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BLACK BUSINESS QUARTERLY



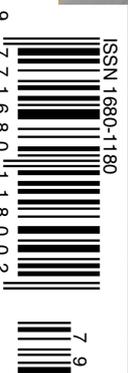
**Vikash Narsai**  
CEO and founder of the  
award-winning VNA Consulting

SOUTH AFRICA'S PREMIER  
BLACK BUSINESS  
LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE  
FIRST QUARTER 2019

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THIS FIRST QUARTER 2019

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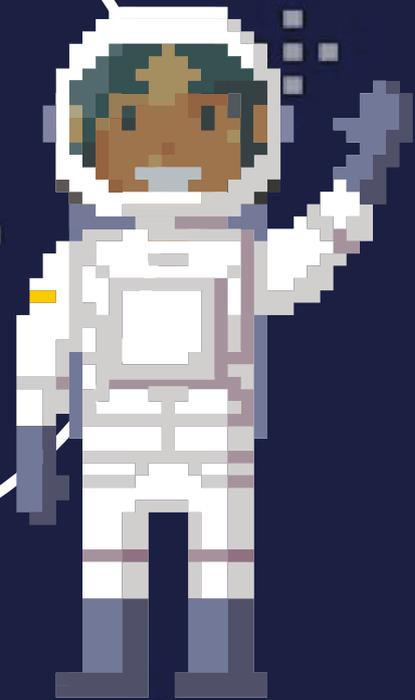
THE MUSICAL ARTIST, NTSIKA NGXANGA, IS BLESSED, TALENTED AND DRIVEN



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# Transformation is the key



**I**t is beginning to sound like a buzz-phrase: Transformation in South Africa. However, transformation has been high on the agenda for the past few years in South Africa, out of necessity and due to the need for progress. Diversity is key for progress in an ever-changing world that is constantly in flux.

Transformation, therefore, should not only be based on redress and the unequal past but on the need for organisations to move forward through various informed points of view. The H&M (black

child saga) is a recent example—without diversity (gender and race), any organisation is left worse off for it.

The annual statistics for top leadership placements in South Africa have, for the second year in a row, shown a sustained increase in race and gender transformation. This is a positive for the country as it seems trade and industry is now walking the talk.

Annual placement statistics collected by the top executive search firm, Jack Hammer, show an 8% increase in black economic empowerment appointments last year, building on the near 10% increase logged the year before. The gender-limited ceiling has also been blown off as more women are now taking the reins at major private and public entities.

The number of female appointments, which stood at 32% in 2016, has risen to 42%. This is highly significant as the percentage had stayed stagnant at 30% for the past few years.

The 17th edition of the BBQ Awards, recently held at Emperors Palace in Johannesburg, were a glowing success. It was a true example of the transformed South Africa we are striving for, based on awarding true champions of business excellence in the country. The feedback from attendees and winners reflected the spirit of the event. Refreshing, entertaining and educating, a more detailed look will be in the next edition.

I hope you enjoy this edition and take in all key learnings. Transformation is the lifeblood of our future.

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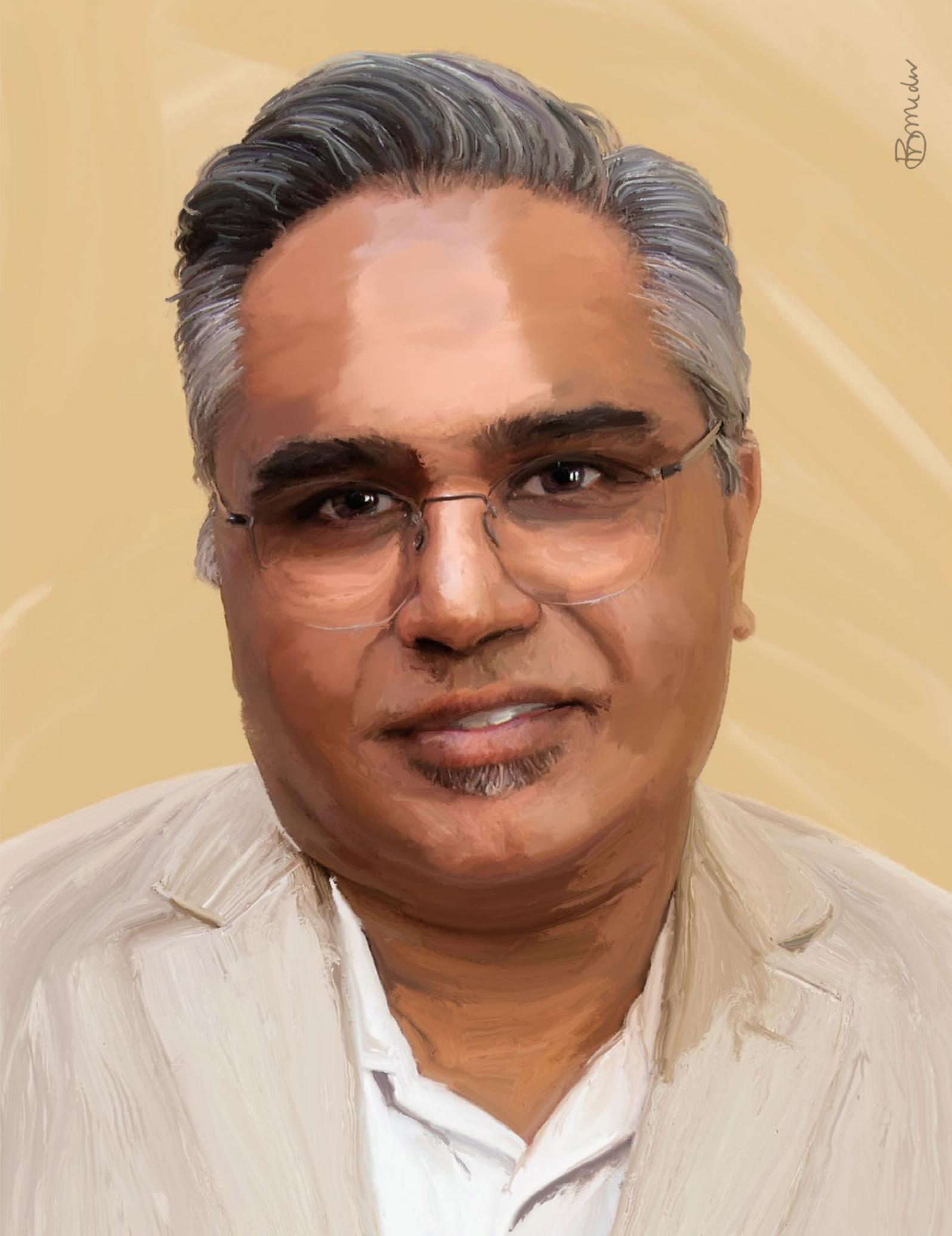


**AIRLINK**  
Freedom of the African Sky



# **Vikash Narsai**

A leading specialist in  
the built environment



**T**he multi-disciplinary professional services consultancy VNA Consulting leads the charge for built environment transformation, realising the continental potential and connecting African communities, while enhancing the lives of the inhabitants.

VNA Consulting's CEO and founder, Vikash Narsai, extends a broad, debonair smile and an unassuming confidence as he strides into his office boardroom, in an upmarket, converted colonial-style house, set high up on Durban's Berea.

Narsai, a Quantity Surveyor by profession, assumes an affable presence, a characteristic that has, no doubt, steered this energetic leader through the twists and turns of a challenging journey in the global built environment sector.

Narsai, 47, built VNA Consulting, an award-winning firm, from humble beginnings with less than a handful of staff in 2000, into a large South African company employing 300 people and with established branches in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Free State, Western Cape, Mauritius including strategic partners in Australia, USA, Asia and Europe.

The firm focuses on connecting African communities, providing construction project management, construction management, civil engineering, specialised pavement engineering, infrastructure development as well as cost engineering services. VNA Consulting recently won the South African Construction Award (SACA) as the Best Health, Safety, Environment and Quality (SHEQ) Company of the Year in 2018 and a year earlier, the firm clinched the SACA Best Consultancy of the Year award for 2017.

But it has been a long and arduous journey to arrive at these major milestones.

Narsai recalls how, as a young graduate fresh out of ML Sultan Technikon (now the Durban University of Technology), just before the dawn of democracy in 1993, the dearth of jobs even then, led to a delay in fulfilling his professional dreams.

"I was confronted by the realities of being a new job seeker due to the absence of available quantity surveying opportunities.

To make ends meet, I was forced to sell children's books door to door. It was a tenuous time.

"But my continuous drive to embrace the built environment industry finally paid off when, in 1995, I was given an opportunity in Richards Bay as a Junior Quantity Surveyor for Coalfields Construction, one of the largest contracting firms at the time located in Northern KwaZulu-Natal," he says.

However, the opportunity presented challenges, especially the long "camping days" on the job.

"Apart from 'roughing it' in a caravan for nearly eight months on site, I had the unfortunate experience of crashing my boss' brand new 4x4. I will always remember my "camping days". I attribute this to my early years I spent as a Boy Scout which equipped me to overcome challenges with ease."

"What I thought was just a snowballing, disastrous year turned into a blessing. It led to a promotion to Chief Buyer of the company's operations in Vryheid as a result of my tough work ethos and commitment," Narsai adds.

A new opportunity arose at a Durban-based construction company in 1998 and Narsai was deployed to its Johannesburg branch for a year. He returned to KwaZulu-Natal in 1999 and was appointed the Chief Quantity Surveyor on the Kokstad Supermax Prison housing project.

This contract, his last as an employee, was a turning point in his professional life because the following year, he started his construction project management consultancy.

"My strong-minded entrepreneurial spirit and focused dedication forged me and enabled me to bring my unique vision—to create a dedicated construction project management practice—to fruition. My transparency, fairness, due diligence, strong work ethics and being highly regarded by project stakeholders culminated in the opening of the VNA Construction Project Management Consultancy, now simply known as VNA Consulting," Narsai recalls.

His life partner, Anju Prabdial-Narsai, joined him in the business in 2002. However,



Narsai found he had to prove himself to clinch new clients and build the brand.

He seized the opportunity to work as an independent consultant to the main contractor who built the new KZN Department of Transport offices in Pietermaritzburg in 2003. Through the project, he built a credible track record with the Client by delivering the project within time, cost and quality performance levels."



Despite providing a high-quality professional service, Narsai's firm endured challenges and he came close to shutting the doors in 2005 when the work opportunities dried up. However, he endured the tough times and went on to experience the strongest growth in 2007 and during the 2008 global recession.

One of the firm's first major breaks came when he submitted a tender for a

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport District Consultant appointment in 2006 and was successful. Always up for a challenge, Narsai was given the most difficult district located in uMzimkhulu. This was a district that was handed over from the Eastern Cape Province to the Province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Today, more than 10 years later, Narsai looks back at these early projects as catalysts that helped him build a solid

reputation among his peers for completing quality projects on time, to the highest standards and, importantly, well within the client's budget.

"This was the stepping stone to building credibility within the civil engineering fraternity, which was dominated only by civil engineers and not built environment specialists with the requisite skills of the road infrastructure industry," he explains.



Narsai lists several projects and awards among the company's successes over the years, which have included:

Leading the growth and development of the town of uMzimkhulu, situated in KwaZulu-Natal, for the KZN Department of Transport from 2007 to 2018.

Being appointed as the Lead Programme Manager on the Free State Department of Police, Roads and Transport Contractor Development Programme since 2014. With VNA at the helm, the programme won the 2016/17 national CPSI award for the most innovative Contractor Development Programme.

Serving as the implementation agent for Vodacom South Africa (Midrand) since 2013.

Assisting the National Department of Transport to achieve standardisation, integration and uniformity of road assets within South Africa in 2016.

Being awarded the contract for implementing infrastructure delivery management and road asset management in accordance with the Division of Revenue Act (DoRA) for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport in 2018.

However, the single biggest success story in the company's history has been the acquisition, from the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB Group), their Systems and Technology division to create Automated Road Rehabilitation Business Systems (ARRB Systems). His firm secured the acquisition when the ARRB Group decided to divest its research division from the systems and technology, after participating in a highly competitive international procurement process in 2017.

"ARRB Systems is now a global distribution network involving established offices in Australia, the USA, India, Sweden and South Africa, including a global distribution network in 23 countries," Narsai says.

VNA Consulting initially partnered with the ARRB Group in 2010 to access the technology to assist local road authorities with quality scientific assessments to check the condition of roads in line with the international standards adopted by the South African National Roads Agency (Sanral).

"We felt there was a monopoly because there was only one company doing these assessments, where non-destructive instrumentation based condition surveying and assessment was fast becoming the way of the future."

The firm's acquisition of the systems and technology division sets it head and shoulders above local competitors and gives it a distinct international competitive edge, he says, especially when competing as a black-owned business in a sector monopolised by

We are threats to those who have been dominating the industry because with this technology, we are 'the police, the Hawks, the crime-intelligent busters' because we can very objectively determine whether a contract is being done correctly.

"The sad part is that, with shoddy workmanship on road related projects, Transport Authority Clients don't have the necessary management tools to determine whether a Consultant and/or Contractor are performing their respective scope of works

## “What further sets his team apart is its human and technical skills and ability to assess the big picture to deliver on a range of projects

traditionally white-owned businesses.

"What has helped us is that I have always been intrigued by what goes on globally. I have travelled extensively and picked up ideas by looking at what goes on in Australia, Asia, the United States and India. Australia is similar to South Africa and a lot of the advances that have been made there can assist us at home.

"As we believed automated pavement condition testing to be the way forward and in line with global trends, VNA had the foresight to acquire our first falling weight deflectometer trailer in 2009, paving the way for our extensive investment in sophisticated, state-of-the-art pavement strength testing equipment, designed to significantly improve road maintenance solutions in this country," Narsai says.

Introducing the technology was a major turning point for the business, bolstering its reputation as a leading road asset management service provider among transport authorities in SA and the SADC region, yet Narsai says leading the way has drawbacks.

"The downside is when you are seen as the first mover, you are seen as a threat to the industry. It goes back to transformation.

and/or service appropriately. Our key objective is to ensure Clients always get value for money," he explains.

While this cutting-edge technology is a game changer, which is not only analysing the condition of the pavements scientifically, but exposing sub-standard work on roads, what further sets his team apart is its human- and technical skills and ability to assess the big picture to deliver on a range of projects.

"We have a long-held collaborative approach to big-picture planning, coupled with an ever-changing vigour to improve quality and customer value in a simplistic manner while delivering professionally on local and international planes.

"Our pioneering project methods and processes have contributed immeasurably to the business success we have enjoyed during our 19-year history. Our successes have been built on our strategic approach to doing things differently in terms of business products, services and innovation. I pride myself in having a hands-on approach with my clients," Narsai says.

He describes his leadership style as "participative" and he likes to lead by example.

"My employees and management teams assist me by participating in the decision-making process while maintaining the final decision-making within a governance structure. It's of mutual benefit as it allows participation and allows for better and informed decisions," Narsai says.

