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# Forbes

AFRICA

MAY 2019

**INSIDE:  
HORROR AND  
HAVOC: AFRICA'S  
DEADLIEST  
CYCLONE**

**RETAIL FURORE  
IN SOUTH  
AFRICA'S  
TOWNSHIPS**

## A BILLIONAIRE ONCE AGAIN

ONE OF THE CONTINENT'S RICHEST MEN **ABDULSAMAD RABIU** ON  
HOW HE GAINED A STAGGERING \$650 MILLION THIS YEAR



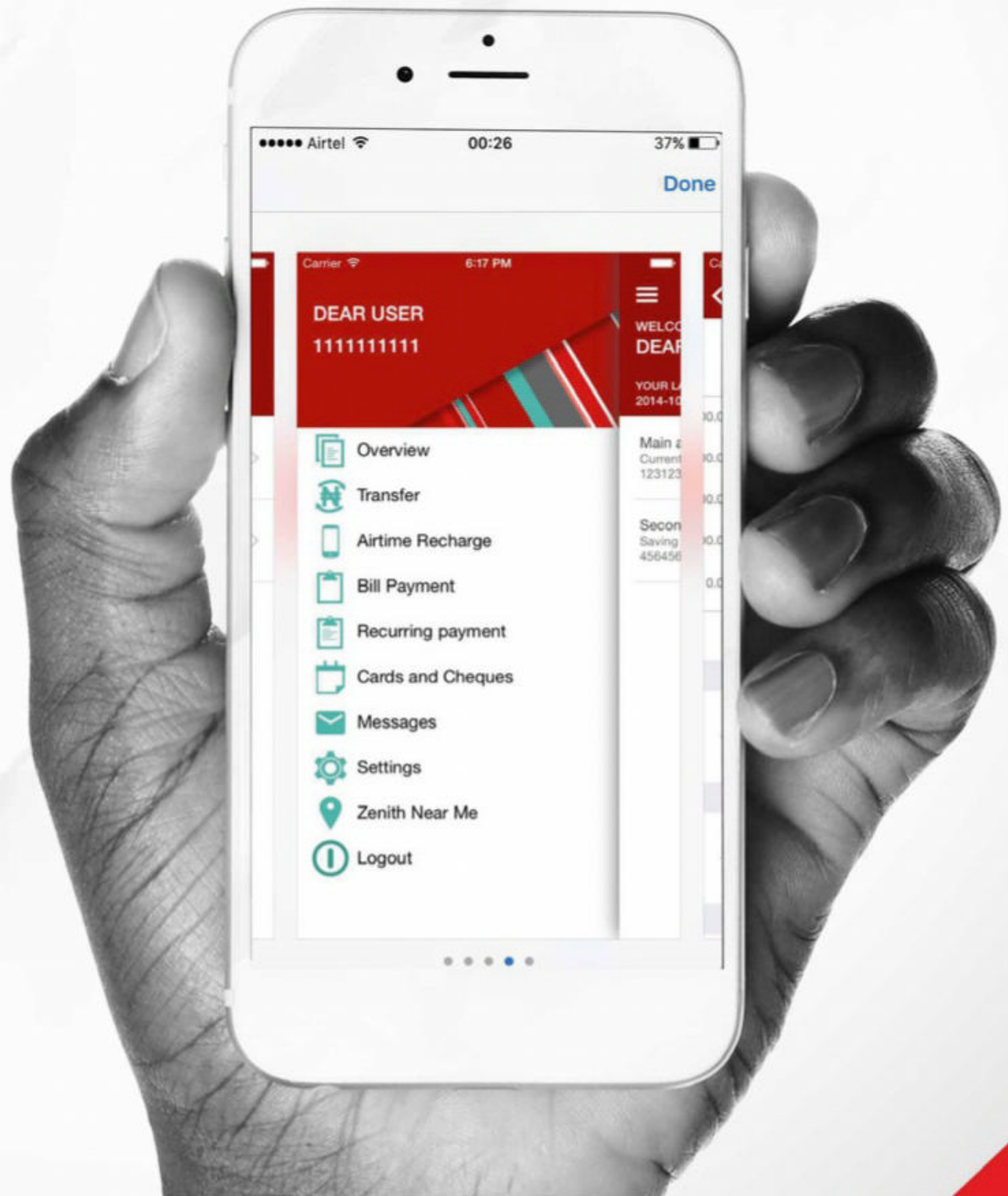
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24



8 | EDITOR'S NOTE // METHIL RENUKA

10 | PUBLISHER'S NOTE // RAKESH WAHI

12 | BRIEF 360

## COVER STORY

14 | THE COMEBACK BILLIONAIRE'S  
FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Nigeria's business mogul and third richest man, who cemented his return to Forbes' African Billionaires List this year since dropping off it in 2015, says he owes his \$1.6 billion net worth to being a disruptor - and to being stubborn.

BY PEACE HYDE

## FOCUS

24 | A TALE OF TWO PRESIDENTS AND  
ONE PHONE CALL TO FREEDOM

A month before South Africa's elections, one of the country's leading political figures exposed a number of his former comrades for corruption with evidence to the Zondo Commission on State Capture. It was box office material, yet just another eventful period in the turbulent life of Robert McBride - guerrilla fighter, policeman and death row prisoner.

BY CHRIS BISHOP

30 | NO MAIZE, NO MONEY, NO FUTURE

The deadliest African cyclone, to date, tore through Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique in March, leaving a trail of death and destruction. The worst is yet to come for survivors.

BY ANCILLAR NOMBEWU

38 | THEY STILL TAKE CREDIT

South Africa's township grocers have had to increasingly adapt to changing consumer behavior and the demands of a digital economy. What they are still cashing in on is their originality.

BY MOTLABANA MONNAKGOTLA

Cover image by George Okwong

## ENTREPRENEURS

- 46 | PACKING LIGHT IN SCHOOL BAGS**  
Former South African rugby star John Mametsa provides alternative energy solutions for the state. With his wife Tumi, he says their future in the business is bright.

BY SIBUSISO MJIKELISO

- 52 | CONSUMED BY HEALTHY EATING**  
The restaurant market still hungers for healthy options. This entrepreneur is feeding that need, serving earth-conscious customers and gym junkies.

BY MELITTA NGALONKULU

- 58 | SWEET SUCCESS**  
After her husband's death, Popi Zolas abandoned her corporate career and took on a restaurant franchise, before immersing herself in the catering and confectionery business.

BY MOTLABANA MONNAKGOTLA

## LIFE

- 72 | BIG BUCKS, BULLETS AND BODYGUARDS**  
The dark and dangerous lives of the men protecting the rich. The stakes are high and so too the rewards.

BY GYPSEENIA LION

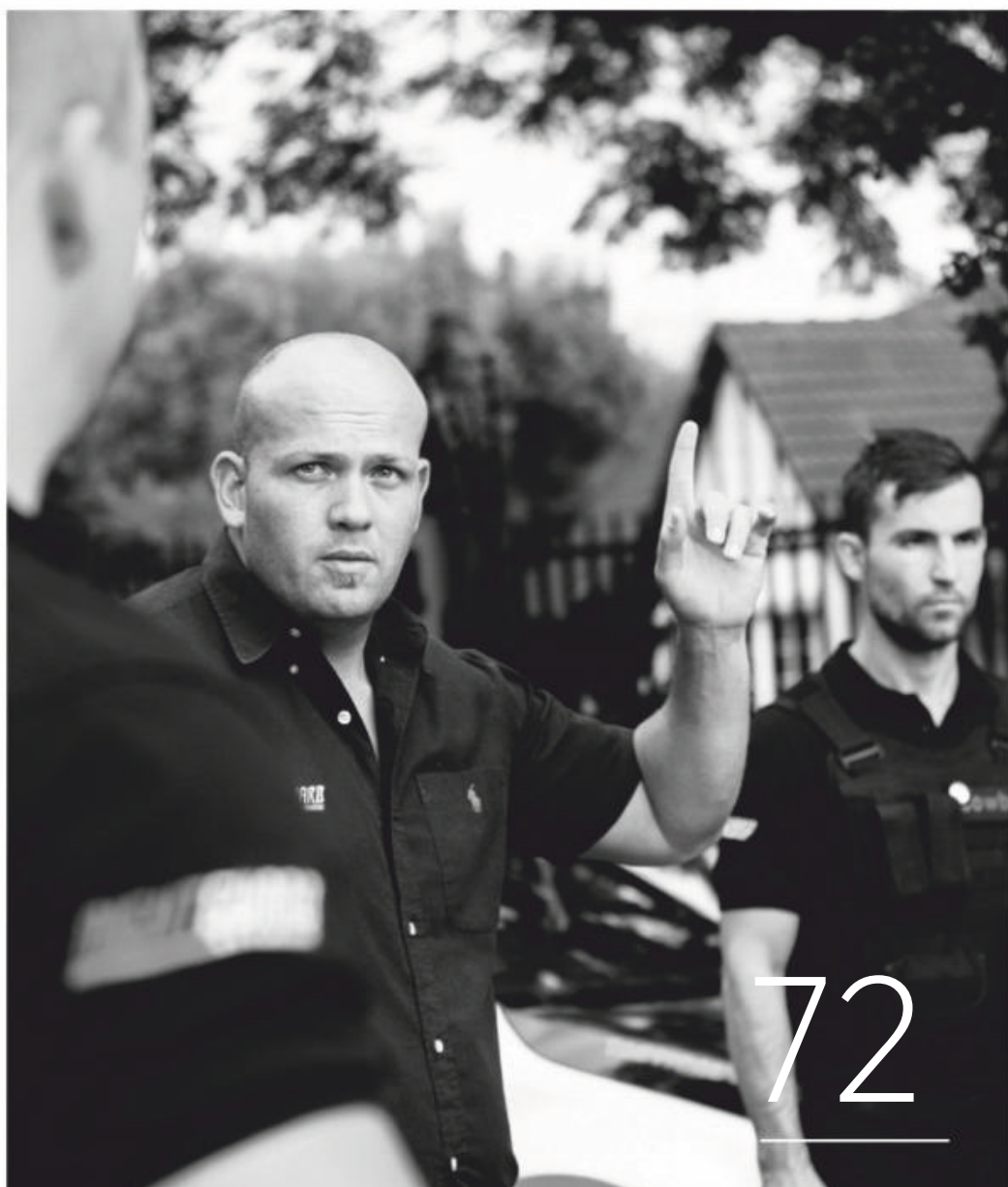
- 78 | SONGS OF AFRICA**  
Creators and consumers of music seek African online music platforms even as global entities and record labels hesitate to fully commit on the continent.

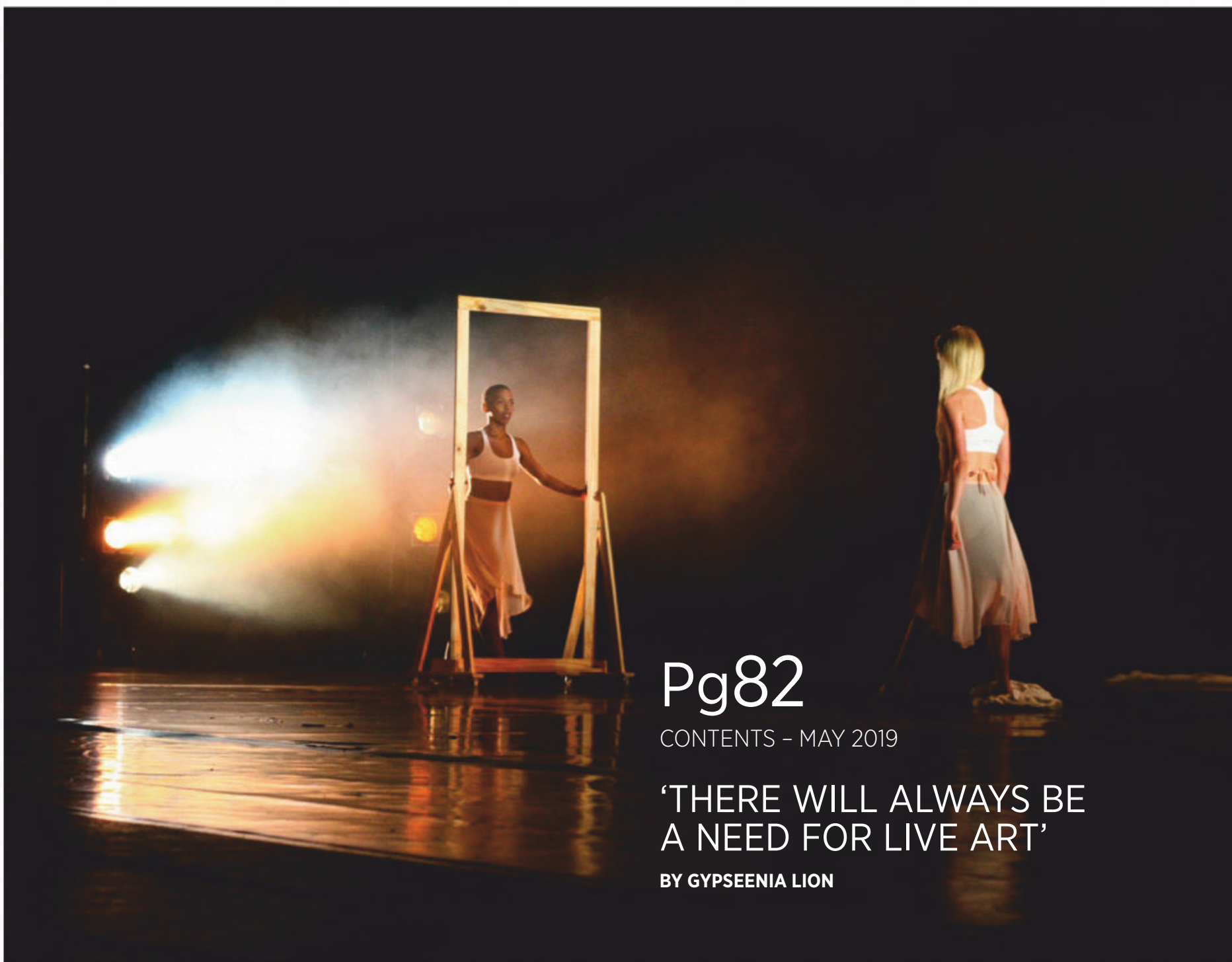
BY TOM JACKSON

## SPORT

- 90 | AFRICA'S STARS IN EUROPE**  
Soccer players from the continent are kicking it up a notch as they become instrumental in their European teams contesting championships.

BY NICK SAID





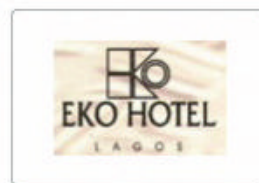
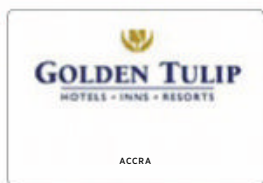
Pg82

CONTENTS – MAY 2019

‘THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A NEED FOR LIVE ART’

BY GYPSEENIA LION

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# MAKE AFRICA WORK FOR EVERYONE



**I**VANKA TRUMP was in Ethiopia last month. It's a country I have enjoyed traveling to and walking around in, meeting some remarkable entrepreneurs. Now, with a reformist prime minister who has instituted a cabinet that is half female, and the country's first female president, Ethiopia has been receiving a fair share of headlines.

Ivanka, President Donald Trump's elder daughter, who serves as his adviser, was here to promote women's participa-

tion in the workforce as part of her government's initiative.

I met her for a few brief minutes once, as did a few others, at the Forbes Women's Summit in New York in 2015, by the glittering waters of the Hudson. One of the measurements of success, American self-made billionaire Sara Blakely told me during my one-on-one interview with her at the event, is the people you meet and can be in the same room with. And in that room that day were some of the most powerful women on the planet. Ivanka talked to the audience about her "mistakes that opened tremendous opportunities".

"I wanted to be in real estate as early as I can remember... My dad would send me renderings of 90-storey buildings when I was young," she said. "It was clear to me I was going into real estate. What was not clear is I would start in fashion." That took her on a path with entirely new learnings. And one of which, I am sure, was on her Africa trip, visiting a female-run textile manufacturing unit in Ethiopia.

Indeed, it's not surprising that in every nook and cranny of this part of the Global South, you bump into resilience in every shape and form. I have met poor, barefoot women, in Rulindo in Rwanda, Jinja in Uganda or Musanze near the DRC, planting vegetables in green houses, selling them to cooperatives and using the money to send their children to school. They seek micro finance, take out small loans to start small-scale farming and feed their families.

On a trip to Uganda, I saw how an NGO is getting women off the

streets by employing them to harness their hidden talents. Some of the poorest women handcraft beaded necklaces made out of cow horn or recycled glass to sell them in boutiques from Kampala to Kansas.

But this is what travel entails; be it by foot, bus, cab or plane, as a journalist, I have always found the best stories and sound-bites, not in the summit rooms of five-star hotels, but on the streets, from the eyewitnesses of everyday life.

I recall a 20-year-old female cab driver I met in Johannesburg a few years ago. A student of publishing by day, she worked as a chauffeur for a car company after dusk. Her night shift done, she bussed back in the wee hours to her home in Pretoria for her college class the same morning. The cab driving job at times found her in some pretty tough spots, but that's the whole point, she said: "I see this as an opportunity to also help other women in trouble on the streets at night. I consider this job empowering." She is one of the many young people in South Africa, hoping she will find decent full-time employment one day.

In an election year, when most African countries are going to the polls, there are some crucial questions we need to ask political parties: how serious are our future leaders about youth unemployment, and inclusive and labor-intensive economic growth? How can cities be better managed so they become platforms of opportunity? These are the questions organizations such as the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) in South Africa ask and argue: "Elections are about the policy choices that will shape our growth prospects, which in turn will determine our ability to address our crises of unemployment, poverty and inequality."

"Create cities of hope," says CDE. And for that, enterprise-led growth is essential. To make sure Africa works for everyone. 

RENUKA METHIL,  
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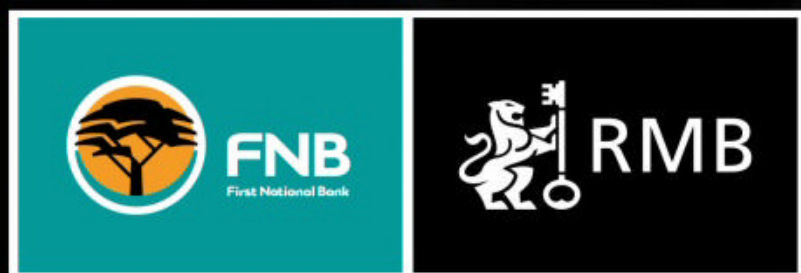
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# EDUCATE, RE-ENGINEER AND LEAD THROUGH UNCERTAINTY

BY RAKESH WAHI, FOUNDER AND PUBLISHER, FORBES AFRICA

**O**NE OF THE GREATEST challenges we face today is uncertainty; a simple word that has often been used naively to describe apprehension. It is, however, one of the most complex words of our times and is anything but simple.

