an inability to meet value chain requirements due high barriers of entry.

"There are very few black-owned mechanisation companies in the country and the sector is the most untransformed, with the black ownership in various companies being less than 25% overall.



*GrainCo's key stakeholders: the Masisizane Fund with members of its Board and EXCO, joined by leaders of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government*

Inputs, markets and finance are monopolised to lock out poorly resourced smallholder farmers who are at the start-up stage," says Makwabe.

"Agriculture drives growth in communities. In rural areas, agriculture is the key economic activity and driver, it employs more people seasonally than any other sector. The sector creates wealth that is passed on to generations as it is built around a fixed and movable asset model," he adds.

Matatiele Grain Company was one of the recipients of the Masisizane Fund that provided the initial capital investment towards the procurement of mechanisation for the company. The Masisizane Fund mobilised resources from various partners, which includes the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform that also funded the company. In total, the Masisizane Fund has invested over R34 million and the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, through its partnership with the Masisizane Fund, invested over R17 million into the company. Lastly, the Masisizane Fund provides continuous business support to the Matatiele Grain Company.

"One of the biggest challenges facing smallholder farmers is their inability to benefit from economies of scale. This makes farming expensive and prevents smallholder farmers from becoming competitive players in their industry. In addition to the personal success of the co-operative farmers in Matatiele, the farmers of Matatiele GrainCo are also reaping the benefits of large, cost-effective agribusinesses. Farmers receive the best service from top-class machinery and equipment at affordable rates. The company is locally based and easily accessible to the farmers. This effectively allows emerging farmers to not only enter the agribusiness value chain, but to be competitive in the market as well," Makwabe explains.

The Masisizane Fund is assisting the Matatiele Grain Company with the management of the operations and ensuring governance is adhered to. Currently, a business plan to take the company forward and which outlines other components such as grain storage and farming to diversify revenue streams, is being developed with the assistance of the Masisizane Fund.

"Matatiele GrainCo strives to become a world-class and leading mechanisation and agricultural products transporting company that renders the best services to clients through the sharing of information, knowledge and skills.

"This will be achieved by optimising time, cost and quality in all services offered. Our slogan is 'Standing by you, with you, for you—always', and we strive to adhere to it," concludes Makwabe.

# Tourism is the ticket to jobs and growth

President Cyril Ramaphosa has been hailed as the “travel and tourism job creation champion” as tourism prepares for a revival

**T**his is thanks to his stated intention to double the number of people employed in the sector.

The accolade came from the mouth of Gloria Guevara, the President and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Speaking on 22 November at the inaugural WTTC Africa Leaders Forum in Stellenbosch, South Africa, which was hosted by Tourism South Africa, Guevara commented: “In his State of the Nation address in February this year, President Ramaphosa not only mentioned the ‘incredible opportunities’ of travel and tourism, he also set a powerful target to double the number of people directly employed in our sector from 700 000 to 1.4-million.

“Travel and tourism is, without a doubt, South Africa’s greatest engine for the creation of jobs and the alleviation of poverty. It contributes to social equality, encourages the integration of women in the workplace and enables economic self-reliance. It provides employment in parts of the country where other jobs may not exist, and generates a sense of self-worth. We praise the government for recognising those ‘incredible opportunities’ of our sector and the steps it has already taken to realise the potential.

“We see those opportunities falling in three broad areas. We congratulate the government of President Ramaphosa for its efforts to reform the visa process so that more tourists from more countries can visit

the country and recommend that this is rolled-out as widely as possible. Secondly, we support the long-held ambition to fully liberalise the continent’s air services. Finally, we see the benefits of South Africa’s continued adoption of biometrics as a way to make travel safer and more efficient.

**“Travel and tourism is, without a doubt, South Africa’s greatest engine for the creation of jobs and the alleviation of poverty**

“These and other initiatives will help to achieve President Ramaphosa’s ambitions and we look forward to continuing our strong partnership with his Minister of Tourism, His Excellency, Derek Hanekom.”

Travel and tourism is already working from a strong base, with the latest annually published WTTC data indicating that the sector currently contributes a total of 8.9% to South Africa’s gross domestic product (GDP) and creates 726 000 jobs directly, a figure that grew to 1.5-million when all the indirect impacts of the sector are taken into account.

Recent figures from Statistics South Africa show that, of the 15.8-million workers employed formally and informally in South Africa in 2016, 4.4% (or one in every 23 people) were directly employed in the tourism sector. This compares to 3.8% just 10 years prior.

Furthermore, the 690 000 people employed in the sector in 2016 outnumbered those in both mining (444 000) and utilities (118 000). That same year, the tourism sector directly contributed to 2.9% of South Africa’s GDP, making the sector larger in terms of GDP than agriculture, although it is still smaller than construction and mining.

As an organisation, WTTC represents the travel and tourism private sector at a global level, with a membership numbering more than 170 chairs, presidents and CEOs from companies in every part of the industry.

It is not only travel and tourism companies that are promoting the industry. The financial sector is also eyeing the lucrative sector as a potential “silver bullet” for the ailing South African economy. The visa issue represents a particularly appetising



*Pic caption*

case of low-hanging fruit. With the resignation of Malusi Gigaba as the Minister of Home Affairs and a Member of Parliament, the time is ripe for South Africa's tourism-killing visa regime to be amended, in the hope that tourists will give the economy some much-needed CPR.

This is the view of Cannon Asset Managers' Investment Analyst, Tlotliso Phakisi.

The infamously unfriendly visa requirements for which Gigaba will be remembered have crippled the tourism industry by throttling the volume of tourists entering the country. Perhaps the most damaging blow of all was landed by the controversial requirement—frequently derided as nonsensical—that visitors travelling with children under the age of 18 years must provide their unabridged birth certificates (UBC) upon entering or exiting South Africa. Bad press associated with negative experiences suffered by unprepared travellers deterred families from visiting our shores. Faced with the uncertainty and stress of the onerous visa requirements, travellers simply opted to go elsewhere. The direct impact of the visa regime has been measured by the Tourism Business

Council of South Africa (TBCSA), which estimates that more than 13 246 travellers were prevented from entering the country between June 2015 and June 2016 after failing to meet the UBC requirements. When considering how much tourists tend to spend, it is clear that the country lost many millions in potential revenue during this period alone. Of course, the indirect impact is more difficult to gauge—there are no statistics for the number of people who were simply put off or who changed their minds—but the multiplier effect is likely to be substantial.

Now, South Africa has the opportunity to put that episode in the past and restore the travel and tourism sector to its rightful place.

"Despite this, however, tourism has been one of the few sectors in the country to consistently show promise and resilience in terms of both job creation and economic growth over the past few years, demonstrating its potential as the lever needed for turning things around in the short term," says Phakisi.

Referring to the statistics on tourism already cited above, he says, "These figures help to underscore the extent to which tourism has outperformed other key industries in

job creation. And when compared to other countries' tourism receipts, it becomes clear that tourism should be an easy win for South Africa, especially given our rich natural and cultural heritage."

Within the broader context of travel and tourism, the hotel industry is a sub-sector that promises to deliver excellent employment opportunities and a steady career path for school leavers and post-gap year individuals.

The fact is that the industry averaged R16.6-billion in hotel room revenue in 2017 and this is forecast to increase by an additional 5.6%, according to PwC's Hotels Outlook. Considering that the rest of the economy is troubled by economic and political unrest and that a devastating drought continues to plague one of our largest tourism regions, the hotel industry's consistent growth only serves to make it all the more attractive.

In the words of Ronel Bezuidenhout, the Principal and Managing Director of the Capital Hotel School, "Today, there are roughly 124 different roles available across food and beverage, housekeeping, front office and chef departments. This industry is possibly the most diverse environment to



the new and revised grading standards for South Africa from 1 April 2019.

As announced by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA), the objective is “to advance and maintain a recognisable, credible and globally benchmarked system of quality assurance for accommodation and venues in South Africa”.

Two new categories have been introduced in the form of “apartment hotels” and “small hotels”, which will also cover luxury accommodation in the form of boutique hotels. Those products “that far exceed premium expectations with respect to quality standards and service excellence” will now be recognised with a new 5-Star Premium grading level. For too long, five stars have not been enough of an indication to tell the truly exceptional apart from the average.

Niche market differentiation also comes into play with the new grading system, as the TGCSA has introduced a range of “accolades” that “include insignia and criteria for niche markets such as child-friendly, pet-friendly, wedding venues, spa and wellness facilities, 4x4 etc.”.

The accolades offering also includes the category of responsible tourism. The idea is to encourage tourism businesses to operate more responsibly and limit their environmental impact.

This falls in line with comments made on 7 November, World Environment Day, by the recently appointed Western Cape Minister of Economic Opportunities,



*Pic caption*

Beverley Schäfer, who said: “South Africa is seen as a global leader when it comes to responsible tourism, and the first formal declaration in this regard was signed right here in Cape Town in 2002. That declaration recognised the importance of ensuring that responsible tourism generates more opportunities for local people, improves working conditions and creates wider access to the industry.”

Protecting the environment also translates into preserving jobs. “In the Western Cape, tourism is one of our major job creators, creating more than 300 000 direct and indirect job opportunities. By committing to using more local suppliers and services, and fair labour practices, the tourism industry can ensure that tourism is

also economically and socially responsible,” Minister Schäfer said.

It is to be hoped that tourism destinations outside of the Western Cape will take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new grading system.

“The approved enhancements to the grading system create greater value for our members and will further aid the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa in upholding and improving the competitive positioning of South Africa as a quality destination,” comments Darryl Erasmus, the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa’s Chief Quality Assurance Officer.

“The implementation date of 1 April 2019 offers sufficient time for us to consult and socialise the revised grading system with all the stakeholders. It will also enable our members to ready themselves for their next assessments based on the revised criteria,” he adds.

“This would not have been possible without the participation of our valued stakeholders and we are immensely grateful for their involvement. I would like to thank the industry for their contributions and inputs as well as their patience whilst the TGCSA completed this revision process. The valuable inputs of all our stakeholders have resulted in a set of criteria that are globally competitive, yet uniquely South African,” concludes Erasmus. **BBQ**



*Pic caption*

*Greg Penfold*

# Fasset

Co-ordinating the supply and demand of skills within the finance and related services sector



*Elizabeth Thobejane, acting CEO*

**T**he Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Fasset) was established in 2000 and its main role is to influence the effective operation of the labour market through effective skills, so as to ensure the appropriate supply of competent labour, which is necessary to compete in the global economy.

“There are four strategic goals that form the foundation of Fasset: increasing the flow of new finance and accountancy entrants to employment, developing and growing the skills required in the sector, facilitating the transformation of the finance and accountancy sector and producing knowledge of the skills needed in the sector in order for stakeholders to make informed decisions about skills development opportunities,” explains the acting CEO, Elizabeth Thobejane.

Fasset provides funding across a range of programmes in the financial and related services sector. They have a number of bursaries and work with all the major universities, universities of technologies, as well as with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. Strengthening the capacity of TVET institutions has become a primary focus of Fasset’s revised strategic approach.

“We decided to start supporting the TVET sector actively as, in a way, it tends to still be a bit of a forgotten sector, suffering from esteem issues in terms of learners attending TVET Colleges and attaining the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) only to find it is not well regarded by employers. Learners themselves are feeling that they are in a programme where, upon completion, there

aren't many prospects, post the attainment of that certification," says Thobejane.

"So, we are supporting this sector from our end and we've targeted learners who have enrolled for the financial certificate and also the business management certificate to complete a workplace learning component as part of their requirement to complete their certification. For the 2018/2019 year, we will be financing 480 TVET learners to be placed in the 18-month learnership programme," she adds.

Thobejane says that this is only one of the initiatives of the new pipeline approach to skills development in the financial services sector. She explains that in correlation with the strategic posture of the new board and the aims of facilitating employment, for the first time since 1919, Fasset has made the decision to finance 1 000 matriculants and place them into 18-month learnerships.

"We have found that the majority of unemployment occurs within those groups that come out of matric and who are not going to university—they cannot undergo any form of further education or training. They exit school and become unemployed. For the first time, this is why we've decided to join hands with the country's YES programme and we are actually going to finance 1 000 matriculants and place them into learnership programmes over 18 months. Part of that programme is also looking at building work readiness skills and the rest of the programme is about building the critical skills that those learners need."

Thobejane stresses that having an effective pipeline approach is the key to successful skills development. She explains that delving deeper into the pipeline and looking at and reassessing the performance of our basic education system, the quality of teaching and the production of students with good pass rates in maths and accounting can drastically impact the financial services sector.

"If we're limping at the foundations, we are never going to achieve the correct quality higher up in the pipeline. What we're finding when looking at the TVET system, for example, is that, yes, we can pull TVET

graduates and put them into strong programmes with our professional bodies, but they already enter the programme with such a disadvantage and we can see that it goes back to the quality of teaching and learning in the colleges," says Thobejane.

She says that, often, the curriculum may not be keeping up with the developments in the industry and elements of it are a bit too theoretical and outdated. Through research and conversations with the Department of Higher Education, Fasset has identified that a big constraint is the quality of teaching in the colleges, and has made the forward-thinking decision to finance the upskilling of college lecturers of the Financial Management Certification qualification.

Thobejane also explains that Fasset's strategy will shift majorly to place more emphasis on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 4 and 5 and will not only focus on improving high-end skilling at NQF Level 6.

"The financial sector is all about what drives the income and produces that high level of contribution to the GDP. Traditionally, there is a great focus on improving high-end skilling. However, it becomes very important for us—and this is the message, going forward—to place more emphasis on NQF Levels 3, 4 and 5, which are your low- to mid-level skill production, because that is where there is a substantial scarcity of skills. We need to focus on low NQF Levels to decrease unemployment and support transformation," says Thobejane.

"We've achieved a lot of in-growth in terms of fast-tracking black graduates into professional designations and also supporting black graduates who are still at university, to increase the throughput rate at a university level and also to then support them as they enter the workforce," she adds.