He believes truly effective leadership stems from the passion one exhibits for a vision bigger than oneself and a dream to improve the social order of the day.

"Our vision is to realise continental potential, ensuring the built environment transformation of South Africa and the continent while enhancing the lives of the inhabitants. VNA is service-driven, with service success as the cornerstone of its culture," he says.

The company rigorously manages client requirements, schedules, facilities, human resources and the budget, holding every employee accountable to ensure service delivery success.

"Every employee must be mindful of content, risk, cost and schedule. All must understand the goals and requirements of their activity and how that activity interacts with the larger system. VNA cultivates and inculcates a vision, which includes all the people across our operations who individually and collectively take ownership of any project in which we invest. This new breed of leadership must demonstrate a dynamic understanding of the competences, applications and future

potential of evolving technologies," he says.

Narsai says technology is also having an impact on leadership, as managers need to understand how to delegate between human and technological resources to optimise the proficiencies of both.

"South Africa and Southern Africa's built environment industry is constantly evolving. No longer is brick and mortar being considered the Alpha and Omega. The digital age now influences every aspect of this economic sector in terms of innovations, systems and methods.

"Behind the amazing technological advancements and innovative developments are connected business customers; customers who now demand smarter, faster, always-on experiences and solutions from us," he says.

But he notes that what works elsewhere on the globe may not necessarily always work in Africa.

"Opportunities, prospects, ventures and creativity need to be developed and nurtured. What Africa is missing is infrastructure - roads, rails, ports, airports, clinics, schools, houses, electrical and information technology networks - which is required to revitalise the African economy. The lack thereof hampers growth," Narsai says.

And there are also sure rewards for focusing on the big picture. He is of the view that companies that know how to succeed in connecting African communities and markets will undoubtedly prosper on the continent.

"Connecting communities was always one of our undeniable endeavours, built into the core of our company vision. Once you start connecting communities, the 'triple bottom line', targeting economic, social and environmental matters in delivering sustainable built environment solutions can bring about the change to ensure Africa's rising economic prosperity," he says.

VNA Consulting incorporates effective collaboration and skills sharing, both internally and externally with service suppliers and communities, as a critical means to enhance its infrastructure development services on the continent.

## Focused on CSI

VNA Consulting is founded on the premise that the firm has an obligation to address the essential 'triple bottom line', especially in under-served rural regions of South Africa.

The CEO and founder of VNA Consulting, Vikash Narsai, says the firm is making an impact in the arena of education and skills development as part of its corporate social investment programmes.

"Our annual mentorship through an in-service programme is offered to a minimum of at least 20 students in civil engineering annually. This programme focuses on previously disadvantaged individuals," he says.

Within its bursary programme, VNA provides access to education for existing staff and the previously disadvantaged. Its external bursary programme involves a minimum of five students of various disciplines within the built environment.

"The outdated misconception still exists today among young people that the industry is still just brick and mortar. There is a lack of information on professional prospects and technological advancements, which have created unique career paths and entrepreneurial opportunities.

"These need to be placed at the disposal of the youth through direct and interactive experiences to not only encourage but create a passion for the industry and inspire them to access the right training and qualifications.

"The youth need to be engaged at the school level with the opportunity to experience the industry from the inside, such as visit project sites and meet inspiring professionals. Initiatives such as internships can play a vital role," Narsai says.

He believes it is his firm's responsibility to assist with the development of science and mathematics at the school level. The company sponsored the renovation and upgrading of the science laboratory classroom at Mariannridge Secondary School, which included the supply of new equipment and chemicals for the laboratory.

"We learnt that the school achieved a 100% pass rate in science in 2018, which was attributed to the facilities we provided," he says proudly.

VNA also adopted a public intermediate school in Pomeroy, Msinga in KwaZulu-Natal, to which it provides a monthly nutrition programme for 270 children.



"We engage in a wide spectrum of programmes, projects and activities of extraordinary risk, complexity and priority, in our centric, cross-organisational approach and business model. Although our project teams consist of variable skill sets, they share matching goals, resources and leadership styles. With their diverse set of specialised skills, they are able to problem solve as a collective. Our collaboration and skills strengths lie in the abilities of our culturally diverse

employees as we harness the different strengths of individual team members," Narsai says.

The firm also focuses on engaging with stakeholders, not only to ensure the successful management of the environment around projects but to consider the interests of all participants in order to identify potential conflicts and challenges.

"One of the greatest challenges facing skills sharing is the public sector institutions' acceptance to respect the knowledge that

the private sector brings to the fold. There seems to be continued resistance to change which, if not accepted, can derail government programmes and hamper service delivery," Narsai says.

However, he says the sector is upbeat about the government's moves to clamp down on corruption, which has been a "pandemic prevalent for more than a few decades".

"There is a renewed hope that comes with the introduction and adoption of the Standard for Infrastructure Delivery Management and the adoption of the Division of Revenue Act by Treasury to hold public sector institutions accountable, and which will, indeed, bring errant public servants and unscrupulous service providers to account with consequences," he says.

For Narsai and his team, the cleaning up of corruption in the sector is good news because it will promote fair competition and opportunities for his firm so that they may continue seeking out difficult development tasks across the continent—projects that will irrevocably change landscapes and connect communities.

"Our firm's value system displays and practices ethical leadership to promote a work environment, which upholds one's reputation for integrity, ethical conduct and trust. The realisation is a daily commitment and there is zero tolerance for any breach. Simply put, don't 'sell your soul'," he says.

Narsai is invigorated by the prospects of the many new challenges that lie ahead.

"From the very first day I stepped onto the site, put on my hard hat, safety boots and became immersed in the project at hand, I could feel the adrenaline pumping through my veins.

"I still get the same feeling each time I get involved in a new project. My continued involvement—albeit from a distance—in the various projects that we are working on keeps me fulfilled, motivated and driven each and every day. There is never a dull moment in my day at work," he concludes. **BBQ**

*Lyse Comins*

# Traderoot Technologies

A proudly South African FinTech company delivering payment and issuing solutions to Africa and the world

**T**raderoor Africa is the regional sales and support subsidiary of Traderoot Technologies, a FinTech software company based in Cape Town. Traderoot Africa has offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Windhoek, and its role is to support and engage with new and existing clients on the African continent, bring new clients on board and provide third-line product support for the software.

Traderoot's software is licensed to customers, who range from some of the largest financial institutions in the region to end-user point-of-sale merchants.

As an example, clients like Metropolitan Momentum Insurance (MMI) use a Traderoot Core Account solution to manage account balances and account holder profiles, including the collection of fees. MMI's Core Account system integrates with their health insurance system, their customer-facing structures and their accounting systems.

Old Mutual uses a custom Traderoot solution to aggregate transactions and calculate interest on their Old Mutual Money Account and Retail Mass 2-in-One Savings Plans.

Traderoot software underlies much of the transaction switching and routing between retail merchants and banks in the region. Major payment service providers (PSPs) and their merchants are using Traderoot software, including Innervation, Sureswipe and Dashpay.

In Namibia, Traderoot software is used by Namclear, the national payment clearing house, to route transactions among the country's banks and provide inter-bank settlements. Furthermore, NamPost licenses a suite of four Traderoot solutions to



meet all their business requirements, from biometric authentication to paying bulk salary payments, and managing proof of life for the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF).

Some of the other Traderoot clients in the Southern African region are the Botswana Building Society (BBS) and NASCU, a Zambian financial inclusion initiative sponsored by Mastercard.

The FinTech solutions available from Traderoot Africa include two forms of PSP software: the PSP-Channel, which aggregates transactions from a community of merchants and payment terminals, and the PSP-Acquirer, which additionally interacts with banks to settle the merchants' accounts from their customers' banks.

The available solutions also include the Card Management System (CMS), which manages the production and issuing of cards and authenticates cardholders using PIN and biometric data.

Their Universal Issuing Platform—Core Account (UIP-Core Account)—provides core banking functions such as managing customer profiles and their account balances, as well as calculating interest and collecting fees.

The Electronic Value Distribution (EVD) solution manages the distribution of value-added services such as airtime vouchers and payment of bills and amenities. The Billing and Reconciliation Engine automates business-to-business functions, including transaction reconciliation and the production of invoices and statements.

Traderoot Africa's solutions, therefore, cover the entire spectrum of business requirements in banking and payment processing, and their relationship with the region's banks ensures that their clients' solutions are compatible and integrated with the established standards.

### Investment

Traderoot Africa is well-established, growing and profitable, and they are seeking strategic partners to help them accelerate growth throughout Africa in line with a clearly defined and prioritised market strategy. The Banking as a Service licensing model offers further opportunity to increase their already high proportion of recurring revenue derived from support and maintenance, and from transaction fee income from existing clients. This business model makes Traderoot Africa an exciting investment case for both capital and debt finance. Interested parties should contact the CEO.

### Traderoot Active

Traderoot Technologies, through its Africa operations, believes in making a contribution to the future of our country and community by sponsoring education and sporting talent in a meaningful and lasting way that empowers children to become well-educated and healthy leaders of the future.

Rather than simply supporting organisations that tackle the problem of education superficially, they feel that their contribution can be made far more effectively by supporting individual children and young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds who have shown the potential for success, by providing a sustained support network that enables them to reach their goals and achieve that potential. This is the most effective way to foster and mentor genuine leadership potential in future generations.

The Traderoot Active initiative is their way of achieving this aim, while encouraging people's passionate involvement in active, constructive sporting and leisure activities at the same time. The Ride for a Child and Run for a Child campaigns bring together runners and cyclists to raise funds for education. The people who do these sports are often

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passionate about the activity, and they have created a platform that enables these people to fund a passion for education through the efforts of an activity that they love doing.

The basis of these campaigns is that people take part in recognised provincial, national or global sporting events competing in Traderoot Active racing gear. Every kilometre they run, swim or ride is sponsored, either by Traderoot or by independent sponsors, and raises money for a charity that significantly benefits a child's education. In addition, all the funds raised from sales of the branded racing gear go to the same charities.

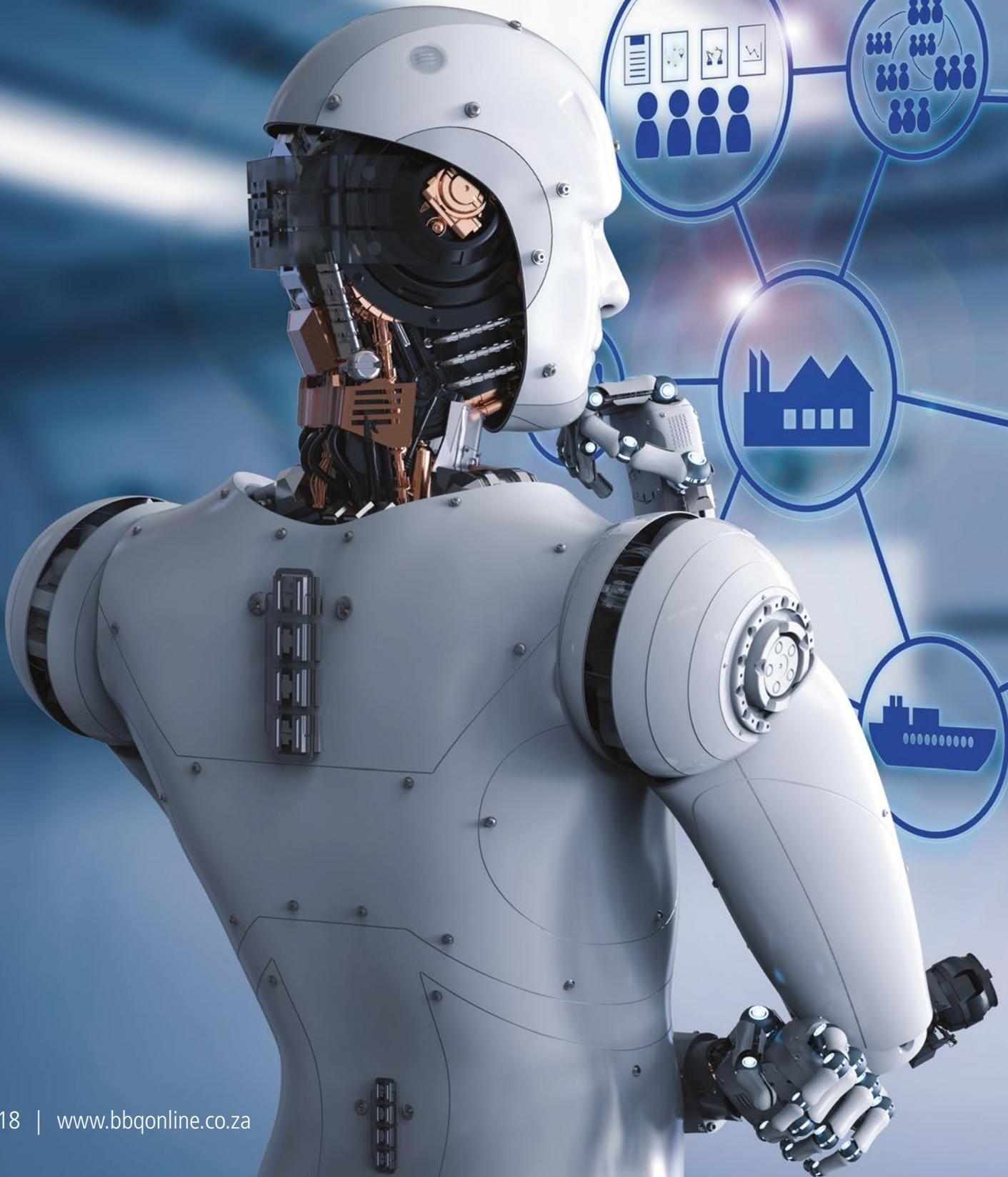
Traderoot has partnered with Bright Start, an educational charity that places promising children from underprivileged communities into schools with a high standard and continues to work with the child, teachers, parents and others to provide holistic support and guidance throughout the child's educational career.

Traderoot is also involved with Support SA Talent, an investment project focused on sustainable funding for talented South African athletes. **BBO**

*Francis Bryan*



Traderoot Active riders from Songezo Cycling Academy, which was established by professional cyclist Songezo Jim of ProTouch Continental Team, the first black South African to compete at the World Tour level of professional cycling.



# Industry 4.0

## Understanding the new era of explosive development

**F**rom self-driving cars and virtual assistance drones to genetic editing, it is clear that the Fourth Industrial Revolution is fundamentally different, mainly due to its exponential rather than linear speed, and the way it is redirecting the way we live, work and, now, relate to each other. Previous industrial revolutions assisted humanity by ushering in digital capabilities across the globe and achieving mass production.

The Industrial Revolution, in the 18th and 19th centuries, involved mechanisation, water and steam power. As a consequence, the steam engine was developed. The Second Industrial Revolution was driven by the need for electricity, the use of electricity resulted in mass production and assembly lining, which expanded industries. The Third Industrial Revolution was centred around computers and automation. Now, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, also commonly referred to as Industry 4.0 or the Internet of Things, represents the combination of cyber-physical systems and the Internet of Systems.