Physics, mathematics and applied mechanics were my passion since 1973. Archimedes, Einstein and Newton, among others, made the world a better place; add to that, a topping of economics and finance from Samuelson and Damodaran and management from Drucker, and I thought I had life and business covered. Until a decade ago, we were able to use predictive models of the past and apply them with reasonable surety, within some standard deviation models, for the future. We applied some risk factors and gave ourselves a pat on the back when we had all bases covered; and often term our analysis as a base-case scenario. Perfect.

In 1999, as part of a fund management business, my team and I were advising buy-side transactions of an Islamic Private Equity fund. The internet bubble was growing and was my initiation to the fast-talking breed of entrepreneurs who had sworn to change the world. Have you ever had instances in your life when you are so scared of looking foolish that you don't question fundamentals? Well, that was our time of looking bewildered. At the end of one of the harebrain schemes that was presented, I sheepishly asked a question about the absence of cash flow. That was considered sacrilege at a time when the dotcom entrepreneur's words were taken as gospel. I was given the greatest explanation of all times and something our world has become synonymous with; "you don't get it – it's a leap of faith, you are either in or out". Everything I studied was irrelevant. Much to our eventual delight, we were proven right by staying out of some of those misadventures but the transformation moved at the speed of light. Recalibrated by two major meltdowns (the dotcom bubble burst in 2000 and the financial crisis of 2008) and sabre-rattling on governance, we fast forward to 2019.

In comparison to 1999, I can only summarize that uncertainty is relative. So what changed? Nothing and everything! Nothing, because sometimes I feel that we learned nothing, and everything, because the world is no longer the same.

I will only deal with two issues. The first relates to the future of



employability of the human race. In the 20th century, we were assured of a job in whichever vocation we studied. Today, with the pace of change from the Fourth Industrial Revolution, there are serious questions about what humans will do in the future versus the functions performed by machines. The fundamentals have changed and we are not asking questions because we are scared once again. We want to ignore that anything which is quantitative and predictive in nature will eventually be done by machines. However, the qualitative aspects or anything requiring a human interface can never be replaced. The role of humans will change but their importance in managing the ecosystem will never change. So there is a need to ask questions, understand this profound reality and change the way we educate and learn. This is critical to provide a sense of certainty.

The second uncertainty is caused by disruption. Our lives and businesses are predictive and so shall be disrupted. What we do will not change but how we do it will. You will still need a doctor to give you advice, comfort and hope but almost everything in the medical field will be predictive. It takes minutes to conduct pathology tests and scans and simultaneously get reports. Training of nurses is on fifth generation mannequins that are almost human. Since disruption is becoming a way of life, we need to embrace this reality and start planning for the future that we have no idea about. So go back to basics, unlock the status quo and reengineer.

Humans have evolved from the stone ages; we have the resilience, tenacity and inherent instinct to survive and succeed. What will help us along the way is educating ourselves on the challenges of the future. Leadership will play a far greater role in the future than ever before. Analysing, recognizing, educating and managing change is an important aspect of dealing with uncertainty.

As leaders get predictive and quantitative advice, success will come from taking that information, making sense of it and most importantly acting on it. At a corporate level, an important change needed is to break the archaic organization structures so that decision-making is autonomous at the level of frontline managers, just like field commanders in a battle field. United by a common vision, mission, values and goals, a well-trained team will deliver like synchronised swimmers. Uncertainty cannot be conquered as it is dynamic but it can be harnessed and managed through effective leadership. 📌

AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK



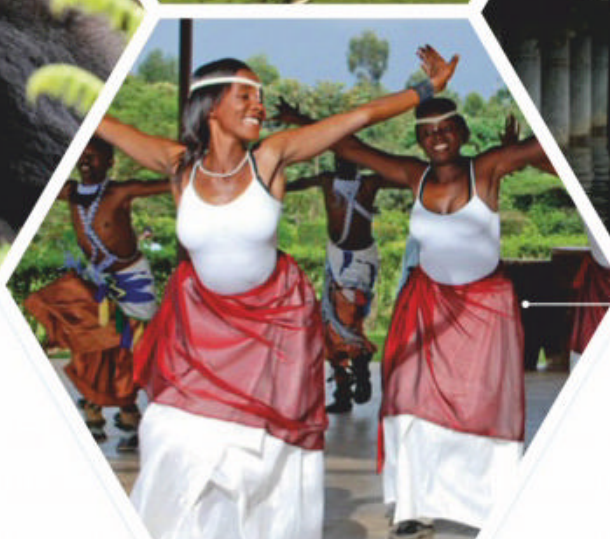
NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK



VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK



LAKE KIVU



LIVE ENTERTAINMENT IN KIGALI

# RWANDA'S TOP 5 DESTINATIONS

## VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK

Two and a half hours north of Kigali you will find Volcanoes National Park, home to most of the world's remaining mountain gorillas. Rwanda is among only three countries in the world where you can trek to see the majestic gorillas up close – a truly once in a lifetime experience.

## LAKE KIVU

Kivu is one of Africa's Great Lakes, with deep emerald-green waters and a shoreline of magnificent mountains and fishing villages. The lake is dotted with uninhabited islands that can be explored by boat and provide the perfect location to relax and enjoy the peace of Rwanda's countryside.

## NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK

Nyungwe is one of the oldest rainforests found anywhere on the continent. The lush, green forest is home to over 300 bird species and 13 primate species including chimpanzees and

colobus monkeys. Take a stroll through the canopy along a 70m high walkway for exhilarating views of the rainforest.

## AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK

Rwanda's largest national park is home to a diverse array of plant and animal life. The lakes, papyrus swamps, savannah plains and rolling highlands make Akagera an incredibly scenic reserve. The park is home to the elusive Shoebill stork, seven newly introduced lions, elephant, leopard and the shy but stunning roan antelope.

## KIGALI

Rwanda's capital provides the perfect backdrop for a weekend getaway. As one of the safest cities in Africa, Kigali is quickly becoming a favourite for East African and international tourists. Savour the tastes of international cuisine at the city's best restaurants and enjoy live music at the many clubs and bars in Kigali.



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# BRIEF

# 360

## FIRST AFRICAN TECH STARTUP TO LIST ON NY STOCK EXCHANGE

Jumia Technologies, a pan-African technology company, last month listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), becoming the first-ever technology company from Africa to list on the world's largest stock exchange.

The largest e-commerce operator in Africa started its first day of trading with an opening price of \$14.50 but the stock traded at the close of the day at \$25.46 per share, *CNN* reported.

The so-called "Africa's Amazon" has four million customers on a continent where just 1% of retail sales are via online.

Jumia was founded in Lagos, Nigeria, by two French entrepreneurs in 2012 and now offers services to most of the



African population, in countries such as South Africa, Tanzania, Egypt and Ivory Coast.

Jumia Nigeria CEO Juliet Anammah, was present to ring a ceremonial bell when the company's stock began trading on the floor of NYSE.

## GOOGLE OPENS FIRST AFRICAN AI LAB IN GHANA

Google now wants to position itself as an "AI first" company and with research centers across the globe in places such as Tokyo, Zurich, New York, and Paris.

Last month, the technology company opened its first center in Africa in Ghana's capital city, Accra.

Moustapha Cisse, the research scientist heading up Google's AI efforts in Africa, says his team's goal is to provide developers with the necessary research needed to build products that can solve problems that Africa faces today.

"Most of what we do in our research centers at Google and not just in Accra, we publish it and open-source code, so that everybody can use it to build all sorts of things," he said.

## SUDAN PRESIDENT OUSTED BY MILITARY

Omar al-Bashir came to power in a military coup in 1989 and ruled what was until 2011 Africa's largest country. When he seized power, Sudan was in the midst of a 21-year civil war between north and south.

His goal was always to keep a unified Sudan, but a referendum on secession for South Sudan was agreed as part of the peace deal, as per a *BBC* report. In the January 2011 referendum, about 99% of South Sudanese voters were in favor of separation. The independent state of South Sudan was declared six months later.

Recently, political unrest gained momentum quickly.

Nationwide protests first started in December 2018 after the government announced that prices for fuel and bread would rise.

This turned into a wider call for al-Bashir and his government to step down. He declared a state of emergency in February, reshuffling his cabinet and replacing all state governors with members of the army. After months of unrest, Sudan's military stepped in and finally toppled al-Bashir on 11 April 2019. Sudan's principle protest group has demanded the immediate formation of a civilian-led government to replace the country's new ruling military council, warning that the demonstrators' "revolution" is at threat from "the remnants of the regime" of al-Bashir.





## FIRST VIEW INTO THE ABYSS

Last month, scientists produced the first image of a black hole, shining a light on one of the universe's great mysteries.

Scientists produced the first real image of the black hole, in a galaxy called Messier 87. The image is not a photograph but an image created by the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) project.

The black hole itself is un-seeable, as it's impossible for light to escape from it; what can be seen is its event horizon.

The EHT was also observing a black hole located at the center of the Milky Way, but was unable to produce an image. While Messier 87 is further away, it was easier to observe, due to its larger size.



## TIGER WOODS GETS FIFTH GREEN JACKET OF HIS CAREER

In the last decade, the world has witnessed Tiger Woods topple his own legacy with public confessions of serial infidelity, a police mugshot and videos looking dazed and confused after his arrest for driving under the influence.

With all these public controversies, his golfing was severely hampered and the world had long given up on watching him claim a victory again. Woods was desperate to show them he could do it.

After an 11-year dry spell, Woods finally claimed a historic victory at Augusta National last month to take

his fifth Masters in what is dubbed as the 'most unlikely win.'

It has been coined by many as the greatest sporting comeback of them all – a journey that has included career-saving spinal fusion surgery and a tumultuous series of personal problems that threatened to bring an end to the career of a golfing icon.

"It's hard to comprehend right now. I mean, honestly, it's only been a few hours out of winning the tournament. I'm still trying to enjoy it and figure out that I actually won it. I know I have the green jacket on but it's just, it's still, I think it's going to take a little bit of time to sink in," Woods said.

## FIRST SUB-SAHARAN BULLET TRAIN ON ITS WAY

Sub-Saharan Africa is set to get its first bullet train courtesy of Tanzania and Rwanda.

The 571km-long cross-border railway project dubbed the Isaka-Kigali SGR project linking landlocked Rwanda with Tanzania's port at Dar es Salaam will cost \$2.5billion to complete.

In a joint announcement, Rwanda's Minister of Infrastructure Claver Gatete and Tanzania's transportation minister Isack Kamwelwe declared the cost was established by an initial study.

The cost will be split between the two nations with Tanzania forking out \$1.3bn and Rwanda \$1.2bn.

The first 400km from Dar to Dodoma is currently underway and being built by Turkish/Portuguese consortium.

The cross-border railway project will

enable landlocked Rwanda to access the Dar es Salaam port in Tanzania. The line will also support the transfer of goods from Dar es Salaam port to Burundi and Congo.



Kevin Curren - Tournament Director and Founder, competing in the 2017 event.

## CHARITY AT THE HEART OF GOLF

The 16th edition of the premier celebrity golf and lifestyle event in South Africa, the BCX SuperSport Shootout, returns this year from May 17-19, and will be hosted at Val de Vie and Pearl Valley golf courses in the Drakenstein Municipality in the Western Cape province of South Africa. The event was founded by former Wimbledon finalist and Grand Slam doubles winner, Kevin Curren, 16 years ago.

To date, the event which is underpinned by a charity element, has raised over R24 million (\$1.7 million) for the upskilling of underprivileged individuals in charity organizations such as the LIV Village in KZN, Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation and the Val de Vie Foundation.

"The purpose is to create a world-

class amateur golf and lifestyle event whereby the leaders of South African society from government, business and sport can engage and network in an informal environment over an entire weekend, whilst at the same time raising significant funds for the upskilling of our less-privileged citizens," Curren says.

The environment is relaxed and conducive to networking and building relationships. Furthermore, the event is based on an exciting Ryder Cup team theme, whereby the 120 participants are divided into two teams of 60 players, which represent title sponsors, BCX (BCX is the ICT division of Telkom) and SuperSport. The tournament as well as many of the thrilling activations and lifestyle components are broadcast live on *SuperSport*. Highlights of the event are also broadcast by *CNBC Africa*.

- Compiled by Unathi Shologu





THE COMEBACK  
BILLIONAIRE'S  
*FOR* {*MU*} *La*  
FOR SUCCESS

Nigeria's business mogul and third richest man, who cemented his return to *Forbes'* African Billionaires List this year since dropping off it in 2015, says he owes his \$1.6 billion net worth to being a disruptor - and to being stubborn.

BY PEACE HYDE



**T**HE INSIDE OF Abdulsamad Rabiú's office, on the corner of Churchgate Street, in Victoria Island's commercial district in the heart of Lagos that is notorious for chaotic, rambunctious traffic, is marked by a serious lack of clutter.

The expansive room is tastefully decorated in cream and black hues. Rabiú's desk is organized in a manner that seems as though everything is exactly where it should be; completely spotless and devoid of any distractions that will hinder the 58-year-old founder of BUA Group from managing his vast empire, a conglomerate spread across southern and northern Nigeria.

A firm believer in strategy, the cement and sugar tycoon boosted his fortunes by a whopping \$650 million this year when he merged Kalambaina Cement, a subsidiary company of his BUA Cement, with the publicly traded Cement Company of Northern Nigeria (CCNN), where he was a controlling shareholder.

That calculated move has made him the third richest man in Africa's largest economy, with a staggering net worth of \$1.6 billion, according to the latest *Forbes* African Billionaires List, which he dropped out of.

"Nigerian cement mogul Abdulsamad Rabiú, who runs and owns the BUA Group, returns to the list for the first time since 2015. He merged his Kalambaina Cement firm into publicly-traded Cement Company of Northern Nigeria, which he controlled, in late 2018. Rabiú now owns 97% of the list entity," *Forbes* reported.

He says his fall from the coveted list was due to the devaluation of the Naira, which meant that the exchange rate went from N190 against the dollar, to N300.

"That was the main reason I dropped off the rich list. Also, most of our other



assets were not being considered because once you are not listed, it becomes more challenging to get an accurate valuation.

"Our assets, in the cement industry alone, are worth more than \$2 billion, but that is because Obu Cement [Plant], which is our biggest cement plant, is not listed," Rabiú says.

His return to the billionaire boys' club is due to five years of strategic expansion and a much more stable Nigerian economy. However, it is about more than just numbers for Rabiú.

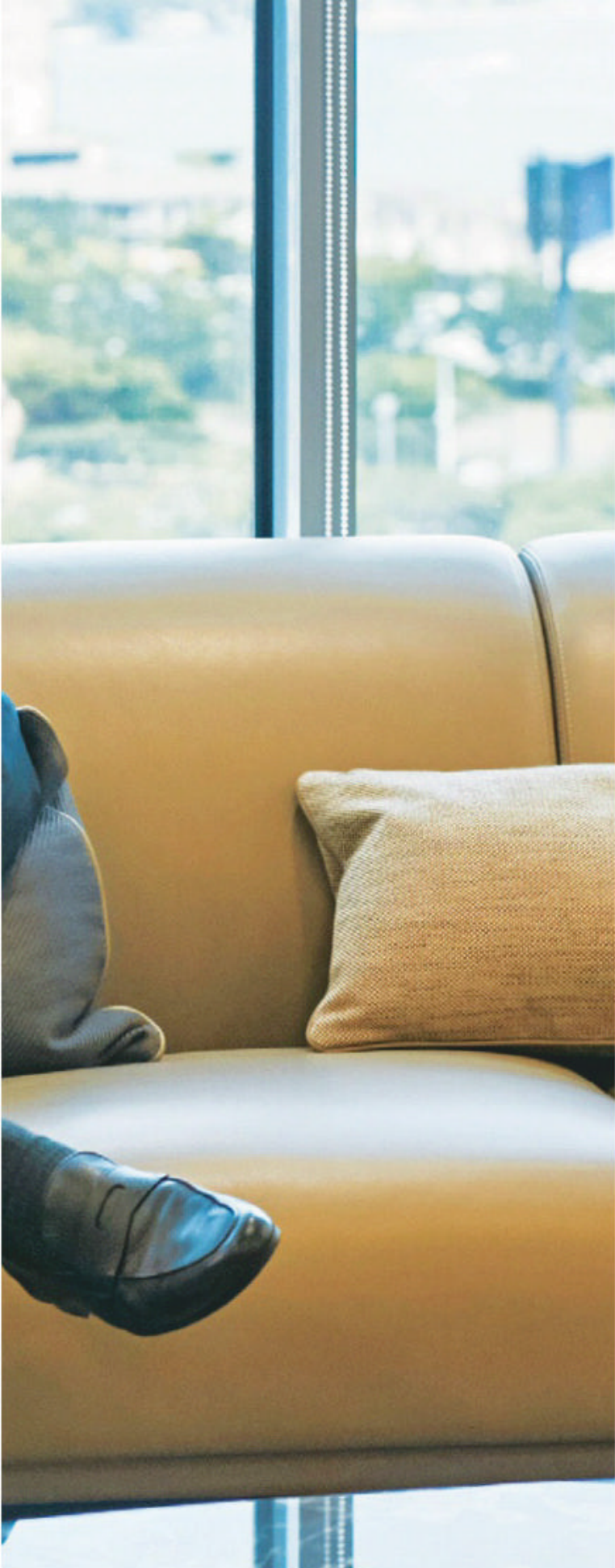
"It is a good feeling to be on the rich list, the most important thing is not about how

much money you make, but the impact you make. Touching people's lives is more important because money is a number. What you need in terms of your day-to-day is not that much."

One of the secret ingredients to his tremendous success is that Rabiú is a firm believer in delegation.

His phone purrs only occasionally, but this is also because his plants run with clockwork precision in an environment that is chaotic at the best of times.

He has a calm and soft-spoken demeanour, a trait which is, quite frankly, unconventional for someone who has



fought his way through hell and high water in business.