To further enforce strengthening the pipeline approach, also in 2019/2020, Fasset is, with much more focus, going to increase and bring back their intervention with basic education with the schools, partnering with the schools in terms of improving maths and related gateway subjects. "We also

have to strengthen our career development programme because that is where learners are often not clear about what the options are that are available to them and how to navigate them," says Thobejane.

"The financial services sector is one of the key economic sectors that is critical to keeping the South African economic engine driving. We're interested in deepening the value of our programmes and it was a very determined decision by Fasset to say that we will go beyond just the financing of training, and will start to look at the value chain from school to university to the workplace, and solidifying the pipeline," she says.

With over 20 years in the skills development sector, Thobejane has occupied various roles, most recently, as the Deputy Director General in the Gauteng Provincial Government. She began her career as a school educator, eventually becoming a Human Resource Development Officer involved in training and programme development. In 2000, she became a Policymaker in the government.

"As a Policymaker, I was part of the architecture of the skills development plan and learnership regulations that we are currently using.

"In this role, the biggest frustration for me was not being able to witness the complete progression from the creation of a policy to its implementation. What would make it so frustrating is that you would know the line of communication—from the intention of policymakers and the understanding and the application of it further downstream—but then it would end up not aligning, and you'd ask yourself why these things have not worked with the level of success you had anticipated in the policy. And that is what I enjoy about my current role at Fasset. Being able to follow through from start to end, identify the sore points and create solutions," says Thobejane.

"Taking the pipeline approach and cementing the other missing elements in the value chain and ensuring that we pay attention to those will guarantee learner success so that we can guarantee a better return on investment," she concludes.

# Lurco Business

## Providing innovation through best practice

**T**he multidisciplinary technology and consulting company, Lurco Business, answers real business challenges through innovation and best practice, providing high-value end-to-end solutions to various industries.

“Lurco Business was registered in 2010, but I kept it non-operational due to my very hectic work commitments and studying,” explains the founder and Business Director, Maupi Peter Letsoalo.

“The company started operating in mid-2016 and I positioned it to focus on three pillars, namely technology, consulting and acquisitions,” he adds.

His parents were strict advocates of academia, and Letsoalo holds a number of academic qualifications, achieving a Bachelors (BSc), Honours and Master of Science (MSc) in Computer Science at the University of the Free State, followed by a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). Currently, he is completing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at North-West University (NWU) and a Doctorate in Business Leadership (DBL) at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Letsoalo possesses a plethora of professional certificates and has worked in various senior and advisory positions for companies such as Eskom (via a consulting firm), Business Connections, the South African Bureau of Standards, Rotek Engineering and KTS Technology.

“Throughout my career, I have always wanted to start my own business and see it flourish. I kept postponing that dream because year after year, I would take on even more financial commitments,” explains Letsoalo.

It was a scuffle with an executive at his previous engineering firm that motivated his resignation and provided the push he needed to establish Lurco Business.

“Lurco Business focuses on delivering high-end solutions to clients and on conducting the assessments necessary to enable the use of technology. The reason for that is most companies purchase very expensive software and hardware infrastructure and realise their mistake only after they have financially committed and they are locked in contracts they can’t get out of.

“More often than not, their internal staff rarely uses the software, which just becomes a white elephant. So, we assist them by first conducting assessments to find the pain points to prioritise. We uncover mission critical elements of the business and then match



*Maupi Peter Letsoalo, Founder and Business Director*

them with technology. This is the reason why we don’t necessarily sell technology upfront to our clients,” explains Letsoalo.

In terms of acquisitions, the company focuses on acquiring technology, services or products that are not well-known by the market.

“We do this to get a leading edge. There are many resellers of well-known technologies and solutions in the market, so much so, that it’s not worth competing against the bigger ICT providers. They control the pricing index and they can always kick you out of the market. Because of this, we had to look for technology solutions only we own or only a handful of companies have the competence to deliver.



"One of the acquisitions we are currently busy with is an exclusive agreement with a Silicon Valley-based company to become the SADC region's Master value-added reseller (VAR). That way, we will have control over the pricing index of the technology with our own reseller network," he says.

Currently, the company operates from its Midrand office in Birchwood Court but, through partnerships with various other technology providers, it has a national footprint.

"We have a partner that operates in Mozambique, Kenya and Mauritius, and through that partnership arrangement, we have started making inroads there. Our biggest win will come to fruition when our agreement with this United States-based company concludes. We will gain an SADC-based footprint, which will be a collection of 16 countries. Our vision is to grow drastically in 2019 after we have concluded our international agreements," Letsoalo enthuses.

Made up of a team of young dynamic minds, Lurco Business is well-positioned to keep clients at the forefront of the technology evolution, motivated by knowledge, skills and the organisation's ability, as well as to keep the company abreast of new technologies, especially during the Fourth Industrial Revolution era.

"Currently, we are busy drafting business proposals around the Fourth Industrial Revolution within the SADC region. When the wave hits, we want to be one of the primary technology firms that controls its consumption," says Letsoalo.

He mentions two very big business examples around this, the first being the use of high-performance computing in various sectors such as mining, agriculture, finance and human settlements.

"The list for using this technology is endless. We can help companies that deal with artificial intelligence (AI), big data and aviation realise their benefits," says Letsoalo.

"The second example is the use of space communication technology to monitor, operate and control ground-level infrastructure. The biggest benefit of this technology is that it will enable Eskom, Transnet, Sentech, the Department of Energy, among many other entities, to have a global view of their infrastructure and much more," he explains.

Lurco's core consulting services include project management, management consulting, technology and maturity assessment compliances. Lurco offers various security countermeasures like a state-of-the-art firewalling solution that is locally produced. Through their acquisition model, they have an exclusive agreement to distribute this solution to the public sector or via other technology providers that have public sector clients.

"This solution is built using the same principles, hardware and software as the likes of the more favoured international brands like Cisco, Juniper, Fortinet etc. The same technology can be used in

an enterprise environment or when one has to design a network topology.

"The technology is called software-defined wide-area network (SD-WAN), which is the new wave of technology to replace the traditional Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS), which is more expensive. So, through this network technology, we are able to offer security as a service and design a more efficient and cost-effective network topology for your enterprise," explains Letsoalo.

Lurco Business is a unique technology company that works on the basis of solving mission critical and core services and then bringing optimisation and value-add to a well-functioning system.

"What sets us apart is that we don't just pack a solution onto a collapsing environment and hope for the best, like most companies would do because they are chasing a bottom line more than anything else. We believe that when our clients grow, we grow and vice versa," says Letsoalo.

His leadership style and personal business philosophy are rooted in his belief that anything that lands on your table effortlessly can also disappear the same way it came, thus making him a firm advocate of good old-fashioned hard work.

"There are times when I spend three complete days without sleeping. When I started, I used to struggle to function well if I hadn't slept for a day. I could even feel my heart trying to leave my chest. As time went by, I became used to it, so much so, that I could push myself for three full days without sleep. My wife knows I like to say that I wish a day were 34 or 40 hours long, instead of 24 hours. There's so much to do and time is a commodity we rarely have," he muses.

On his approach to dealing with challenges, Letsoalo says that he has learnt that they cannot be resolved by the same conditions that created them and that while most challenges can be resolved, the injection of human arrogance into the equation deters the production of a solution. He further states that while developing and running a business is not easy, perseverance and self-motivation is key.

"Being a serial 'technopreneur' in an emerging economy, like South Africa, can be very difficult and discouraging. We have the capability to provide disruptive technologies crafted locally, but the business market hasn't matured enough to look for and develop solutions locally rather than overseas.

"Many South African firms have the knowledge to invent even far greater than what the more developed countries can offer us. If we don't encourage this development, we will lose the next Elon Musk or Paul Maritz.

"The journey hasn't been easy at all but I believe we are moving in a direction that will greatly improve the landscape of South Africa, technology-wise," Letsoalo concludes.



# Emerging markets in Africa

## Turning African investment opportunities into successful mergers and acquisitions

**T**he International Monetary Fund predicts that Africa will be the world's second-fastest growing region in the period leading to 2020. This ensures that the continent will remain squarely on the radar of foreign companies and investors. South African companies, too, are eyeing opportunities across our borders in light of this country's uncertain economic growth.

While challenges persist on the continent, these are more recently being viewed as investment opportunities. For example, Africa's infrastructure deficit provides a compelling case for investment in sectors such as transportation, energy, agriculture, telecoms and housing, which remain critical to enabling economic growth and driving productivity for Africa, yet can offer investors attractive returns.

An initiative that concretises investor interest and opportunity is the G20 Compact with Africa (CwA), which was launched last year under the German G20 presidency to promote private investment in Africa for companies within the European Union (EU). The compact seeks to support coordination between African countries, international organisations and bilateral G20 partners to support economic, business and financial sector reforms that will attract private investment. EU countries invested US\$22 billion in Africa in 2017 and the UN World Investment Report of 2018 anticipates foreign direct investment (FDI) into Africa to grow to around US\$50 billion.

From an investment perspective, Kishan Govan, an Associate within the corporate

finance team at Bravura, an independent investment banking firm specialising in corporate finance and structured solutions, says that companies seeking acquisition opportunities in Africa require experienced corporate finance partners that can guide them through often complex transactions.

"Attractive investment opportunities may not be as straightforward as anticipated. The reality is that there are any number of complications that may emerge in African deals. This ranges from a technical perspective, where deal structuring might have to take into account different legal jurisdictions, to relationship management that necessitates an understanding of the local markets and business cultures on which the success of the transaction could ultimately rest," he explains.

Govan recalls the example in which a family-run business based in a UK territory needed to raise capital in order to fund the acquisition of a majority share in a Malawian business.

"This was expected to be a straightforward transaction. However, an indecisive minority shareholder and an inherently risky investment jurisdiction resulted in a more complex, protracted transaction that included three parallel processes. There was one process with the seller, one with the funder and one with the minority shareholder who had certain pre-emptive rights. A pre-emptive right gives a shareholder the right to acquire shares of a disposing shareholder, on the same terms and conditions, as those accepted by the disposing shareholder from a third party. To manage

all three aspects required a consistently strong set of technical skills combined with the development of good relationships with the client and other stakeholders in order to ensure that everyone remained invested throughout the process," he explains.

### Funding challenges

Undertaking two separate transactions was necessary for this transaction, outlines Govan. One which was the merger and acquisition transaction itself and the other to source and secure the funding timeously.

"It was imperative to work with the client to understand their requirements and then to settle on the most appropriate funding instrument," he says.

While equity is dilutive, given that the partner will take shares, the benefit over (senior) debt is that there are no mandatory fixed payment terms or security criteria. However, says Govan, as their client was a family-run business with long-term goals, it was clear that the equity route would be too dilutive for their liking.

Debt funding, says Govan, can prove difficult in certain jurisdictions and this was true for this transaction.

"There are few banks in Malawi that can undertake debt funding and it was difficult to find the right security parameters for a Malawian transaction of the required amount. The banks were also uncomfortable with the tight timelines the parties were required to meet," he explains.

Since the characteristics of equity and senior debt did not suit the requirements of the client and other stakeholders in this

deal, mezzanine debt funding was proposed. After discussions with equity, debt and mezzanine providers in Malawi, South Africa and multiple other jurisdictions, it became apparent that mezzanine providers were also the most interested parties in pursuing the transaction.

### Mezzanine funding in Africa

Mezzanine funding is a flexible instrument in that it contains certain characteristics from both equity and debt instruments. The main advantage for the client is that it is less dilutive than equity but also less restrictive than senior debt.

Mezzanine is typically structured as cash-flow funding and can be structured to follow the company's lifecycle and liquidity events such as an exit after a certain number of years. There were no apparent mezzanine funders in Malawi, so the funding had to be sought from international funds from South Africa, the United Kingdom or the Middle East. However, Malawi as a jurisdiction poses certain risks for these foreign funders such as currency, macroeconomic, political and security exposure. Where there is a debt component, the issue of how to enforce security in a jurisdiction like Malawi becomes challenging.

"Mezzanine in Africa is largely uncharted territory. While some funders do provide this, it is concentrated to a few funds, which have a specific mandate to provide mezzanine funding in Africa.

"In securing funding for this transaction, we spoke to everybody and investigated all available instruments. We were finally able to secure mezzanine funding from a South African financier and structured it according to our client's needs that included a strong debt-like component," Govan says.

### Transaction complexities

This is one of the most complex structures that people will see in an acquisition, says Govan. The transaction needed to be structured through multiple jurisdictions, comply with legal, tax and exchange control requirements, and the process with the seller, funder, minority partner and regulatory bodies had to be carefully managed.

"Both our client and the minority shareholder needed to be comfortable with the financier. For the financier—given that there was an equity component to their investment—they needed to be sure the deal was being managed correctly to ensure a suitable return on their investment," he says.

Concluding the deal was a lengthy process and took several months from signing to closure. "

Our team views the technical work as a non-negotiable commodity but it is the role of the trusted advisor—who is able to successfully guide the client and other stakeholders through the process to conclusion—that is paramount."

Govan concludes, "Although there are ample opportunities in Africa, cognisance must be taken of the complexities that could hinder investment. Having an experienced team with knowledge of and experience



From a technical point of view, structuring the deal, meeting the legal and tax requirements, which are all inter-conditional, and obtaining regulatory approvals did extend the timeline, given that we had stakeholders and agreements spanning multiple jurisdictions," states Govan.