It is the idea of smart factories, where machines are augmented with web connectivity and connected to a system that can visualise the entire production chain



and make decisions on its own. What makes this revolution so special is the wide range of new technologies—it's practically impossible to omit the fact that the lines between physical, digital and biological worlds have been blurred. This is present in all disciplines, industries and economies, causing an urgent need to be receptive to those changes. Industry 4.0 questions what it means to be human, as more tasks are becoming automated.

These shifts and disruptions are present in every country, affecting the way we live. The Fourth Industrial Revolution will alter and transform systems and the structures of organisations in the way they are governed and managed. Human beings excel mainly because of experience and creativity. Disruptions challenge the education system to be structured in a way that can prepare for this future because learning how to collaborate with technology will immensely benefit businesses and civil societies across the globe.

There are several positive impacts of this revolution, which have been made

possible by the availability of vast amounts of data, including a massive breakthrough in fields such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, autonomous vehicles, 3D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage and quantum computing. This has dramatically improved the efficiency of organisations.

reliable energy from a variety of sources, such as the wind and sun. The right technology can harness renewable energy on a scale large enough to replace traditional energy sources. This type of technology helps the planet by reducing greenhouse emissions that damage the atmosphere. Some of the renewable energy sources

## “ Renewable energy provides reliable energy from a variety of sources, such as the wind and sun

Another highlight is, by regenerating the natural environment, we will be equipped to manage environmental assets. At the relatively fast rate that global warming is affecting the environment, this new technology can assist in saving it and potentially correcting the mistakes made by previous revolutions. Renewable energy provides

include biomass, solar, hydropower and geothermal. Electric cars, like Tesla models, don't rely on fuel but use rechargeable batteries. These batteries are more energy efficient compared to regular vehicles. This is because they convert 62% of their battery charge to power the wheels, unlike traditional vehicles that only use 21% of the



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energy to power the wheels. Environmental technology is also protecting the earth by saving wildlife. Using GPS tracking systems makes it possible to track the movements and migration patterns of wildlife and poachers. This helps to preserve endangered species. Switching to digital reduces paper waste. Things like robotic farming, precision farming and livestock biometrics are helping advance agriculture and making farming more efficient.

New technology is causing digitally fabricated technologies to interact with the biological world on a daily basis, for example, engineers, designers and architects are combining computational design, additive manufacturing, materials engineering and synthetic biology to pioneer a symbiosis between microorganisms and the human body. Understanding this relationship will help enhance human livelihood.

## “ This type of technology helps the planet by reducing greenhouse emissions that damage the atmosphere

Technology has made new products and services possible that increase the efficiency of human being's personal lives. This is evident in the way we book flights online, buy products online, make a wide variety of payments online, listen to music online, watch movies online or play games online, any of these can now be done remotely. These are improvements that the basic human can enjoy.

There are, however, a number of concerns with regards to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. One of the major problems is the extent to which organisations will be able to adapt to these shifts and disruptions. It is imperative that governments formulate policies that enable harmonic coexistence between humans and technology. Security is another big cause for

concern, and many of the abovementioned services pose a threat to people's privacy and security due to the personal information required when utilising these services. As society grows, so does the risk of social imbalance and the likelihood of inequality amongst humans and technology, causing society to fragment.

Bringing it home to Africa, studies show that by 2030, Africa will have the world's largest potential workforce. Industry 4.0 stands as the continent's greatest opportunity to bridge the gap between Africa and the rest of the world through a unity of purpose. Africa needs to unite and people in leadership positions are now obliged to create platforms that connect people across sectors in order to maximise on Industry 4.0 opportunities. The signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the launch of Smart Africa are good examples of how

Africa is practising collective action. This has helped to inspire the younger generation, educating them on how they can embrace the change and think exponentially, developing skills that can adapt to Industry 4.0 and assisting in eradicating youth unemployment.

Africa has the world's youngest population; Industry 4.0 has been able to play a key role in addressing issues, particularly in South Africa, such as youth unemployment through the tailoring of education models to upskill the next generation. The Department of Trade and Industry's Industrial Policy Action Plan, together with the South African government, has developed several iterations of industrial policy to support Africa's industrialisation and optimisation of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

In March 2018, City.AI, a global non-profit organisation, included South Africa as a new member. It invited local AI practitioners to attend its first-ever AI event in Cape Town, which ran on 27 March 2018. The goal of this event was to encourage peers to share their actionable advice and insights on applied AI experiences, coupled with sessions on computer vision, natural language processing and machine learning. South Africa's involvement in the community opens the country up to over 50 different communities spread across six different continents.

This opportunity exposed some of the leading South African AI startups, such as Xineoh, which focuses on simplifying AI with machine learning. It uses fairly distinctive algorithms; they are remarkably similar to those used by top players such as Netflix and Amazon. This technology looks at user behaviour in order to determine potential purchasing behaviour and to provide bespoke information to target users—this is going to help several industries, mainly retail.

Then there is Clewa, an AI startup that has its sights on developing AI, which helps people to work more effectively, rather than replacing them with AI systems. Aerobotics focuses on drone technology, which is issued within the mining, agricultural and logistical industries. The drones are used to scan areas and provide essential data to help manage the sites more effectively, also increasing the safety of the workers. Finally, there is DataProphet, the first African machine-learning specialist company, which focuses on providing AI solutions to businesses across the globe.

This demonstrates that South Africa is making huge strides in AI. Ultimately, humans have to collaborate across the government, academia, science, industry and society to maximise the opportunities this revolution brings. The Fourth Industrial Revolution also has massive potential to raise global income levels and improve the quality of life for populations around the world. The anthem that should constantly be playing in our minds is: "First and foremost, technology tools are created by people to enhance the lives of people." BBQ

*Tavonga Jacqueline Manyonga*



## Recycle plastic bottles. They are turned into new bottles.

By doing one thing and recycling, you are exercising extraordinary power. Consider that in 2017 alone, 90 749 tonnes of PET plastic was diverted from landfill through recycling. That's the equivalent of over 250 Olympic-sized swimming pools full of PET plastic bottles that were used in the creation of many new and useful products, including brand new bottles.

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like stuffing for duvets and pillows, jeans and jackets, even automotive parts.

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Iya Travel is a travel service company that offers car hire, flights tours and accommodation to businesses and individuals across South Africa. At Iya Travel we are aware that we are serving people and not just organisations. We are aware that people have various travel preferences that is why we seek to understand the nature of travel to better serve all of our client's needs.

Our approach is to be people orientated whether it is a CEO, technician, cleaner or teacher, we strive to ensure that our clients reach their destinations with ease and a positive mindset in thus enhancing businesses and or entrepreneurs to better deliver. In turn we are very passionate about our South Africa and its beauty and have strategically positioned Iya Travel to bridge the barriers faced by travelers from all walks of life no matter your social standing and finances. This Iya Travel initiative will allow a lot of travelers in South Africa to visit our tourism sites via our "Travel South Africa Campaign".

**TRAVEL S.A CAMPAIN:**

This program seeks to assist the South African Tourism industry to get more tourists and guests by creating accessible travel modes for locals and overseas tourists to visit and experience our provinces in all its glory. This program is intended to work very closely with the accommodation, attractions and adventure companies in different province by allowing guests to access these affordable travel solutions.

**"WHAT IYA TRAVEL OFFERS VS WHAT'S CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON THE MARKET"**

*Affordable rates on car rental, flights and accommodation, while others have expensive car rentals, flights and accommodations.*

Unlimited mileage on car rentals allows the client to travel as far as they want in touring the province rather than the limitations of limited mileage which only offers you up to 100km free per day, which in turn prohibits the tourists in traveling as much as they want. Some locals own cars but only use them within their town or city due to lack of roadworthiness and others avoid traveling long distance using their own cars to avoid expiry of warranty.

We also understand that not everyone who needs to travel owns a credit card, when you rent cars from us we allow any savings account from the following major banks: Capitec, FNB, Nedbank, Standard bank and Absa, while other companies only allow credit cards for payment and security purposes. Excess holding deposit is one of the prohibits when needing a car rental,

Normally car rental companies hold R5000 - R15 000 to hire a car and this limits many travelers to use this mode of transport. This money can be used on enjoying your travel and be able to spend on more nights at the accommodation and visit more tourist attractions in our country and grow our GDP.

At Iya Travel we only hold R2000 for a small vehicle and at times we able to loan the client the excess holding deposit in which case terms and conditions apply. At Iya Travel we seek to make people of these travel option. These travel solutions and benefits are intended to save time, but as the set goal for Iya Travel save money.

**Lusanda Fibi - MD**



## CORPORATE & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

\* **Efficiency:** We use latest travel technology & our team is available 24/7

\***Compliance:** Our clients are always at peace knowing that they are using an accredited service provider.

\* **Inspect travel costs:** We do not only provide you travel service but also take a look at where you are overspending.

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\*Car hire on unlimited km

Lusanda Fibi the managing director is heavily involved In Operation Phakisa Ocean Economy and was part of the Small Harbour and Coastal properties Development mini Lab initiative by Department of Public Works, Operation Phakisa related department and other state owned organs. He currently sits as a board member and Executive Director of South African Maritime Business Forum and coordinator for the South African Maritime Clusters Alliance comprising of eThekweni, Nelson Mandela Bay, Buffalo City, Western Cape and

Gauteng Maritime Cluster. He also sits on the Eastern Cape Maritime Manufacturing Working Group. His educational background is MPTLA - (Marine Port Development, Transport and Logistics Academy) - Stellenbosch University and Travel and Tourism Management from the University of Queensland - edx. 2015 - 2017 Iya Travel was a Coastal Marine Tourism Stakeholder for the University of Walter Sisulu Enterprise Development Centre

"Lusanda is the champion we needed to drive the

Ocean /Blue economy and transformation of the sector in the country" -Peter Myles - Chairman of the Nelson Mandela Bay Maritime Cluster and tourism specialist.

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# From backroom to big time

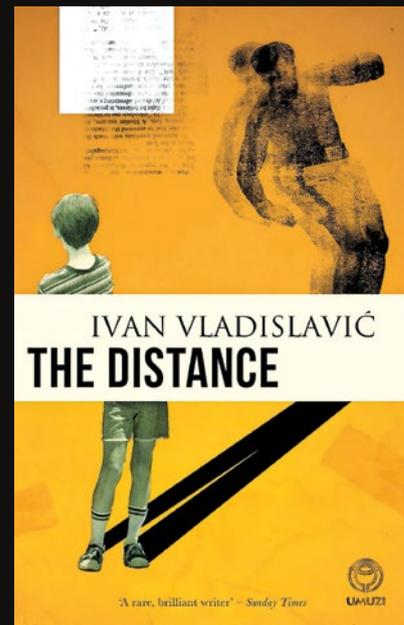
South African novelist spreads international wings

**K**nown as one of South Africa's most critically acclaimed fiction writers as well as one of the most modest, he has never courted fame—however, now, with his name attached not only to a new novel but also to a creative writing course at a prestigious university and an award-winning play, Ivan Vladislavic is emerging, deservedly, from obscurity into the limelight.



The novel is called *The Distance* and appears to be about the struggle of Writer, Joe Blahavic, to write an account of his obsession with Muhammad Ali, the boxer who started off as Cassius Clay, and who will always be known as 'The Greatest'. Working from some old scrapbooks filled with newspaper clippings from the late 60s and early 70s (in South Africa, the days before TV), Joe runs into trouble and invokes the assistance of his older, more worldly-wise Video-Editor brother, Branko, to get the book written. For reasons that would spoil the reader's enjoyment of the novel, the book of Joe is left unfinished—but the writing process unravels a myriad of tales of history, identity and belonging that bring the reader right up to the present day, when even Branko's Millennial son inadvertently plays a part in bringing the story to not a close, but at least a full stop.

As much as the novel is a fiction, it has a material basis—the scrapbooks are real; in fact, the traces of their physical existence linger in the printed book, with words, phrases, sentences lifted verbatim from the clippings and set off in a special font against the rest of the text. Vladislavić's description of the writing process shows that his is very much an exploratory approach to mining fictional gold from the ore of the past: "I had the idea for the book in about 1999. I went to Germany on a residency for a year. I packed up my house and I suspect that I



found a box of clippings, which I had been carrying around with me for many years.

"The archive reflects a certain set of interests, a certain set of fascinations of an earlier self that had to be accessed, to be constructed. Once I unlocked how to do it, it wasn't too difficult, but it took me many, many years of self-starts, I was even making notes.

"The whole account of the writing of a novel, which is built into this book, is pretty accurate: first, just reading the material, reading the archive and making endless



notes about that, then, finding ways of processing that or structuring it.

"Initially, I was thinking of just writing a long essay about being a collector or being a fan, about hero-worshipping sportsmen, but I could never find something compelling enough for me in that small idea," he says.

Until 2015, Vladislavic made a living as a Freelance Editor, working with some of South Africa's most celebrated writers, including Tim Couzens, Charles van Onselen, Jonny Steinberg, Antjie Krog, Chris van Wyk and Achmat Dangor, to name a few. Then two important things happened at once: he won Yale University's Windham-Campbell Prize for short stories and he was offered a post as a Distinguished Professor in the Creative Writing Department at Wits University.

Although he had already won a string of prizes, including (with David Goldblatt) the Kraszna-Krausz Award for Best Photography Book in 2011, as well as the Sunday Times Fiction Prize, the Alan Paton Award and the University of Johannesburg Prize, the Windham-Campbell Prize carried some serious financial influence.

The professorship was a chance to do something entirely different: "I've always been doing something to earn a living, so the teaching took the place of the editing. It's more secure and easier in some ways because as a Freelance Editor, one still doesn't make a terribly good living.

"My friends used to joke with me that if you can do two jobs, at least one of them should pay properly. Now, I'm working in a workshop system where all the students and the supervisors meet together as a group.

"The responsibility is spread a little bit further, trying to help each student to write the best book they can. I think you can teach almost anybody to write better, and you can accelerate the kind of learning that writers have to go through on their own," he says.

Vladislavic has no intention of becoming any sort of guru, however. "Clearly, the

thing to be resisted is, you don't want to try to churn out replicas of any particular writer. The other thing is, you don't want to try to get everybody to write in the same way. The trick is to actually get people to do what they're doing more effectively or more compellingly, to try to get them to do a better version of what they want to do," he explains.

In addition to inspiring young writers in person, Vladislavic's work has also been inspiring people in a different sphere—the stage. *Save the Pedestals*, a collaboration between the Baxter Theatre Centre, Handspring Puppet Company and Halle Puppet Theatre, had a hugely successful world premiere in Halle, Germany, last year.