“I am quiet but I am very stubborn. If I want something I go for it and if I don’t want it, no matter how much I’m pushed, I don’t do it. If somebody is stubborn, sometimes it’s seen as arrogant but I don’t think I am an arrogant person,” Rabiou says.

It is also immediately clear that he is not a man who rushes into things. He would rather move methodically, with clarity and precision, a skill he picked up in the early days learning the ropes from his industrialist father. Case in point is how he built his empire brick-by-brick from the

early days as an importer.

“In 1988, I started my own business and founded BUA International Ltd. At the time, the in-thing was importation of rice, sugar, fertilizer, agriculture etc. So the challenge was that, if there was scarcity of any product, everybody would now go and import the same thing. This pushes the price up and everybody will say the price of fertilizer has doubled, so everyone would now go and import fertilizer and within a short time, the product would now come down to half price and everyone would lose money,” Rabiou says.

He decided to break the mould and instead adopted a value-added approach. He focused on bringing in raw materials to process it locally.

“We started with oil in Kano. We were processing crude palm oil to refine it. We were also getting peanuts from Kano and then crushing and processing, and that was a good business at the time because it was adding value and people were not used to adding value to anything at all. They were importing everything.”

In 2000, BUA acquired Nigeria Oil Mills, which was a peanut processing company in Kano. In 2005, he set up the BUA Flour Mills factory in Lagos. Rabiou saw very early on that he had to be distinctive in a sea of importers who simply followed the trend.

It is this measured philosophy of value that has allowed BUA Group to innovate and expand capacity to about 2 million tons of cement per annum with its new merger. Rabiou says with the consolidation, BUA Group has a market valuation of about \$800 million. A far cry from the company’s humble beginnings.

Returning to Kano as a newly-minted graduate with a degree in economics from Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, in the United States, a lot had changed while Rabiou was away.

The country was being run by a military leader and there were severe shortages in foreign exchange which

made the business of importation extremely difficult. Following his new ethos of adding value to the production line, Rabiou set his eyes on the sugar business by establishing the 2,000 metric ton (MT) per day capacity plant in Lagos which is the second largest refinery in West Africa, after the Dangote Sugar Refinery.

But the BUA story isn’t without its share of trials and tribulations. The fight began in the early years of business, when the Nigerian government introduced the backward integration policy in the sugar business.

“This is where you were allowed to import raw sugar and process into refined sugar and you must have a sugar refinery facility. So, if you have the facility for a sugar refinery, you were able to import sugar and pay a duty of 5% to 10%, while everybody else was importing refined sugar and paying 50% duty,” Rabiou says.

At the time, it was only the Dangote Group that had the refinery facility, so Rabiou decided the lack of saturation made sugar a viable business to go into.

The government’s backward integration policy is a well-known competitive strategy which allows an organization to control more of its supply chain in order to bring down the costs.

It means that a company is allowed to



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purchase or internally produce segments of its supply chain. This is done to ensure the supply, along with securing bargaining, leverage on vendors.

To take advantage of backward integration, a company needed to have its sugar refinery at the ports in order to import raw materials in bulk, which made having a terminal at the port a prerequisite.

“At that time, everything was owned by [the] Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), so you had to go and lease land from them, together with the storage. This was a huge capital investment, and to make matters worse, there was no land at the time because everything was taken.”

Luckily, Rabiu was able to find a company that had a facility that was not being utilized.

“We paid a lot of money to that company, got all the designs, bought all the equipment, we were about to start the company, then the lease was revoked and we could not go there. This was during the [Olusegun] Obasanjo regime. Most of our money had been spent on getting the land and equipment and they revoked the lease and gave it to somebody else. It took us a year and almost \$50 million in cost before we were able to start all over again,” he says.

Incidentally, that site was given to Rabiu by his father. Once they took off, the business worked out so well that they were able to recoup their money within a very short period of time. The sugar venture was a cash cow.

The company was able to reap huge margins due to the difference in duties for imports of raw sugar, and, yet again, Rabiu found validation in his strategic approach to business.

Even in those early days, his penchant for success was apparent. The sugar refinery is still operating at capacity and Rabiu is in the process of commissioning another refinery at Port Harcourt in Nigeria. They say the apple does not fall far from the tree, and this is true for Rabiu.

His father, Isyaku Rabiu, was a

renowned businessman, who also made his fortune in trade decades after Nigeria’s independence.

His wealth grew significantly until the 1983 coup which toppled the government and led to the arrests of President Shehu Shagari and his close allies, including Isyaku, leaving his business empire in a precarious state.

But where his father lost his footing in trade, Rabiu was destined to find his in cement. Opportunity came knocking in 2007 when the price of cement was so high that the Nigerian government decided to introduce yet another backward integration in the cement industry.

The idea was simple. You could only



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import cement into Nigeria, if you had a cement factory. At the time, there were only two multinational organizations in the country with the capacity to build their own cement plant.

Local companies like the Dangote Group and Flour Mills of Nigeria were the only two other companies that had signed contracts to build cement factories in Nigeria.

“Nobody else was allowed. So President [Umaru Musa] Yar’Adua was alarmed that the prices of cement was going up every day and he called for a meeting when the price was \$300 per ton. He said it was too much, so what do we do? He was briefed on the reason nobody else could bring

cement into Nigeria and told that there was a policy in place that only those building factories could import cement into Nigeria, and we did not have enough capacity in terms of manufacturing to meet Nigerian demand.”

There were only three or four cement plants in Nigeria at the time producing about 4 million MT per annum against what the country needed – almost 10 million MT.

The president ruled that the existing backward integration policy could not be continued and established a committee who came up with the idea that the policy should allow companies outside manufacturers who were building plants, in order to bring prices down.

“So they selected six companies to be able to import cement and we were chosen as one of the six companies,” Rabiu says.

But there was a big challenge.

“How do you import a million tons in a year or even 100,000 tons a month in bags? That will be like five or six cargos a month, to be able to take the bags out and transport them all over the country, so nobody could actually do it.

“The other guys had terminals, which means they were discharging the cement in bulk and taking it to their warehouses and bagging them in the warehouses and they had been in the business for a long time,” Rabiu says.

In order to reap the rewards in the lucrative cement industry, all the new six companies who had been granted licenses needed to secure terminals at the port. But the barriers to entry were significantly high.

Rabiu decided on a disruptive approach. “So I now came up with the idea of the floating terminal. It is like a factory on a vessel, so it moves. It is a big ship with a terminal in the ship. It was an idea I read about a long time ago and I decided to be innovative.”

He approached the only terminal at the time that was free in Greece and agreed on a price.



Fearing the size of the competition, Rabiú knew he needed to get protection for his business, if he stood a chance of competing favorably in the new venture.

“I knew that we had tough competition from the people who had factories and they were not happy with the government giving us the license because they were making so much money they did not want anyone to come into the business.

“So they were doing everything to frustrate it [the process]. I knew that there would be a problem. So before I bought my vessel, I came to Nigeria and sought an appointment to meet the president who granted me an audience and I explained everything to him.”

Rabiú made an impassioned plea to President Yar’Adua — he knew he could drive down the price of cement from \$300 per bag to \$150 if he had his own terminal.

However, building the terminal would take more than a year to complete, during which time cement prices would continue to rise, which would be detrimental to the Nigerian economy.

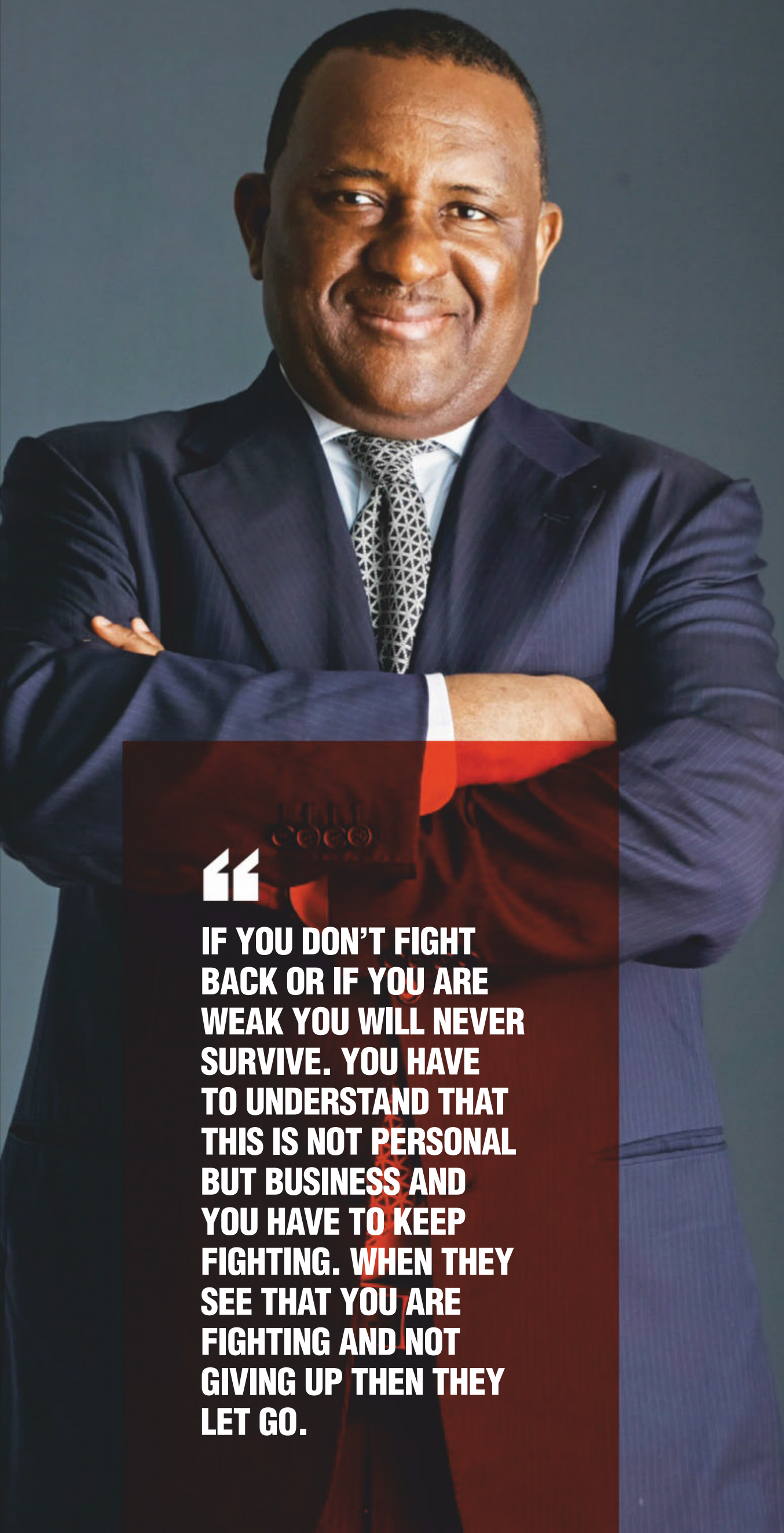
A floating terminal meant that the timeline of going to market was significantly reduced but more importantly, without the blessing from the president, the other giants in the industry would muscle him out of the game.

Once approval from the president was secured, Rabiú purchased his floating terminal and was ready to reap in the millions of dollars awaiting him in bags of cement.

It was logistically impossible for Rabiú to set up shop in Lagos. These circumstances pushed him to explore other means through which he could realize his goal. He approached Port Harcourt and this move proved to be fortuitous for him because all the eastern markets were coming to the port as there was nothing in the east.

However, not everything was ideal as he was allowed only one week in a month after which point he had to leave the port, making it difficult to offload his cement.

Rabiú was faced with more hurdles but eventually, was forced to consult the



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highest authority in the country to explain the barriers he encountered.

It was only after an order from the president that the impediments to Rabiú's business stopped and, with that, came the growth of the BUA Group, to become one of the leading conglomerates in West Africa. As the monopolists gradually loosened their grips on the cement industry, Rabiú used the opportunity to build capacity. The company has five plants now.

"That experience strengthened my resolve because it was not easy. I never thought I was going to quit. If you don't fight back or if you are weak, you will never survive. You have to understand that this is not personal but business and you have to keep fighting. When they see that you are fighting and not giving up then they let go because most of these things are illegal anyway," says Rabiú.


BUA Group steadily expanded to cover new ground. With the new merger, Rabiú has seen an opportunity outside Nigeria's borders. The demand between Sokoto and Niger through to Burkina Faso is estimated to be about 4 million MT of cement per annum.

Coupled with the fact that these countries are landlocked, there is a need to import all their clinker, the raw material needed for making cement.

His new merger with CCNN will create the second largest cement company on the Nigerian bourse after African mammoth, Dangote Cement.

Rabiú believes in Nigeria's ability to produce its own products without relying on imports from other countries and in so doing, create tens of thousands of jobs for the Nigerian economy.

As the avenues to expand in Nigeria get limited, BUA Group has consistently sought to broaden its reach to new territories.

The fighting days are long gone and BUA under the aegis of its bold leader is ready to conquer new turf in Africa. 

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# POLL POSITION

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPH: MOTLABANA MONNAKGOTLA

**M**AY 8, A LANDMARK day for Africa's second biggest economy. South Africans will cast their votes for the country's sixth general elections since the dawn of democracy 25 years ago.

In the run-up to the polls, the country saw flagrant protests in some parts, as disgruntled citizens expressed disapproval of their stifling living conditions.

In this image, a resident of Alexandra, a township in the north of Johannesburg, lies in protest in the middle of a busy road leading to the opulent precincts of Sandton, Africa's richest square mile. The dichotomy of socio-economic circumstances is an accelerant to discord in one of the country's poorest communities filled to the brim with squatter camps and the restlessness of unemployment. **F**



# A TALE OF TWO PRESIDENTS AND ONE PHONE CALL TO FREEDOM

A month before South Africa's elections, one of the country's leading political figures exposed a number of his former comrades for corruption with evidence to the Zondo Commission on State Capture. It was box office material, yet just another eventful period in the turbulent life of Robert McBride – guerrilla fighter, policeman and death row prisoner.

BY CHRIS BISHOP

**R**OBERT MCBRIDE HAS ONE of those faces full of character that looks like it has endured life as much as lived it. A glance through his tough years of struggle yields a list of reasons why: five years on death row to screams and tears of the condemned; scores of beatings over decades; shooting his way out of hospital; years of the shadowy and violent life of an underground guerrilla fighter.

McBride was born in Wentworth, just outside Durban, in 1963, and grew up amid racist insults and violence. It swiftly politicised him and he was taken into the military wing of the African National Congress where he carried out sabotage with explosives.

Even by the standards of the desperate days of the gun in South Africa, McBride's political activity is remarkable. In 1986, McBride fought his way out of an intensive care ward in a bizarre rescue of his childhood friend and fellow fighter Gordon Webster. It happened at Edendale Hospital in Durban where Webster lay, with tubes in his body, under police guard.

McBride posed as a doctor, with an AK47 hidden in his white coat; his father, Derrick,

was dressed as a priest with a Makarov pistol under his cassock. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission heard, in 1999, that hospital staff cheered them on and held back an armed policeman as the McBrides shot their way out, pushing the wounded Webster to freedom on a trolley.

Thirty-three-years on, McBride went into battle again for his beliefs, this time with words and documents, against a more insidious and formidable foe than armed police – corruption. He gave evidence before the Zondo Commission, in Johannesburg, springing from his days as head of IPID, the independent police investigators. He spent more than four days on the stand – longer than most cricket matches last these days. He told of missing police evidence, claims of sinister moves to remove corruption busters and the misappropriation of money, under a cloak of secrecy, by the crime intelligence agencies.

“People don't like me because of my anti-corruption stance, their dislike of me I wear as a badge of honour. Those who dislike me for other reasons, it is a free country and you are entitled to your likes and dislikes. I have no problem with you. But wherever I am, I will do my work and will always be against corruption. I understand how corruption affects the ordinary man and means there is so much less to go around,” he says.

To give a little more context, McBride's erstwhile job went with unpopularity. The head of IPID is a post that politicians, plus probably more than a few disgruntled policemen, wanted him out of. They ended his contract and he assures me he is going to court to get his job back. His stance may give clues as to why some wanted to see the back of him.

“I have spoken loudly every time I have seen something wrong and raised unpopular issues. Some of the issues we picked up early on was police involvement in cash-in-transit robberies... The looting of police funds, the corruption, the wastage and the leverage, we then began to understand it; the leverage that some policeman have over politicians... Any criminal syndicate that is operating requires police to help them otherwise they will be found out in the normal course of events,” says McBride, the month before the hearing.

“Rogue activity by certain elements in



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the prosecuting authority, the willingness to prosecute people for non-criminal acts and unwillingness to prosecute when there is a pile of evidence... We will also speak about the abuse of state funds, the abuse of power by the police by negating investigations. Most of our evidence is backed up by court papers, evidence and affidavits,” he says.

Many activists who saw the nasty, ugly, side of the struggle often are the first to come down, hard, when they feel freedoms they fought for are being abused. You could argue McBride, an intelligent thinker, is very much one of them.

You could also argue that McBride has been cut adrift by many former comrades and demonized as the Magoo's Bar bomber – the 1986 car bomb on the Durban beachfront that killed three and wounded scores. Others, on both sides of the South African struggle, who issued orders, or did worse, are undisturbed and anonymous by their swimming pools. Any regrets? I ask.

“It's like asking me ‘do I regret living in a free and democratic country’, the answer can't be yes... We would have preferred that things went differently. If you are in an armed struggle, you are the cause of hurt to other people and as a political activist, as a revolutionary you can defend that and justify it.

“But as a human being, you know that when it concerns other people, it is not the right thing to do to cause the hurt of other people. I have expressed myself as a human being on this, not because I was trying to elicit any sympathy or anything; I have never asked for redemption, I have never asked for forgiveness. Those who know me know what I am about and those who understand the circumstances in the early 1980s when we became active; those who are

old enough to remember that was what the circumstances were.”

Those circumstances recede further into the darkness of memory of democratic South Africa every year, yet, in the minds of those who suffered, it stays pin sharp. McBride spent five years on death row, in Pretoria, after being sentenced to the gallows for the Durban bombings.

He reckons the prison hanged more than 300 prisoners in this time. Through the cell door, he heard the condemned screaming and crying as warders dragged the condemned along the passages to their fate. The hanging warders used to bring back the bloody hoods from the gallows and force the next batch of condemned men to wash them.