But it was the complexity of managing all the parties and aligning everyone that took the most time. Govan says, "This is where personal skills and relationships cannot be underestimated. There were times when each party was poised to walk away from the negotiating table. We needed to encourage constructive discussion and ensure that everyone was comfortable with the projected outcome

in diverse African jurisdictions to facilitate investment opportunities can assist in realising significant investment potential." BBQ

*Kishan Govan*

*Bravura Holdings Limited is an independent investment banking firm specialising in corporate finance and structured solutions services. Bravura Holdings has a primary listing on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius and a secondary listing on the NSX. It has offices in Mauritius, South Africa, Namibia and Australia.*

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# ProVest Group

## Providing quality services to the mining industry

**T**he proudly South African ProVest Group strives to be the service company of choice, which helps its clients, people and communities to grow and prosper

According to Pine Pienaar, the CEO, the name, ProVest, is an abbreviation of Professional Investment, referring to their investment in their employees through ongoing training, enabling personal growth, as well as their investment in their clients who benefit from the dedication and goal-orientated approach of their people, thus ensuring their clients attain their goals and objectives.

"These investments are under the mantra of professionalism in our conduct, and in the services and products we deliver. We strive for the name ProVest to be the choice brand recognised for quality," he says.

In terms of their key mining services, the ProVest Group provides specialised cementitious products, such as shotcrete of different strengths and times to strengthen, to the mining industry.

"We also provide underground secondary support through the application of shotcrete and the drill and installation of anchors. The manufacturing of Thin Spray Liner (TSL) and the application thereof also forms a large part of our business.

"Other products provided are the Blasting Control Device (BCD), which prevents reverse priming and has the added benefit of improving the advance per blast. Our Platchro Mining division does traditional mining contract work such as underground stopping, development, vamping and construction," explains Tshego Sefolo, the Chairman.

As a 'one stop shop', ProVest has become adept at seamlessly getting different functions to work together for maximum



*Tshego Sefolo, Chairman*

productivity. "Clear goals and objectives determine the workflow of functions and individuals, the who that needs to do what, and the role of each individual. It is no different to that of a successful sports team. Obviously, the incentives for achieving predetermined productivity goals must also support efforts in a manner which does

not compromise safe working practices," Pienaar explains.

With regard to exciting projects ProVest is involved in and their outlook for the rest of the year, Pienaar says, "We are consistently challenged by changes in the external environment pertinent to the mining industry, whether it is Mining



Charter changes, declining volumes of work resulting from low commodity prices or community pressures on mines, we have to constantly reposition ourselves as a result. This while we seek external and organic growth opportunities to ensure employment for our employees," he says.

ProVest has been fortunate to render its services and products to most of the Blue Chip South African hard rock underground miners, namely Sibanye-Stillwater, Glencore, Two Rivers, Northam Platinum, Anglo American Platinum, South32, Lonmin and Royal Bafokeng Platinum.

"As with all businesses, the key to remaining in business is to provide value for money, through consistently delivering quality services and products to our clients. The products and services obviously need to be backed by highly-qualified and experienced mining capabilities—our people, good safety systems and records, and an online track record. Our products are backed by the quality assurance accreditation of ISO 9001: 2015.

"In 2014, we made a conscious decision to differentiate ourselves in the industry by introducing our own safety system supported by safety officers, which is in addition to our client's specific safety systems, standards and procedures," explains Sefolo.

#### Access to finance

Sefolo says that, when one has a compelling investment story, access to finance becomes less of an issue.

"Very often, people are preoccupied with raising finance before refining the investment case. If the story is good, the money will follow. I recently saw a Harvard Business School study by Shikhar Ghosh, which says that over a 10-year period, over 70% of start-ups fail. You must ask the question, is it the inability to access finance or a business case, which wasn't robust enough to withstand market forces? I suspect the answer lies somewhere in between," he says.

#### The Mining Charter III

In terms of his views on the progression of the Mining Charter III and being on track, Sefolo says, "The recently gazetted Mining Charter 3 provides certainty in an industry, which for the longest time, has been asking for it. When you look at some of the provisions in the Charter, particularly around communities and workers, I think these are well-placed, given some of the recent challenges we have seen in the industry.

"I think industry players also need to look at the spirit of the Charter as opposed to the letter of the law. Ultimately, this is trying to create a sustainable environment for investment where all stakeholders, investors, labour and communities can reap the reward."

#### The effect of technology

With the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, technological advancements have had an effect on all industries, and the mining industry is no exception.

Sefolo says, "Technological evolution is something one cannot ignore as a business. For example, recently, everyone was talking about developments such as the Internet of things (IoT) and virtual reality (VR). These are trends, which cannot be ignored, as they will change the way in which we do things. Less human involvement in performing analytics and large-scale data manipulation will ultimately change the skillset required in business to compete on a global scale."

#### The role of the government and the private sector

Sefolo says this is a very critical topic and one that he is very passionate about.

"I believe in the free market system. I believe that, given any opportunity, human beings will find a solution and seize the opportunity to thrive. That is the nature of the private sector," he says.

In his view, governments must provide the framework and a legislative environment

(not unnecessary red tape) to enable this, effectively creating a fair playing field.

"Of course, left unchecked, capitalists driven by pure profit motive can sometimes act to the detriment of society, for example, Ford and the fuel emission scandals in the automotive industry.

"In a South African context, this also holds true. We face the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty. Unfortunately, the government alone will not resolve this. We need private sector involvement. We need to encourage entrepreneurs, we need to encourage an environment where capital does not feel threatened.

This, unfortunately, we do not always get right. If we are going to thrive as a society and as a nation, a more collaborative relationship has to be fostered," he cautions.

#### Tshego Sefolo, the Chairman

Sefolo was born and raised in South Africa. A qualified Chartered Accountant by profession with an MBA from the Wits Business School, he did his articles with Ernst & Young in Johannesburg and, subsequently, at the London office.

"I then joined private equity in the late 90s when I joined Ethos Private Equity. The industry was in its infancy at that time, having been around for about 20 or so years and largely driven by the unbundling of historic South African conglomerates, which were in existence from the Apartheid years.

"It was then that I developed a passion for dealmaking. What I liked even more, was this idea of "cradle to grave" investing. Unlike traditional advisory businesses, we invest in a business and stay with them for the long term. So, you really must have the conviction when you decide to invest in a business.

I started the business, Agile Capital, through a management buy-out of a business I ran since 2009, and with the backing



*Pine Pienaar, CEO*

of the FirstRand Group and RMB Corvest, I effectively launched a mid-market South African-focused private equity business. We currently have more than R1.2-billion of invested capital, with a further R900 million to invest," he says.

With regard to mentors, Sefolo says he didn't really have mentors in the true sense, however, he has some trusted confidants whom he tests ideas with.

"Sometimes, I will talk to two or three people independently to get their views on something. I prefer people who can tell me honestly if I am talking nonsense or missing

something. That, to me, is the most valuable form of mentorship. My mother has had the most influence on me. From an early age, she taught me to guard against arrogance and be honest in my dealings," he says.

As the Chairman, Sefolo explains that the business of ProVest is very dynamic and operates in a very challenging mining environment in this country.

"Challenges in the mining industry cannot be understated—decreasing commodity prices coupled with the ever-increasing cost of mining in a very volatile and sometimes uncertain regulatory environment makes

it a very challenging investment case. As ProVest, we have been able to navigate some of these challenges and hopefully create a sustainable environment where employees and our broader stakeholder requirements are met.

"We are also overly cognisant of the challenges facing communities where we operate, and we try to assist where possible. This, together with our management team, is something I am particularly attentive to," he explains.

### **Pine Pienaar, the CEO**

As the CEO, Pine Pienaar says two of the biggest highlights for him are when set organisational goals are being achieved and seeing an individual's ability, confidence, competency and knowledge grow as well as seeing an individual grow as a person.

"The other side of the coin are individuals who are stagnating in the work environment and as people—life is a journey of continuous learning and experiencing.

"It is our plan to grow in mining, to get into transport, secure a footprint in the coal industry, and manufacture for mining. Why mining? It remains South Africa's largest foreign exchange earning industry and although it's a tough environment, opportunities do exist for those who persevere," he says.

In terms of what good leadership means to him, Pienaar concludes by saying, "Good leadership entails the crafting of organisational direction and, thus, providing a clear sense of purpose.

"Additionally, it entails surrounding myself with a team consisting of diverse individuals who are better-equipped than me, both in skills and experience, to attain such a purpose. Then, it is a leader's duty to provide those who are selected with the necessary support and means to execute the plan.

"Getting the best out of staff starts by surrounding yourself with the right people, people who are self-driven and who enjoy taking responsibility and assume accountability. Those who assume such responsibility and accountability are also the ones growing and excelling in their work and as people."

# Championing black excellence



BET in Africa has become a leading proponent of black culture in regions around the continent since its launch in 2015

**The primary goal of the channel is to champion black excellence across the continent through a range of programmes and 360-degree campaigns that provide their audiences with immersive experiences. They air entertainment that both uplifts and educates their primarily black audience, speaking to the needs and interests of this community. They're constantly innovating new formats on the channel, including BET Breaks, which will air locally in January 2019.**

Part of BET in Africa's mission is to be a voice for the black consumer, providing informative content on a "glocal" scale—getting the right balance of local and international content that speaks to the needs of their African viewers. They believe they've succeeded in achieving this over the past few years and will continue to grow and expand their footprint with excellent content around issues that matter.

## 2018 highlights

Reflecting on the past year, BET in Africa has spent 2018 building on their reputation of being the brand of choice for their black viewers. From testing new programmes and formats to honouring black talent, both globally and locally through award shows like Black Girls Rock! and the Soul Train Awards, it has been an impressive year for them as a channel.

BET in Africa provides a platform for young, talented artists and performers to

find a voice. For example, Nomalanga Shoji, a 23-year-old Presenter emerging from the small town of Port Shepstone on the east coast of South Africa, recently found herself interviewing top performers on the red carpet of the Soul Train Awards in Los Angeles, including the likes of Krystal Garner, Normani, Robert Glasper and Kali Uchis.

This is part of Nomalanga's duties as the brand-new BET Breaks Presenter. This is an international format show that features the latest celebrity news and gossip, which BET in Africa is pioneering on the continent. Nomalanga will be representing Africa when the show airs locally from January 2019 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Another way through which BET in Africa is using its footprint to uplift local creatives is through the successful fashion programme, Made in Africa. Hosted by Presenter, Designer and aspiring Producer, Nandi Madida, Made in Africa sees two designers from the continent go head-to-head in new challenges each week.

The ultimate winner will receive the opportunity to display their original creations to consumers in a national retailer.

One of the annual highlights on the BET calendar is the BET Awards, which were hosted by Jamie Foxx this year and paid homage to the rise of African culture on an international stage. On the night, African artists that BET in Africa has worked closely with to empower and enable their craft, took home top honours. These honourees included Nigerian Performer, Davido, South African Artists Sjava, Distruction Boyz and Cassper Nyovest.

This year, a large part of their mission was to honour the legacy of Madiba across their platform. Thus, as part of the BET Awards and the Madiba Centenary, VIMN Africa hosted the Global Good Dinner, where the Basketball Player, Bismack Biyombo, was honoured for his work on his "Child in Africa" project that primarily focusses on uplifting children in his home country of the Congo. Complementing this celebration of Madiba's legacy was the panel discussion BET in Africa hosted with prominent South Africans.

The award show, Black Girls Rock! is another important initiative that BET in Africa supports. This is because empowering and honouring black excellence forms the foundation of the BET philosophy. This annual award show is the culmination of black female brilliance and honours leaders in industry while providing role models for young black women around the world to look up to.

## Changing the African narrative

While their programming and 360-degree initiatives and campaigns have the primary goal of uplifting local black talent and displaying black excellence around the world, it also has a secondary function, which is to reshape the narrative around the continent on a global scale.

"BET content celebrates and showcases both local and international black culture and African talent. We are proudly committed to local content that entertains and makes a difference in our viewers' lives," says Monde Twala, Vice President for Youth, Music and BET

# Seductive sweets and tasty treats

As we enter the season of indulgence, there's no better way to get into the festive spirit than by featuring the highest level of happiness producers—confection creators. Karen Schneid and Sinenhlanhla Ndlela are two women spreading joy with their delicious delights born out of a passion to do what they love.



**Artisanal creations**  
**Karen Schneid,**  
**founder – Ooh La La Confectionery**

A successful advocate for close to two decades, Karen Schneid loved her profession.

"I was very lucky with the cases that I got to work with, even changing the law in some instances. This gave me a lot of freedom and allowed me to travel widely.

"On one such trip, when I was travelling with my husband, David, in Provence. I tasted an amazing confection called a calisson, which is made only in

Aix-en-Provence. It was the most sublime experience, a mixture of crushed almonds, candied oranges and melons, covered with a thin layer of royal icing. It was the most amazing confection that I had ever tasted.

"I returned to South Africa, determined to replicate it in my kitchen. And so, my passion for confectionery grew. I remained an Advocate by day but by night, I was busy in my kitchen concocting confections. Once I had mastered the calisson, I then moved on to nougat and marshmallows. Eventually, I realised that while I loved the law, I adored confectionery more and I took the plunge, left my law practice and opened Ooh La La Confectionery," Schneid explains.

The business soon outgrew her family kitchen, and she moved to a factory designed by her husband, an Architect, that was indicative of her passion for French design.

"We live on a farm-style property in Johannesburg, which is designed along the lines of a French farmhouse. Establishing a factory was always part of my bigger Ooh La La dream. I envisioned having our own version of a Provençal-style factory on our property to keep the delightful, artisanal feel. There is a wonderful atmosphere in our factory. I have a passionate and loyal team. I have personally trained all my employees

in the art of confectionery making and they share my passion for excellence. When we get awards, everyone in the factory shares in the pleasure. Our company employs over twenty staff members and supports many families in this process," says Schneid.

She says that becoming an entrepreneur has been both challenging and wonderful. It's challenging in the way that running her own business takes up every waking second, but wonderful in the way that it gives her freedom of choice to be available for her family and their special moments.

"As a Lawyer, if I was in court, I had to be in court, no matter what was going on with my children. As an entrepreneur, while everything relies on my passion, energy and impetus, I get to create something I really want in the world and, at the same time, I can be more actively present in my children's lives, even if it means I need to work until 1am that night to catch up on my work," she explains.