Vladislavic's eponymous short story provides the narrative, which is brought to life by a South African creative team under the direction of Choreographer and Director, Robyn Orlin, who is widely regarded as one of South Africa's most controversial and provocative choreographers and performance artists, and featuring puppets by the Tony-Award-winning Handspring Puppet Company, led by Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones. The puppeteers are Mmakgosi Tsogang Kgabi (Botswana and SA), Lambert Mousseka Ntumba (DRC) and Franziska Rattay, Ivana Sajevic and Nico Parisius (Halle Puppet Theatre).

Described as a poetic-political discourse, the iconoclastic work sees struggle comrades Comrade A and Ma Z wandering around a Johannesburg filled with long defunct public monuments and sharing dreams and slapstick humour levelled at monuments erected to Saddam Hussein, Cecil John Rhodes and Lenin, among others.

"The idea behind this production of *Save the Pedestals* is to bring together the best German puppet theatre with the best puppet theatre from African countries," explains Torsten Mass, who came up with the idea for the project.

"The performance has its finger on the pulse from a historical perspective and

simultaneously addresses and encourages discussion around this global problem, in an interesting and provocative manner. Vladislavic's story, at its heart, is about how we deal with monuments that have been left behind by political change and we are, therefore, resigned to confiscate them and they end up being nothing

more than rubbish heaps of concrete," he concludes.

*Save the Pedestals* makes its African debut at the Baxter Flipside, for four performances only, from 28 to 30 March at 8pm, with a matinee on Saturday, 30 March at 4pm. **BBO**

*Greg Penfold*



# Up, up and away

The Minister of Transport supports the potential of the aviation industry to drive tourism growth

**N**obody would disagree that the current economic conditions call for South Africans from every walk of life to pull together to reignite economic growth for a better life for all. Critics, however, would point out that in many instances, the government has not always been helpful in creating an environment conducive to prosperity. One case that certainly stands out in this regard is the tourism industry. Few would deny that government intervention, in the form of the revised travel documentation requirements for people travelling to South Africa with children, has been nothing short of catastrophic. However, the silver lining on that particular cloud is that now, under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa, the government is fully cognisant of the benefits of a thriving tourism industry—and ministers are pulling in the same direction.





Indeed, President Ramaphosa was recently hailed as a "champion of tourism" by Gloria Guevara, the President and CEO of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). "In his State of the Nation address in February 2018, 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 generate a sense of self-worth."

One of the pillars of the travel and tourism sector is, of course, the aviation industry. Speaking at the BARSА Aviation Summit 2019, held in Johannesburg on 28 February, the Honourable Deputy Minister of Transport, Sindisiwe Chikunga, outlined the importance of this vital sector and underscored the government's commitment to transforming aviation into an engine for economic growth, skills development and job creation.

Citing Oxford Economics, Minister Chikunga stated that 12 million passengers

and US\$18.8-billion worth of goods were carried by air every day in 2018. The total value of goods transported by air is a staggering US\$6 trillion, or 35% of all international trade, and 10 million women and men are directly employed to build aircraft and prepare, fly and land flights. Aviation jobs are 4.4 times more productive than other jobs, opening markets and enabling knowledge. In Africa, by 2036, air transport and the tourism it facilitates will support 9.8-million jobs (60% more than in 2016) and contribute US\$159 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP) (184% up from 2016). In South Africa, civil air transport contributes R154 billion to the GDP (3.5%).

"We are thus compelled to consider aviation as a strategic asset, forcing us to continue with the development of infrastructure, build human capital and skills for the

future, and improve our connectivity and open skies," said Chikunga.

"We must be aware that tourism is an important component of economic stimulation and recovery, but it depends on an efficient aviation sector. This encompasses the development and sustainability of both commercial and general aviation," she added.

Declaring support for industry is one thing but does the government have the mindset to move further forward into the 21st century? Minister Chikunga's words suggest that it does indeed, reflecting a profound awareness and understanding of the latest consumer trends and calling for the consumer to be placed at the centre of innovation: "It is important that as we assess the role of air transport services and their state in this era of revolution in civil aviation, we must constantly be reminded

of how we package our products. We know today that the consumer has become better empowered by technology and can make independently informed decisions about different products. It is the so-called shift in the behaviour of consumers that is said to be the most significant disruption in the sector due to the consumers' greater knowledge as a result of mobile technologies and the data they make available to the consumer."

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is also very much on the Minister's radar: "The development-oriented approach can never be exclusive of the technical sophistication required by the sector and its different industries."

For this reason, she added, "It becomes imperative for states and airlines, in particular, to invest more in training as well as re-skilling of personnel to ensure alignment



with new technologies. It is thus essential that skills developed are viewed from a perspective of promoting the next generation of aviation professionals.

"In order to succeed in the 21st century, everyone needs to collaborate and connect digitally. The curriculum needs to be market-driven and resources made available for students and trainees to fulfil all qualification requirements. The fast-changing job market may render many skills irrelevant if education systems are not aligned to the new technological advances.

"A good intergenerational balance is also important, as Millennials need mentors and organisations need to retain institutional memory and experience for consistency and sustainability, which calls for the upskilling of current aviators."

By 2037, South Africa will need 3 589 pilots, 887 air traffic controllers and 4 053 ground personnel.

Minister Chikunga challenged industry leaders to ask themselves what their organisations are doing to ensure the development of skills, including the gender and age diversity that must be entailed.

"One of the challenges in aviation is the cost of training aviators in general. In this regard, both industry and the government need to work together to fund aviation training through instruments like bursaries, etc.," she said.

"The DOT and its aviation entities, SACAA, ATNS and ACSA fund students ranging from pilots and aeronautical engineers to mechanical engineers; however, given the demand, the private sector is asked to assist in this effort.

"We also need engagements aimed at the establishment of regional aviation academies to sustainably educate and train the next generation of aviation professionals to exploit the opportunities presented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). South Africa must lead in this area," she added.

"The aviation sector needs to build aviation leaders of the 21st century who possess knowledge of a dynamic sector. E-learning solutions should be considered to increase the accessibility of aviation careers. Outreach programmes should be run across all sectors of society in order to demystify aviation as a preserve of the elite.

"Transformation in its totality remains the most critical goal for the sector," she concluded. **BBQ**

*Staff Writer*





# African Utility Week: a bright continent

African Utility Week is the leading conference and trade exhibition for African power, energy and water professionals

**T**his three-day trade exhibition and conference gathers experts from across some of the largest companies and organisations specialising in power, energy and water. This year will be the 19th edition of this singular must-attend event for the power, energy and water utility professionals in Africa as the conference features the most sought-after African and international speakers and the hottest strategic and technical topics.

Some of those topics include identifying successful areas within the different sectors

and highlighting the challenges that those sectors are facing in Africa. Attendees are at liberty to choose from a wide variety on the long list of presentations, seminars, briefings, discussions and facilitated networking opportunities, which can equip them with up-to-date information in their respective fields.

The conference gathers the hottest decision-makers and 'real-world doers' who share their expertise and give tips on the best practices for effective power and water supply. 2019 will bring a staggering 10 000 visitors to Cape Town from across 81

countries. Amongst that will be 77 utilities and municipalities and over 350 exhibitions. There will be 1 200 conference attendees, three co-located events, six conference tracks, 21 hours of networking, 570 000 business connections, 130+ hours of content and five knowledge hubs.

The reason why so many organisations attend is due to the nature of the platform, which serves to educate, thus enabling them to make informed purchasing decisions. The high level of insight provided increases their return on investment because they receive detailed product knowledge and refined

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details on the latest industry innovations from Africa's leading power, energy and water exhibitors. There are many on-site special offers and people are able to network with new suppliers, shaping new business ideas and inspiring new opportunities. Attending these free technical workshops will help to increase knowledge through meet and greets with international delegations. Individual business owners and their teams can experience first-hand practical project-led solutions and take advantage of them.

There is a strong and diverse group of experts who will be speaking at the conference, diverse in nationality, age, gender, race and profession:

Bhavtik Vallabhjee is the Head of Power, Utilities and Infrastructure at Absa Bank Africa, with 22 years of corporate and merchant banking experience in South Africa and the Middle East. He has been engaged in structuring major project finance transactions in sectors such as power, water, O&G, telecoms, transportation, healthcare and industrial projects. He has worked on several

deals in the Middle East and a number of African countries and has been involved in executing transactions with an aggregate value in excess of US\$23 billion in his career. Vallabhjee spent five years in the Middle East at the height of its infrastructure spending boom where he was a Project Finance Banker. After returning to South Africa in 2010, he specifically focused on power. He is currently the Head of Power, Utilities and Infrastructure at Absa in Africa. He is a United-Kingdom qualified Chartered Management Accountant, has an MBA in Finance, two Honors degrees and a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and Finance.

Bobbi Harris is the Vice President of Africa Utilities Technology Council (AUTC) United States. She is a smart water and smart city industry expert with more than 15 years of experience. In her years as a global strategic marketing professional, she has focused on environmental issues and sustainability technologies to address water and energy challenges including smart water infrastructure, smart grid, clean-tech and green building initiatives. Harris is also the founder

and CEO of Smart Water, Smart City, LLC and a leader in market analysis, strategic intelligence and technology assessments. She graduated summa cum laude from Campbell University and has also earned her MBA from the same institution.

Chinedu Igbokwe has more than 10 years' experience in storage solutions and solar power. At Daystar Power, Igbokwe manages its pan-African operations providing leadership for the sales, supply chain, engineering, projects and service organisations. In his previous roles, Igbokwe was responsible for leading technical teams across Africa to develop complex storage and solar power solutions. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from the Illinois Institute of Technology and a Master's in Engineering Management from Northwestern University.

Dr Hlamulo Makelane is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of the Western Cape's (UWC) Department of Chemistry. She holds a PhD in Chemistry with a strong focus on polluted wastewater from the University of the Western Cape. Dr



Makelane's research interest focuses on the development of a highly selective and sensitive dendritic polymer electrochemical sensor for polluted wastewater, as well as science, technology and innovation analysing in order to evaluate the role it has on addressing environmental challenges and informing policy.

Jason Mingo has followed his passion for water management, following his post-graduate degree in both Environmental Science and Freshwater Ecology. As a Task Manager for the Western Cape Government, Mingo is involved across different levels of policy development, project planning and implementation in terms of innovative and sustainable practices for water management at a provincial level. From the rehabilitation of river systems to the inclusion of fit-for-purpose water-sensitive design solutions for resource conservation, Jason's work has a central focus on collaboration and working across disciplines.

Kudakwashe Mzembe is passionate about Africa and sustainable development. He is the co-founder and Projects Developer of Advanced Power Technologies, a company

that focuses on solar energy, power contracting and technology. He is an entrepreneur at heart and firmly believes that business should be sustainable and must exist to impact society. His roles include the execution of the business's marketing strategy, building strategic partnerships and exploring new market opportunities. Mzembe is also actively involved in various non-profit ventures. He is a Mandela Washington Fellow and is committed to being an active part of providing African solutions for Africa's challenges.

Penny Herbst has over 30 years of experience in a utility environment, mainly from Eskom's Treasury Department, where she was exposed to a diverse set of financial, commercial and legal structures that emanate from its operations. Among others, she has managed Eskom's foreign and interest rate risk, money and capital market investments, project finance transactions and the structuring of projects to mitigate risks associated with projects in Africa. She led the formation of Eskom's Development Finance unit, her role being the Development Financing Manager. She was instrumental in

raising in excess of US\$6 billion from DFI and related institutions. This included funding for Eskom's first renewable projects where she spent some time in Eskom's Renewable Unit working on bridging the gap between financing and implementation. African Utility Week embraces sharing knowledge and capacity building and was established with the intention of offering support and paving the way for growth and development in the power, energy and water sectors.

It's the quintessential conference for anyone seeking investment, sourcing for new technology or looking to reduce technical and non-technical losses. The objectives of the keynote plenary sessions, the six core breakaway tracks and co-located events were created and structured in a way that enables people to connect with experts in the various sectors. Attending the conference will secure the opportunity to meet experts in the industry who can provide answers on how to better run specific organisations. **BBQ**

*Tavonga Jacqueline Manyonga*

# Lyrical motion

Blessed, talented and driven

**N**tsika Ngxanga is a God-fearing man who shares a very deep and spiritual bond with music. He fell in love with music at the tender age of six and consciously made the decision that music was his life in 2004. In 2010, he started singing professionally when the internationally acclaimed acapella group, The Soil, (which he is a member and a lead composer of) received a deal from Native Rhythms.

Ngxanga is also the founder, CEO and President of Nomadic Tribe Entertainment, a groundbreaking record label that continues to add amazing, colourful contrasts to the global music landscape.

The announcement he made about his solo journey and his upcoming debut solo album has excited many people. He has gone from being a professional Chemical Engineer who studied at the Vaal University of Technology to what critics are now labelling as a creative phenomenon with the potential to usher in this generation's very own golden era of music.

It was in 2018 that Ngxanga decided to pursue a solo journey, releasing his first single Awundiva, which features the talented and award-winning singer/songwriter, Vusi Nova. The debut single is still receiving numerous plays from some of the biggest radio stations in South Africa since its release.

It's 2019 and the all-round artist has released his second single Ding Dong, giving people a taste of what to expect in his first



debut album, titled I Write What I Dream, which was released across all digital platforms and in Musica stores on 8 March 2019.

#### Who are you as an individual?

Ntsika Ngxanga is a vessel of amazing songs. I love and live music and now, of late, I mainly think of myself as a melodic African storyteller.

#### Which instruments do you play, and what have you played during the course of your musical journey?

Unfortunately, I don't play any instrument, I only use my voice as an instrument.

#### How do you balance your music with other obligations? Do you have a partner?

My beautiful wife is truly a blessing to me and she is my support structure that allows for me to seamlessly balance the two.

**How important is image in the music industry?**

It's very important! I regard it as a visual extension of my music.

**What skills/personal attributes are most important for success?**

Discipline and the love one has for working on one's craft for as long as it takes before presenting it to the masses—this is key.

**What are the typical mistakes people make when trying to pursue a music career?**

Trying to become like an artist whom people already know. No one wants to listen to a duplicate, people always gravitate towards authenticity and originality.

**What made the difference in your career in terms of rising to the top?**

**Can you think of a mentor, something you changed or did differently, or even just some aspect of yourself that you believe set you apart?**

Clive Radebe once said to me: "The will to win is not as important as the will to prepare to win." That has definitely changed how I view life in its entirety and has propelled my career to what it is today.

**If you had to do it all over again, would you still choose this career? Would you do anything differently?**

I would leave everything as is. I personally feel that everything I've been through was meant to be part of my journey.

**Please tell us about transformation in your music space?**

The coolest thing about the music industry is that it continues to grow at all times, cross-over music also successfully demolishes the racial walls and other various demographics.

**Running a business and making money in the music industry surely cannot be easy—how do you do it?**

It's definitely not easy, hence, as a musician, you need to stretch your gift and make sure your livelihood is not reliant on stage performances only. The business/behind-the-scenes jobs ordinarily make artists incredibly successful.