In May 1990, the sun shone as hope visited death row in Pretoria. The prison management summoned McBride and a group of fellow condemned activists, to the main office at the maximum security prison. Each were given green prison jackets – the garb of special occasions. Warders drove them, in a van, to a distant part of the prison and all feared they were either going to be executed or allowed to escape and shot in the back.

“We were told not to talk and then we were put in this big room with a steel of security around the room and after about 45 minutes the former president (Mandela) walked in and it was the most beautiful sight on earth; the greatest feeling ever and when he walks in, he says: ‘Ah, Robert! How are you!’ As if he knew me forever. It was the most important meeting I had in my life. It was like a God-like environment. He gave us a rundown of negotiations and what can be expected and that we must not worry, we must be patient and sit tight, he knows all of our backgrounds and will do his utmost to get us released and we will never be forgotten.”

It took more than two more years, in the shadow of the noose... until a fateful Friday. September 25, 1992. McBride will never forget the date.

“Round about half past four in the afternoon, I got a call to come to the office, I didn’t know what it was about, and when I came there, the head of the prison said: ‘You have a phone call’. It was my first phone call in prison. On the other end of the line was



comrade Cyril Ramaphosa and he says: ‘Hi chief’. I keep quiet and then he says: ‘Monday’. I say: ‘What’s happening Monday chief?’ He keeps quiet, then he says: ‘You are going home!’ There was a bit of a smile you could feel in his voice,” says McBride with a huge smile on his face.

Long after Mandela had completed his long walk to freedom for his country, McBride was to yet again hear the click of a prison key and feel the pain from a warder’s boot.

It was the summer of 1998 and in Maputo, the sea was warm and the prawns were hot. The police in Mozambique picked up McBride, then a high-ranking official in foreign affairs, on alleged gun running charges that appeared to be trumped up to us journalists. We scoured the streets of the capital, for weeks, in search of witnesses.

McBride argued that he was on an undercover operation for the National Intelligence Agency trying to uncover gun runners who were flooding neighbouring South Africa with illegal weapons and fuelling crime; a counter that eventually set him free.

Despite this, McBride spent six months in the capital’s notorious, grim, Machava maximum security prison, where he told me violence was meted out.

I covered that story for many months and came within a split ace of interviewing McBride in his cell. We spent hours plying the Portuguese-speaking warders with beer and the story, through an interpreter, that we were friends visiting from South Africa and we just



**IT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT MEETING I HAD IN MY LIFE. IT WAS LIKE A GOD-LIKE ENVIRONMENT.**

wanted to say hello. We told them our friend was a big man in South Africa.

“He is a small man now,” smiled back one of the warders icily.

We convinced the guards and as they moved towards the prison doors, keys in hand, our cover was blown. One of the not too bright colleagues from our TV station strolled into the prison waving his press card.

“Hello Chris!” says he. The none-too-pleased prison guards threw us out.

I had to wait more than 20 years for my interview with McBride.

A phrase I always remembered from those many hot, crazy, days in Maputo was a quote we got from the late presidential spokesperson Ronnie Mamoepa when McBride went behind bars yet again.

“He is a tough guy who can look after himself,” said Mamoepa.

The Zondo Commission and scores of corrupt policemen last month found out how tough. **F**

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# ‘DIFFICULT TO BRING WHOLESALE CHANGE’

Ahead of the May elections in South Africa, the country's Minister of Public Service & Administration, Ayanda Dlodlo, gives her take on simplifying government processes and ensuring public services are available for all on digital platforms.

## What do you have on the cards for this year?

It's a very short year because we are going to elections, but the major plan for me now is finalizing the Public Administration Management Act regulations; so that we can fully implement on that piece of legislation. The second one that is important for me is a fully functional government employee housing scheme. If I can do that by the time we go to elections, I will be very happy. It is not an election thing, it's just that we all do not know where we are going to be after the elections, so I am pushing hard to ensure that even when I do leave, that is what I would have done and completed as a minister in my time.

## What are some of the opportunities that lie within a digitized government?

We have many processes in government that if digitized could be much simpler. The dissemination of information, for instance. If we vigorously work towards fully implementing on our vision of a government portal where citizens can access any information on government that they need on a single portal – that is a digitized government that would have been able to provide people easy access to information. For instance, we launched the Z83 Application Form, the e-recruitment strategy and it's much cheaper if they use the internet to apply for jobs online. There are quite a few things we are looking at as government to ensure services are brought to our people on digital platforms so that they can access them even easier.

## What are some of the developments with the enrolment scheme and how is it affecting employment rates in South Africa?

We have a large youth contingent that is unemployed but, more so, those that have graduated return home to the rural areas with a university qualification but can't access any employment opportunities... You could be the only one in your family who has ever gone to university... What does that say to people around you?... So we are doing away with the two years' experience for certain categories of jobs. But also... we will put in place training programs, mentorship and clear programs to monitor and evaluate the growth of that individual and the job they will be occupying.

## What are some of the developments regarding the public sector wage bill?

We are seeing an increase in the wage bill because of the agreement that is in place. But we are trying to ensure that we do not go beyond what we had agreed upon with labor. But, what we have done in the process is that we have introduced regulation six of the Public Service Act where we are allowing people, between the ages of 55 and 59, from April 1 to the end of September, to exit the system without incurring any penalties. The reason we are doing this is because we want to bring young people into government but, over and above that, we are trying to deal with the runaway wage bill.



## With the upcoming elections, where do you see the public sentiment laying?

I see the African National Congress (ANC) at the very least getting 62%. Because if you go by what your polling says, it changes from week to week and that is dependent on what is topical in that week or on that day.

## How important will these elections be in shaping the country's future?

To me, they will be very important because it is the 25th year of democracy... With all its (the ANC) flaws, with all its inadequacies, we have to change the face of our country. It is difficult to bring wholesale change, in a 25-year period, to a system that has been in existence for more than 400 years. It will take much longer than that. And as society progresses and goal posts change, it will become difficult. But for any government that is going to come, they will never be able to do what we have done in the last 25 years. 🇿🇦

– Interviewed by Karen Mwendera



# THE 4IR STRATEGY TO MOVE FORWARD

**S**OUTH AFRICA HAS created the Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, chairs this commission and I am the Deputy Chairman. The commission consists of 30 members.

It is tasked with developing South Africa's strategy around the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Why this commission and why is the 4IR so important? To answer these questions, we ought to understand first what the 4IR is and what it entails.

As a point of departure, we ought to understand the first, second and third industrial revolutions. The British scientific revolution that gave us Isaac Newton's laws of motion, gravitation and the study of heat, catalysed the first industrial revolution.

The first industrial revolution gave us coal-powered steam engines that drove trains and ushered the era of using machines to produce goods and services. The luddites, who were a group of activists hell-bent on stopping the first industrial revolution, disappeared into the ash heap of history and the technological revolution marched on.

The scientific revolution that facilitated us to leverage magnetic and electrical forces called electromagnetism ushered the second industrial revolution. Electromagnetism gave us electricity and an electric motor, and these, in turn, spurred the development of the assembly line, which vastly improved production and introduced mass production in factories.

The discovery of semiconductors and the invention of a transistor in the United States (US) ushered the electronic age, which gave us computers, mobile phones, and ultimately led to the invention of the internet.

Seventy years after the discovery of a transistor, there is no significant semiconductor company on the African continent. To solve this serious gap in the political economy of the African continent, industries, society and universities on the continent must come together to develop a strategy and the plan of action on how the continent should enter the primary economy of the third industrial revolution.

The 4IR is a confluence of digital technologies of the third industrial revolution, developments in biotechnology through innovations such as molecular motors, as well as the developments in the physical space through breakthroughs in new materials and



robotics technologies.

One of the technologies driving the 4IR is artificial intelligence (AI). Because of AI, machines are gaining intelligence and thus planes are intelligently flying with minimal interference by pilots, the factory floor is increasingly automating, and self-driving cars are reaching maturity. AI is revolutionizing the medical field and making careers such as radiology redundant.


The implications of the 4IR will be extensive. It will reduce the world of work and usher a post-work era, where factories will employ fewer people than ever before. The presidential commission should study this post-work era and the impact thereof on the labor market, equality and tax collection.

This commission will explore the viability of strategies such as the introduction of universal basic income, virtual economic zones and imposing tax on robots in order to prevent the escalation of poverty and inequality.

In the 4IR era, some jobs will disappear, some will change and new types of jobs will be created. It is important that the presidential commission study these changes and design a strategy on how we should move forward. This should include the identification of the required set of skills in order to thrive in the 4IR, and the mechanisms in which the education sector should plan for the development of such skills.

Kai-Fu Lee, the Chairman of the World Economic Forum Council on Artificial Intelligence, wrote in his influential book, *AI Superpowers*, that in the 4IR, data is becoming the new oil. Countries and companies, such as the US, China, Google, Facebook, and Alibaba, which collect more data will become so powerful that they will influence all aspects of our lives.

The company Cambridge Analytica allegedly influenced the US election through data analytics.

This commission should study and recommend how South Africa should position itself with respect to defence, peace, security, industry, trade, society and politics in the light of the 4IR. Failure to capture this 4IR moment will relegate us to the dustbin of history. 

– The writer is a professor and Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Johannesburg in South Africa.

Crops devastated by flooding  
in the Sussudenga region of  
Matarara, Mozambique

# NO MAIZE, NO MONEY, NO FUTURE

The deadliest African cyclone, to date, tore through Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique in March, leaving a trail of death and destruction. The worst is yet to come for survivors.

BY ANCILLAR NOMBWU



**T**HE DEADLIEST cyclone to ever hit Africa, Idai, overnight, ripped through Mozambique and then tore into Zimbabwe and Malawi, leaving a long trail of destruction in its wake.

Trees were uprooted, so were people, in the millions.

Roads were washed away, houses destroyed and bridges torn from their edifices. Worst of all, the raging muddy waters killed at least 847 people, affected about two million and destroyed several hundreds of thousands of crops. The devastation caused by the cyclone is almost unimaginable as, in these three countries, bodies could be seen floating in water where there used to be villages.

“This was unimaginable. I am in the military but I have never seen such. People are desperate for help and have lost everything,” says Brigadier General Joe Muzvidziwa, who is helping survivors in Zimbabwe.

For those who did survive, the worst is yet to come. Many



**IT'S BEEN THE WORST TIME OF MY LIFE. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE LEFT. MY HUSBAND WAS SWEEPED AWAY BY THE FLOODS AND WAS FOUND ABOUT 10KM AWAY..."**

– TSITSI MUNGANA

of them will mourn the deaths of their loved ones on empty pockets and growling stomachs.

The drive to Zimbabwe's hardest hit district, Chimanimani, is long and painful. A mere six days after the furious waters swept away most parts of the villages in the area, the ground is dry but the pain and destruction still palpable.

We struggle to drive into the villages as trees and debris still block the roads and bridges have been decimated.

We continue our journey on foot and meet many with no place to call home. One of them is Tsitsi Mungana.

As we meet, she is trying to climb over a tree blocking the road, to make her way to aid agencies for her first decent meal since Cyclone Idai. She is walking barefoot and is wearing the only dress and *doek* (headwrap) she now owns. She mutters

a few words to herself as tears stream down her cheeks.

"It's been the worst time of my life. I don't know how I am going to move on from this. I don't have anything else left. My husband was swept away by the floods and was found about 10km away... We spent hours looking for my grandson. The rocks which fell off the mountain due to the heavy rains and wind covered his body and it took many people to find him. All our belongings and livestock are also gone," says Mungana as she begins to weep uncontrollably.

She is one of hundreds of families who have lost loved ones, and thousands who are most likely going to starve this year.

According to Wandile Sihlobo, Chief Economist of the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz),

Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi will collectively have to import over a million tons of maize this year to feed its people.

He says Zimbabwe's maize imports could reach 900,000 tons in order to meet the annual needs of roughly two million tons a year.

"Meanwhile, Mozambique will most likely double the typical maize import volume of about 100,000 tons a year," he says.

It's going to be hard to find suppliers of maize because the key suppliers, South Africa and Zambia, are expecting low harvests this year.

"If we assume that South Africa's expected production of 10.6 million tons materializes, then the country could have about 1.1 million tons of maize for export markets. A large share of this will, most



likely, be destined to the BNLS countries (Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and Eswatini), thus leaving a small volume for Zimbabwe and Mozambique,” Sihlobo says.

There is also very little to be expected from Zambia as the International Grains Council forecasts the country’s 2018/19 maize harvest at 2.4 million tons, down by 33% year-on-year. This will be enough only for domestic consumption.

Cyclone Idai also affected trade.

In its wake, according to the UN Economic Commission for Africa Executive Secretary, Vera Songwe, the cyclone cost Africa infrastructure worth more than a billion dollars.

Port of Beira, the main corridor for Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Eastern DRC, closed its doors.

“We closed the port two days before

the cyclone hit to allow us time to prepare for it by reorganizing and removing all potential hazards. There was a lot of damage to the port. It took another two days to clean up and, at least, make the port accessible. The damage was several millions of dollars. We are currently in talks with insurance to know how much exactly. It will take time and money to fix everything up. We are currently improvising just to make sure business goes on,” says Jan de Vries, Managing Director of Port of Beira.

Before this disaster, Beira port controlled 60% of the country’s imports and 40% of its exports.

“We handle about 300,000 containers per year and about three million tons of general cargo per year and a lot of fuel but we had to put services on hold... On the first day, it was tough to go around. Nearly all the roads were blocked, to some extent, with trees, electricity cables and many things. There was a lot of destruction. A lot of roofs damaged, buildings completely collapsed. This place looked like a warzone,” de Vries says.

He says at the port, roofs, doors and warehouses were destroyed but they are lucky because it is currently low season.

“Electricity supply had been cut off but



**THERE WAS A LOT OF DAMAGE TO THE PORT. IT TOOK ANOTHER TWO DAYS TO CLEAN UP AND, AT LEAST, MAKE THE PORT ACCESSIBLE. THE DAMAGE WAS SEVERAL MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.**

– JAN DE VRIES



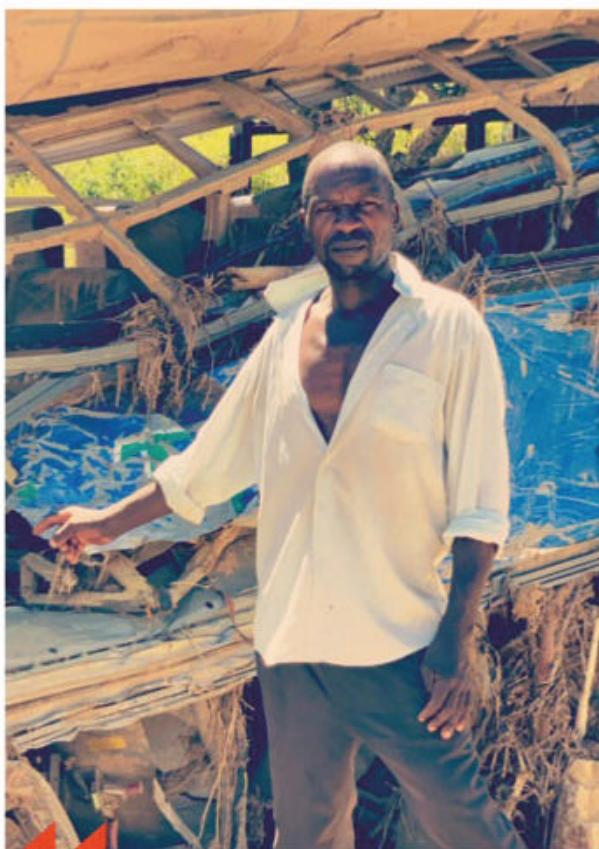
People walk in muddy waters on the flooded streets of Buzi, central Mozambique



we are very impressed by the government because power is being restored. Technicians from all over the country are working hard. Major industries have been reconnected and a few residential areas are now being connected. Rail and road infrastructure is also being fixed. Although we have to struggle a bit, we have opened the port and business continues," he says.

The president of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) Sifelani Jabangwe says Beira is one of the major ports for the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region and its closure, no matter how short-lived, affected trade.

"Zimbabwe imports fuel and wheat through the Port of Beira. The closure caused a strain on the supply of these two commodities. We had trucks that were



**RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME,  
WAS A BUS ROLLING  
DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.**

– CHERUKAI MUKAMBA



Local Christian missionaries handed out aid to villagers

stuck in Beira for a number of days. The bigger impact is also on businesses located on the eastern sides of the country, like timber estates, fruit and tea producers, and even the diamond company, in that area, is now revising its targeted output because of the flooding," Jabangwe says.

Henry Nemaire, the Chairman of the CZI Trade Development and Investments Promotion Committee based in Mutare, says most businesses have been severely affected and are looking for funding to rebuild.

"Some businesses are in areas that can't be accessed with 30-ton trucks which they used to move their goods like timber... Power lines are cut off and there are issues around water supply systems which have been damaged. Smaller businesses were the most affected. Most of them are now trying to apply for loans to get new trucks and rebuild so they can get back on track," Nemaire says.

Jabangwe agrees with Nemaire. He says it will be a long and harsh road to recovery.

"We are still waiting for reports from various companies affected by the cyclone which should start coming in soon so we can understand the actual loss that has occurred... there are already teams working with government to import the required maize to feed the country. We need additional support to make sure that people are catered for. We would need to feed people in that area for at least 12 months, which means a full-fledged program has to be put in place," he says.

Cherukai Mukamba, a local smallholder

farmer, says he relied on farming to make money. "I would sell maize and chicken, and sometimes cows, to make money to be able to take care of my children. A week before the cyclone, I had hired people who were going to help me with harvesting when the time came," he says.


Like many in this area, Mukamba spent the night fearing for his life and that of his family.

"I was asleep and was woken up by very loud winds that I have never heard before. I went outside to look and right in front of me, was a bus rolling down the mountain. I could hear people scream and it crushed them before my eyes. I tried to go help but it pouring and I could see rocks fall off the mountain right into the fields and I had to go back in the house and say a prayer."

The next day, Mukamba says he woke up to the biggest horror.

"Everything was destroyed; all my crops, livestock and part of my house. I went to check on the bus but didn't find anyone inside. I heard that there had been three people in the bus and their bodies were found over 100km away. I couldn't believe it. It is the worst thing to ever happen to us," he says.

Mukamba's story is one of thousands of stories in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique.

These countries have weathered many storms over the years like Cyclone Leon-Eline and poverty, but this massive natural disaster will go down in history books as the worst and southern Africa will bear its scars for generations to come. 