In terms of her experience as a female Entrepreneur, she says she has been fortunate that, in her time working as a Lawyer or Entrepreneur, she has always been taken seriously as a business and career woman, and has never experienced discrimination based on gender.





"To women out there, I would say take yourself seriously, know your worth, trust your intelligence, and if you ever do experience discrimination, seek the support to challenge it," says Schneid.

### Award-winning confections

Since its establishment, Ooh La La Confectionery has consistently grown and is the recipient of numerous accolades, receiving more than 54 gold stars from the British Great Taste Awards.

"While not well known in South Africa, internationally, the British Great Taste Awards are the Oscars of the food industry," explains Schneid. "The judges taste your food blind and have given me incredible, valuable feedback and wonderful compliments. One judge described my calisson as a 'lovely, beautifully made product, with soft almond paste and delicate perfume with sweet citrus notes'.

It has been very gratifying to be acknowledged on the international stage in this way.

"Here in South Africa as well, Eat Out Magazine acknowledged us with the Best Confectionery of the Year award. As much as being acknowledged internationally is amazing, it's also fantastic to hear you're the best at home," she adds.

She says that the business is buoyed by the support she received from her family including her father who, even at the age of 83 years old, continues to be her mentor.

Ooh La La offers a number of ranges from nougats to their signature pebbles, different Belgian couverture dark chocolates to the new Japanese-inspired matcha range. The confectionery makes artisanal marshmallows, which are infused with unusual and very delicious flavours such as violet, mocha, cheesecake, Madagascan vanilla and more.

"Our Pebble range is very popular. We roast and caramelize the freshest nuts for hours in French copper pots and then add a sprinkling of fleur de sel. My customers have called the Pebbles 'crack cocaine'. The pebbles can also be bought covered in dark and white chocolate or plain. We also make salted butter caramels, Turkish delight, plain or covered in milk and dark chocolate, and a traditional, award-winning fudge," says Schneid.

"I have travelled the world to find only the very best raw ingredients to go into our products. Combine this with the very best traditional recipes and confectionery methods, and you have a delicious, award-winning confectionery," she says.

While there are a number of popular products, she highlights Ooh La La's pebbles and ormolu—a piece of crunchy butter toffee, smothered in the finest couverture Belgian chocolate and then coated in roasted walnuts and pecans—as fan favourites.

Schneid gleans a lot of her inspiration from travel, her latest passion being Japanese-French fusion confections.

"While in Japan, I discovered matcha. There is a well-known history of Japanese-French fusion confections. I was inspired by the work of Sadaharu Aoki, who came from Japan to France and was one of the first patissiers to create a fusion between these two glorious food cultures.

"Since tasting his astonishing creations, I have been using only the best-quality matcha from the beautiful Nishio region in Japan, in my confections—from matcha-infused milk chocolate, to matcha and orange blossom French nougat and even a matcha white hot chocolate," she says.

### Passion and creativity

Schneid is a great believer in the power of following one's passion and it is the advice that she gives to aspiring entrepreneurs. "Only for one's passion will you pour your



energy, morning, noon and night. And it is contagious. Lead with passion and others will follow," she says.

On whether her two daughters will take over Ooh La La one day, she says, "I don't know what my two daughters will want to do with their lives, but I do encourage them to follow their passions.

They love coming with their friends for a taste of whatever we are working on and I am also quite happy to give them a bowl filled with our confections to snack on because I know that there are no artificial flavours, colours, or preservatives. I have been to my daughters' school and taught the kids about confectionery, which has been fun.

"If my daughters were to develop a huge passion for the company, I would love nothing more than to work with them one day. But, mostly, I want them to have their own dreams and passions."

With regard to how she maintains her passion for the business, Schneid explains that what keeps her motivated is her vision for Ooh La La. "I don't see it as just a confectionery—it's a brand that embodies confectionery, design, storytelling and education to the world about food. I see myself as creating a little confectionery universe.

Each confection has a little imaginative story attached to it, complete with a little character that is attributed to creating the confection.

"I design and package my products very carefully, holding in mind both practical considerations and also French aesthetics," she says.

"I am passionate about food and about the procurement of ingredients. When I launched my Matcha range, I wanted to educate the world about matcha. When I work with chocolate, I want to teach my customers about the production of chocolate from the cocoa bean and about the difference between brown and white chocolate," she adds.

For Schneid, the most fulfilling aspect of what she does is meeting with customers and clients and talking to them about the creative process that goes into every single aspect of Ooh La La, from procuring the very best ingredients from around the world to creating stories about their products, to thinking about packaging. As to the most enjoyable aspect, she says it's the experimentation and tasting every single batch before it leaves the factory.

"I have to say, it's the creative part that appeals to me the most. I love exploring

new flavours, and coming up with new ideas for different seasons and holidays. We have developed four new exciting confectionery ranges for the festive season.

This year, we are offering pumpkin spice, gingerbread and fruitcake nougat. We have created marshmallows in these flavours as well, including gold caramel, cinnamon and sugar and candy cane. In the spirit of playfulness, I also created festive crackers, which you pull open to find an explosion of festive season nougat or marshmallows, amongst a wonderful range of gifting options.

"Working with an artisanal company like Ooh La La really allows me to have immense creative freedom.

"I can come up with an idea in the morning and have it on the shop shelves by the end of the day.

"We will always bring back customer favourites, as long as people still want them, but we will also use every opportunity to come up with something new and wonderful," Schneid concludes.

To view and purchase Ooh La La's delicious confections, please visit [oohlalaconfectionery.com](http://oohlalaconfectionery.com)





**Scoops of love**  
**Sinenhlanhla Ndlela,**  
**founder – Yococo**

Sinenhlanhla Ndlela is the creator of Yococo, a dairy-free ice cream that has given lactose intolerant individuals and vegans a reason to rejoice.

Originally from Cape Town, Ndlela moved to Johannesburg where she became a Writer for television and a film post-production professional. However, she eventually realised that the career choice was not for her.

"I just didn't feel fulfilled in what I was doing. It felt like I was stuck in a mundane routine, waking up day after day doing the same thing, and it didn't feel as though I was contributing to anything meaningful. It was also a time where a lot of changes were occurring in my life and I suppose, ultimately, I was trying to find my place in the world.

"It also happened to be a time when I was exploring veganism and I realised that if I were to actually become a full-on vegan, I would not be able to enjoy traditional ice cream, and the vegan ice creams that were available at the time did not appeal to me. So, things seemed to perfectly aligned, and I got the sense that this was my purpose, and that I could possibly create something successful venturing out on my own as an Entrepreneur," she explains.

Like all great things, Yococo started as a dream. "It started with an idea, really, and rallying everyone around me to believe in it.

Then, I had to put a lot of action behind it, I am a dreamer and it can usually stay there," says Ndlela.

"I also had to do a lot of research because I wasn't familiar with being a businessperson and the veganism lifestyle. I also conducted extensive market research because the worst thing that can happen when creating a new brand is that only you will like it—I had to do my homework," says Ndlela.

Despite her newfound commitment, she worried about breaking the news of her career change to her family. "I didn't think they'd understand it because, for them, ice cream is just a treat that costs a few rand. I knew they'd doubt the sustainability of such a business," she says. However, Ndlela's mother turned out to be her biggest champion, paying for three months' rent, stock and equipment.

Yococo is made from a plethora of natural, aromatic ingredients and has one unique common factor in line with the owner's personal philosophy—all the flavours in the range are made according to the seven chakras, the centres in our bodies through which energy flows.

"For example, lavender is for the crown chakra and represents femininity, while granadilla ice cream is for the sacral chakra, associated with creativity and emotional wellbeing. I'm a big believer in homeopathic and natural remedies and these principles guide my ice cream flavours," she explains.

Yococo has a number of interesting flavours, such as turmeric-laced golden milk, avo and mint, fragrant Earl Grey and lavender and light and lovely strawberry and rose water. Her ice creams feature fascinating flavour marriages that are amazing on their own and sure to be a fabulous finale to any meal. Yococo's Rooibos cookies and dark chocolate and granadilla dairy-free ice creams are two of her signature ice creams.

"All my ingredients are natural and I like using both fruit and vegetables to create out-of-the-box flavour combinations. I like incorporating ingredients that you wouldn't normally think to turn into an ice cream, like beetroot, for example," Ndlela says.

Ice cream has a nostalgic quality and symbolises self-love to Ndlela, and she wants people to experience those things when eating her ice cream. "Dreamy, colourful and soft," is how she describes her brand in three words.

Founded in November 2016, the brand boasts a staff that is all black and all women. Yococo still has a long way to go according to the team, but they have chosen to celebrate every small success. The ice cream brand has increased their sales by partnering with new stores in various locations and by teaming up with other black-owned businesses like Beauty on TApp and Studio Moma. Recently, she also collaborated with the urban leisurewear brand, DEAD, at the gourmet waffle house, Van De Waffle in Rosebank, creating an on-trend black vegan ice cream, activated charcoal being the main ingredient, served on a charcoal Belgian waffle.

In terms of overcoming the challenges faced, Ndlela says that the biggest one has definitely been having the self-belief that she can succeed.

"Even though I've grown up around businesses, I've never had a real interest beyond assisting here or there if friends or family required me to. When running your own business, you have to be assertive and take on the role of business owner one hundred per cent and continuously motivate yourself. You have to step up the plate and embody your idea fully.

"And even when I'm not making money, I still have to keep the goal in view because you get discouraged sometimes. Another challenge is also making sure I know exactly what it is that I'm doing and not making unnecessary mistakes, and gaining business acumen. Some days, I do think that if I had proper funding, I would be much further along in building Yococo, but I'm also grateful that things are taking time to grow and that it's progressing in an authentic and organic way," she explains.

Ndlela says that one mistake she learnt from was her experience of trying to open a store without a solid approach. "I thought I had to have a shop, so I rushed into renting a small space in the CBD. However, it was

a disaster—it was in the wrong location for my brand. People there don't want artisanal ice cream—they want a quick, hot meal for lunch. I opened in February last year and it was such a struggle that I closed the shop in April this year. I was only making about R25 a week and couldn't draw a salary. I had to do freelance work to support myself," she recalls.

Despite this hiccup, Yococo has been successful and her innovative postings through social media have gained her many fans and helped her to target the right audience. In the year since Yococo first opened its doors online, the brand has grown a cult following of both vegan and non-vegan ice cream lovers, who subscribe to both the flavours and the concepts behind them.

Of the success, she says, "It's surreal. The reaction has been very positive and it's very uplifting. Sometimes, I will be having a normal conversation with someone and, upon telling them what I do, they say, 'my gosh yes, I follow you on Instagram' or 'I've had it and I love it', and it encourages me and makes me believe I'm on the right track—because I think it's very difficult

to find what your purpose is, and having positive feedback gives one that sense of confirmation that you've found it and are doing the right thing," she explains.

In terms of whether she would recommend becoming an entrepreneur to those trying to find their purpose, she says that while it is a good path if you have the passion, it might not be for everyone.

"I don't think we are all supposed to be entrepreneurs. All our purposes are different and entrepreneurship is very difficult. It can have great rewards but it's not the same as when you're working in a set position. One can put in 20% or 70% of their effort when you have a job because you will still get a salary at the end of the month, whereas, on your own, you have to push hard to actually see results. But, because it is my passion and something I love to do, I'm okay with that. However, if you don't have that in you, then becoming an entrepreneur would be a miserable experience," Ndlela cautions.

Her future aspiration is to establish a large factory and provide employment for a whole group of people who will share her love for Yococo. "I would like to see

us grow into other African countries and, eventually, grow internationally. But I am taking things slowly. At the moment, I am building capacity and creating interest in the brand.

"I'd like to have a place where people can taste my ice cream, but I don't think I would go the shop route again. I'm taking it one step at a time, at my own pace. When I started out, I knew that the business could be successful and there is still a lot for me to achieve for it to fit into my idea of success, however, I am very grateful for the progress so far and the positive support from consumers," she concludes.

Yococo is sold at a number of locations, including Healthy Store in Umhlanga Centre in Durban, Farm Table in Linden, Johannesburg, Wrap in Braamfontein, Jackson's Real Food Market in Bryanston, Kwikspar in Hillcrest, KZN, and at the Sea Point Spar in Cape Town. **BBO**

*Kevin Michaels*  
For more information on further locations, visit [www.yococo.co.za](http://www.yococo.co.za)



# Cooking with Chef Funi

The Cape Town-based Chef, Lufuno Sinthumule, is cooking up a storm in the hospitality industry, the South African way

**L**ocal food fanatic, Lufuno Sinthumule, is affectionately known as Funi to some of the best food critics worldwide and his followers on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Placing food at the centre of human survival and nutrition, he adds that it is also about fun, social connection, joy and love. His name means love in Venda and he says that it is love that defines his approach to food and cooking.

Born in Louis Trichardt in Venda, Limpopo Province, he spent most of his childhood with his grandparents and it was his grandfather who influenced his career.

"My grandfather was a chef at a local hotel, that's where I got my inspiration from—his skills made an impression on me, even

though my grandmother was also a good cook. However, although I was exposed to good food from a young age, my career choice was not obvious. And, initially, I began studying medicine, but soon made a career change midway," explains Funi.

He decided to attend the Vaal University of Technology where he achieved a National Diploma in Food Service Management, a Bachelor of Technology Degree in Food and Beverage Management, a BTech in Post-School Education Management and a Master's Degree in Food Service Management, specialising in community nutrition.

"I taught students at a few universities of technology, colleges and correctional services facilities. I also worked in the administrative and management side, developing

the curriculum and ensuring quality assurance," he says.