**Why is it paramount to understand the importance of having sound business acumen to compete in the creative global arena?**

Having sound business acumen is everything. It says a lot about an artist's knowledge of their wealth, ability to coming up with musical-related business proposals, professional conduct, technical precision, unmatched creativity and so forth. All these aspects set you apart as a force to be reckoned with.

**What has been your biggest success to date?**

Releasing my debut solo album titled I Write What I Dream, available nationwide.

Please talk to us about the challenges of being financially successful in the music business.

I suppose in every industry, the challenge is always maintaining or growing your success after attaining it.

**What are the most rewarding aspects of your industry?**

Touring the world while sharing my God-given gift with everyone out there.

**With the music scene in South Africa rapidly changing and new talent emerging on a daily basis, how do you ensure longevity in this industry?**

By being consistent in delivering high-quality and relatable music.

**Tell us about some of your inspirations in music, who do you draw from and what is it about them that moves you?**

Simphiwe Dana, Fela Kuti and J Cole for the love they have for the music and their ability to knowingly or unknowingly pour their souls into each and every song they send into the world.

**Who are your favourite Jazz musicians?**

Herbie Hancock. He's a genius.

**What should fans expect at your upcoming performance in Cape Town?**

An explosively spiritual journey into a world they didn't know existed. **BBO**

*Lhili Tom*



**30 seconds sidebar**

- I think transformation is... growing together as a nation.
- If I could do anything over I would... eat fewer sweets because I miss my wisdom teeth.
- I will never... sleep without praying.
- The best investment I have ever made was... starting a family.
- As a leader, I... would prioritise and tighten the laws that govern perpetrators who abuse women and children and I would strengthen the quality of our education.
- Ultimately, I would like to... head the DAC.
- The biggest no-go in black business is... uninformed investments.

# Forget the buzzwords

## Embrace the trends that are relevant to you

**T**ech entrepreneur and sought after speaker, Mushambi Mutuma, shares his insights on keeping up with technology—a taste of what’s to come in his new book, *Tech Adjacent*

It is nearly impossible, nowadays, for organisations to keep up with trends in business and technology. While drawn in by buzzwords like artificial intelligence, innovation and disruption, the constant pressure to keep up and innovate can make the idea of opting out of digital transformation altogether more appealing. Running the risk of being left behind with this all-or-nothing approach, business

leaders should look to simply embrace the innovations, which hold the most potential for their organisations’ success.

This is according to Mushambi Mutuma, a leading South African tech entrepreneur, sought-after speaker and the founder of the Johannesburg-based high-impact digital company, Altivex.

Mutuma, who sits on numerous health-tech, fintech, edutech and creative company boards while also advising multiple accelerators and incubators, notes that while technological shifts are an opportunity to transform businesses, the truth is that organisations don’t need to jump on board with every single trend that hits the market.

He says, “In the current tech context, what is essential is learning and understanding the fundamental principles and pace of technology, disruption and innovation, and leveraging this general understanding to put a strategic plan together. This plan should throw buzzwords out the window and focus on what is relevant for the particular company, its audience and the industry in which it operates.

“Ultimately, it is easier to understand technology when you are focused on the innovation and trends applicable to your own circumstances. Think about it, while Uber, Airbnb and Facebook are grandiose Silicon Valley success stories, their approach,



industry and audience are likely to have little relevance to your own market.”

With over 12 years’ experience in building brands and businesses across Africa and the United States, Mutuma is a regular keynote speaker on the topics of entrepreneurship, innovation and leadership.

His next public speaking engagement is the Suits & Sneakers entrepreneurship-themed event on Thursday, 28 March 2019 in Hyde Park, Johannesburg, where he will take to the stage alongside other successful entrepreneurs including Justin Drennan, the co-founder of Parcelninja, wantitall.co.za and insurance.co.za; Matsi Modise, the founder and CEO of Furaha Afrika Holdings; and Mike Stopforth, the founder of Cerebra, to name just a few. On the topic of the entrepreneurial

mindset, Mutuma believes that it is vital for all brands and businesses to utilise the tools entrepreneurs use to succeed. “While not everyone is meant to be an entrepreneur, everyone in this age should be entrepreneurial in their thinking and behaviour.”

“Today, more than ever, leaders in business and entrepreneurship need to invest in new ways of thinking and prepare their businesses for rapid moving digital change. There is no doubt that technology has always played a part in human advancement, facilitating our transformation as a species,” he says.

Adding authoring a book to his list of impressive accomplishments, Mutuma will be releasing his first book, Tech Adjacent, later this year.

Set to be an exponential guide to leveraging technology for business success, Tech Adjacent will delve into the nature and history of technology, unsung African innovation, trends in and the process of innovation, steps to surviving disruption, indicators of future opportunities and how to predict where technology and business audiences are heading.

The stories and examples shared throughout Tech Adjacent will provide a specific context for readers in the corporate world, entrepreneurs and small business owners, as well as market-entering youth.

Mutuma explains that it is about leveraging technology for growth and change. “Sharing my experience in this regard, I hope that I can play a role in advancing Africa’s next generation of innovators and tech adjacent businesses,” he concludes. **BBQ**

A portrait of Mzi Mdongolo, a man with short dark hair and a goatee, wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt and a patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# They are here to stay

In 2019, Mzi Mdongolo, the founder and Managing Director of MGD Consulting, is determined to bring innovation to this ancient field of science

**M**dongolo was born and raised in Mt Frere in the Eastern Cape. He eventually left and headed for the big lights of Port Elizabeth. Having worked for a few engineering companies from 1998 after graduating, Mdongolo moved to the even bigger lights of Johannesburg. He has worked for and started some engineering firms in his past but MGD Consulting is his passion.

MGD Consulting opened its doors in January 2012 as a direct result of Mdongolo seeing a

gap in the market. He says that there were a number of black-owned engineering firms but for various reasons, these firms faced a great deal of criticism due to the perception that service and professionalism were not high on the cards for them. He says he saw the gap and, through a constant drive towards customer satisfaction, meticulous attention to detail and many sleepless nights and missed weekends, he has since closed that gap. He views business as a person that has an identity—where its unique characteristics, traits, and operations are expressed in all it does..

Mdongolo says that mistakes are great tools from which to learn, they provide the opportunity to accept the error, learn from it and move on. Doing things correctly the first time saves their clients a substantial amount of money per project. Mdongolo says this comes from a mindset of excellence, which is the culture created in the company.

Honesty is critical in business and he views himself as an honest person and, therefore, likes to work with honest people. Building long-lasting relationships based on trust is a business imperative for success,

he believes. As long as there is a common vision, the relationship will last. Mdongolo explains that this relationship could be with clients, employees, or stakeholders.

“Because we operate in a South African context, we need to eliminate greed. Don’t focus on greed, pay attention to balancing social responsibility—with the economy as well as with your environment. Those are the values that are the basis of the business,” says Mdongolo.

### Projects and plans

The sectors in which MGD operates include oil and gas, real estate, mining, industrial and construction. The services cover the full spectrum of planning and design, the preparation of drawings, construction documentation, project administration and completion, as well as investigating and reporting services.

One of the major projects MGD has been involved in since 2017 is the investigation and assessment of 11 Coca-Cola manufacturing plants. Some of the buildings were built in 1980, whilst the majority were built in the early to late 1990s. Mdongolo says, by law, structures or buildings, particularly structures over 10 years old, should be assessed on an annual basis in order to keep record of their structural integrity and behaviour for future repairs.

Currently, MGD focuses on two core engineering services, namely civil engineering, which covers bulk earthworks, roads, portable water, stormwater design; and structural engineering, which is the design of buildings from the foundations to the roof.

### Innovation and agility

Mdongolo is passionate about driving the world of engineering into the future and he is accomplishing this through the formation of partnerships, for example, instead of providing a client with a 2D plan of the planned project, they are able to provide a 3D plan. Changing the status quo of how things have always been done is how he plans to take

MGD into the future. Aside from giving the client a better view of the finished project, the use of 3D modelling can save money in the long-run by providing a clear view of structural elements.

### The secret to steady business evolution

Mdongolo says that from what he has experienced, tenacity, drive and determination to keep going is what has driven his endeavours forward, and that discipline overcomes everything. Being disciplined about time, cash-flow and work ethic is the key to his success, as is continuous hard work, and he laughs as he recalls often working over weekends to fulfil his dreams.

Another element of success is to never think that you’ve ‘arrived’—a portfolio of two or three major clients isn’t enough. This also leads to a constant improvement of yourself, he says, by learning along the way, driving yourself and maintaining the trust built with clients.

Although the team is small, Mdongolo relies on a network of trusted sub-contractors and as such, MGD is able to keep

overheads lower than larger firms. He has big visions for MGD and wants to lead it to become a multi-disciplinary engineering firm, which will eventually include all of the engineering disciplines. Partnerships are imperative to drive this growth, and he envisions partnering with global companies that hold specialised experience. His rationale is that there will then be skill sharing across the globe, which will facilitate more specialised projects, such as façade design. Currently, MGD has a relationship with a German company that only specialises in this, and bringing them on board will enhance the company’s skill set.

### The vision

Mdongolo says that the possibilities are, indeed, endless and there is a huge scope to grow and learn. Keeping the balance between the bottom line, social development and the environment is key. He is hoping that the government will make the labour laws of South Africa less restrictive, as this will give companies the opportunity to hire more rapidly and, should the need arise, let go of people who aren’t performing. **BBQ**



# The Black Business Council



## At the forefront of economic transformation

**T**here was a need for a platform that is dedicated to facilitating an over-arching confederation that represents black professional business associations and chambers. This led to the establishment of the Black Business Council (BBC) whose core objective is to lobby the government on policy-related matters, playing an immediate role in advocating an acceleration of black business participation in the economy, where policies are in place. Aiding in creating black industrialists, its mandate is driven by 11 portfolio committees. Their main responsibility is driving policy-related matters through advocating government legislation, policy stakeholder engagements and programmes.

Those committees help make provisions for black businesses to access opportunities in the mainstream economies. The structure of the BBC leadership comprises of a President, two Vice Presidents (professionals and organised business), a Secretary-General,

Treasurer-General and a Head of Policy. This team is highly competent as well as experienced, as it is made up of professional businesspeople who boast expertise in different sectors of the economy.

BBC membership is open to both black and white associations, professional associations, corporates, chambers of commerce and state-owned companies that subscribe to the ethos of economic transformation. BBC offers the following corporate packages for membership: the diamond package, the platinum package and the gold package.

Like any organisation with packages, BBC has its exclusively customised benefits but those benefits are not limited to the following: invitations to participate in the Presidential Government, business working groups and access to their regional and global network of partner organisations, for example, South Africa-Russia Business Council, South Africa. In addition, the India CEO Forum, World Economic Forum, British, Russia, India, China and South Africa



Business Council, European Union and United Nations Development Programme are some of the organisations one can get access to.

The packages also offer assistance and advice on the implementation of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment policies, access to enterprises in order to deliver on supplier development and enterprise development strategy. Moreover, participation in National Economic Development Labour Advisory Council chambers, committees and task teams involved at the coalface of the legislative process in South Africa (a unique feature offered by the BBC) is offered. Members are also given an opportunity to offer submissions relating to new bills and the formulation of policy, this is done through parliamentary committees.

The BBC recently hosted the Black Business Summit and Gala Dinner, which was held on 28 February. In his speech, the BBC President, Sandile Zungu, mentioned that they were able to run the summit and gala dinner on a huge surplus, all thanks

to the support of corporates, both black and white, and the commitment that was shown by political parties. The key topic at the summit was discussing economic transformation within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and how this could be a catalyst for inclusive growth in the South African economy.

The highlight of this event was the keynote address by President Cyril Ramaphosa, who spoke about the importance of business in the economy and the strides in transformation. Other key topics discussed included: the reflection on Finance Minister Tito Mboweni's address, the regulatory impact of driving business growth, particularly focusing on whether or not regulations enhance or stymie business growth, and how they can lower barriers to entry for enhanced inclusivity. State procurement was also on the agenda, focusing on how the state is an active player in developing economic transformation and the ethical impact of corruption on the economy, especially the way it robs black business growth.

More key topics of discussion included: a look at the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Commission, the efficiency of policy instruments and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment legislation, reflecting on whether it is achieving its desired goals or failing to do so, as well as the impact of competition legislation on socio-economic transformation and the political economy with regards to how political parties view transformation and their perspective on how the economy can be transformed. Another major topic was South Africa's readiness for Industry 4.0 and how they can position black business for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Overall, the Black Business Summit was a huge success and they managed to conduct thought-provoking interactions that built a solid foundation for future collaborations between the BBC, the government, labour and key stakeholders on relevant economic issues **BBO**

*Tavonga Jacqueline Manyonga*



# Born independent to co-create



**A**gility and nimbleness have become the signature DNA of Pacinamix—a PR, communications, activations and digital cutting-edge firm that resonates its identity as a disruptive 100% black female-owned business that is born independent to co-create relevant, engaging and interactive digital, PR and communications experiences that captivate audiences.

Born independent, Pacinamix perceives itself as the new breed of specialist experts who are liberated enough to disrupt the status-quo in order to achieve pioneering solutions that serve as an opportunity to empower clients to be both distinct and competitive.

This ethos characterises Pacinamix's visionary Chief Executive Officer, Manzini Zungu, who resolutely advocates that the value of being a disruptive business has its undertone of being innovative enough to transform the parameters of the trends in which you operate.

This notion served as a synergist in Pacinamix's partnership with the Black Business Council (BBC) to deliver a bespoke industry-disruptive two-day Business Summit aptly coined Economic Transformation within the context of the 4th Industrial Revolution – a Catalyst for Inclusive Growth in the South African Economy.

Pacinamix's agility and extraordinary expertise to set innovative trends manifested in the internal digital branding used during the two-day summit, which added a tailored component to the event—optimising the uniqueness of the summit and demonstrating the firm's flair for the unconventional.

As a strategic media partner, Pacinamix architected a multitudinal media blueprint also comprising of a digital approach, which ensured all stakeholders stayed abreast in the productive interaction between the government, civil society and business on matters relating to South Africa's economy.

A diverse portfolio in public relations, digital, communications and activations became the cornerstone for Pacinamix to earn the BBC's trust to produce content that is authentic and of quintessential quality in growing the BBC's position as a transformative force within the country's business industry and safeguarding the national economic interest of black businesses under the essence of black business excellence.

The overall success of the summit was underpinned by the nimbleness of experts who executed pertinent PR activities that ensured the BBC achieved optimum coverage by the relevant media. This is the hallmark of co-creation—journeying with partners in a synergetic relationship that

has the sole purpose of forging shared experiences that foster learning in both directions.

Solidifying the doctrine of black excellence has positioned Pacinamix as a custodian of the BBC's articulacy as champions of accelerating the participation of black business in the mainstream economy of our country. The reputation management, end-to-end media and event management, brand and crisis communications, profiling speakers and lobbied live broadcast interviews with the BBC President and CEO and as well as on-site interviews demonstrated Pacinamix's 360-degree insight into how best to align the BBC's strategic and business objectives with the summit.