# HEALTHY NATIONS ARE WEALTHY NATIONS

**W**e live in a world where even a poverty-stricken Ghanaian child can dream of solving Africa's health problems. I believe that everything begins with a vision for a better future and a passion for one's continent and people, with perseverance, no obstacle cannot be overcome. Perseverance conquers all difficulties.

While an individual cannot provide a solution to all of Africa's unmet health needs, any effort goes a long way. I was a Ghanaian child that dreamt of an Africa in which all citizens would have access to adequate and affordable healthcare.

Africa is the second most populous continent, and home to 16% of the world's population. The continent receives just a mere 1% of global expenditure on healthcare, a fact which is not only morally reprehensible, but economically unsustainable for families and their entire countries, as evidenced by the high medical costs, often inaccurate diagnoses, medication errors, and inadequate or unsafe clinical facilities for those who cannot afford better.

**How does Africa, with a public healthcare system that is largely under-resourced and underfunded, build healthier nations? I have a few ideas:**

1. Africa's healthcare gap is worse in low and middle-income countries where 10-15% of hospitalized patients can expect to acquire an infection during their stay, as compared to 5-7% in high-income countries. This is despite hospital-acquired infections being easily avoided through better hygiene, improved infection control practices and appropriate use of antimicrobials. Because of statistics such as these, I am committed to doing my part to bring quality healthcare to people in developing nations through my non-profit, R.E.STO.R.E Worldwide Inc.

Through the R.E.STO.R.E foundation, which is primarily focussed on reconstructive surgery, not only do I donate my surgical

skills, but also my vast knowledge in regard to sustainable healthcare and capacity building within the industry.

Individual efforts to better a community ultimately culminate into a nation built by individuals and this is the Africa we want to see. This is not as difficult as we think to implement in practical ways, for example; if one's passion point is education, one can gather a few of the young people in the area and conduct lessons.

2. I am privileged, not only to be able to provide but also have access to quality healthcare. However, I realize that this is not universal. As I write this, my thoughts are with the people of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi who are affected by Cyclone Idai.

What the survivors of this tragedy have in common is their immediate need for resources, stability, comfort, and medical help, among many other things. As well all know, healthcare does not exist in a vacuum. Efforts also have to go towards improving education, skills, and resources, as well as creating strategic partnerships among key stakeholders.

Public-private partnerships exist in all forms to lend a hand to all kinds of causes. Neighborhoods and local governments could team up for a cleaning exercise, professional associations and governing bodies can also team up to help a cause of their own, either as a short or long-term endeavour.

An estimated 60% of healthcare financing in Africa comes from private sources which is a testament to the fact that public-private partnerships are a sustainable and feasible way to grow any sector.

3. Africa is confronted by a heavy burden of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV – not to mention the disease of “inadequate surgical providers”. Studies show a gross lack of knowledge about the basics of how to diagnose and manage common diseases

Africa is definitely ready for relevant, reliable healthcare dialogue. The top 30 innovators showcased at the recently concluded WHO Africa Health Forum in Cape Verde has given me and all other stakeholders immense hope.



Dr Micheal K Obeng – Director and Owner of MiKO Plastic Surgery and MiKO Surgery Center in Beverly Hills; Founder and CEO of RESTORE Worldwide, Inc. & Global Health Solution

These 30 brilliant minds from across Africa and beyond have developed simple solutions to the complex and unmet health needs on the continent and these are the success stories that reinforce my belief in the future of a healthy Africa.

4. As healthcare stakeholders, it's our responsibility to develop new medicines to treat disease, but these medicines are useless if they can't get to the patients who need them the most. We need to commit ourselves to work together with all other healthcare players and to move away from simply donating aid, to building sustainable infrastructure and capacity.

To answer my opening question on how a public healthcare system that is largely so under-resourced and underfunded can build healthier nations; I say this is one way that a little boy from Ghana or any part of the poverty-stricken parts of the developing world can solve health problems in his or her community and ultimately build healthier nations across the globe. This can be done through identifying their passion point, doing all they can in their power, seeking out other like-minded stakeholders to partner with and working to create better paths for the generations to come.

For more information, please contact:  
[www.restoreworldwide.org](http://www.restoreworldwide.org)

restore  
THE FOUNDATION FOR RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY



# ‘A TWEET CAN TANK AN ECONOMY’



Many perspectives have been shared on influencer marketing, but very few from the brands themselves. What are its business imperatives and ROI?

BY MASHOKANE MAHLO



**I**N THE HEART OF SANDTON, Africa’s richest square mile, is Brittany Preece, a social media manager at Investec Bank.

As part of the Private Banking marketing team, Preece and her team have managed to successfully implement disruptive digital strategies to meet the growth objectives of the bank.

Traditionally, the role of marketing has been to support business objectives. Yet when companies experience financial difficulty, more often than not, marketing is seen to be the first in line on the chopping block. As a way of adapting to this reality, most marketing managers have had to look at cost-effective, yet creative, ways of achieving business impact.

Social and digital media have given room for new ways businesses can engage and sell to their customers.

Increasingly gaining traction in South Africa is influencer marketing, an entirely

new branch of the sales and marketing funnel which has seen brands leverage popular personalities on social media to promote their products and services online. Globally, the influencer marketing industry is forecast to be worth \$5 billion to \$10 billion by 2020, according to a study by Mediakix.

For Investec, attracting and diversifying into new markets has informed their decision to leverage influencers as part of their marketing strategy.

“Since 2015, we as Investec, have predominantly used influencer marketing to reach the young professional audience,” Preece says.

“We (Investec Private Bank) have recently evolved our qualifying criteria. We’re no longer just the preferred banking partner for accountants, engineers, lawyers, doctors and actuaries. We’re positioned to be the bank of choice for those who are under the age of 30,

consistently earning more than R600,000 (\$42,582) a year, with a university degree and working in their area of expertise.”

Seated in front of a glass wall which looks out to a view of a bustling and upbeat office environment, she elaborates that to effectively reach the young professionals’ target market, it is important to identify individuals that can speak to that audience.

“What influencer marketing gives you, that a lot of the other marketing channels can’t, is great reach and engagement with your target audience. Using [influencers] brings a lot of authenticity to the brand, where Investec Private Banking was seen as unattainable to a lot of young professionals,” Preece says.

In the digital universe, content is king. Authenticity is paramount. A study conducted by the Mobile Marketing Association reported that most consumers have banner blindness and suffer from advertising fatigue. They cannot recall the

last digital banner ad that they saw.

Ad-blocking continues to be a growing phenomenon, further demonstrating the shift in consumer behavior. Consumers simply don't want to be marketed to. To this effect, influencers assist brands to reach their customers through content that is more relevant to those consumers.

According to *Business Insider's* 2018 Influencer Marketing Report: *Research, Strategy & Platforms for Leveraging Social Media Influencers*, the average social media engagement rate from influencer marketing averages 5.7% per post.

This is a feat compared to content generated by brands which fluctuates around 2% – 3% per post.

With this in mind, it's even more essential for brands to involve influencers upfront to co-create an envisioned campaign.

"You want your influencer to buy into what you stand for as a brand. It shouldn't be a hard sell – consumers see through that. If not done properly, it can look very fake and [we] never want to make it feel like an ad," Preece says.

Brands and agencies measure awareness and engagement by analyzing a few parameters, including, inter alia, number of likes, comments, shares and followers. Proponents of this theory believe an increase in these parameters lead to brand success.

Detractors of the theory believe awareness and engagement alone are not sufficient indicators of brand success. "Likes and follows are unimpressive without an increase in the bottom line," says Sinesipho Maninjwa, a financial analyst and commentator.

But technology has its limitations. Dianne Joseph, the Commercial Director of Digital at Nielsen, a leading global information, data and measurement company, elaborates that there are real challenges in measuring sales attribution as a result of influencer marketing.

"The influencer models are difficult to measure because most influencers use their own personal pages to post, and these organic posts don't offer us



## THINGS CAN GO WRONG WITH INFLUENCER MARKETING. YOU ARE PUTTING FAITH AND TRUST INTO A HUMAN BEING WHO IS IMPERFECT.

the opportunity to implement a tag (for tracking purposes) and, therefore, we aren't able to track the outcomes," Joseph says.

The ability to measure what is happening on and off digital platforms, or across social media platforms, is a challenge that most digital marketers face. Different platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have their own unique methods of tracking and storing data. The link between these platforms is, therefore, a lot more tenuous.

But in support of influencer marketing, a number of global studies have come out and shown that influencer marketing does yield a positive return on investment (ROI).

Pierre Cassuto, of social media influencer platform Humanz, who recently set up shop in South Africa from Tel Aviv in Israel, believes that the use of influencers can lead to increased sales. "In the US market, there is about a four times ROI on money spent in the influencer marketing space for retailers, cosmetics and FMCG brands," he adds.

Cassuto agrees that engagement on its own doesn't yield conversion. For influencer marketing to yield conversion, the message being broadcast by influencers has to be well thought out and carefully constructed to achieve that objective.

"There has to be a reason for someone to do something now as opposed to anytime. That can be around creating urgency around something specific, it

can be around creating a limited time availability offer."

Essentially, brands can become creative and purposeful in how they design their entire campaign to track conversion from the ground up. "The way we suggest measuring conversion is by making sure that the influencers have a way that [brands] can track the relationship between the influencers post and the actual conversion," Cassuto says.


The first looks at providing the influencer a coupon code that they can distribute and share. In doing so, the specific brands will know that the people who redeemed the coupon code came from the influencers. The second options measures sell over time related to increase in traffic due to influencer marketing towards a landing page that the brand is driving to. With this, Cassuto states that brands can do A/B testing to see the impact on days influencers are posting and days when they're not.

With all the advantages of influencer marketing, should brands solely invest in this sales channel?

Preece firmly holds the view that influencer marketing on its own isn't the be all and end all. "I do believe that it should be a mix. I believe that an integrated marketing plan that uses out-of-home, billboards, TV and digital is where you see the most results."

"Things can go wrong with influencer marketing. You are putting faith and trust into a human being who is imperfect. We have a saying: A tweet can tank an economy," Preece says.

With consumers becoming increasingly selective about what they consume, influencer marketing continues to grow as an attractive sales channel. It is imperative that brands place the necessary care and due diligence before partnering with any influencer.

The perfect fit between an influencer and the brand will determine the overall ROI. After all, effective influencer marketing is the online equivalent of the highly valuable word-of-mouth advertising that marketers have always coveted. 



Maseko Modern,  
a spaza in Ermelo  
in Mpumalanga,



# THEY STILL TAKE CREDIT

South Africa's township grocers have had to increasingly adapt to changing consumer behavior and the demands of a digital economy. What they are still cashing in on is their originality.

BY MOTLABANA MONNAKGOTLA

Kabelo Mpofu runs a 40-year-old spaza in Soweto



**T**OWNSHIP TUCKSHOP – two words that are more than just a nice alliteration.

They are the life and soul of South Africa’s informal economy.

In the 1970s, tuckshops were commonly known in the country’s townships as ‘spazas’, slang for “imitation” of a real shop, taken from the Zulu verb “isiphazamisa”. Soon, these shops started growing in number and so did the small entrepreneurs

running them. In the vibrant and colorful township of Soweto, are thriving examples of small retail businesses that retain old traditions, but are having to adapt to new digital and marketing trends to survive.

FORBES AFRICA speaks to 38-year-old Kabelo Mpofu from Meadowlands, Soweto, about 25kms from Johannesburg’s Central Business District. He is now running his mother’s spaza, Kate’s Tuckshop, named after her.

Almost four decades old, the spaza started by selling only vegetables. As

demand for other products like bread and milk grew, so did the enterprise.

“My mother, in the 1990s, was well-established because [her shop] was the only spaza in the area, covering a radius of about 5kms; everyone used to buy here, that’s why you can see the double-storey house,” he chuckles, referring to the family home constructed with the fortune they made off the shop.

“Daily, my mother would scoop around R4,000 (\$286), and about R7,000 (\$500) on weekends, all in cash. Weekly, she would bank the money,” he says.



**THE INTRODUCTION OF BIG RETAIL STORES AROUND 2010, IN THE TOWNSHIP, AFFECTED MY BUSINESS A LITTLE BECAUSE OF THE USE OF DEBIT CARDS, BUT MY LOYAL CUSTOMERS CONTINUED SUPPORTING ME...**

– SIPHO MABUZA

Mpofu took over the spaza 10 years ago and introduced services like DSTv (a sub-Saharan African direct broadcast satellite service) payments, also selling electricity and soccer match tickets.

Back then, he made less of a turnover annually compared to his mother as there were more spaza shops mushrooming in the area and commercial retail stores entering the townships.

During this period, he remembers how things started to go downhill for him.

It had a serious effect on business and as Mpofu says, they were taking food

from his table. It was difficult competing with the well-funded marketing strategies of the bigger players.

“These commercial retail stores are [causing] more damage than foreign nationals are. Now, I have lost a majority of what my mother used to make. It’s not enough but we are living because of her loyal customers; the customers that grew up buying here daily,” he says.

“I hear they are going to open a commercial store in front of our spaza. I just have to look at the bright side because they don’t sell loose items like



A local customer at Outline Tuckshop

cigarettes. Also their prices are very high; they are just going to take my swiping customers [card-holding customers], but the cash customers will still be coming to me. Another thing is they start late, I open at 5.30AM. They close around 7PM, I close at 9PM. I'll still have that little to capitalize on."

About a three-hour drive east of Soweto is the township of Ermelo in Mpumalanga. We speak to Avush Abax, who migrated here from Ethiopia. He opened his spaza in 2016 and employs three people.

He disagrees with local disdain about foreign nationals taking business away from South Africans. "Business is business," he states matter-of-factly.

About 5kms from Meadowlands is Dobsonville where we meet with Siphon Mabuza, the owner of Outline Tuckshop.

From South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province, Mabuza moved to

Johannesburg to work but, unfortunately, was retrenched in 2005 and opened a spaza shop in 2009. The spaza started so small, inside a container, that he would use a backpack to store products, until it developed into a fully-fledged brick and mortar garage tuckshop.

Mabuza had to dip into his earnings to buy the corrugated iron sheets to build the container. It cost him R10,000 (\$717) overall to start the business.

"I worked on my own for four years and only then [did] I employ two people because the workload was expanding. Soon, the container was getting smaller and I built a garage in the yard so I could work in bigger spaces. About three years later, I employed one more because we couldn't handle the pressure," he says.

In the first year of his business, the turnover was R80,000 (\$5,738), all made in cash from the spaza shop. Every Monday,

he would deposit at the bank varying amounts he had made during the week.

"The introduction of big retail stores around 2010 in the township affected my business a little because of the use of debit cards, but my loyal customers continued supporting me, so it wasn't really a hard hit financially.

"I started feeling the pinch when foreign nationals, around 2015, started opening their tuckshops in the township."

During that period, his turnover varied from R50,000 (\$3,586) to R80,000 (\$5,738). However, from 2017 to 2018, it rose to around R100,000 (7,173).

"Tax-free," he adds.

#### FORMALIZATION AND FINTECH

Over the years, the retail face of the townships have changed, and the impact on the spazas has been more than what is visible.

Standard Bank's Chief Economist Goolam Ballim, says: "The formalization of retail markets has displaced spaza shops, however, for staple, small-market consumption, especially for small item goods, spaza shops continue to play a very substantial role because they are very accessible within smaller pockets of the township.

"But it is true the scale [at which] the more substantial chain stores have been able to deliver consumer goods at lower prices has impacted spaza shops. But spaza shops cater for high-frequency consumer items in small forms, like bread and milk and even sweets..." Ballim says.

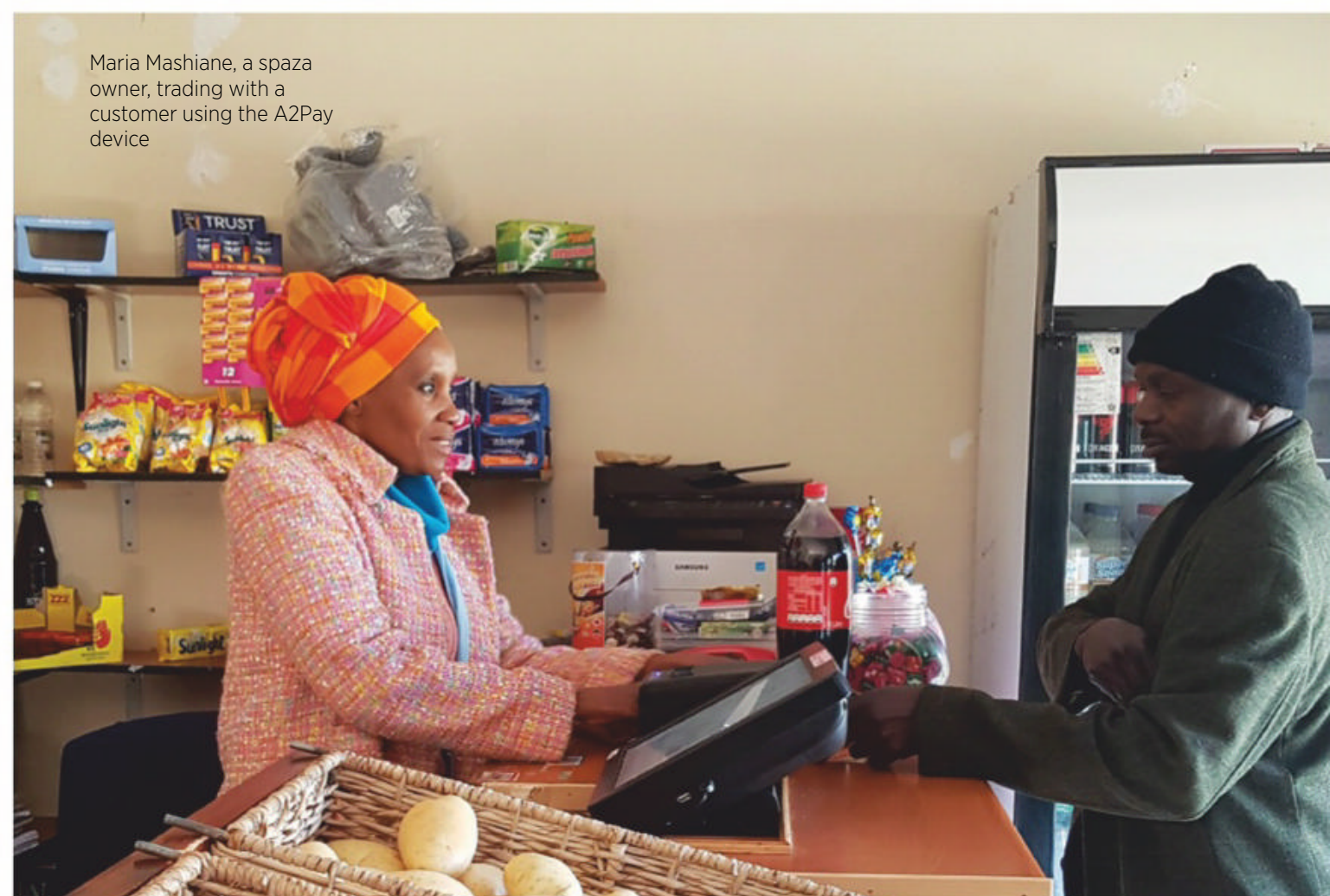
He adds the township economy is indeed significant with numerous studies showing that the money circulated is sizeable and the cash flow and liquidity have also helped lock in money in the townships.