Earlier this year, Chef Funi was selected to prepare meals "the South African Way" for dignitaries and the president at the BRICS Summit, which he describes as a highlight of his career. "Receiving the call was overwhelming and it felt as though I was dreaming. It was a great opportunity and a great personal achievement," he says,

He explains that he had about two months to prepare and plan the menu, which was set to introduce the foreigners to South African culture. He submitted his menu after receiving the invitation from the Department of International Relations and Co-operation. On the Saturday before the summit, he met with Minister Lindiwe Sisulu at Reuben's in Franschoek for a tasting session, before they headed to Pretoria for the state visit by Chinese leaders, where Chef Funi cooked meals for 250 people.

His menu included starters of creamy chicken and chickpea soup as well as fresh salad. The main course was ostrich fillet while vegetarians had ravioli. For the summit's welcome banquet the following day, the main course featured options such as springbok fillet with rooibos jus, baked pap and sweetcorn tartlets served with seasonal vegetables as well as grilled salmon served with baked polenta, seasonal vegetables and beurre blanc. Vegetarians had cannelloni pasta tubes filled with feta and butternut served in a creamy tomato sauce, while vegans had chakalaka balls served with polenta and chilli sauce. Dessert options included malva pudding with Amarula custard.





wRICS Summit was definitely a dream. It was overwhelming but exciting, and the feedback was extremely positive. It was the biggest accolade on my CV to date, and I certainly hope the future holds more opportunities like this," says Funi.

He is renowned for his locally inspired cuisine, which he promotes on his YouTube channel, Cooking with Funi, a dynamic, fresh show that introduces South African cooking into the everyday South African home. Alongside this, Cooking with Funi places emphasis on healthy cooking for everyone from beginners, to grand masters. "The main aim of the online cooking show is to transform our relationship with food. My passion stems from making delicious and healthy food an option for everyone and that is why we created the YouTube channel. Looking at our society's demand,

from a proudly South African point of view, I strongly believe that we need the online cooking show that can be accessed everywhere for free by using any of your communication devices," he says.

On what makes a good chef, Funi says that a mark of a good chef is being able to open any fridge or cupboard and make a meal out of what you have available. "There isn't always a need for fancy ingredients and long processes. Sometimes, the best meals are spontaneous and simple. My main aim is to transform our relationship with food and to assist South Africans towards achieving a healthy eating lifestyle utilising simplicity, creativity, convenience and a taste of heritage," he says.

In 2015, he published his cookbook, Funi Cooks South Africa. He wrote the book to promote typical South African dishes that

South Africans grow up eating every day as well as to teach upcoming generations about the food that generations before them cooked and ate. The book has recipes of simple, easy and creative cuisines for every reader to try.

Funi Cooks South Africa offers a wide variety of recipes, including exotic and comfort dishes from South African traditions and cultures. Included are all-time favourites umngqusho (samp and beans), deep fried tripe, mopane worms and two-bean chakalaka, to mention a few. The book also gives advice on cooking items, basic ingredients that any kitchen should never be without, cooking tricks and tips, as well as a simplified metric conversion chart.

In terms of whether or not being a chef is a tough career to become successful in, he replies that it is certainly is.

"Being a chef is tough and if you don't have the passion for it, then it's probably not the career for you. The hours can be very long, it's hot in the kitchen and there will be some chaotic times. If it's not a passion then you are most likely going to burn out and not be happy with what you do," says Funi.

He further states that the financial return is one of the top challenges of being a chef. "While you can become very successful as a chef, it is not for those who are entirely money driven," he cautions.

His advice for those wanting to start a culinary career is to work really hard right from the beginning.

"In this line of work, you don't just wake up and become an executive chef. You start by being in the kitchen, washing dishes, doing the scullery, peeling—they will make you chop a whole 10kg bag of onions just to see if you love your job—and then, one day, you will climb the ladder and slowly but surely, you will make it," says Funi.

His passion for cooking has taken him all over the world where he has willingly presented his skill and love for food, leisure and the hospitality arena. Memorable places have included Morocco, Paris, New York and China. Having travelled to different countries and experienced cuisine that highlights the heritage of these places,

he says that he would love to see South Africa do the same thing, as he feels that we need to represent local cuisine better within culinary schools and restaurants.

"While there are many styles of cooking and food is an amalgamation of different heritages and tastes and influences, it would be great to see the South African food identity come across more. We have endless visitors and tourists visiting our country but how many restaurants are promoting South African cuisine? We have so few and then we find that they're not even presenting in a way that can be easily identified as our

own, we're trying to copy other countries instead, while they are embracing what makes them unique," says Funi.

"I remember that, upon a trip to Ghana, when fetched at the airport, we were given these delicious chips made from plantain, a signature ingredient of their country. Then, at the hotel, the starter was a kind of plantain soup and it was wonderful and different, but they incorporated it into their meals and they're proud of that.

"South Africa should be more proud of indigenous food and our own style of preparing certain things—we shouldn't try to

mask it using the styles of other countries because other countries aren't doing that. When you go to France or China, the food is presented in the French or Chinese way, as in their style. If I'm travelling, I want to experiment and taste the food that that country has to offer," he explains.

He says that the lack of indigenous local cuisine can be connected to the lack of diversity within the sector and rising young black professional chefs. "The culinary and hospitality industries still have a long journey to go in terms of achieving adequate transformation. While there are some amazing black chefs, both male and female, that have achieved successful careers, there is large room for improvement," Funi explains.

He says that there would be a lot more representation, in terms of young black professional chefs, if more young people had the resources available to enter the field.

"One of the largest problems in the country is youth unemployment and the fact is, there are many young people who are interested in culinary school and the hospitality industry, but they may not be able to afford it, they're in the wrong locations or they don't have the correct information about the careers within the industry," says Funi.

"There are many people who do have that perseverance but they don't have the opportunity. I remember when I was in high school, most people were not thinking about becoming chefs and going into hospitality, all they were thinking about was becoming a doctor, an engineer, teacher, nurse etc.—the things we grew up seeing our parents doing.

"The culinary industry needs more promotion as a viable career choice, as its equally important. More guidance and information, bursaries and scholarships are needed.

"There are many jobs available within the hospitality industry and students need to be made aware of them. And I think if it was more financially rewarding, it would entice more young people to become chefs," he concludes. **BBQ**

### A recipe for the festive season

## Mixed Cherry Cake

### You will need:

- 250 g Butter
- 1 1/2 cup granulated sugar or castor sugar
- 6 eggs
- 1/2 Tsp almond essence or
- 1 Tsp vanilla essence
- 250 g cake wheat flour (525 ml)
- 2 Tsp baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 cup milk
- 125 g Glacé mixed cherries, well drained
- 6 glacé cherries cut in half for garnish optional

### How to prepare:

- Cream the butter and sugar until the mixture is light and creamy.
- Add the eggs one by one, beating thoroughly after each addition. Add the essence.
- Sift the dry ingredients together and stir into the creamed mixture gradually - about a third at a time, alternatively with the milk. The batter should be stiff.
- Stir in the mixed cherries into the batter.
- Put into a lined, greased, deep, round pan.
- Bake for 1 hour or longer in a slow (160°C)
- Allow to cool slightly before turning out.

### Funi's variations:

- You can add 150 g of walnut or pecan nuts chopped instead of cherries.



Ché Vigus

# Women in law

The law is the bedrock of any nation—without it, we will be lost

**A**s commonly explained by experts, the law is the guidepost for minimally acceptable behaviour within society. The four principal purposes and functions of the law are to maintain order, resolve disputes, establish standards and protect the liberty and rights of the citizens. But it runs much deeper than that, and is often far more crucial than many expect it to be.

Like many industries, law has been male-dominated for as long as it has existed but times are changing. Slowly, perhaps, but they are changing nonetheless. Not only are women receiving far more opportunities, but transformation within law is improving.

*BBQ* magazine sat down with two young women who are not only making their way into the industry, but who are changing perceptions as they go.

Rirhandu Matsala, aged 27, better known simply as Ria, grew up in the City of Gold in Ekurhuleni. Law wasn't always the goal. Originally, Matsala wanted to become a Psychologist to help solve people's problems, something, she says, she was very passionate about. She wanted to become the "Dr Phil of South Africa".

However, things changed in Grade 11 when Matsala had to job shadow. She had a stepsister who took her into shadow the legal advisors at the SABC legal department. The spark was lit that day and Matsala has never looked back. The spark still shines just as brightly as we sit and chat in her chambers.



*Rirhandu Matsala*

Law wasn't foreign to Matsala either. Her uncle, Taki Madima, practices as senior counsel (SC) of the Johannesburg and Cape Bar and it was he who convinced her to come to Cape Town originally.

"I studied at Tuks (the University of Pretoria) and completed my LLB degree there and then went on to do my articles, although I always wanted to be an Advocate, not an Attorney. So, after a year of articles, I swapped Johannesburg for Cape Town and applied to do my pupillage in the Mother City," she explains.

Matsala did her pupillage with her mentor, Mary-Anne McChesney, and wrote her bar exams in order to become an Advocate, which meant she could start practising, hold chambers and become a member of the Cape Bar.

Those within or close to the industry will tell you how easy it is to get lost in it. The workload seldom eases, the hours are long and, as Matsala explains, often, when people are on Christmas holidays, you can find yourself in chambers with your head buried in all the papers.

But, like with anything, balance is good. Balance is required. Balance is a necessity.

Perhaps it is more the older generation who struggles to find the balance. And you can ask those who have fallen too deeply into the work—it has wrecked families, marriages and, in some cases, has led to far more severe consequences.

Perhaps it is just the smile and charm of Matsala, but it appears that she has attained that balance. She speaks keenly about Cape Town being more laidback and less "cut-throat" than Johannesburg, which offers her more opportunities to relax and enjoy life.

"Entering into this, I knew it would be a lot of work—I had seen my uncle in this environment.

"So I expected it, but when I moved to Cape Town, I realised I could have a balance, I could still practice passionately and be hardworking and get the job done while, at the same time, telling myself it's okay to take a break—I think this came from my mentor, Mary-Anne McChesney," says Matsala.

However, being successful in law is difficult. It isn't glamorous and being a young black female doesn't make it any easier. Transformation is as important as it is in any other industry, but the mindset within the country still remains skewed.

Over the years, many of Matsala's colleagues have shifted out of the industry due to the fact that they don't get enough work, which mainly comes down to a mindset of black women and, in some cases, just women, not being good enough.

"I don't know if I have ever personally been overlooked because I am female or black but I believe if someone questions my ability for whatever reason, they should find someone else—the client needs to trust me and if they don't, they need to work with someone they do," she explains.

Matsala has done well for herself, but she is not even close to achieving all of her goals. Many still lie before her, one of which is to one day open an NGO and offer disadvantaged kids the opportunity to achieve their goals, not only in law, but in whichever industry they choose.

"The NGO will identify children from townships or disadvantaged areas who have the ability to succeed and contribute positively to society, but their only obstacle is funding.

"You see, bursaries are often handed out based on academic achievements but how can you measure a child accurately that has so many other issues to deal with? A child sometimes has to spend hours on the road just to get to school while others might not have a good daily meal, let alone three to go home to.

"Many other issues also exist, issues that poverty brings, and that is why I'd like to start this NGO—I can say, 'So you want to be an accountant, I don't know much about it but here is a friend of mine who does and he/she can mentor you.'

"My NGO can then assist them financially while the mentor guides them through the process. My uncle currently does this at the University of Venda and I'd like to follow that example," says Matsala.

Matsala explains that it is an expensive process to become an advocate. With

an absolute minimum of five years, from matriculation to the day you can practice—and that is only if you pass every single year—she realises how lucky she was that her parents were able to assist her financially with her studies. One day, through this NGO, she would like to be able to give back to communities and those who are less fortunate.

As far as career aspirations go, for now, Matsala is keen to remain practising in Cape Town and to continue improving as an Advocate. However, she would like to become an acting Judge when she has a few more years of experience and then, ultimately, become a permanent Judge.

When Matsala isn't making or breaking a case in court, she enjoys taking time out to simply relax with a good book and, perhaps more importantly, a good bottle of wine.

With the time off that she does have, she visits her family, gyms or goes hiking up the mountain because "Cape Town has some great hiking trails".

Perhaps this is why she really moved to Cape Town...

We also sat down with an Attorney, Masivuye Sithole, who shared her experience of the industry and spoke about what she wants to achieve in future.

Sithole's story is one of hope. It's a story that all too many South Africans can relate to—a story of perseverance and of overcoming the odds.

They say fortune favours the brave and it certainly did in her case.

Unfortunately, during her Grade 10 year, Sithole lost both her parents, which left her without the financial support to finish her schooling and follow her dreams thereafter. Her fortunes, however, changed again, as the school principal said they'd fund her final two years and one of Sithole's teachers assisted in terms of applying to universities. UCT accepted.

As a person, her passion runs far deeper than just law. Ultimately, she would like to be an acting Judge one day, but that is a very long-term goal. Furthermore, she says, "I want to be active, not only in the legal profession but also in business. I'm very cognisant of the fact that I don't just want

a career. I am part of Shine Literacy, an organisation that focuses on reading, thus, in the long-term, I'd like to open a centre in my village that focuses on the school there, a centre that would improve the quality of reading—I want to diversify and promote reading where I come from.”

Sithole took the route of becoming an Attorney rather than Advocate and currently works for Van Wyk Simpson Attorneys in the Waterfront, Cape Town.

“It has been quite a huge transition, going from being an articled Clerk to being an Attorney, because, now, you are accountable; you don't have your Principal as your buffering person, you are the centre point for clients. However, it is a challenge and I love a challenge, I'm really enjoying it thus far,” she enthuses.

Becoming an Attorney was not always the goal for Sithole. Initially, she was not sure what she wanted to do, despite having a bit of background in law—her father was a Magistrate in the Eastern Cape. So, when she went to UCT, she signed up for a general BA degree “but I ticked the law option for second year in case I became bored”.

Clearly, Sithole did become bored because, in her second year, she went into law and, clearly, she has not looked back.