The golden thread in Pacinamix's business model is the doctrine of black excellence. For Pacinamix, this ensures that black businesses have the aptitude to rise and stand firm on their own to compete on all stages, making the collaboration between Pacinamix and the BBC—two entities that seek to rupture the negative stereotypical rhetoric surrounding black business—all the more paramount.

Pacinamix's intentional disruption has filtered to all its partners, endowing the cutting-edge firm with the prowess to identify innovative and game-changing methodologies that enhance approaches to business. **BBQ**



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# A family of performers



Talent Africa is providing a platform to showcase the best in performance art that SA has to offer

**E**stablished 13 years ago by Melanie Ashcroft, Talent Africa is providing a national platform to elevate South African performance art to its rightful place in the spotlight.

“Talent Africa is a talent-based competition, which seeks to do three main things,” explains Shawn Ashcroft, Melanie’s husband and the co-organiser.

“It scouts talent and gives them a platform to perform on, nurtures the talent to grow it, and provides ongoing platforms and, hopefully, opportunities of being able to work in the industry from the created platforms

“The competition is open to all ages from 3 years old and our oldest participant to date has been 70 years old. Contestants are divided into different age groups within the main categories of vocal, dance, instrumental, drama and modelling, which are further divided into

different genres or sub-categories. There is no limit to the number of entries but there is a closing date, which is strictly adhered to,” he adds.

Ashcroft explains that each season begins in August of each year, and the number one priority is to get representatives to all nine provinces, to invite people from schools and various community areas to that region’s qualifying round.

“We sometimes come across underprivileged schools or underprivileged dance communities, which we then sponsor or give a reduced fee to, depending on the need, in order for them to, at least, have the opportunity to experience the stage. From there, we take the next step, should they progress to the next round. Of course, there will be cost implications, arrangements will need to be made and accommodation is needed, so we try to put their minds at ease in terms of what is necessary for them to progress to the next round,” Ashcroft says.

Talent Africa is not only recruitment-based. “Our webpage is open to anybody who feels they have talent. To register, you will need to have an ID, physical address and email address. Once they’ve received a contestant number, they can enter,” he explains.

There are three rounds to the competition. All participants must qualify at a regional/provincial round anywhere in the country in order to participate at Nationals, the second round, where all provinces compete for a place on the South African team. The South African team travels to New York City to compete in the Talent America International Competition in July of every year.

“We have two national rounds that normally take place around the end of March/beginning of April. This year, our national events are from the 25 – 30 March in Roodepoort, and from 2 – 5 April in Port Elizabeth,” explains Ashcroft.

"From this final round, we select those who will accompany us on different international trips.

"It's an important decision because if we look at our records in America for the last 12 years, bar one year, we've had a South African overall winner, which proves that we've got immense talent in our country. Also, in 2018, every international trip we did, we had an overall winner in the country that we visited. We've been to Poland, Serbia and America (on two different occasions), and in all of these competitions, South Africa won overall.

"It's not by any luck that we won, it means that we've chosen strong teams, good people, good candidates and good representatives. We are very proud of our track record," explains Ashcroft.

He believes that there would be many more opportunities within the performing arts if the sector received the attention it deserves from the public and private sectors, and, especially, the government.

"In sports such as soccer, cricket and rugby etc., you get National Colours/ Protea badges, however for performing arts you get nothing. And it costs you greatly, not only financially, but also in terms of the hours of practice and effort, only for there to be no credible recognition.

"We submitted proposals to the government, but they have never been accepted. What I'm saying is that if we can get to a place in this country where we understand the value of performing arts and we start to create more theatres and platforms to

perform, if we provide more shows and if better funding is available, we can successfully show how viable it is as a career choice. The performing arts is a space that can inspire underprivileged communities and individuals and provide a platform for talented people to be discovered, people who, without competitions like ours, would not have been," says Ashcroft.

"We have some of the greatest talent in this country. For the last four years, we have gone to America, we've had the scouting agents sit in the venue and, without fail, after witnessing the participants, be amazed by the talent. And they ask, 'Are you all from South Africa? Why aren't we coming to you, instead of you coming to us, you've got the best talent out of everybody.'"

Talent Africa cannot exist without some of the platforms that are helping them to educate the kids and helping with sponsorships. The company extends its gratitude to the Federation of Performing Arts South Africa (FPASA), which awards federation colours; Safata, which provides education and certificates for different qualification levels in the performing arts; and the African Artists Development Programme (AADP), a non-profit organisation that provides education courses in the arts.

"We'd like to thank Signium, our main sponsor, that has remained with us over the years, as well as Windmill Productions, that is now starting to write production pieces and they're only going to use non-professional artists to be on their stage.

"So, they may use professional artists for guest appearances but their

non-professional artists, in other words, those who are looking to grow into the platform, are going to be the ones who are going to receive exposure in their productions. For me, Windmill needs to be given the biggest handclap of all because they have said they are going to work hand-in-hand with Talent Africa and are going to give the first option to all those who have made it to Talent Africa Nationals, to be in those productions running later this year and early next year.

"At its core, Talent Africa seeks to increase recognition for the performing arts and provide opportunities and inspire people. Talent Africa caters for both the novice and the professional on one platform, which is South Africa's heartbeat and that is why we refer to ourselves as Talent Africa, a family of performers," Ashcroft concludes.

#### Discover our Talent (DOT)

Connect the dots to find the stars. This is a landing page for all artists, performers, coaches, scouts, agents studios and suppliers. It's everything you want and need to know about performing. You can find talent or managers, stars or agents, students or studios.

This is the one landing page for all those who love performing. Once you are a member of DOT, it is easy to see how, when all the DOTS are connected, we find Stars. **BBQ**

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field will inherently provide a better service by understanding needs, develop bespoke solutions and build strong and long-term relationships. We are aware of the importance to assist in efficient procurement solutions in order to reduce indirect costs, but also have an overall responsibility to reduce the total cost of ownership (TCO) to the government in travel procurement. We understand that government travel is extremely specialised and that new clients require the support of our team, which is dedicated to providing industry expertise to make travel as seamless and as cost-efficient as possible.

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- **VIP service teams** for true itinerary management and a seamless travel experience.
- An in-house and wholly-owned after-hours **emergency call centre (Wings24®).**

- Online and real-time **reporting** via the goData portal.
- **Travel risk management solutions;** including traveller tracking, high-touch incident management and reporting with instant communication **via own mobile App.**

Travel management is our business and we are passionate about delivering outstanding IT solutions to our clients, ensuring all economic segments, from SME to large enterprise, have the benefit of scalability, cost efficiency and bespoke applications, which suit their specific needs.

To successfully implement and manage travel management services customised to client-specific requirements, a high level of scalability, both in terms of seamless setup and maintenance in conjunction with an experienced, accredited and professional travel management services provider is essential.

## Customised solutions

In addition to our around-the-clock support, WingsNaledi is committed to being flexible with creative solutions that are customisable for our clients.

These solutions include:

- Cost-reduction strategies
- Incident management
- Traveller security
- Logistics management
- Supplier relations
- Formulating and managing travel policy
- Consolidating travel programmes
- Reporting metrics for effective management



Ultimately, we're there for our clients, providing expertise, unlocking complex travel and redefining value.

### Our specialisation

WingsNaledi understands the business-critical nature of government travel. Our consultants go through a rigorous training process to ensure they meet the WingsNaledi standards for understanding the intricacies and fluidity of this niche travel market. Continued professional development is offered to keep our teams up-to-date on any changes or developments in the industry.

WingsNaledi also complies with the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Scorecard. We are rated as a Level 2 contributor in terms of the B-BBEE Codes of Good Practice and we are deeply committed to developing talent within our company. We continue to give dedicated, passionate and pro-active people from disadvantaged backgrounds the chance to develop their skills and succeed.

WingsNaledi clients can rest assured that we are mindful of the cost implications while providing a value-added service. In addition, we will provide:

- Accurate reporting of travel spend, with careful attention to invoicing and reconciliation
- Accessibility to WingsNaledi 24/7/365
- An ability and drive to negotiate competitive rates that our clients would not get by working directly with suppliers
- Clients benefit from our global negotiating power
- Agility and flexibility to work with travellers whose plans can change at a moment's notice

- Seamless, hassle-free travel for busy, on-the-go officials

In addition to professional development for our consultants, WingsNaledi takes a keen interest in keeping client travel bookers apprised of industry changes. Our free workshops to clients cover topics such as:

- Traveller compliance
- Being a good custodian for your travel programme
- Last-minute bookings
- Making changes to bookings and possible restrictions
- Cancellation policies
- Traveller tracking during emergency situations (including a mobile application)

### Quality

We are obsessed with quality at WingsNaledi. Customer retention forms the bedrock of our company values and this can only be achieved by consistently delivering high-end service and incident-free travel. To ensure we accomplish these goals, a dedicated quality assurance team independently monitors the performance of our service to each client from day one of trading.

WingsNaledi Incident-Free Index™ is our proprietary application used by the quality assurance team to monitor any service failure, regardless of origin or scale. The Index creates a Process Improvement Report, or PIR, documenting the nature of the incident and any necessary or corrective measures that need implementing. Incidents can range from bags being delayed by the airline, a hotel not managing the correct billing cycle, or a Wings servicing issue.

The entire process is transparent, culminating in monthly client-specific Incident-Free Index reports detailing total

transactions against the percentage of incident-associated transactions. At our client review meetings, part of the agenda is to review each incident, the actions taken, the conclusion and the result obtained to ensure the client is happy with the outcome.

### Emergency contact centre

Travel on its own comes with unexpected delays because of extreme weather or mechanical issues. Whether it's a natural disaster or simply missing your connection, you want to know that the TMC you use will be there for you—24/7/365.

Having an emergency after-hours service is a minimum standard in our industry. However, making the commitment to operate a superior service delivery model—not outsourced but staffed with our own team members—is what separates us from the pack. And by using our own specialised staff who knows our processes and understands our customers' unique needs, we are able to provide our consistently high-touch service, no matter what time the call comes. And our consultants are not just there to answer the phone; they are there to solve the problem and that's a key component to our value proposition.

Adding to our superior problem-solving skills, Wings24 uses the same technology platform that is standard throughout all WingsNaledi locations, so our team can access travel records regardless of where or when the reservation was made. This ensures a seamless and reliable after-hours service delivery.

### Strategic geographic locations

Having associated operations across the globe, including regional hubs in the United Kingdom/Europe, North America, South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia Pacific, places WingsNaledi in an optimal position to serve the travel-negotiating power of today's government and state-owned entities. This is especially important for the service-critical government and state-owned entities where travellers may interact with many different Wings offices. **BBQ**

# The Fitbit Charge 2 Tracker

**F**itbit's number one selling tracker, the Fitbit Charge 2 now has so much more to love. With standout features like PurePulse heart rate, multi-sport tracking and connected GPS, call, text and calendar alerts, cardio fitness level and guided breathing sessions, this is nothing short of personalised fitness tracking. Fitbit believes a better you starts with the heart and this tracker constantly tracks your heart rate.

Maximising workouts and better tracking the number of calories you burn, it gives you a clear picture of your health without the discomfort of a chest strap. The multi-sport modes track specific exercises like running, weights or yoga so you can see your workout statistics on display. The connected GPS connects to your phone's GPS to see real-time statistics like pace and distance on your wrist and a map of your route post-workout. SmartTrack Charge 2 automatically records select exercises like hiking, biking, sports and more in order for you to get credit even if you forget to log a workout.

The call, text and calendar alerts allow you to see these alerts on your wrist, allowing you to keep your phone out of sight so you can focus on your goals. The cardio fitness level powered by your pulse helps you to get a better understanding of where you are in your fitness journey.

Viewable in the heart rate section of the Fitbit app, your score is an estimation of your VO2 Max (the maximum amount of oxygen your body can use when you're working out at your hardest), which is widely accepted as the gold standard measurement of cardiovascular fitness. Fitbit automatically provides you with a cardio fitness level in the app using your

resting heart rate and user profile. You can obtain a more precise cardio fitness score and level by going for a run for at least 10 minutes on flat terrain at a comfortable pace with the connected GPS enabled. The higher your cardio fitness score, the better your cardiovascular fitness.

Using your cardio fitness score, Fitbit provides an easier way to understand where you stand with a fitness level rating based on your age range and gender (from poor to excellent). This allows you to know where you stand as you make changes and improve over time.

The Charge 2 also offers something they refer to as "sleep stages", which uses motion detection and heart rate variability to estimate the amount of time users spend awake and in light, deep and REM sleep each night. Results from the collected data are used to empower Fitbit users to take control of their sleep quality. This collected data also allows Fitbit scientists to dig deeper into the health effects of sleep. Researchers tapped Fitbit's longitudinal sleep database, which happens to be the most extensive in the world, to analyse millions of nights of sleep stages data, in order to determine how age, gender, and duration affect sleep quality.

For the second year in a row, Fitbit data scientists found that women get about 25 minutes more sleep on average each night compared to men. The percentage of time spent in each sleep stage was also similar until you factor in age. Fitbit data shows that men get a slightly higher percentage of deep sleep than women until around age 55, when women take the lead. **BBQ**

*Staff writer*





# Does the trust model for broad-based black ownership hang in the balance?

As South Africa enters its third wave of empowerment deals, the use of trusts as an ownership vehicle continues to rankle the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Commission

**W**ith a third of all major B-BBEE transactions using this model, it seems that for corporate South Africa, the model is here to stay. However, a recent roundtable discussion hosted by the B-BBEE Commission signalled that using a trust as a vehicle for broad-based ownership has overstayed its welcome.



Since the inception of the Commission three years ago, the issue of fronting has remained front and centre as a critical impediment to transformation. Commissioner Zodwa Ntuli reported to Parliament in 2017 that a growing number of companies were believed to be engaged in fronting their employees through trusts. That same year, the Department of Trade and Industry (dti) Minister, Rob Davies, said that over 50%

A member of the BEE Advisory Council suggested that trusts and empowerment transactions were not the answers to true empowerment.

Evon Jeewan, Associate Principal at Bravura, an independent investment banking firm specialising in corporate finance and structured solutions with specialist expertise in B-BBEE ownership transactions, says that the existing B-BBEE

beneficiaries. This is a feature of South African trust law and is expressly permitted within the Codes," she explains.

Where black shareholding is held through a trust, the B-BBEE Codes require the trust deed to define both the participants in the trust, as well as the portion of their entitlement to receive a distribution of the economic interest from the trust.

Minister Davies says that, in most instances, trusts do not provide guidance on how they record information relating to the identity of each black participant. Additionally, certain transactions are structured in a manner where the beneficiaries are only selected each year (to receive benefits for education and so on), or it is broadly stated that a portion of dividends will go towards projects.