Over the last two decades, more township residents have migrated to the city or the central business district (CBD), preferring to buy their groceries and miscellaneous items from their locations of work. But with more malls opening in townships, the cash flow has stayed in them.

A2Pay, a South African financial technology company that provides advanced vending solutions to small and medium-sized retailers, has partnered with The Jobs Fund (JF), a government enterprise that creates jobs by supporting initiatives that generate employment in innovative ways.



A foreign national receiving stocks of bread at his spaza



Maria Mashiane, a spaza owner, trading with a customer using the A2Pay device



A2Pay has identified what some spaza merchants are struggling with in order to create a sustainable business, namely, access to finance, access to technology, information and regulations around informal trading, among other challenges.

In addition, A2Pay has built a point of sale vending technology device (a till) that allows the merchant to operate and track all activities such as electricity and airtime.

“We asked the question how big supermarkets make their money, and they make their money using a till, so we chose this technology because it roots the discipline of trading in the store. It is not an app, not a tablet; it’s not something that is movable. It’s still in the store and it locates the discipline,” says Tina Mason, the Chief Operating Officer of A2Pay.

“We talk to people with a range of education and in different age groups in their shops, engaging face-to-face. We try and use as many methodologies as possible like training on the machine, and we use paper.

We also try getting people collectively in a community, we then use the numbers to change the behavior.”

The concept is to get merchants to use the device and understand their numbers so they are included in the retail market and are seen to be generating incomes and creating jobs.

“The Jobs Fund works with us on that. So, we provide equipment and training, at no charge, on condition that they change their behavior, in other words, using the device correctly.

“You attend the training, you employ South African youth and pay a licence fee of R250 (\$18) a month and establish that this is about commercial purposes,” Mason says.

A2Pay has recruited and trained 4,190 informal retailers across the country and created 4,209 new permanent jobs.

Isaac Matsego, an economist at Nedbank, believes fintech will boost the township economy.

“Fintech will facilitate activity in the township because it will make access to

financial services cheap, like cell phone banking is far cheaper than your traditional bank account banking, so fintech would facilitate access for the low income market to financial services; this is based on the flow of money in the township economy.

“I believe that it can boost businesses due to offering efficiency. Imagine carrying cash, the risk is very high, that money could be lost one way or another and that would be a loss for the business. So if transactions and payments are technology-based, it reduces risks,” he says.

Kate’s Tuckshop is one of the few spazas that offer cashless payment in the township while other shops generate unaccounted cash, raking in billions that are difficult to track in South Africa’s undigitized market.

Zande Africa, a fintech company founded by Siya Ntutela and Mdu Thabethe in 2017, to help spaza shops access financial loans, provides them with cost-effective distribution platforms.

The duo say they assist owners with

Local customers outside Kate’s Tuckshop



Siya Ntutela  
(left) and Mdu  
Thabethe



**WE ARE TRYING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM FROM THE SOURCE ... SO WE'RE TRYING TO CUT THE MIDDLEMAN AND SAY 'WHY DON'T YOU PRODUCE AND LET IT REACH THE CUSTOMERS DIRECTLY'.**

– SIYA NTUTELA

credit where conventional banks and wholesalers would otherwise reject them.

He elaborates: “Imagine yourself being a spaza and you don’t have a credit line with any of your suppliers, you struggle with transportation with getting your products from wherever to your store; you’re buying at large prices from the wholesaler and you’re not buying directly from the manufacturers; these are some of the reasons why a spaza would come to Zanda Africa, because we provide the delivery component, which means that we save you costs on delivery.

“Secondly, we provide you with access credit to stock, and thirdly, we negotiate directly with manufacturers so that the pricing is driven down and we share those discounts with our customers.

“So we don’t have the thrills and frills, all we’re giving you is exactly what your business needs.”

Zande Africa currently operate two warehouses in Ermelo and Nelspruit, maintaining a strong footprint in the Mpumalanga region where it was piloted. They are in the process of testing the model throughout the rest of South Africa.

“Basically, our long-term vision is to build an e-commerce capability for the township, using the informal market to actually drive them,” he says.

Zande currently employs 72 people.

“We are more supply chain facing rather than trying to put a laptop or tablet inside



Zande delivering bread to a local tuckshop in Ermelo

the spaza and hoping for miracles. We are trying to solve the problem from the source and the source exists from the manufacturing process, where it goes to the wholesaler and ends up at retailing and inflates the price.

“So we’re trying to cut the middleman and say ‘why don’t you produce and let it reach the customers directly’”

This system cuts out the middleman, enabling the retailer to purchase directly from the manufacturer at a reduced price.

Doctor Maseko, the owner of Maseko Modern, a spaza that uses Zande Africa services, started his business in 2010 and has been operating successfully with a turnover

of around R60,000 (\$4,298).

“I have been working with Zande Africa for a year now. They inform me with price changes on time. Even with unsold bread, they will take the old and leave fresher bread when delivering,” he says.

In an increasingly digital and retail dominated world that offers consumers more options, these small entrepreneurs are left with no option but to change their business model, while still retaining their ethos and originality.

For these corner grocery shops are a part of urban culture that the informal economy cannot afford to ignore. **F**



# PACKING LIGHT IN SCHOOL BAGS

Former South African rugby star John Mametsa provides alternative energy solutions for the state. With his wife Tumi, he says their future in the business is bright.

BY SIBUSISO MJKELISO

**I**N HIS PRIME, FORMER BLUE Bulls winger John Mametsa had rugby fans screaming in delight at his try-scoring exploits at Loftus Versfeld Stadium. Between 2001 to when he retired in 2010, he had brought smiles on people's faces.

Hidden beneath the rugby bravura on display on a weekly basis were Mametsa's entrepreneurial exploits, which led him to co-found Soltech, a solar technology

company he started with his wife Tumi.

Soltech has bridged the gap between solar technology and user-friendly consumer products by creating school backpacks, outdoor umbrellas and lifestyle bags custom-fitted with solar power.

The smiles are back but Mametsa has brought them in a different form.

Soltech's main aim is to help companies achieve their corporate social investment targets and make a real difference in the

lives of school children who might not have electricity at home, or whose access to electricity is limited.

"Generally, I love giving back. Just to see the kids smile brings joy to me," Mametsa says.

"It is the best space I could have asked for. Other than when I was involved in rugby, this is the best thing I could have ever been a part of.

"Putting smiles on kids' faces is the

best thing. Because we are dealing with children, we have aligned ourselves with people that want to make a difference.

“We don’t stop at just giving them the bags where they can charge phones and study at night but we also educate them about the social ills that come with roaming on the internet and social media.”

During this period of Eskom blackouts, uncertainty about South Africa’s energy and a widening chasm between the haves and have-nots, he says Soltech’s products make a difference in the lives of ordinary citizens.

In a sense, they’ve taken the might of solar technology and put it right in people’s hands. The school bags come with a solar-powered battery, which has a night lamp and cellular phone battery charger installed.

“With everything that’s going on at Eskom now, they (citizens) are using millions of liters of diesel per month, just to keep the lights on,” Mametsa says.

“Hence, it’s coming back to hit our pockets and they (Eskom – South Africa’s national energy provider) are raising the electricity prices again. Such things we have to read about so that, as we grow, we educate the people that we are selling the bags to.

“At some point, you need to convert [to reusable energy sources], you need to start using solar energy. We are still fortunate that there’s an Eskom in the first place. What about those countries that don’t even have electricity at all?

“Yes, we have power cuts but the people

that really need the bags are people in the rural areas.”

Admittedly, Mametsa was the pretty face and Tumi conceptualized the idea when they started. But their partnership was perfect in more ways than one. Tumi, just like her husband, had a massive entrepreneurial drive.

While Mametsa was playing rugby, he would dabble in taxi and printing businesses – an uncommon trait among sportsmen and sportswomen who are at the peak of their powers. Tumi was no different. As a student, she would sell hair and cosmetics products, something that sharpened her business senses.

And despite a successful 11-year career in corporate as an accountant and financial manager for companies such as Alexander Forbes and the Film and Publication Board, Tumi took a bet on herself and dedicated her time fully to building Soltech.

The result was that, in just the company’s second year, they have signed a memorandum of understanding with Finland solar technology company Tespack. Tespack founders Caritta Seppä and Yesika Robles were last year named in Forbes’s 30 Under 30 Europe.

The joint venture will see Soltech come out, among other things, with a solar-powered, fast-charging power bank, which should totally disrupt the smartphone accessories market.

“There’s going to be skills and knowledge transfer,” Tumi says.

“The DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) is also backing us on the partnership because we need them and their funding to assist us. We will be hiring South Africans to work the machinery, which was something that was very attractive to the DTI.

“The Tespack partnership confirmed my belief that our company could grow from a small tree to a forest someday. Once we manufacture in-house we can streamline the process. And there are so many other ideas for products I have, such as ladies’ handbags and stuff.”

Here at home, Soltech has partnered

Tumi Mametsa



**WE ARE STILL FORTUNATE THAT THERE’S AN ESKOM IN THE FIRST PLACE. WHAT ABOUT THOSE COUNTRIES THAT DON’T EVEN HAVE ELECTRICITY AT ALL?**

– JOHN MAMETSA

in CSI projects with Liberty and Exxaro and they hope to grow their client base in the next couple of years. It is a huge endorsement of their products and should see them salve some of the hurt from the country’s electricity crisis, especially to those who need it the most. **F**



# DEMYSTIFYING INNOVATION – UNPACKING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS



BY: KELE BOAKGOMO, ACCENTURE INNOVATION ARCHITECTURE DIRECTOR  
& YUSOF SEEDAT, ACCENTURE RESEARCH DIRECTOR

The ability to innovate and to consistently unlock value within business, now and in the future, is one of the most important criteria for success in the digital era. Research from Accenture indicates a growing challenge ahead for South Africa – with only 3% of South African organisations successfully unlocking trapped value. Innovation champions with the capability and savvy are showing the way.

## COMPANIES ARE ACCUMULATING TRAPPED VALUE

Exponential technology innovations and the declining cost of advanced technologies are creating abundant value opportunities for companies to raise efficiency and develop new kinds of products, services and business models. The winners are innovating—using digital technologies to unlock value in their current businesses, seize new market opportunities and scale up innovation. These are the disruptors.

In South Africa, Accenture’s research shows that most companies are on the wrong side of disruption. They are struggling to convert the opportunities presented by advanced technologies into value.

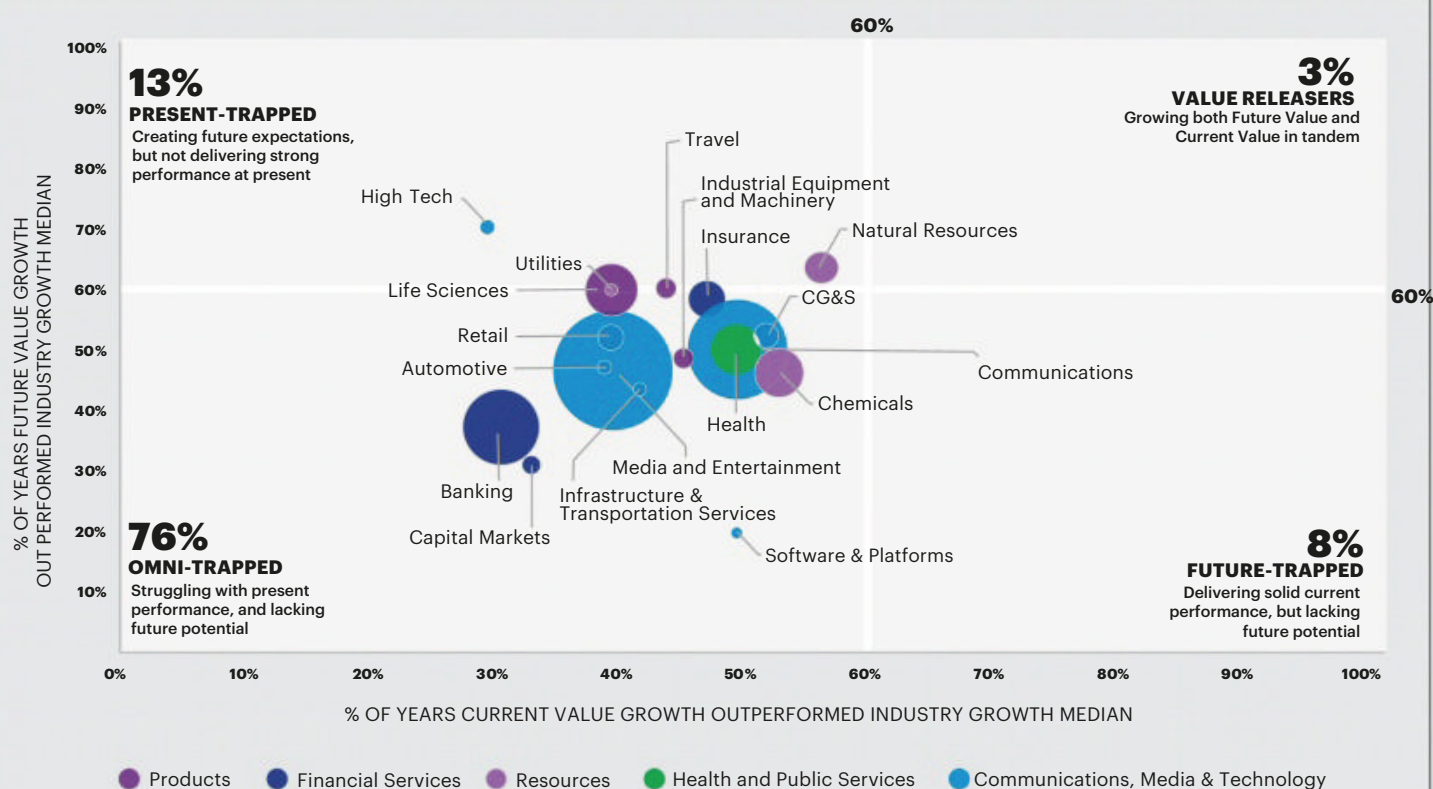
We measured trapped value in two ways: by how consistently companies release value in their current business, and how much more value they are expected to release in future. Our data shows that the largest share of organisations in South Africa—76 percent—are “omni-trapped”, meaning that

they do not achieve both.

At the other end of the scale, only 3 % of South African businesses (compared to a global average of 14 %) are value releasers—companies able to take full advantage of opportunities to release trapped value. Clearly, South African businesses need to rethink their response to disruption.

**76% OF SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANIES ARE “OMNI-TRAPPED” -THEY ARE STRUGGLING TO UNLOCK TRAPPED VALUE IN THEIR CURRENT BUSINESSES AND TO CREATE FUTURE VALUE**

**Figure 1:**



**3 OUT OF 4 SOUTH AFRICAN EXECUTIVES EXPECT THEIR INDUSTRY TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY DISRUPTED IN THE NEXT 3 YEARS**

Source: Accenture Research analysis based on CAPITAL IQ data

## WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW?

### ABUNDANCE FOR ALL

This is a critical period for South Africa and for businesses across Africa. Africa is a continent alive with potential and real innovation.

Take ride-hailing company Lyft, for example, which listed at a market cap of \$26 billion. The founders of Lyft first spent five years developing Zimride, a successful rideshare programme in the United States that was inspired by observing a grassroots transport system developed by Zimbabweans who didn't have access to public transport.

An innovation architecture can help realise this potential, unlocking Africa's abundance for all by addressing endemic challenges, such as access to healthcare, education and basic services, and helping businesses raise efficiency, develop new kinds of products, services and business models to access new markets and growth opportunities.

### DISRUPTION IS A REALITY

Business leaders in South Africa know that

technology-driven innovation and innovators are going to disrupt the status quo and shape a new reality for their industries, but many feel unprepared for the level of potential disruption they face.

Results from interviews with 100 C-suite South African executives from across 11 industries indicate:

- 75 percent expect their industry to be significantly disrupted in the next three years.
- 46 percent feel unsure or dissatisfied that their company's innovation efforts will position them well to overcome future disruption.
- Almost half concede that their companies are not prepared for disruption.

To prepare for disruption, our research indicates that South African businesses need to make innovation part of their DNA.

### INNOVATION MATTERS: UNLOCKING TRAPPED VALUE AND MANAGING DISRUPTION

Accenture's analysis of high-growth companies—those that have outgrown their peers

in the last five years and are expected to outgrow their peers in the next five—show that these companies successfully unlock trapped value and manage disruption by doing two critical things:

- They 'Innovate by Design', building the capacity to innovate by putting in place an innovation strategy, culture and architecture.
- They embed innovation in their everyday business by applying seven practices that successful innovators share: they are hyper relevant, network-powered, technology-propelled, asset-smart, inclusive, talent rich and data-driven.

### HOW DO SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS MEASURE UP?

Using a bottom up approach, we identified 81 factors from these insights and used them as a basis to develop the Accenture Innovation Maturity Index.

This index measures the maturity of a company's innovation capability—the innovation structures and practices it has in place.

## INNOVATE BY DESIGN

Build the formal mechanisms for reliable innovation.

- Define an **innovation strategy**. Successful innovators aim for disruptive advances rather than incremental improvements; they balance innovation between old and new, and make sure it is quantifiable.
- Instil a **culture of innovation** in which creativity is encouraged and rewarded, and ideation is applauded.
- Create an **innovation architecture** that specifies clear processes for moving innovation from ideation through R&D to mass-market commercialisation. (see figure 2.)