However, it isn't all roses. She says that being a female in the industry is not always easy, as much of the profession is still stuck in archaic ways.

“Before, I didn't think about it much but now, as an Attorney, I have started to realise that some people speak differently to you, as though you need things to be explained in simpler ways. They speak differently to how they speak to your male counterparts—it is almost as though you constantly need to prove yourself,” Sithole explains.

While transformation is important, Sithole believes it isn't just about black versus white, it is more about male versus female. People, for some reason, seem to believe that, perhaps, men hold more weight in court, or can do a better job, which is obviously not the case. But that's the prevailing mindset amongst many people.

Things are changing, however, and Sithole believes that things like Mandisa



*Masivuye Sithole*

Maya, a lady from Umtata, becoming the President of the Supreme Court of Appeals can only help.

Sithole says that it is easier to be shifted out of the industry when you are an advocate because you are not getting business and you work for yourself, but she has seen many female attorneys go off and start their own firms, such as Mary-Faith Saku did with Saku Attorneys “so you have to believe in yourself and be bold”.

Sithole is thankful for the sacrifices that were made for her in order to achieve what she has today.

She worked hard but also received assistance along the way. She is grateful to her mother, who sent her to boarding school because the matric pass rate was so low at their community school, and this is where she learnt reading, understanding and the correct pronunciation of words.

The life of an attorney is a busy one but just like Ria, Sithole realises that creating a balance is key to a healthy life. Although she doesn't have much free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, going on hikes, reading and, generally, finding space, away from the city, and breathing in the clean, fresh air. She also has a great love for dogs.

Being a young Attorney is tough, but if her life is anything to go by, it will be a success and, in a few years, we might see Sithole on the bench as an acting Judge. However, more importantly, and what really lights her eyes up, is starting the Shine Literacy programme in her home village.

For now, we will enjoy watching from the sidelines and we look forward to everything she has to offer. **BBQ**

*Ralph Staniforth*

# Leaders and mentors

## Preparing the youth

**L**ilian Baylis School in Lambeth, South London, was regarded by many as one of the archetypal struggling and forgotten about inner-city comprehensive schools.

Historically at the bottom of the pile and once even referred to as “England’s worst-performing school” by The Guardian, it was failing by any measure you may apply. So much so, that the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) had placed it under ‘special measures’.

Gary Phillips arrived as the new Head Teacher in 2000, the sixth in five years, and initiated the most incredible of transformations—since 2013, Ofsted has rated the school as “outstanding in all areas”.

Changes this profound and far-reaching usually begin when someone with the ability to influence and persuade can articulate an inspirational (and inclusive) vision of the future. However, that is rarely enough on its own, it also needs a leader with broad enough shoulders to take ownership of that vision and deliver it—that leader was Gary Phillips.

Far too many years ago, Gary contacted me out of the blue and persuaded me to come and give a talk to his pupils at Lilian Baylis School, which was going through its carefully planned transformation towards becoming a technology school.

I can remember it so clearly, it was like yesterday. Gary was an understated but extremely powerful and unmissable presence. The students, the teachers and Gary himself, left an indelible imprint on my mind. Some 10 years later, we contacted Gary with a view to kicking off a mentoring

scheme for his most precocious students. Recent research from Ernst & Young has uncovered that mentors can make a bigger difference to the success of students than even teachers. The power of having someone special in your corner, looking out for you and caring for you has been the catalyst for many great leaders to help them fulfil their potential.

they were also sitting, tentatively curious about their own Spikes.

After sharing that “time was better spent fine-tuning your Spikes to the highest standard possible, rather than becoming obsessed with working on the things you were really not that good at and consequently, did not enjoy”, I had their undivided attention.

## It was a masterclass on how to deliver tough feedback without ruining the feelings of those who had worked so hard

It was a timely coincidence that the UK’s National Mentoring Day was held the same week, as it also marked the beginning of what we hoped would be a groundbreaking mentoring scheme at Lilian Baylis.

I had agreed to deliver a 10-minute address taken from my new book, *Spike*, to the pupils in Year 11.

As they gathered in the gym, they were smirking and laughing, as we would expect teenagers to do. As I was introduced by Gary, they were instantly polite and attentive.

As soon as I opened with my usual mantra, “Everyone in this gym has a stand out inherent strength and we call that your *Spike*”, a number of teachers came in. Perhaps it was to help keep order but no marshalling was necessary. Before long,

This was initially an anathema to all the teachers present, they shifted uncomfortably in their seats a little and smiled awkwardly.

I took many rapid-fire questions from my eager students.

Most of the girls asked questions that suggested that they didn’t believe that they had any of these ‘Spikes’. It didn’t take long to start winning them over with the conviction that everyone in the gym probably couldn’t master everything, but could definitely be a star at something.

They were soon buzzing.

Gary had briefed me proudly that his Year 11 students were something very special indeed. They were in their final year and were bright and hardworking. However, the teachers felt many of the girls appeared to lack confidence and self-esteem.



As they now bounced towards the doors, the boys shouted their thanks and disappeared. With the boys now gone, most of the girls politely and sincerely came over to give me their gratitude and thanks. They carefully asked more about their potential Spikes—they were very classy indeed.

As we were preparing to leave, one of the girls returned to the gym. She wore a hijab and held her rucksack firmly in front of her, it looked like it was her protection, as she tried to hide behind it.

She stood still and looked at her shoes and summoned all her courage to ask me: "I know what my Spikes are—its history and geography. But the Spike I really want to have is confidence. Can you please teach me the Spike of confidence?"

She was special and had touched all of us with her honest self-deprecation.

Luckily, we were able to help her on the road to confidence by later introducing her to a fabulous mentor. They meet at the school on a monthly basis.

I went back to visit them again a few months ago. She has been completely transformed. When she came to meet me, her rucksack was now hanging over her shoulder. She stood straight whilst speaking and was wonderfully self-assured with an unforgettable and infectious smile.

Confidence, no less—quite possibly, a well-hidden Spike.

Absolutely everyone can be a winner if they find and embrace their Spikes—there need not be any losers anymore.

### Seeing is believing

I started my own leadership journey at the quintessential British retailer, Marks & Spencer (M&S). I was given the responsibility of running the very new audio/visual team who ensured that all the major clothing department reviews were displayed in the best possible light.

To be summoned to the large conference room fifteen minutes before the beginning of the ladies' lingerie department's season review could only mean one thing—the IT equipment was not working properly.

And there was precious little time before the Board Director responsible, Joe, was

due to arrive. Thankfully, it was a small issue that was easily resolved but before I could leave, the review had begun. At this time, ladies' lingerie was one of Marks & Spencer's most important departments and the company had a near 40% market share of UK lingerie at the time.

The conference room looked spectacular. There was a vibrancy of colours, expensive silks, eye-catching lace, most hanging on the walls around the huge conference room but some carefully and lovingly fitted on the most beautiful of models. It was mesmerising.

There was a gap beside the stage where I stood, enthralled by the proceedings, when, suddenly, the doors burst open. In walked a large entourage of suited male and female managers.

Joe came in with a supreme air of confidence and self-belief, but not a touch of arrogance, unlike many of those who were walking in behind him.

From the moment he entered, he was throwing out greetings and kind words for everyone he encountered on his way to the stage. He now calmly addressed the audience, thanking them for their hard work and letting them know how wonderful the range looked, before setting the tight agenda for his three-hour review.

He wanted to look at the 'product', check pricing, understand the profitability and compare it to the previous season. But most of all, he wanted to see whether they had pushed themselves even further than the previous year, which had been an outstanding one.

At that moment, he noticed me standing by the stage and asked me what I was doing in the conference room.

At this point in my career, I don't think I had ever seen a board director, and certainly had never spoken to one, so in a choking voice, I muttered: "Just ensuring everything is OK".

Joe said with a mischievous smile: "I thought that was my job", and everybody laughed. It broke the ice and the collective anxiety, but at my cost. Seeing that I was clearly embarrassed, feeling small and looking out of place, he asked me what

my name was. I just managed to choke back "René".

He asked me to come and join him at the front on the stage. He announced that "René will be performing the review with me". For a moment, I couldn't breathe or move.

I had barely sat down and, already, in front of everyone, he was asking me what my job title was and where I worked.

He then asked me what I thought of the range. Not seasoned enough to understand the politics of the situation, I took the question at face value and answered: "Not bad at all, but I have to say that I thought it was much better before they made the final changes before you arrived."

I had been there earlier when lots of the real creative displays were removed upon the sharp instruction of a late-arriving senior manager. I sensed that those who had spent the night carefully putting these garments up with such care and attention to detail were crushed by this rather sweeping diktat.

With very little understanding of the bigger picture or the politically correct approach, I responded to Joe's gentle probing and told him everything 'unvarnished' in front of the lingerie department's finest!

Despite my gauche style and language, it was an unbelievable moment. A huge learning point for me—when things are going well, it should never just be about the task at hand, always spare a thought for the feelings of others. This was a lesson that was about to be brought alive for me by a true master operator.

Joe went on to provide individual feedback on almost all of the garments. He commented on the quality of the fabric, colours, pricing, volume and who the manufacturer was. He consistently used the most positive and encouraging language but after a while, even I could work out that he actually wasn't that pleased with what was being presented to him.

He was saying things like: "I can see what you are trying to achieve, but I don't ever remember it doing that well for us. Can you think about it again please?"

"I really like the fabric but I'm not so sure about that particular shade."



"I completely understand why you are being so ambitious with these garments but maybe you've pushed it that little bit too far."

This went on for nearly three hours.

He was jovial, well-mannered and good-humoured but in the end, he completely decimated the range. Crucially, he did this without ruining morale or making any individual feel as though they had wasted their time and efforts. It was a masterclass on how to deliver tough feedback without ruining the feelings of those who had worked so hard, but had got it so wrong.

At the end, he stood up, with me by his side, and gave a beautiful summary that motivated everyone to try that little bit harder and said he would be back in three weeks for another review. He delivered this so authentically and sincerely that the chastised audience were encouraged to look forward and become excited about having to do it all over again. Now, this is inspirational leadership.

This was the first time in my career I had actually been in the presence of a great leader.

It was a masterclass of sensitive and positive communication underpinned by a strong emotional connection, brought about by Joe's incredible humility. He made it so easy for someone in my position, as a relatively new and junior Manager, to bridge the gap with him, a fully-fledged Board Director of the UK's most admired company at the time. I desperately wanted to be able to do that. Who doesn't want to be liked and admired?

#### **Grab every opportunity**

As we walked out of the conference room, an opportunity not to be missed presented itself to me and, on impulse, I held my breath and asked Joe if he would be my mentor. Was it courage? Was it a special insight? Who knows. For me, it was obviously the effect his behaviour had on me. It just instantly reflected what I inherently believed was the right way to get things done.

The feeling inside of me could not be denied and I just had to act or I would regret it forever. I might not have had this golden opportunity again and I certainly could not live with that.

Joe was not sure what was involved in being a 'mentor'. I, myself, had only found out a few weeks before from reading an article in *The Economist*.

I quickly responded with a short story, comparing our situation to that of the young King Arthur and Merlin. He smiled and we agreed that I would meet him in his office for a chicken salad lunch the following week and he committed to spare me one hour.

Before turning away down the corridor, he shared how this would work—I had to book the meetings in advance with his PA, Sue, set the agenda, and everything we discussed would be totally confidential. And, vitally, the only reason we would continue meeting was that we were both getting something out of it.

The onus and accountability would clearly reside with me. He had already started—he had given me trust and ownership. What an opportunity!

I walked away very quickly, six inches taller. As I turned the corner, I sprinted back to my office. I instantly dived across the desk and grabbed the telephone. I dialled

Sue's number and a warm and friendly voice listened to my breathless delivery. Sue responded: "Is that René?" How did she know that? She said: "Joe called and mentioned that you might call me immediately."

Come the following Thursday, I sat in Joe's secretary's office a full 30 minutes prior to our appointment. Sue knew that I was both nervous and excited at the same time. She shared with me that Joe was the best boss she had ever had, and that he was looking forward to our lunch as much as I was. Her Spikes were clear for me to see and benefit from.

She eventually invited me into Joe's office; there was a small table laid out tidily for lunch for two, with two Marks & Spencer chicken salads carefully prepared and wrapped in cling film. Joe came over from behind his desk and invited me to join him at the table and he instantly proceeded to give me a good listening to.

### Listening is learning

He picked over his salad, saying little but coaxing everything out of me. It was amazing how much I blurted out and in no sort of order.

I tried to remain orderly and structured but he was so good at getting me to switch subjects, to delve ever deeper, and the honesty just sailed out in return.

In no time at all, I was realising the power of really listening. Joe not only heard everything I said but he played it back in a language I could only dream of using. After about forty minutes, he had stopped eating and after encouraging me to eat, it was his turn to speak.

I just listened to every word and every pause, and digested absolutely everything. He knew so much, he'd achieved so much and most of all, he appeared to completely understand and empathise with my career dilemmas and concerns. Time seemed to just evaporate when I was in his company.

I wanted to be like Joe. His candour was delivered with such sensitivity but, vitally, he never avoided honest feedback. Unbelievable brilliance—this was it.

When I left his office, I was now a full twelve inches taller.

I went back to my office and wrote everything down. This was easy, as he had made it such an unforgettable experience.

We were to meet for two years, every month on a Thursday, in his office with me setting the agenda and him providing the wisdom and the chicken salad. A monthly masterclass that always made me feel 'hungry for more'.

I was amazingly and shockingly promoted three times and I just knew it was because Joe had enabled me to understand how to better 'navigate' the complex business that was M&S. But even more than that, I'd had the benefit of what close proximity

## In no time at all, I was realising the power of really listening

to a fabulous role model could do, with no training or studying whatsoever.

It was very powerful indeed. I didn't miss a moment of his advice, let alone a mentoring meeting.