This is at odds with the Code requirements, according to Jeewan. "There is no stipulation that trusts, B-BOS and ESOPs list the details of participants. On the other hand, there are detailed requirements that seek to protect participating groups against fronting. For instance, the Codes ascertain that black participants in an employee trust must take part in appointing at least 50% of the trustees and in managing the trust at a level similar to the management role of shareholders in a company. There should also be an articulation of the participants having vested rights to distributions. As well as this, the Codes require the trustees to provide an annual financial report to participants at an annual general meeting. If the trust does not comply with the requirements, the ESOP B-BBEE ownership points cannot be scored," she says.

### **The B-BBEE Commission's view on trusts**

Commissioner Ntuli's concern is that there has been little certainty around whether broad-based ownership is benefiting the intended participants. In a recent interview, she remarked that in the first wave of empowerment deals, there had been no

## **“ This is at odds with the Code requirements, according to Jeewan. There is no stipulation that trusts, B-BOS and ESOPs list the details of participants**

of the trusts registered as part of a major B-BBEE ownership transaction had been found to be non-compliant with B-BBEE requirements.

In the Commission's first financial year of 2016/17, it received 191 complaints of fronting. Although this had dropped to 92 a year later, by the end of August 2018, the numbers of complaints related to fronting had risen to 125.

So far, the Commission has issued 55 preliminary and 14 final reports. Some cases are being referred for criminal processes.

A roundtable session was hosted by the Commission in early 2019 to discuss strategies for the ramping up of black ownership, particularly in South Africa's township and rural economies. At the meeting, the dti said that black ownership has declined across the country's key economic sectors. Additionally, it said that the ongoing abuse of trusts has kept black people at arm's length from the real, operational ownership of a business.

Codes make specific provision for trusts to be used as an indirect form of B-BBEE ownership. Code Series 100 has specific rules that relate to broad-based ownership schemes (B-BOS) and employee share ownership programmes (ESOPs).

A report by capital markets and financial services research firm, Intellidex, indicates that the 25 trusts included in the report hold R37 billion in endowments, with the spend to date on projects benefitting black participants totalling R3.3-billion.

### **Criticisms of trusts**

Jeewan says that there are two main criticisms aimed at trust ownership structures. "Firstly, they lean towards 'passive' shareholding, which refers to the fact that there are no specific black individuals able to drive transformation in the company. Secondly, black participants of a trust do not own the shares in their personal names—rather, the shares are held by trustees on behalf of the

monitoring to ascertain whether B-BBEE had been implemented and whether members were effectively participating as shareholders.

"This is when the Commission was established and it became our role to step in. We need to make sure that these vulnerable groupings really are going to benefit from those deals," she says.

Jeewan says that this view foregrounds points raised during the last roundtable session. "It has been proposed that the Companies Act Regulations be amended to require that the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) records data specifically to track black ownership, and that this be broken down by race and gender. It is anticipated that this amendment may go through Parliament to be promulgated in the Companies Act after the general elections in May. Apparently, the Commission has already begun the amendment of its registration forms so that it can gather race and gender information when companies are registered. To date, the Commission has gathered this information from 6 000 of South Africa's larger businesses," she says.

Ntuli says that as of December last year, a total of 341 major B-BBEE transactions (deals over R25 million) had been registered with the Commission, as per the requirement of the amended Codes. In assessing these, the Commission has found that over a third of the deals made use of the trust model in their ownership structures. Prior to concluding B-BBEE deals, companies are able to take advantage of the Commission's service to assess the transaction up front, prior to registration, and provide non-binding confidential advice. Ntuli says, "We are able to look at the transaction and highlight where there will potentially be a problem, for example, with regards to the proposed ownership structure.

"We have advised certain companies who have approached us specifically to provide input on transaction variables, for instance, where a repayment of a loan

is dependent on dividends and on the achievement of a particular share price in a particular year. When looking at the track record of the company, we've been able to assess whether this is going to be probable or not.

"In such instances, we advise companies to remove those provisions and structure in a way that clearly shows the intention to pass ownership, and not to prolong ownership vesting while the company continues to be recognised for black ownership through the very credentials of those people who may not be getting anything."

Ntuli says that for those deals already registered, the Commission assesses and advises on the need for remedial action where necessary.

"We see a number of companies heeding the Commission's instructions. But for those that inform us that there will be no remedial action taken, we will follow through to check that they are recognising black ownership. Our view is that you cannot recognise ownership, which does not meet the requirements in terms of vesting, exercisable voting rights and all of those other rights that should flow naturally to a shareholder," she says.

#### Going forward

The roundtable session's findings will be consolidated into a report with the purpose of advising the government, although Jeewan says no time frame has been provided for this. "The findings could have an impact on the utilisation of B-BBOS and ESOP schemes. Although Commissioner Ntuli has stated that the trust model can be used to facilitate broad-based ownership, she has cautioned that 'at the end of the day, we must be able to look for the black person and find the black person in the deal'. So far, both the Dti and the Commission do not seem convinced that this is being achieved in many of the transactions utilising the trust model," she concludes. **BBQ**

[www.bravura.net](http://www.bravura.net)



**Bravura, established 20 years ago, is an independent investment banking firm specialising in corporate finance and structured solutions with specialist expertise in B-BBEE ownership transactions.**

#### EVON JEEWAN

*Associate Principal – Bravura  
Bachelor of Accountancy, BCom  
Honours, CA (SA)*

Evon is a Chartered Accountant with almost seven years of corporate finance experience. She is a JSE-Approved Executive and has advised a number of JSE-listed clients. Prior to joining Bravura, Evon held Corporate Finance positions at KPMG, Grindrod Bank and PricewaterhouseCoopers. She was a Senior Manager within the Deal Advisory team at KPMG for two-and-a-half years, having advised on successful M&A and BEE assignments, advising on both the sell side and buy side for a broad range of local and global clients. Evon joined Bravura in 2018, she served her articles at PricewaterhouseCoopers within the Consumer and Industrial Products business unit, having managed audit clients such as MTN, Aspen and Meadow Feeds.

# Catalysts for social change

Empowerment &  
Transformation  
Consulting



## ET Consult is driving transformation through sustainable empowerment solutions

**With a passion to change and enrich lives, and a results-driven approach, ET Consult is at the forefront of delivering empowering catalytic solutions.**

Established in 2007, today ET Consult are a team of young, dynamic experts who develop transformation strategies and implement programmes to help you achieve your business growth objectives; beyond meaningless tick-box exercises.

“Transformation is an emotional and complex social issue in South Africa, therefore, our transformation strategies are sustainable and not a once-off occurrence,” says Maxi-Lee Machado, the Transformation Director.

“We are catalysts for social change towards prosperity. We want to positively impact the lives of 200 000 people in the next 10 years. We aim to achieve this by working with clients to deliver sustainable and socially transformative programmes that deliver multiplier impact and comply with a myriad of complex regulatory obligations,” she adds.

### Skilled in transforming

Machado is an experienced professional with a demonstrated history of working in the management consulting industry, whose skills include project planning, social entrepreneurship and entrepreneur development and training. Her focus has

primarily been on the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) space as a Lecturer, Consultant, Technical Assessor for the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) and a published Author on the subject.

“My ikigai—reason for being—lies in being able to provide truly transformative and empowering consulting solutions for organisations wanting to move past scorecard compliance and actually change lives,” says Machado.

She explains that the most important aspect in developing successful transformation strategies is moving beyond tick-box scorecard compliance and delivering solutions that have a long-term beneficial impact for the intended beneficiaries; thereby changing the social status of our country.

“There are numerous studies confirming the positive correlation between diversity and inclusive transformation with business growth. Embedding transformation and inclusion within the organisation can take many years and often requires great skill. Companies that do this well can reap huge rewards because they are better able to understand their customers and improve customer engagements and offerings; attract and retain top talent; and create a strong corporate ethos that resonates across all groups,” she explains.

**The vast range of consulting services that ET Consult offers include:**

- Legislative compliance mapping—they help you to understand the legislation that you are required to comply with; and identify compliance obligations.
- Target setting—they assist in setting your targets and budgets for the desired outcome.
- Baseline assessments—they look at your current score versus your set target.
- Supplier assessments—they investigate your suppliers and identify those that you can benefit from and those that will cost you your reputation.
- Competitor analysis—to help you maximise your selling advantage, they conduct a thorough competitor analysis that determines how they fare in comparison to you.
- Gap analysis and recommendation report—they identify where your gaps are and recommend initiatives to achieve the intended outcomes.
- Strategic policy and plan development, implementation, monitoring and reporting—they implement your social upliftment programmes, on your behalf, including all compliance and administration; while you focus on what you do best.
- The submission of BEE reports—they develop and submit annual BEE reports to the BEE Commissioner’s office within the required timeframes for the government, state-owned entities and listed companies.

- Public and in-house workshops—they help your board stay abreast of legislative changes and how these will impact your organisation's empowerment and transformation strategy.
- Youth Employment Services (YES) project management—they handle your entities entire YES implementation; from recruitment to workplace readiness and assistance with absorption.
- Enterprise development—through the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS), they develop SMMEs; your suppliers, to gain traction on their business; thereby giving you better service and helping your BEE status. This service is also available for businesses that want to gain more traction and ensure their sustainability.

"Each of our sustainable empowerment solutions is customised to fit each client as each client has a unique set of challenges. We spend a lot of time understanding each client and what they do, what their vision, mission and values are; as well as what their critical success factors are. With this in mind, we are able to customise programmes to ensure impact; compliance and the client's success are simultaneously achieved," says Machado.

### Part of the solution

She explains that with regards to BEE compliance, the most common challenge she has witnessed companies struggling with is the lack of certainty around compliance obligations and waiting for the absolute last minute to implement their BEE programmes.

"Often, this is financial year end and companies struggle to balance and focus on everything that needs to be done. In such instances, companies can enlist our full scope of services, where we develop and advise on a strategy, provide training if necessary and implement on the client's behalf," says Machado.

Besides increasing business growth, ET Consult's transformation strategies offer clients a number of benefits.

"The primary one being that through these partnerships, clients are able to be a part of the solution to some of the many

problems facing our people today and join us in making a positive impact on the lives of thousands of people. Our internal marketing guru will also ensure that clients receive partnership exposure on all our web-based platforms," she explains.

### Added value

In addition to offering first-class consulting services, ET Consult holds seminars aimed at keeping your board (governing body) up to date with all the relevant regulations and changes.

"Our seminars are focused on legislation that is relevant to B-BBEE and the latest developments in the sector. We address new legislation as well as any changes that affect the way companies conduct business," explains Machado.

"The seminars are three hours long and are hosted on an on-demand basis. Soon, our seminars will be bi-weekly to cater for the greater demand, and to ensure that our attendees get the most recent information," she adds. To keep abreast of our sessions, including bonus sessions, visit our website and subscribe to our newsletters and mailers.

Ideal candidates for the seminars include members of the board/governing body, as well as the executive management responsible for transformation and compliance; human resource management, procurement activities and commercial activities.

"However, we welcome all interested candidates and provide a simple and effective booking method—just send an email to [training@etconsult.co.za](mailto:training@etconsult.co.za) with the necessary information and we will contact you," says Machado.

In conjunction with the seminars, ET Consult also has training sessions and is

equipped to design customised training solutions. Training is targeted at companies and individuals who want to improve their understanding of BEE. ET Consult offers standard sessions on BEE Codes of Good Practice as well as sessions that serve a specific requirement that the client may have. There are various subjects that they can offer training on and this will be dependent on the needs of the client.

### Guaranteed excellence

Currently, ET Consult has offices in Durban and Johannesburg and will be expanding to Cape Town in the coming months.

"What separates us from the rest is that we go beyond scorecard compliance. Instead, we deliver programmes that achieve multiple benefits for donors and beneficiaries.

"Our team of experts have 20 years of industry experience to educate, inform and provide you with the necessary skills. We offer free BEE advice to clients who need our full scope of services and we are a Level 1 black youth-owned SMME, making all spend recognisable at a rate of up to 135%.

"At ET Consult, we want to help our clients grow, so we empower them by implementing sustainable transformation programmes that achieve multiplier empowerment impact. As a result, ET Consult is changing the perception of BEE and focusing on the success stories that come out of sustainable BEE implementation," she concludes. **BBO**

*Do you need help with your BEE strategies? Get in touch with us*  
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[www.etconsult.co.za](http://www.etconsult.co.za)





# Caution: Black Mamba territory

Robbie Stammers finds out more about a highly lauded group of mostly women rangers operating in part of the Kruger



**T**he sisters of the Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) are not doing it for themselves but for the entire world—putting their own lives on the line every day in an effort to save our precious rhino. The APU was founded by Transfrontier Africa to protect the Olifants West region of Balule Nature Reserve, which forms part of the Greater Kruger National Park.

The area in which the Black Mambas patrol is a free-range savannah ecosystem with open borders to the Kruger. The highly endangered black rhino as well as the white rhino are strongly represented in this location.

Since the unit went into operation in 2013, the number of rhinos lost to poaching has plummeted; snaring and illegal bushmeat incidents have been reduced by 75%; and nine poacher incursions have

been detected, leading to the arrests of the offenders. The unit has also shut down five poacher camps. Twenty-six unarmed members conduct foot patrols, observations, vehicle checks and road blocks, and educate their peers on the importance of conservation and gathering intelligence from their communities.

Restoring dignity and self-worth, and empowering communities to play their part, are crucial components of efforts to combat the illegal wildlife trade across the globe, and the Black Mambas are an outstanding example of success. Their brave actions are sending the message to others in South Africa and beyond, that communities themselves can prevent this illicit trade—which threatens not only iconic species such as rhino and elephants but puts money in the hands of criminal gangs, thus increasing insecurity and risking livelihoods.

The Mambas patrol the reserve—part of the two-million-hectare Greater Kruger National Park and home to rhinos, leopards, lions, elephants and several other animals—for three weeks at a time, walking almost 20 kilometres a day. The rangers reportedly know the land so well that a mere misplaced stone is enough to alert them to the presence of poachers.

Robbie Stammers asked the unit's brainchild Craig Spencer, ecologist and head warden of Balule Nature Reserve, and Amy Clark—project administrator for Transfrontier Africa—a few questions.

### When was the Black Mamba initiative started?

**CS:** The Black Mamba APU was founded by Transfrontier Africa and created to protect the Olifants West region of Balule Nature Reserve—beginning with a team of six at the beginning of 2013, and one year later expanding to cover the entire reserve. We therefore maintain and protect the western boundary fence of the Greater Kruger National Park, a significant barrier between human-wildlife conflict and poachers entering the protected areas' network; and supplying protection

“ **The black mamba snake is fast, lethally venomous and highly aggressive when threatened. The women of our APU are exactly that when it comes to protecting their area of operation**

to all the wild animals that roam freely throughout Balule.

### How did the decision to employ women come about?

**AC:** A different approach was needed to battle poaching, as over the past few centuries the same 'weapons' or tools have been used to combat this issue. Although these tools worked at the time, they only temporarily solved the problem. Craig Spencer came up with this long-term solution.