## EMBED INNOVATION PRACTICES

- **Data-driven**. Generating, sharing and deploying data to deliver new product and service innovations safely and securely.
- **Hyper-relevant**. Knowing how to be—and stay—relevant by sensing and addressing customers' changing needs.
- **Talent Rich**. Creating new, modern forms of workforces (flexible, augmented and adaptive) to gain a competitive advantage in fast-changing markets.
- **Asset smart**. Adopting intelligent asset and operations management to run businesses as efficiently as possible, and to free up the capacity for other innovative efforts.
- **Inclusive**. Adopting an inclusive approach to innovation and governance that incorporates a broader range of stakeholders.
- **Network-powered**. Harnessing the power of a carefully managed ecosystem of partners to bring the best innovations to your customers.
- **Technology-propelled**. Mastering leading edge technologies that enable business innovation.

Figure 2:



### ACCENTURE RESEARCH

identifies and anticipates game-changing business, market and technology trends through provocative thought leadership.

**300+**  
Research experts  
in 20 countries



### ACCENTURE VENTURES

partners with and invests in growth-stage companies that create innovative enterprise technologies, using an open innovation approach.

**5,000+**  
Startups on our radar



### ACCENTURE LABS

incubate and prototype new concepts through applied R&D projects that are expected to have a significant near-term impact on clients' businesses.

**7**  
Lab locations



### ACCENTURE STUDIOS

build innovative solutions with speed and agility.

**30+**  
Digital and Liquid  
Studio locations



### ACCENTURE INNOVATION CENTERS

bring our solutions to scale and demonstrate their impact for clients.

**100+**  
Innovation Centers  
Located worldwide across  
industries & technologies



### ACCENTURE DELIVERY CENTERS

industrialize the delivery of our innovations through our unparalleled network of more than 50 delivery centers around the world.

**50+**  
Delivery Centers  
around the world

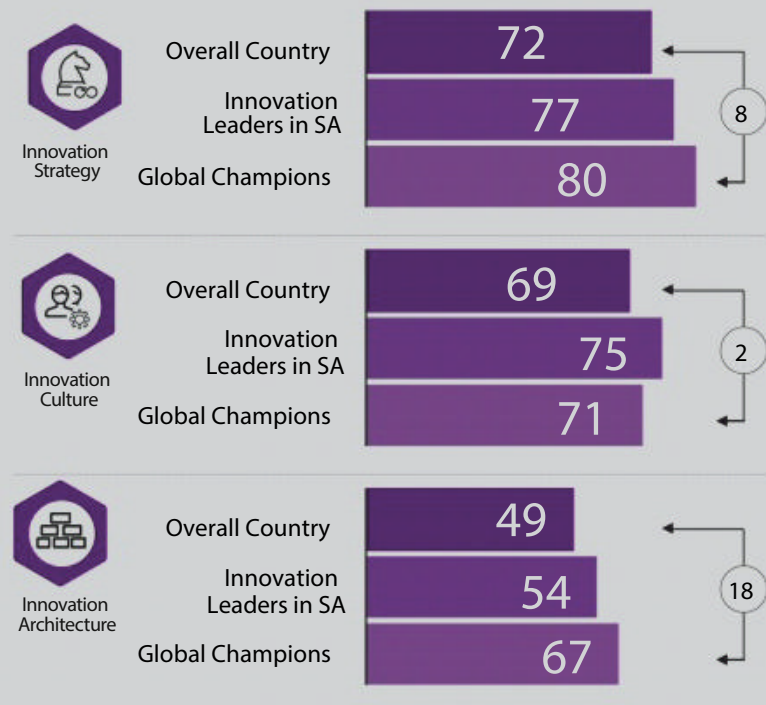
## THE INNOVATION CHAMPION APPROACH

What sets Global Champions apart is their focus on building an innovation architecture—the actual processes that are used to find ideas and bring them all the way to full-scale innovations. Our research also indicates that Innovation Champions outscore South African companies by almost 30 points in each of the seven key innovation practices.

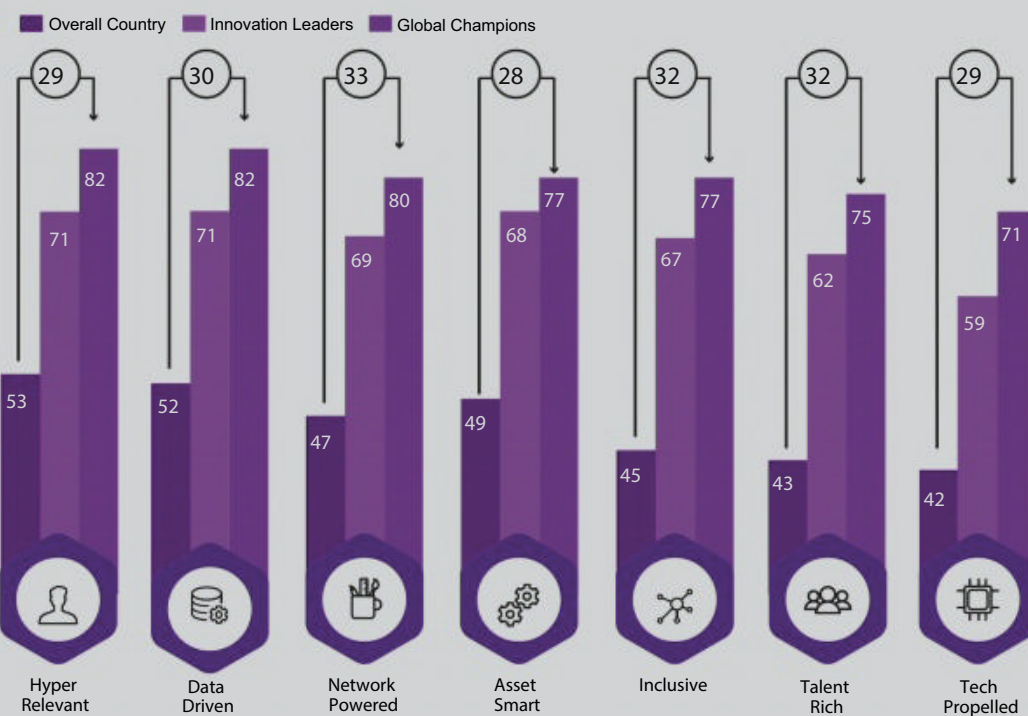
**CHAMPIONS BUILD  
INNOVATION PRACTICES  
INTO THE FABRIC OF  
THEIR BUSINESSES**

**Figure 3:**

**Innovate By Design**



**Innovation Practices**



Innovation Maturity Index Score Breakdown

Global champions build innovation into the fabric of their business by adopting all innovation practices, but they stand out most in their ability to continuously be network powered, data driven and hyper relevant.

**WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE? CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES:**

**NETWORK POWERED:**

Additive manufacturing company Carbon is collaborating with Adidas to create the Futurecraft range of personalised 3D printed shoes.

Carbon’s Digital Light Synthesis system enables Adidas to test and prototype design concepts 10x faster than previous methods, allowing Adidas to rapidly scale production.

**DATA DRIVEN:**

Oil producer Chevron spent \$4.3 billion in 2018 on shale basins, approximately 20 percent of its total spend.

It is using data-analysis expertise gained at its offshore wells to make horizontal drilling more efficient. This analysis is based on a proprietary database of over five million well

attributes, supplemented by data analytics of petrophysical properties.

The insights gained helped Chevron reduce the time taken to drill a shale well from 27 days, to just 15 days, for longer and more complex wells.

**HYPER RELEVANT:**

Tommy Hilfiger’s runway collections are instantly available through TommyNow, the company’s “see now, buy now” initiative.

This initiative eliminates the standard six-month wait between the runway and retail. As soon as shows begin, shoppers can order items through the label’s digital platforms, and an event live-stream.

**POSITION FOR FUTURE SUCCESS**

We believe that all too many times innovation is seen as intangible and a buzz word used loosely not linked to achieving business value. At Accenture innovation is defined as a new way of doing things that adds value. Having the right innovation structures and adopting practices that allow organisations to unlock trapped value will better position them for future success.



Leigh Klapthor (left)  
with a chef

# CONSUMED BY HEALTHY EATING

The restaurant market still hungers for healthy options. This entrepreneur is feeding that need, serving earth-conscious customers and gym junkies.

BY MELITTA NGALONKULU

**H**ER DESPERATION FOR A healthy meal fueled the fire for business.

Leigh Klapthor, 31, couldn't find enough eateries that sold healthy food that was not bland, so decided to start her own.

"It is no fun to go out with friends and you are always the girl with the green salad," she says.

"I wanted to find a way where being healthy is not such a chore and I also wanted for it to be affordable."

Klapthor, who dropped out of a course in marketing communications at the University of Johannesburg, ditched a

job in corporate marketing to pursue her passion for food.

In 2017, she started Sprout Café at the Stoneridge Centre in Edenvale in Johannesburg with a loan she received from her husband's business and money that was given to them as a wedding gift.

"Everybody underestimates what everything will end up costing [when starting a new business]. In my mind, I thought R150,000 (\$10,588) would work. I thought I would get my shop fitting and everything done and in the first month we would be able to pay salaries with the money we make," says Klapthor.

But she soon realized the unforeseen

challenges faced by many entrepreneurs. She had to eventually pump in a capital of R350,000 (\$24,706) to start the venture.

"So I had a couple of life lessons at the beginning. I had to end up using our savings but I didn't mind having to do that because I trusted and believed in the vision."

But though she did, the banks did not because they often declined all her loan applications.

"I think there are so many young black and enthusiastic individuals that have brilliant ideas and vision but the investment capital is not there. Though I do not have the capital as well to assist

them, I would say keep going because the vision is greater,” Klapthor says.

Sprout Café offers health food, light meals, vegan food, and vegetarian and ketogenic diet food.

With her corporate marketing skills, she advertised her food on social media and gained a lot of traction.

“I want to create food on Instagram and people are like, ‘oh my God, I want to eat that’ and when they come into the store, it is the same deliverable they receive,” she says.

Sprout Café turns over R3 million (\$211,677) annually and has 10 employees.

After only two years of business, she has recently opened a second branch in the heart of the busy Moove Motion Fitness Club in Sunninghill in Johannesburg.

“There are people that are on specific diets and there is no one that is giving these people food. There is no one that is saying, vegan people want to be healthy too. They are making a conscious decision to preserve the environment and preserve their health and they are making these decisions but there is no one that is there to accommodate them.”

Klapthor says that the world is moving towards a plant-based lifestyle and she believes that many have recently caught on to that idea recently.

Trend translator Bronwyn Williams of Flux Trends, reiterates Klapthor’s views on how the world is adopting healthier habits. She believes that Generation Z is choosing good, clean fun the most.

“Yes, South Africa is not exempt from the global movement towards more locally-sourced and earth-friendly products and packaging,” Williams says.

However, Williams believes that because 64.2% of the South African population still lives in poverty, clean and organic food still remains costly for the majority of people.

“That said, unfortunately, earth-friendly consumer options remain a luxury that only the upper middle class can really afford to support and enjoy... certified organic, eco-friendly products tend to cost far more—up to 40% more than ‘regular’ packaged produce, it would be disingenuous to say



**I THINK THERE ARE SO MANY YOUNG BLACK AND ENTHUSIASTIC INDIVIDUALS THAT HAVE BRILLIANT IDEAS AND VISION BUT THE INVESTMENT CAPITAL IS NOT THERE.**




that what the market wants is locally-sourced, earth-first produce when the majority of South Africans are struggling just to put any food on the table,” Williams says.

Though Klapthor knows more people are opening healthy-eating establishments because they see that it is a trend, she believes that they need to be in touch with the reality of an ordinary person’s life and consider the cost implications.

“You can’t charge someone R150 (\$10.59) for a Beyond Meat burger and expect her to come back tomorrow for the same burger. People are tight with their money and they work hard for it, they do not want to let go, for instance, of R500 (\$35.29) in three days,” Klapthor says.

“We want to provide a healthy lifestyle, something that is consistent and that people can live through, and not just a treat-themselves-to at the end of the month. Every day, you should be able to eat a Sprout meal without having to feel any kind of guilt and shame.”

Obviously, it is a concept that has worked and keeps her business healthy as well.



Desmond Blackmore

**I**T'S ALMOST impossible to attend a party or wedding in Ghana and not be treated to one of Desmond Blackmore's ubiquitous chart-toppers.

With hits like *Personal Person*, *Vera* and *Seihor* a must-have on any Ghanaian DJ's playlist, the 32-year-old rapper known by the moniker 'D-Black', has managed to solidify his presence as a leading emcee in Ghana's afrobeats scene in less than a decade.

And it isn't just about churning out party anthems and catchy lyrics. Blackmore is also a sharp businessman, who has been building his larger-than-life stage persona into a brand that now extends to a night club, live events, apparel, content production, media and advertising.

His story is the stuff of movies. His father, a businessman who made his wealth importing agriculture machinery, had 10 children with five different women. By the time Blackmore was a teenager, his father had lost most of his wealth through bad investments.

Blackmore, along with his mother, a civil servant, and his little sister, moved to North Kaneshie, in Accra, in search of a livelihood. With a life devoid of any comfort, Blackmore had to depend on his wit and creativity to make a living and pay his own way through school.

Cue the summer of 2007. Opportunity came knocking and Blackmore decided to take it. Aphrodisiac, a night

# THE CREATIVE IN THE NUMBERS GAME

Desmond Blackmore has solidified his presence in Ghana's afrobeats scene and is one of the few musicians to turn into a successful entertainment mogul.

BY PEACE HYDE

Photo supplied

club and advertising company Blackmore was working for as an errand boy, had shut down operations and as he was leaving the office, he received a call from Coca-Cola, looking for advertising services.

The previous owner of the business advised him to take the deal if he felt he could deliver. He decided to take the chance. He registered his own company within a week and secured his first big contract with the mammoth brand.

“I have always been entrepreneurial at heart. I like numbers and I am a creative as well, so putting those two together was natural to me,” says Blackmore.

That deal paved the way for the then 20-year-old entrepreneur and exposed him to corporate Ghana. With the proceeds from the deal, he bought his first car and invested the rest into his music.

Blackmore’s is a story of dogged determination. He has gone from being homeless to becoming one of the most successful entertainers in Ghana. Case in point, in 2014, when Guinness Ghana Breweries Ltd (GGBL), a subsidiary of Diageo Plc. U.K., were looking for their official brand ambassador in Ghana, Blackmore was the only name on the list.

“D-Black is one of the few brands in Ghana’s music scene that embodies the Cîroc Vodka brand. The brand is championed by global megastars like P Diddy so we needed someone who matched the ethos of the lifestyle, flamboyance and entrepreneurship that the brand evokes and D-Black was the perfect celebrity partner to further enhance the luxury profile of Cîroc in Ghana,” says Nathaniel Ansong Manu, Head of the Luxury Brands portfolio at GGBL.

With a degree in fine arts and music from the University of Ghana as well as a brief stint studying economics at the University of Cape Coast, Blackmore had found the right combination of knowledge and talent to make his dreams of becoming a solo artist a reality. With his cash injection from his first deal, he set out to be Ghana’s next big hip-hop artist. He decided early on in his career that he wanted his music to have international appeal and as a result, opted to rap in English, a move that was risky at a time where most of the chart toppers were singing in the local dialect.

“I met someone called Kweku T after university, who was rapping in English too. So we started recording together and we didn’t have enough money to shoot a video or anything, so we decided two pockets are better than one. We put together money and created a mixtape project and we shot three videos,” says Blackmore.

That partnership paid off. Blackmore received nominations

from the prestigious Ghana Music Awards, as well as international acclaim from awards in South Africa. After a year and a half, the pair decided to go their separate ways with their individual projects. Then in 2010, he released his first solo album and embarked on a nationwide tour in Ghana.

“I won the hip-hop song of the year at the Ghana Music Awards for the first time in history as well as nominated for the BET Awards for Best African Artist. I went to Los Angeles but I didn’t win and came to New York, bought my own studio equipment, went back to Ghana, opened my own studio, then I dropped the biggest song in the country right after called *Vera* and the rest is history.”

Blackmore has broken boundaries in his young career as a music artist. He is one of the few musicians to transition smoothly from a successful rapper into an entertainment mogul.

He owns a record label Black Avenue Music to find fresh talent in Ghana. In 2015, he started Live Wire events, an event management company delivering corporate events, celebrity soccer matches, large concerts as well as festivals for the Ministry of Tourism in Ghana.

His early years working for Aphrodisiac gave him the experience he needed to also open his own lounge and night club, Onyx, in Ghana’s plush residential hub of Cantonments. He also started a media and advertising company, Volcano. But Blackmore did not stop there. Spotting an opportunity in the content world, Blackmore also launched Black Avenue TV that produces movies and TV shows for some of

Ghana’s biggest TV networks.

“All my companies are in the entertainment space because I wanted to provide brands with a 360-degree solution. If you want to do concerts, we have experience doing big stadium concerts or niche events, if you need a club or a lounge, you can use mine and when you need to advertise, we have a solution for that as well.”

However the hustle is not just all about making money.

“I started a record label to help those who still had not found a way to break through. It was a way of giving back to other people. So I was thinking if I spent \$500 of my own money to help someone come up, it was a blessing. If I make my money back, great, and if I don’t, it was still a blessing. Sometimes, just providing studio time, paying for a music video to be shot by an artist who cannot afford it, will go a long way to help an artist and that is how I saw it. I have never made profit from any artist I have signed yet, it is always just about me helping them out.”

And that has been Blackmore’s greatest achievement so far, paving the way for people just like him to achieve their dreams through music. 🎵



**I WENT TO LOS ANGELES BUT I DIDN'T WIN AND WENT TO NEW YORK, BOUGHT MY OWN STUDIO EQUIPMENT, CAME BACK TO GHANA, OPENED MY OWN STUDIO.**

# MIND OVER MORTAR

A former Goldman Sachs trader's \$800 million company wants to extend the wellness fad from aromatherapy and hair gummies to condominiums and casino hotels.

BY SAMANTHA SHARF

“WELLNESS” IS ONE OF THOSE extremely broad words that mean everything and nothing. To its adherents, it signifies more than “health,” which is dismissed as merely the absence of illness. Wellness has become a giant industry, or at least a very flexible marketing term. In the grossly inflated view of one industry group, wellness is a \$4 trillion global business. Gym memberships and organic produce can be considered part of the trend. But so can incense, DNA tests and sleep aids. So why not “well” buildings?

“If you believe in the wellness trend, why wouldn't you apply it to the largest asset class there is?” asks

Paul Scialla, the 45-year-old former Goldman Sachs partner and founder of Delos, a New York City-based startup. “That seems to be the way to extract the most value from it.”