At what would be our last lunch, Joe shared that he could no longer mentor me. I was devastated—what had I done wrong? He did not give me a reason but said it would all make sense shortly.

A month or so later, it was announced that I would be moving from IT to menswear as a Merchandiser. This was a dream come true for me. Most of the board directors at M&S were former merchandisers. I just knew, having been carefully coached by Joe, that without the experience and practical intelligence that commercial acumen brings, at M&S, I could never get to the top.

By now, Joe had moved from ladies' lingerie to lead menswear. I would

effectively be working in his new area now. Unfortunately, even I could work out that it was a potential conflict of interest, as I effectively reported to him now. It was a fantastic opportunity to be working in menswear but in retrospect, for me, it was less about working in menswear and more about having Joe as a leader.

### A national mentoring day

There was a time in their lives when even the best leaders didn't quite believe in themselves.

From Mandela and Gandhi to Angela Merkel and Queen Elizabeth to Pope Francis, they have all had someone who gave them their time, encouraged them and looked out for them—mentors.

Mentors trade in confidence—they are able to give you their confidence and pass on their confidence in you. And as we have all learnt, without confidence, nothing happens.

So, make today your national mentoring day, stop missing out and get yourself a mentor.

Aim as high as you can and do not hesitate, just pluck up the courage to ask for an hour a month of their valuable time. If it looks like stalling, then flatter them. Let them know that you want to learn and be guided by them because of their behaviours and attitudes.

Aim as high as you can as they will have so much to share, the more they have been through.

Aim as high as you can and don't be put off by potential rejection—you will soon learn that rejection doesn't hurt at all when you aim really high.

Do not hesitate, go and find that person you so admire and ask them to mentor you.

If you are lucky enough to be asked to be someone's mentor—find every reason to say "Yes", and make this a wonderful national mentoring day for someone special.

Steven Spielberg captures it beautifully, "The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves." **BBQ**

*René Carayol*

# Leading through upliftment

CEO of RCS, Regan Adams provides insights into the credit landscape, innovation and his passion for community development



There, Adams initially worked on the Peoples Bank Lending Business, a joint venture with the then Nedcor Bank, before spending time in the United Kingdom at Capital One. On his return to South Africa, Adams joined American Express Cards as a Business Manager. He subsequently gained experience in the risk management-consulting field before joining the RCS Group.

"I joined RCS in 2004 as one of the Directors in the company and at that stage, we were still 100% owned by The Foschini Group. In August 2014, the French bank BNP Paribas, one of the largest banking institutions in the world, acquired RCS. I've always been on the board of RCS, thus, with our previous CEO leaving, there was a natural succession in terms of running the business," says Adams.

## The credit landscape

Uniquely positioned to provide insight on the credit landscape during uncertain economic times, Adams believes that while we are currently within a very challenging macroeconomic environment, from a credit perspective, we are in a good place.

"In South Africa, we have the National Credit Act, which is a sophisticated and solid piece of legislation, and we also have quite a strong credit bureau. Relative to the rest of Africa and even certain European countries, South African credit providers are able to obtain comprehensive information on the customers conduct on their credit

profiles, therefore improving the overall assessment process.

"As a registered credit provider, there are some very firm practices in place that govern the extension of credit and the regulator has the ability to come into our environment and check that these practices are done in line with the act. So, my sentiment would be, yes, times are tough, but there is a solid foundation in place," he says.

Regarding assisting consumers with the management of debt and the common pitfalls that consumers are prone to fall into, RCS plays a proactive role in making sure that RCS consumers and staff members have sufficient financial knowledge to avoid financial turmoil.

"Our staff members are also consumers and while they are calling our customers to collect on debt, they may, themselves, have challenging situations. Thus, we provide a mechanism for our staff to engage in financial education, whether it's through budgeting or putting them in touch with financial advisors. We encourage them to get their credit reports so they can see what their credit status is on the bureau and we do similar things for customers," Adams explains.

Currently, RCS is on the verge of launching a Financial Wellness Initiative to equip customers to manage their finances more effectively. "We know what the legacy in this country is and the levels of education that people have been privileged to,

**U**nder his leadership, RCS is currently South Africa's most prominent and innovative financial services provider in the retail credit market, with unrivalled expertise in business-to-business credit solutions.

A qualified Engineer, Adams began his career at PPC Cement, but he soon developed a keen interest in business management. After spending some time in the manufacturing industry, Adams decided to pursue a career in financial services, beginning at Capital One Financial Corporation.



so we are playing a role in those particular aspects," says Adams.

"When there are people who experience difficulty, we also have what is called a "Fragile Customer Policy. If you are in financial distress, we have specific mechanisms to assist you so that if you are going through unemployment or retrenchment, we find ways to help you through that process until you are in a position to repay your debt again," he adds.

### Investing in passion

Each year, RCS acts as the title sponsor for the Gugulethu Reconciliation Race, which is the perfect platform that combines Adams' two passions of running and supporting local entrepreneurs.

Established in 1992, the RCS Gugulethu Athletics Club is the founding club of the RCS Gugulethu Race (2007). In partnership with RCS and the Cape Times, the race has since doubled in size. As a member of the Gugulethu Athletics Club, Adams says

the race promotes the joy that running gives people.

"This is a unique and incredible race. As first-time runners, athletes might be wary of visiting a township. However, the Gugulethu community is very supportive and they are huge fans of the race, which contributes to making the spirit and vibe even better on the day. Years ago, it was just a race but it has evolved into a community event. There are local vendors and inspiring entrepreneurs, entertainment and fun activities after the race," says Adams.

"All volunteers on the day are members of the RCS Gugulethu Athletics Club. It is extremely difficult for clubs to raise money, so races provide income that can then be ploughed back into the club to promote running in the community and support our athletes who often struggle to have just enough money to enter the races," he adds.

Inspired by the national spirit of unity that defines this public holiday, the RCS Gugs Race is a platform that brings together all

cultural groups in one of the city's oldest townships, and also enables them to reach their goals—whether as serious runners, as ordinary people working to get healthier and fitter, or simply as supporters getting up and out of the house.

The race invites participants to run through the vibrant township of Gugulethu as part of either a 10km race or a short 4.2km fun run. The longer race takes runners past local landmarks, including Gugulethu Square Mall and Gugulethu Junction.

"Although I have a love for running, it's the areas that we focus on from a social investment perspective—youth, health and wellness – that makes the race such a significant event. Even in our company, we do a lot of things that are centred on wellness. One of the partners that we've had for a long time is called TSIBA; they're a free university. They're modelled on the SEDA City Campus that was in Johannesburg. They provided tertiary qualifications for previously disadvantaged students. We were

one of the founding sponsors there and they've had a lot of graduates through that particular process," explains Adams.

"We also support the JAG Foundation which focuses on promoting sport to the youth as an alternative to joining gangs or getting involved in illegal activity. Sport is a vehicle to get them out of that situation; it's something for them to focus their minds and their efforts on. Yes, it is only an activity but it is one that teaches teamwork and there's a sense of community and great potential to uplift communities through it," he adds.

Adams is also the driving force behind the RCS Group partnering with Startupbootcamp Africa, now called Startupbootcamp Afritech. He has invested heavily in this because of his vision and belief that local entrepreneurs can be the driving force behind the innovative technologies of tomorrow, particularly the systems and processes most relevant to financial services institutions in South Africa. He is absolutely committed to innovation and cooperating with startups to ultimately help realise the true potential of the African Innovation landscape.

"People always think of innovation as something that's completely new and the reality is that in today's world, there are very few things that are completely new. It's about how you adapt things to make it more efficient and effective. I was fortunate to visit Google in San Francisco several years ago and one of their definitions of innovation was just doing the best with what you have available to you, as no company has ever had unlimited resources. Innovation can be a new approach to something already in existence and maximising what you have," says Adams.

He further explains that one aspect of innovation is how you partner with start-ups. Most start-ups are entrepreneurs and Fintechs—start-ups that provide solutions in the financial services tech space. What interested RCS in Startupbootcamp is that it's the first Fintech start-up programme for Africa.

"But also, as much as there a social impact and a willingness to get involved and develop start-ups because we need

more businesses to employ more people, these start-ups are also developing very tangible solutions that will positively impact corporate business and their customers. Cape Town is positioning itself as an innovation hotspot where Fintechs can come and develop solutions. We need to constantly expand and improve this supporting environment, encouraging greater government and industry bodies involvement," explains Adams.

### Leadership and future goals

Job creation and cultivating a culture of growth are two of his main ambitions for the company.

"I take my responsibility of keeping these teams in a job seriously and also to grow the business in order to create more jobs. We're sitting with an unemployment rate of 40% of people under 30. Our contact centre is an ideal vehicle to get the youth to start earning an income and also grow into other areas of our organisation," says Adams.

Commenting on his leadership styles, he describes his engagement with people as authentic.

"I am a Christian, my faith is very important to me and my decisions are driven from that foundation. It's very difficult in the bigger corporate environment because there

are all sorts of dynamics that are at play but, for me, that is quite important in my life. I am a very honest and open person, it's important that we engage with each other in a very respectful and humane manner. I am not one for politics and it's important to me that people appreciate and support each other, despite disagreeing views or opinions. When I joined the company in 2004, there were 70 people. There are 2 000 now—probably one of the biggest challenges is how you grow a business with more people to create more structure and still maintain that warm small-company feeling," says Adams.

His major achievements include transforming RCS into more than just a technical solution or product for its partners, but a provider of tailor-made experiences that integrate people, processes and technology to create value for both its partners and their customers. "We have a very clear 2020 plan where we want to diversify our business to ensure sustainability. We're launching new products, changing the way we engage with people; digital transformation is a big theme. Our ultimate aim is to build a more sustainable business for the future. A business that will help built a nation," concludes Adams. **BBQ**

*Interview by Shannon Manuel, article by Dale Rother*



*Focussed on innovation. Photo credit: The Loudhailer*



# Please go!

“The only problem with Australia is that it is, well... full of Australians,” joked a tourist on the Gold Coast of Australia during a recent trip. “Yes, and too many South Africans,” was the quick retort from the Australian tour guide. Sadly, I think the only problem with South Africa is, well, South Africans.

I’ve had the privilege of travelling to three very different countries since the last edition of this magazine. All are amazing in their own right but each has very specific and far-reaching challenges. Does this sound familiar?

Whilst I loved our time in Australia, Dubai and the Maldives, I loved being home even more. For me, every time I travel internationally, I come back home with a sense of gratitude and hope, and have a newfound respect for our beautiful country. Every time, I feel an even stronger sense of purpose and excitement. Every time, I become an even prouder South African.

So, what happened while I was away?

I returned to a more negative general perception than ever before. With Ramaphosa running out, we’re hanging our ‘depression’ on the land debate, the now official recession, fuel price hikes and almost anything else we can find to make ourselves miserable. We’re then not only making ourselves miserable but taking every opportunity we can find to drag those around us, down with us as well.

Please stop it! Think about a road trip in a car. First, you decide on the destination and then you look ahead, scanning between the road ahead and the horizon, to ensure you’re moving towards your destination.

Yes, you have a rear-view mirror as well as two side mirrors to warn against anything unexpected from the past creeping up on you but your main focus is the road ahead. That’s why the windscreen is the full size of

## Continue to count your blessings. Find things to be grateful for

the front of your vehicle and the rear-view mirror and two side mirrors are tiny by comparison. Too many South Africans seem to be looking in their rear-view mirror and side mirrors, and have forgotten to look forward at all. Never mind the destination that’s been forgotten about in the first place.

Seven critical steps that could perhaps assist you in getting back on track:

1. Commit to a future you want to see. No one can commit to a future they cannot see or feel. The more you dwell

in the negativity, the more you move away from your ideal future. The more the rest of us do the same, the more we collectively spiral into what we’re currently experiencing. As Mahatma Gandhi famously said: “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Create your ideal future and commit to it fully. Then, put blinkers on and get going.

2. Stop reacting to the news. Stop jumping to conclusions after falling for the news headline, which, by the way, is specifically designed to invoke emotion and enough of it to react and actually read the article. Sadly, we forget that and only react without actually reading. Stop sharing fake news and even real news that just focuses on the negative. Stop wallowing in the paralysis your one-sided reality is causing. Stop seeing only the one side of the story—often, not even your own side. Don’t forget that there are always three sides to every story. Your side, the other side and the truth somewhere in-between.
3. Start actually understanding what’s going on around you. That may mean a lot more work and definitely more reading and research. Don’t just react but actually open up the article and read the whole thing. Then, read some of the links to other related articles and

remember to stick with a topic until you see the retractions, retorts, the truth emerging, apologies etc. Find out why things are the way they are and how they're interlinked. Find out what is really happening internationally and look for the manure that's making the grass seem greener on the other side.

4. Continue to count your blessings. Find things to be grateful for. Purposefully force yourself to see the good that exists all around you. Document—yes, physically write down—what is good with the world around you. Volunteer your time and money for something you're really passionate about and then see both the need of people around you and the beauty of committed people trying to make things right. Continue to live your life to the fullest and stop pulling up the handbrake whilst you wait for perfection to reveal itself. It won't.
5. Be the example we so desperately need. You are already a leader in your sphere of influence. That leadership position

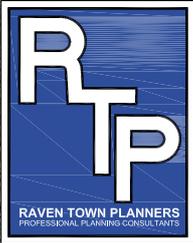
comes with responsibility. People already look up to you and take guidance from you, your emotions, interactions and reactions. Be the leader you so desperately believe South Africa needs. Don't worry about the top leadership and start doing your bit where you are. That way, we get more leadership examples permeating society and collectively bring about change.