### How did you decide on the name Black Mamba?

**CS:** The black mamba snake is fast, lethally venomous and highly aggressive when

threatened. The women of our APU are exactly that when it comes to protecting their area of operation.

### What are the motivations of the members to participate in this unit?

**AC:** All the women who have been selected and who joined the Black Mamba APU have a huge passion for wildlife. They are here to do their part to protect their natural heritage. They want their children and children's children to enjoy nature as they are so fortunate to do today.

### What is your daily routine?

**APU:** Patrols are conducted daily throughout the reserve and within the buffer zones on



our borders. By day, these patrols are conducted on foot, and by night conducted by vehicle. Patrols include the policing of our borders, and bush sweeps conducting searches for snares of bush-meat poachers.

**How vast is the poaching crisis in Africa and, most importantly, in the Kruger?**

**AC:** The rate of poaching throughout South Africa is approximately two rhino per day.

**How do you protect yourself from spies—or even poachers themselves—who want to sneak in with the teams?**

**CS:** Our teams are subjected to regular lie detector tests to ensure their integrity. We are very happy to say that we have not had a single staff member fail the test.

**What do you do when you catch a poacher red-handed?**

**AC:** When poachers are apprehended, they are turned over to SAPS, along with any evidence collected.

**What successes can you record?**

**CS:** The two main types of poaching we deal with on a daily basis are bush-meat poaching through the use of snares, and rhino poaching involving poachers breaking into the reserve to shoot and de-horn the animals. Since their deployment in 2013, snaring within the Black Mambas' area of operation has dropped by 76% within the boundaries of the reserve and 68% within the buffer zones. With the Black Mambas' constant visual policing, any signs of poachers entering the reserve in order to poach rhino have been picked up quickly—allowing for the poachers to be tracked and caught before having the chance to locate and poach rhino.

**If you could pick three words to describe the team, what would they be?**

**AC:** Loyal, passionate and an inspiration to the women of Africa. **BBQ**

*Robbie Stammers*





# Class-leading quality in an award-winning design

The new Kia Sorento flagship model, the Kia Sorento 2.2CRDI EX AWD, was launched in October 2018 and is already in a class of its own in the large SUV category



**T**he Sorento, which is the big brother of the popular Kia Sportage, has a host of incredible features. At first glance, the car has a confident stance and exudes the promise that it means business. This is confirmed once you enter the vehicle. The dashboard is well-designed and is extremely user-friendly with all the controls within easy operating distance, as well as being clear and concise. The interior is extremely roomy with seating featuring a seven-seater configuration covered in very classy leather upholstery. Features include

40/20/40 second row split folding seats with high folding centre armrests. The seatbacks can be remotely folded by conveniently located levers in the cargo bay, which is also extremely spacious. A total of 605 litres of luggage space is available with an undercover tonneau cover storage compartment and integrated cargo net for loose items.

The enhanced KIA Sorento looks similar to the previous model, but with a revised front end and a sharper exterior design. The

new radiator grille is better detailed and is flanked by a new headlamp configuration with projection headlamps and revised LED daytime running lamps. A new bumper design with projection-type fog lamps gives the Sorento an aggressive overall expression. The rear has also been upgraded with a new bumper, sleeker tail lights and a revised tailgate. Overall, the new Sorento has a more refined and upgraded look, making it stand out from its competitors.

The Sorento is certainly one of the best in terms of its specifications and

driving experience. When settling into the driver's seat, the excellent build quality and features set this vehicle apart from its competitors. Features also include dual-zone automatic air conditioning, automatic headlamp control, auto folding and heated side mirrors, all-round electric windows with USB ports in the front and rear. An auto defog system was also featured in the vehicle, along with an illuminated door scuff plate and rear sun shade blinds.

Electrically adjustable front seats with lumbar support in the driver's seat add to the driveability of the vehicle. A wireless smartphone charger is also standard. An eight-inch colour touchscreen with satellite navigation is also featured. Your favourite radio station can be sourced through the car radio or through your mobile device. Six speakers ensure the sound is excellent for all passengers.

The new Sorento is fitted with the 2.2-litre "R" turbo diesel engine as in the previous model. This versatile engine is renowned for its excellent mid- and low-range torque. Even with a full load, the power can be felt from pull-off, when you need to accelerate to overtake or in emergencies. With 147kw/3800rpm and max torque of 440Nm between 1750 and 2750rpm, there is ample power for every situation. Acceleration to 100km/h is reached in a very respectable 9.4 seconds.

The eight-speed automatic gearbox ensures the engine operates at optimal revs, whatever the requirements are. This gearbox delivers a smooth drive whilst reducing emissions, and is more efficient than the previous six-speed version. The gearbox offers Eco, Comfort, Sport and Smart modes, each designed to optimise the performance of the car.

Safety wise, the Sorrento offers a host of safety features, which you would expect

in a vehicle of this calibre. ABS, Electronic brakeforce distribution (EBD), as well as six airbags, are also included as well as ISOFIX child seat anchors. The electronic windows automatically stop if an obstruction is sensed.

Electronic stability control (ESC) and hill start assist are standard as is park distance control. A reverse camera is displayed in the eight-inch monitor on the dashboard to assist in difficult parking situations.

The Sorento comes standard with KIA's industry-leading unlimited kilometre five-year warranty as well as a five-year/100 000km service plan and three years' roadside assistance.

The KIA Sorento is certainly a state-of-the-art SUV designed to be the ultimate in comfort and versatility. This vehicle is certainly way ahead of its game. **BBQ**

*John Elford*





A Proud Level 2  
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# Servest Group

## Pioneering game-changing facilities management solutions

**W**ith the illustrious title of being the first black owned facilities management business in Africa, Servest Group is a leader in the facilities management space. A Level 2 BBBEE contributor, Servest Group is committed to a long-term strategy of broad-based black economic empowerment.

The facilities management business is structured to coordinate all your facilities services, including operational and infrastructure support, ensuring the integration of people, systems, places, processes and technology.

At the helm of its leadership is the new Group Chief Executive Officer, Xolile Sizani. Prior to joining the Servest Group, Sizani was the Group CEO of leading courier pharmacy group, Medipost and before that, he was a Senior Executive at the Afrox Group, during which time he spent three years in Germany with Afrox's parent company, The Linde Group.

Sizani is a Mechanical Engineer by profession, having obtained his qualifications from the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University. He also holds a Master's in Business Leadership from the Unisa Business School and has attended a Leadership Development Programme with Said Business School in Oxford- London.

Sizani is results driven and, like many engineers, takes a systematic approach to complex problem solving. "At Servest Group, we aim to deliver personalised service solutions to meet high-quality standards and exceed client expectations. Critical to us is that we are able to optimise, standardise and synergise our processes for efficient delivery of services to our clients," says Sizani.

Facilities management is a profession that encompasses multiple services to ensure functionality, comfort, safety and efficiency of the built environment. "What we do at Servest Group is integrate the place, the people, methodologies and their prophases so that, in the end, we achieve optimum functionality of the built environment," explains Sizani. "Our view as an organisation is that, just providing multiple services is not enough—instead providing an integrated solution that links to the client's strategy is very critical. Our strategy and vision are to develop a game-changing approach to facilities management

as we focus our attention on developing a more integrated solution that speaks to our clients' strategies.

"Our work is aimed at ensuring that the solutions we provide don't just deal with facilities in terms of how we provide individual or multiple service lines, but they provide the client with a solution that talks to their overall strategy for the environment in which they operate in order to achieve their strategic objectives and triple bottom line."

The secret to good partnerships lies in communication, and in today's knowledge era, Servest understands the importance of having information readily available. They have developed their very own Computer Aided Facilities Management System (CAFM), allowing real-time reporting and information. In terms of sustainability,

Servest Group's modern, tech-based solutions provide innovative tools and skilled professionals to help clients achieve the desired energy consumption and compliance goals, while reducing costs and minimising the business' environmental

impact. Servest provides a comprehensive range of essential facilities management services to numerous clients across various sectors, including the retail, property, transportation, healthcare, marine, hospitality, mining sectors and others.

Sizani explains that while they cover majority of the sectors, there is an invested interest to advance in the sectors in which they operate in order to meet the ever-changing needs of clients. "We operate on more than 11 100 sites and that, for us, has been a pillar of strength because we are able to repurpose resources and skills over different sectors.

For example, we are able to take some of the solutions that we are providing in the retail space, and bring those learnings into another sector like transport, and so forth. Leveraging off our cross sector learnings puts us in a great position to not only innovate in this space but disrupt, bringing the lessons and learnings into other service sectors," explains Sizani.

To ensure excellent service across such a wide field, the company places a great

deal of emphasis on the upskilling of its employees. "We are passionate about our people, as we understand that our industry is a people driven one. We have 24 000 employees who are the heartbeat of this organisation, and for us, it's a necessity that our people take centre stage. We are focused on the training and development of our people, and keeping up to date with new technologies ushered in by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Of priority to us is ensuring that our people are prepared for the change in skills being ushered by new innovations," says Sizani.

"We have training centres where skills development, mentoring and coaching takes place. We also provide bursaries to our people for continuous learning, upskilling and development. We have a rigorous recruitment process focused on ensuring that the individuals we hire are motivated, willing to learn and trainable, especially, because of the work that we do and the demands of our industry. Annually, we spend millions of rands on training and skills development because it is a vital part of our business," he adds.

Sizani explains that, in addition to employee training, managers are sent to participate in leadership development programmes. Servest also engages with a number of strategic partners who are in the technology space in order to discover some of the latest developments and to keep abreast of new innovations.

He says, "The pace of innovation has been astounding, and this industry is going to be one of the mostly affected by such innovations. With this in mind, as management, we are continuously looking at ways in which we can leverage technology and innovations to improve our delivery to clients while ensuring that our overall offering to clients is aligned to their strategic business objectives and triple bottom line. And for the facilities management industry, these include, among others, the Internet of Things (IoT), drones, automation and robotics; and wearable technology."

Sizani says his vision for the company is to take it to greater heights as the leading Integrated Solutions provider in Africa and

inspire his team to always work towards achieving more than has been promised.

"I believe that if employees can have a self-propelling motivation that's developed internally, they can do things that even I could not have imagined. That is why I am passionate about empowering people, enabling the personal and professional growth of colleagues, supporting them to make meaningful contributions, and more importantly, to believe that we can do more than we can imagine," he says.

Sizani characterises his leadership style as transformational. "Transformational in the sense that it's important for me that the clarity of purpose and direction are clearly communicated and internalised by others. A true measure of how I, as an agent of change and as a transformational leader, have succeeded will be the manner in which people are able to own the strategies and the approach that I have established, and whether they continue with it long after I have left," he explains.

Since its establishment, Servest Group has amassed a successful client base and expanded its footprint across 10 countries on the African continent. "This has been a result of our leadership and pioneering approach in facilities management. Last year, we divested in one of our biggest companies, Servest UK. Our goal is to expand even further through a focused approach around mergers and acquisitions (M&A). "Our aim is to deliver solutions geared towards supporting the strategy of our clients. Our integrated solutions approach enables us to offer single point of contact solutions for all facilities requirements in the built environment, as we provide all services in-house.

This philosophy empowers us to simplify management services, saving clients' time and money, but more importantly supporting our client's strategic imperative and triple bottom line," concludes Sizani. 



# Tribute to football icons

## The echoes of heroes forever remembered

**T**he year 2019, or at least the first three months thereof, will be largely remembered on a positive note in terms of what has happened on the football pitch. The Premier Soccer League (PSL) is in the midst of a title race that will be spoken about for years to come, while Bafana Bafana recently produced an impressive away performance, beating Libya and in so doing, ensuring qualification for the African Cup of Nations, which is taking place in Egypt this June.

Unfortunately, amidst the jubilation and positivity, the South African football community has also had to stop, take stock and celebrate the lives of two footballers who passed away this year.

### Philemon 'Chippa' Masinga

The news that Philemon 'Chippa' Masinga had passed away in mid-January this year shocked the nation. Social media was abuzz as condolences rolled in from around the

globe—it became clear just how much impact Masinga had made during his travels.

Masinga gave the country moments it will remember for years to come. Perhaps the impact of those moments has been lost a bit over time but for those of us who were around at the time, they will live on forever.

In 1996, Masinga, or Chippa as he was fondly known, was part of the 1996 team that lifted the African Cup of Nations trophy and, again, when they finished as runners-up in the 1998 tournament. But, without a doubt, Masinga's moment came in 1997 when his right-footed pile-driving shot into the top corner of the net sent Bafana Bafana to the 1998 FIFA World Cup for the first time in its history. Those iconic scenes still play in many people's minds as if it happened yesterday: Masinga running down on goal, one defender to beat, but he shoots from distance and it flies past the Congolese goalkeeper. The crowd

goes into a frenzy, could this be, could we be heading to the FIFA World Cup? The Coach at the time, Clive Barker, sprints down the touchline, arms spread wide in the form of aeroplane wings as if he is flying the team to France (where the World Cup was hosted in 1998) himself.

Again, unforgettable scenes.

Masinga began his career at Jomo Cosmos after the South African legend, Jomo Sono, spotted his talent. A move soon materialised to Mamelodi Sundowns before heading overseas to Leeds United. Although his time there wasn't long, he and the Bafana Bafana Captain, Lucas Radebe, became instant hits.

The Leeds United faithful nicknamed him 'Waltzing Masinga' after the famous song, 'Waltzing Matilda'. Based on the comments post his death, he was held in very high regard by the club and its supporters. His Leeds United stint was followed by a move to Italy where he played for Serie B side,



Salernitana. Soon, he caught the attention of Serie A side, Bari, and made another switch.

Masinga was also part of the ambassador list for the South African World Cup Bid for 2010.

Cancer might have defeated the big man but here, he will always be remembered. His exploits, along with those of his teammates, ensured that South Africa participated in the FIFA World Cup in 1998 for the first time in our history. 16 August 1997 will always be known as one of the greatest moments in South African football and that was largely due to Philemon 'Chippa' Masinga, or if you will, Waltzing Masinga.

# Arthur Bartman

**M**ost recently, Arthur Bartman sadly passed away at the age of 46 after a few months of battling meningitis. Bartman served all his clubs with distinction and was earmarked for big things when he burst onto the scene at African Wanderers in the late 90s. Much like any sports person, there will be ups and downs during a career, but Bartman took it all in his stride.

He was the journeyman of South African football, which is not a tag with any negative connotation. Representing eight clubs is no mean feat and the fact that so many clubs were willing to take him on board speaks volumes about his professionalism. However, he was not only a player. Post-retirement, he turned to coaching and he looked to have a bright future, were it not for his untimely death.

The outcry of support and social media messages is a testament to the man that Bartman was. His family have subsequently thanked the public for their support and also issued a statement to raise more awareness about meningitis.

Bartman will be remembered for a great career that spanned almost two decades but for those close to him, he will be remembered as a family man, friend, husband and father farewell Arthur. **BBQ**

*Ralph Staniforth*





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