6. Rinse and repeat. Remind yourself of your commitment under point 1 and then repeat all the steps. Just like your shampoo, don't forget this critical step. I love Zig Ziglar's quote that's very relevant here: "People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing—that's why we recommend it daily." Daily motivation. Daily reminders. Daily focus.
7. Go! If all else fails, and you just can't be part of the solution for South Africa, then rather go. We need to know who we've got to work with and cannot continue to carry those who aren't with us. Too

many people spend their lives looking in the rear-view mirror, the side mirrors and even daydreaming about the fantasy of the destination, and they forget to look where they're going. Remember to look where you're going and spend the bulk of your time looking through the windscreen. We need you to get going: either towards your ideal future for South Africa or to start again where you believe it may be better for you and your family. Either way, get going.

South Africa has only one real problem and that's unemployment. Give people a job and you give them choice. With choice, they solve their own problems and work towards improving their own lives. To create employment, we, again, only have one real solution: more entrepreneurs and more successful, profitable and sustainable businesses. So get an ActionCOACH and get your business right today. **BBQ**

*Harry Welby-Cooke*



## Raven Town Planners

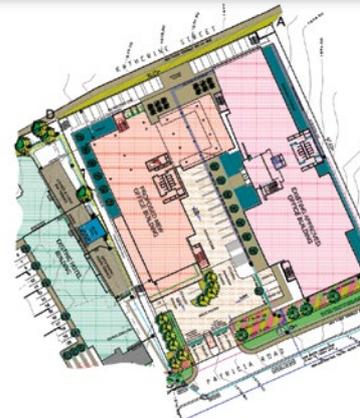
Raven Town Planners is a professional town planning consultancy, duly registered with the Association for Consulting Town and Regional Planners (Registration No. 00224), mainly involved in consulting work in the field of development control.

Most recently, Raven Town Planners was also registered with the Green Building Council of South Africa as the company also has the necessary skills to assist with the green rating of urban development.

Raven Town Planners commenced as a professional consulting agency in the field of town planning on 1 February 1998 and has since operated and traded under the name and style of Raven Town Planners

### The main types of activities performed by Raven Town Planners include:

- Applications for the establishment of townships in terms of the Town-planning and Townships Ordinance, 1986.
- Applications for the removal of restrictive conditions of title in terms of the Gauteng Removal of Restrictions Act, 1996
- Application for the division of agricultural land in terms of the Division of Land Ordinance, 1986
- Appeals to the Townships Board, Services Appeal Board and Compensation Court in terms of the Town-planning and Townships Ordinance, 1986
- Appeals to the SABS Review Board in terms of the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977
- Queries and assistance to a wide variety of professionals, including property valuers, estate agents, architects and attorneys with regard to all administrative matters pertaining to land
- Expert witness in the High Court of South Africa pertaining to land use rights, interpretation of zoning information and applicability of administrative law



# The Hyundai Kona



**A** while ago, we reported on the Hyundai Elantra and commented favourably about its good looks and drivability. Well, here we are, approximately a year later, testing the all-new Hyundai Kona. Whilst not a sedan, this SUV is without a doubt one of the most enjoyable vehicles we have driven lately. Fitted with a host of safety and creature comforts, it is certainly top of its game in the SUV market.

When approaching the car, the aggressive bold front end draws and demands immediate attention. The headlights, grille and driving lights make the car instantly

recognisable, whilst the flowing lines enhance the rugged good looks. Whilst not quite as large as its SUV cousins, the Creta and Tucson, it certainly makes up for size with its features and driveability. The assertive good looks will turn heads wherever the Kona is seen.

Fitted with all of the normal features of a modern car, the Kona also has a host of features including a 7-inch centrally-mounted infotainment system that is extremely user-friendly. The system includes connectivity to Android or Apple systems and has a navigation package. This can all be controlled on a touch screen or by accessing the remote buttons on the steering wheel, which is also

adjustable. Controls on the steering wheel also allow the driver to set up the cruise control, monitor instant or average fuel consumption, as well as tyre pressure.

The instrument cluster is extremely clear and easy to read. The wing mirrors that fold away are an interesting feature, allowing access to difficult parking areas. Auto headlights, as well as LED daytime running lights are standard. The interior is fitted with black leather trimmed with red stitching. The red finish continues with the seat belts, which gives the interior a modern up-market feel. Although it is not a large vehicle, the interior design is such that there is more than enough space and leg room to



## Bold and innovative design in a stunning package

accommodate five passengers in comfort. The rear boot space can also be increased by folding the rear seats.

The 1.0 T-GDI three-cylinder version we drove, with 88kw @ 6 000rpm and 172Nm of torque between 1 500 and 4 000rpm, certainly does not lack in performance. Driven through the front wheels via a six-speed manual gearbox, this model has more than enough power to adequately overtake in town or on the open road, and was very happy cruising at the speed limit in sixth gear, with plenty of power to spare. The fuel consumption tested on this car averaged a very credible 7.2litres/100km throughout the test period.

Driving the Kona is an absolute pleasure in the city or on the open road. The Kona also attained the Euro NCAP 5-star rating award and is filled with safety features including ABS, electronic stability control, downhill brake control and hill start assist as well as blind-spot collision warning, situated in the wing mirrors, and rear cross-traffic collision warning.

A full set of airbags is also standard in the Kona. Hyundai manufactures its own steel, with the Kona featuring a strong light body with 51% ultra-high strength steel enhancing performance and helping to enhance passenger safety. All in all, the Kona is really ahead of its game and I have

no doubt it will be a strong competitor in its market segment. **BBQ**

### Models:

- KONA 1.0 T-GDI Executive Manual R379 900
- KONA 2.0 NU Executive Automatic R399 900

Includes: 7-year/200 000km manufacturer's warranty (comprising the 5-year/150 000km warranty with a 2-year/50 000km drivetrain warranty, a 5-year/90 000km service plane and 5-year/150 000km roadside assistance

*John Elford*

# The quota killers

South African cricket has a proud heritage of being one of the best cricketing nations but in the past two decades, the spectre of quotas has constantly raised its ugly head. However, it seems as though the “born-free generation” is proving that, given the chance, they can do battle against the best in international cricket.

**T**here's Makhaya Ntini, Hashim Amla and now Kagiso Rabada. Three non-white cricketers who have enjoyed glittering careers with the Proteas, and each of them has been ranked number one in the world by the ICC.

It's a proud heritage, one which is getting stronger by the year, and there's every chance that South Africa's long-awaited World Cup triumph could be achieved by a team that has more than half of its players who are players of colour... and with not a quota in sight!

South African players and fans have endured tragic endings to some of their World Cup campaigns. They lost to rain rules in 1992, suffered the disaster of the Klusener-Donald run-out in 1999, were outwitted by the rain and run rates at home in 2003 and, in 2015, lost in the semi-final to New Zealand after a selection controversy apparently sparked frustration within the squad.

The issue of quotas is a touchy subject for white South Africans but it's even more touchy for players of colour. Speaking strictly under cover of anonymity, a number of professional black cricketers currently playing in South Africa have expressed their frustration to me about the fact that they are still labelled as quota players by certain opponents.

"You go out to bat in a first-class match and white players start chipping things like

'you don't deserve your place', 'you're just a quota', 'you shouldn't be playing here'," said one player to me in December 2017, and it's a sentiment that half-a-dozen black professional cricketers have expressed to me in various ways over the past six months. This shocked me as I had imagined that the cricketing landscape in South Africa was looking a lot rosier than these anecdotes suggest. Sadly, one must conclude that a similar sentiment might still be prevalent throughout the amateur ranks, from club cricket through to the professional arena.

Don't get me wrong: this is not a picture of doom and gloom, as the vast majority of South Africans have embraced the new South Africa and, in my cricketing travels around the country, I have seen a sporting brotherhood that would make Nelson Mandela proud indeed. There is great spirit, affection and respect among the majority of players, yet there remains a persistent niggle from a small group of players—and a large group of 'supporters'—who refuse to accept that players of colour have a right to take their place in the top teams across all age groups in South African cricket.

Social media, in particular, is filled with a rogues' gallery of quota callers, who seem determined to hold onto the old South Africa and are ceaseless in denigrating the achievements of non-white cricketers.

By all accounts, in the past, there was a push for quota players at the expense of more talented white players for a few years as South African sport and society worked hard to redress the atrocious imbalances of the past.

That said, when running through the record books, I struggle to spot any players who were way out of their league and could

be described as 'quota' players who were there to make up the numbers.

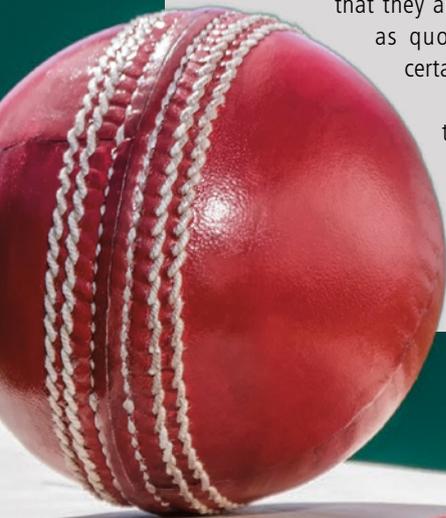
Certainly, some very talented white cricketers would have lost out on some opportunities as slightly less talented players of colour were given a chance to prove themselves. This situation is no different to the fact that many millions of non-white players lost out on opportunities for decades under Apartheid. Some of these non-white 'quota' players didn't make the grade but then if you scour the annals, you also find a number of white players who were given a chance who also didn't make the grade. Yet the 'quota' players burn under the spotlight. It's an attitude that needs to change urgently.

To me, the proof of the pudding is the fact that a number of those players who made the grade rose to the top of the game—Ntini, Amla and Rababa specifically—while many others have been solid international performers who completely justified their place in the side.

Now that more South African cricketers have grown up with far better opportunities to learn the sport and advance along a more natural timeline, the results have been incredible to see, and what a change has been brought about over the space of just 20 years.

In the heartbreaking 1992 World Cup semi-final, only one player of colour (the Spinner, Omar Henry) was in the squad, but he did not play in that semi-final match.

In 1999, there was one player of colour in the semi-final, the brilliantly talented Herschelle Gibbs, although he grew up surrounded by some of the best sporting coaches and facilities a young, talented player could want.



In 2015, there were four players of colour in the Proteas side that lost in heartbreaking fashion off the last over of the semi-final against New Zealand.

In 2019, there are six non-white players who are regular members of the side—and three of them are black Africans. That would really please Madiba, and especially because they are truly deserving of their place in the side.

The new Mzansi Super League is now also shining a spotlight on young South African players—and especially young black African players—who are getting a chance to show what they can do at the highest level against some of the best.

Leading the log at the halfway stage of the tournament were the Cape Town Blitz, a side made up of predominantly non-white players (including overseas marquee players), while the rookie, Lutho Sipamla of the Tshwane Spartans, burst onto the scene and has won numerous admirers for his fiery performances with the ball, along with a good many other players of colour who were not previously household names but who have risen to prominence.

The MSL has been a revelation for the game, however, as it has also offered older and younger white players a chance to shine on major stages, with players such as Anrich Nortje, Ryan Rickelton, Marco Marais, Pite van Biljon and Robbie Frylinck grabbing a spotlight that would otherwise never have shone their way.

Although Cricket South Africa receives much criticism for some of their actions (some of it fair, much of it biased), they truly deserve praise from all quarters for their efforts to create a cricketing culture that is allowing players of all backgrounds to have a chance to shine.

As a result, it's now possible to select an international, quality Proteas side made up of entirely non-white players.

- Reeza Hendricks
- Hashim Amla
- Temba Bavuma
- JP Duminy
- Khaya Zondo
- Farhaan Behardien
- Andile Phehlukwayo

- Imran Tahir
- Tabraiz Shamsi
- Lungi Ngidi
- Kagiso Rabada

Excluded from this line-up are the likes of Vernon Philander, Keshav Maharaj, Junior Dala and a number of other non-white players already capped for their country. The one glaring omission is that of a wick-

## Social media, in particular, is filled with a rogues' gallery of quota callers, who seem determined to hold onto the old South Africa

etkeeper—the above team does not include a specialist keeper. Sinethemba Qeshile is a young man with great potential who is getting a chance to shine as a rookie in the MSL, but he's still making his way in domestic cricket, so the international arena is some way away for him. But remember his name, as he is a talented keeper/batsman for the future.

Wicketkeepers of all colours generally struggle to find opportunities in domestic cricket, from school level up to professional cricket, as it is a position where a dominant player will take ownership of a position for a good 5-10 years. Since 1992, South Africa has only had four main

Wicketkeepers—Dave Richardson, Mark Boucher, AB de Villiers and now Quinton de Kock. A few players have filled in here or there when injury has struck the incumbent, but nothing to challenge these players' long-term positions.

It is a possible team that could do South Africa proud. They wouldn't win the World Cup because the batting lacks a bit of punch and the team has no specialist wicketkeeper. However, if you consider that the bowling attack is possibly the best in the world, that might give this diversified Proteas side the advantage by bowling teams out cheaply and leaving their batsmen with a more accessible target to chase. Maybe they could win the World Cup after all.

The beauty of this team is not just that such a victory would be a reality but rather that it highlights two things: one, there are plenty of quality, international players of colour in South African cricket; secondly, it highlights how important the white players are to creating a balance in the side, just as the players of colour create a vital balance in the current Proteas side.

The 2019 Cricket World Cup promises to be one of the most open in years, with India, Pakistan, England and South Africa being the firm favourites to take the title now that Australia is suffering a self-induced dip in fortune, following the suspension of two key players. Although South African fans are clearly eager to see Faf du Plessis lift the trophy for the Proteas, perhaps an even greater prize awaits within the team itself—the fact that the Proteas are finally lining up for battle with a truly representative team. Not only is that proving itself valuable on the field of play (diversity brings with it strength in so many ways), it is also providing role models for a whole new generation of non-white cricketers and, perhaps most important of all, offers a vision for how South Africans can work and play together to create a better future for all. That, surely, must be the greatest prize of all. **BBQ**

*Brad Reynolds is an International Cricket Coaching Consultant and Freelance Writer*



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