Scialla is selling a “Well” building certification that real estate developers, employers and hotel and resort operators can display in their lobbies and use in their marketing materials. Modeled after the well-known LEED green building standard, which is administered by a nonprofit, Scialla's project differs in one key aspect: Delos is very

much a for-profit company. Over the last five years, he has raised \$237 million at a valuation, most recently, of \$800 million.

Backers include Bill Gates' personal investment office and Jeff Vinik, the former manager of the Fidelity Magellan fund. The New Age celebrity doctor Deepak Chopra sits on Delos' board, as does actor Leonardo DiCaprio. Scialla even persuaded Rick Fedrizzi, a creator of LEED, to put off retirement to run the International Well Building Institute, the part of Delos' business that evaluates buildings.

Scialla hopes that his customers will be as eager to pay for Well as property owners have been to embrace LEED, which has certified 76,800 projects since its inception in 2000. LEED charges \$13,000 to evaluate a new 100,000-square-foot property. In a recent study, a third of building owners said that going green added more than 10% to their properties' value.

It's too soon to say whether a Well certification gives the same boost. But developers are desperate for anything that might allow them to charge a premium for cookie-cutter condos, offices and standard-issue hotel rooms. In a city flooded with indistinguishable accommodations, the MGM Grand in Las Vegas bills 20% more for 500 rooms kitted out with Delos-approved “Stay Well” products.

A Delos evaluation for a 100,000-square-foot space costs some

Delos founder and CEO Paul Scialla in his startup's downtown Manhattan office, where 15 plant-covered walls help clean the air



## IF YOU BELIEVE IN THE WELLNESS TREND, WHY WOULDN'T YOU APPLY IT TO THE LARGEST ASSET CLASS THERE IS?

\$20,000. When the Manhattan construction firm Structure Tone moved from leafy Greenwich Village to congested 34th Street, Robert Leon, who oversees sustainability at the company, thought reluctant staffers would appreciate a Well certification for the new space. Clients also like that the firm is ahead of the wellness-trend curve. “We want to be able to say we did it first,” he says. In 2017, Structure Tone spent \$90,000 to get its Well certification and make the office upgrades required by Delos.

Scialla, raised by immigrants from Italy and Holland in suburban Plainfield, New Jersey, got the idea for Delos in 2009 when he was a newly minted partner at Goldman Sachs. A passing interest in

sustainability led him to wonder why so much was made of how buildings affected the planet, rather than how they affected people. It didn't take his undergraduate finance degree from New York University for him to see the potential in the wellness trend.

The idea seemed so obvious that he spent a few years poking at it on nights and weekends to be certain no one had beaten him to it. He found decades of research linking buildings to health, but no one trying to build a brand around it. “I couldn't find the bogeyman,” he says.


He named his nascent project after the Greek island of Delos, where, according to myth, the god

Apollo was born and, he says, its inhabitants lived forever. By 2013, Paul and his twin brother, Peter, also a partner at Goldman, left the bank to focus on Delos full-time. (Peter is president and chief operating officer.) Both brothers invested in the venture (they won't say how much). That December, Delos scored its first \$24 million in outside funding.

Delos' certification business has ramped up slowly, but 2018 was a big year. It has now handled 1,555 projects totaling 314 million square feet in 48 countries. Forbes estimates that revenue came to \$20 million last year. The firm has 170 employees.

The office certification process starts with Delos assigning a concierge, who guides the customer through the more than 200 elements Delos uses to evaluate a space, including the proximity of workstations to windows, easy access to drinking water and the size of the plates in the cafeteria (10 inches or smaller discourages overeating). Then an independent reviewer comes in with a suitcase full of sensors that measure air, water and sound quality.

Scialla says wellness is a “gigantic” market and he's not concerned about competition from Fitwel, a building wellness certification service launched in 2017 by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the General Services Administration. A nonprofit, the Center for Active Design, operates the service. Fitwel isn't as comprehensive as Well but costs a lot less. Its customers pay \$8,000 for a project of up to one million square feet. Tishman Speyer, whose properties include Rockefeller Center in New York, is using Fitwel to certify its global portfolio by the end of this year.

Looking ahead, Scialla has his sights on other revenue streams, including smart homes. For a price starting at \$3,500, homeowners can buy a Delos app called Darwin that gives them wellness readings that include air and water quality. Simonds, an Australian homebuilder, is installing the system in 1,000 new houses this year, and KB Home is testing it in California. Insurance companies could use Delos' environmental data to make smarter health-coverage decisions, he says, cutting premiums for customers who live in wellness-outfitted homes. When pressed for details, he admits it's just a concept. “I'd like people to look back 20 years from now and think, ‘Remember when we didn't consider the human condition when designing and building these spaces that we're spending 90% of our lives in?’ ” he says. “How did that get missed?” 

Popi Zola

# SWEET SUCCESS

After her husband's death, Popi Zolas abandoned her corporate career and took on a restaurant franchise, before immersing herself in the catering and confectionery business.

BY MOTLABANA MONNAKGOTLA



**A**S A COST CONSULTANT working in the corporate space, Popi Zolas never thought she would one day be in the catering and baking business. But when life deals you rude surprises, you make plans to make the dough to live it down.

Her husband's death in a car accident in 1997 resulted in her inheriting shares in the then popular Something Fishy restaurant in Johannesburg that her husband franchised.

After his death, she was thrown in the deep end and had to co-manage his business.

"I worked there for seven years together with a partner and we did phenomenally well but our visions were different and we had to buy each other out; he offered me more than [the amount] I was happy offer him. I exited the group in 2003," she says.

Zolas rested for a while and went into franchise consulting, and then went on to research global eating trends in 2004. The same year, 180 Degrees Catering & Confectionery was born. She named the business after the standard temperature used for baking.

"This baby (180 degrees) is a very difficult baby, but it's a very rewarding baby in the sense that people who start off as cleaners, end up in either the confectionery or catering department," says Zolas.

It began as a restaurant in Bryanston, north of Johannesburg, employing 15 people, but has seen some changes over the years.

The initial idea was to create home-style, nutritionally balanced

meals for families and corporate employees. Part of the concept was also to make high-end meals that would be convenient.

"I can't say I was happy being in retail. In 2008, during the global recession, my intention was to franchise 180 Degrees but that never happened because banks stopped financing startups. My lease increased, after almost five years, to R150 (\$11) per square meter. I didn't want to sign a new lease because the cost was horrendous. They were upgrading the building, and we thought we have a substantial following of corporate clients, why not retain those clients and go to a small factory where it's R29 (\$2) per square meter."

Unfortunately, the following year, Zolas had to retrench seven staff members but was able to retain the rest.

"We had retrenched because we had a limited number

of corporate customers and we were going to service that group of customers with the intention of growth," she says.

That proved to be a successful strategy as she now employs 79 people at a factory in Wynberg, 12kms from their former Bryanston address.

When they moved into the factory, the business focused solely on corporate catering where food was being delivered to corporates; and business was steadily growing through word-of-mouth.

"If your product is not good, not wholesome, not tasty or without good presentation, you will never succeed, despite the marketing. And word-of-mouth is the most important



**WORD-OF-MOUTH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THIS INDUSTRY.**





thing in this industry.”

Zolas elaborates on her recipe for success.

“I believe the product should speak for itself, customer service should be exceptionally important because our product is a very high-end product. We don’t use preservatives, we don’t use stabilizers and we don’t use enhancers in our products. We use real cream cheese, real butter, our product is a real wholesome creation, and we don’t substitute, I’m very fanatical about detail. We stand out because of that.

“Now we are growing a very huge private customer base; either they collect or we have it delivered, and that started almost immediately because they see us delivering to corporates and would call and enquire for private functions and that is the spinoff from the corporate work that we do,” Zolas says.

The business reaches the far corners of Gauteng in South Africa. Zolas supplies to coffee shops, hotels, restaurants and caterers who are either short-staffed to produce a particular product or if their orders are too high.

“I keep mentioning growth because I never expected to be where we are now when we moved into this factory. I thought when I reached R1 million

(\$71,645) the business would be wow, and then you reach it and you think ‘what now’, and then it’s R1.5 million (\$107,478) and you watch those figures every day and you’re excited and you’re thinking, ‘will I get to R2 million (\$143,304)’ and then its ‘nah, not R2 million’. Now, the turnover is R3.5 million (\$250,782). When I started in Bryanston, I was making around R300,000 (\$21,495).”

Innocentia Malandisa, who has been working with the company for 15 years, is the only person Zolas trusts with quality control in the catering department.

“My child was six months when I started, this year she is turning 15. I have worked with Popi ever since and I don’t have complaints. We’ve had hiccups, up and downs, on and offs but we keep on going. I am the chef here and I’ve been chopping onions ever since [I started], even today and I’m enjoying it,” Malandisa says.

Because of the demands of her business, Zolas, 56, does not enjoy much of a social life, but her customers and staff such as Malandisa have more than filled in to become good friends.

There seems to be enough good food and goodwill going around. **F**

## THE DOS AND DON'TS OF FRANCHISING

**ULRICH JOUBERT**, an independent economist in South Africa, says franchising has its benefits but there are complexities that businesses must consider.

“If you talk about franchisers, it gives people support and provides structure to people who are starting in business. We’ve seen in the past where people lose their jobs and have to do something to stay alive and survive. And so, many people go into franchise and if they have good support, then it helps become successful.”

He avers though that it’s hard work, and you have to be careful about how you do things to provide quality products customers will come back for time and again.

“Quality is of utmost importance and, therefore, skills development, and often if you want to break into the corporate environment, it takes a lot of time and effort to get into those environments.”



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# ROBO-RIGS

A man with glasses and a dark shirt is sitting in the driver's seat of a truck. He is smiling and has both hands raised in a gesture of surprise or excitement. The interior of the truck is visible, including the steering wheel and dashboard. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong blue and green tint.

Self-driving cars are at least five years away. Eighteen-wheelers are coming first, and a 34-year-old Caltech Ph.D.'s unicorn is king of the road.

BY ALAN OHNSMAN

**S**OUTHEAST OF TUCSON'S airport, tucked into a patch of Sonoran Desert dotted with cholla cactus and paloverde trees, is a sand-colored industrial building with a horizontal emerald green slash over the entry doors. Only when a Peterbilt semi-truck loaded with cameras and sensors rumbles out does a visitor get any hint of the technological revolution brewing within.

TuSimple cofounder Xiaodi Hou established this depot last year to test the company's self-driving big rigs on paid runs, the next step in commercializing an autonomous system for the \$700 billion trucking market. (The trucks currently operate with a safety driver and an engineer on board; Hou wants to start making runs "driver out" next year.)

TuSimple isn't the only startup focused on driver-less trucks. Embark Trucks, Ike, Starsky Robotics and Kodiak Robotics, all based in the San Francisco Bay Area, are racing to develop their own autonomous big rigs, but TuSimple is on the fast track.

Hou, a 34-year-old computer scientist, has raised \$178 million for the San Diego startup at a \$1.1 billion valuation, making it the first self-driving trucking unicorn and giving it more than three times the war chest of embark, its closest startup rival. The cash pile gives it an edge in expanding its fleet, key to inking more deals with clients such as Phoenix-based Royal Paper. With 15 Peterbilts and navistars, it has more semis transporting goods for paid customers than any competitor, Forbes estimates, and Hou claims a technological record, too — TuSimple has a proprietary vision system that can see a kilometre ahead, farther than any other driverless tech company, including Waymo.

"Our 1,000-meter perception — I think this could be the biggest strength of the company so far," Hou says.

Waymo, a unit of Alphabet, the

parent company of google, launched its autonomous taxi service in Phoenix in December, beating GM Cruise and Uber to market. Last year, it also started testing self-driving trucks, using the same suite of sensors and software that successfully pilot its hundreds of minivans. If Waymo wanted to double down on trucking, its deep pockets could quickly fund a fleet bigger than all the others combined.

Along with his vision system, Hou has created software designed exclusively to drive big trucks, not cars, by using deep learning — a cutting-edge field that trains machines to recognize objects and figure out their own responses. He's convinced it will set TuSimple apart from even Waymo.

If he's right, TuSimple will be early to profit from the autonomous-driving boom. Dozens of tech giants, startups and global auto players are jostling to catch up to Waymo. But most self-driving car programs are still experiments, at least five years out from being sustainable businesses. Autonomous trucking looks like it could become a commercial success earlier, propelled by a driver shortage that the American Trucking Associations puts at 60,000 a year for semi drivers. TuSimple also hopes to benefit from the relatively easier challenge of navigating interstates rather

than crowded city streets. The plan is to have self-driving trucks haul goods long-distance between depots on the outskirts of big metros, and then transfer the cargo to smaller, manned trucks for local delivery.

This technology isn't fully proven yet, but every truck taking off in autonomous mode from the Tucson depot makes the system that much smarter. Road tests and video-game-like testing are speeding development. The more complex, the better. "Designing a problem is becoming my signature ability," says Hou, an Xbox gamer in his spare time.

A native of Beijing, Hou earned degrees in computer science and engineering from Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 2008, then made his way to Pasadena, California,



## DESIGNING A PROBLEM IS BECOMING MY SIGNATURE ABILITY.

Cofounder Xiaodi Hou, inside the cab of a TuSimple truck in San Jose, California. His self-driving trucks will soon start 22-hour runs, with no overnight stops

for doctoral studies at the California Institute of Technology, deciding that Caltech — home to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory — was a better fit than grad schools in the Bay Area. "I wanted to live deliberately," he says, quoting Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. "I didn't want to be harassed by a lot of so-called opportunities around me."

During his six years at Caltech, he studied how the brain processes visual information — including an unpleasant stint in the neuroscience department's monkey lab. He also explored artificial intelligence developed with the use of deep learning, a field so little understood that he says it was "like alchemy. People didn't know what to do with it."

By 2015, one thing he thought it could do: help create a driverless system faster than was possible when Google began its self-driving research in 2009. Rather than rely on thousands of lines of code for specific features, deep learning teaches computers to recognize patterns from images, mimicking human brains. (Waymo has since become a heavy user of deep learning.)

And while he respected Google's progress, Hou was convinced that complex city environments were too tough for robo-cars. Highways are another matter. For cars, the artificial intelligence "is not there, and it's not going to be there until we have a revolution as big as deep learning," he says, estimating that will take another five years.

Bernd Heid, a senior partner at McKinsey & Company, agrees trucking faces a smoother ride. "Highway is a very easy application, or relatively easy, because it's controlled. It can be easily mapped," he says. "You do not have kids playing around."

Hou envisioned TuSimple while still at Caltech, founding it in 2015 with his friend and business partner Mo Chen, who is CEO, while Hou opted for the CTO and president titles. Chen is based in China, where TuSimple has a second headquarters and is developing robot trucks to carry cargo at local ports. "Xiaodi's role is to build the technology, because that is our future. My role as the CEO is to support him," Chen says.

TuSimple closed a \$95 million round in late 2018, led by Chinese tech firm Sina Corp., its earliest backer, with investment




from Hong Kong-based Composite Capital Management. U.S. backers include Nvidia, which supplies TuSimple's computing system. Hou expects to raise more money over the next year. Revenue from runs, mainly within Arizona and starting last summer, brought in less than \$100,000 last year. As the company expands its fleet to 50 in June, revenue from paid runs should rise to \$1 million a month in the second half of 2019, chief product officer Chuck Price says. Individual states' restrictions on self-driving vehicles prevent TuSimple from taking autonomous commercial loads coast to coast; for now, its self-driving is limited to states like Arizona and Texas. There's also the worry another fatality could complicate its plans: After an Uber self-driving test car hit and killed a pedestrian in Arizona a year ago, the ride-hailing company's program was stalled for months.

To customize its fleet, TuSimple collaborates with industry heavyweights, including Peterbilt and Navistar, as well as truck engine maker Cummins. In the next few months, TuSimple says, it's launching a paid pilot program with a large U.S. agency to make 1,000-mile runs autonomously.

Cash flow from these runs helps offset the estimated \$200,000 expense of robotic trucks: about \$150,000 for the vehicle itself

and the rest for its nine cameras, two lidars (laser sensors for 3-D imaging), forward radar and onboard computer. There's also the cost of TuSimple's constant road tests, which for now include salaries for a safety driver and an engineer in the cab. TuSimple thinks it will have a compelling pitch to customers: You'll make back the added expense in two years. Big, class-8 trucks, the kind you see on open 300-mile stretches, need technology designed specifically for their mass, such as the ability to avoid hard braking or sudden maneuvers that cause jackknives.

They also need to see as far ahead as possible. Like Waymo, TuSimple uses lidar and radar, but it predicts long-range cameras will be the best option for trucks. Its one-kilometer vision system is key to that, and also a selling point for future customers. By being able to see as far as a kilometre ahead, TuSimple maintains, it can cut fuel costs by up to 15% a year by better regulating speed and lane position to avoid rough braking.

Market demand and basic economics could trump jitters about putting 40-ton driverless trucks on the road. In Tucson, just off U.S. interstate 10, the vital cargo corridor that links the port of Los Angeles to the Southwest and ultimately Florida, Hou sees success ahead: "It is going to happen in trucking." 



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# OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE FOLD

Smartphones have been stuck in the same groove for years, until the recent unveiling of folding screens. Are these devices, starting at a nifty \$2,000, and that you would likely fold a 100 times a day, durable?

BY NAFISA AKABOR

**I**T'S NO SECRET THAT THE MOBILE PHONE INDUSTRY has been stagnant for some time now. Consumers are overwhelmed with similar hardware being released every couple of months, making purchasing decisions more difficult. But why are these faster, thinner and lighter smartphones not cutting it anymore?

Tech giants Apple and Samsung have both felt the pinch from shrinking sales in 2018. In a letter to investors early 2019, Apple CEO Tim Cook warned of weak earnings as a result of too many new products; a strong US dollar; and economic weakness in emerging markets, which resulted in, “fewer iPhone upgrades than it had anticipated”.

Samsung also couldn't match the success of the Galaxy S8 with last year's almost identical-looking S9 that featured new cameras and processors, and was forced to drop the price on its flagship to increase sales.

Mark Joseph, a director who heads up technology strategy at Deloitte, says the smartphone industry is finding it increasingly difficult

to differentiate on the hardware layer as it becomes a commodity.

“It is easy to compare it to the PC industry where the consumer sees very little differentiation at all anymore.”

However, the market is expected to take a different turn as Samsung and Huawei have both come out with folding screen devices in 2019, which is arguably the most exciting thing to have occurred in ages.

Samsung introduced the Galaxy Fold earlier this year that appears to be ‘tablet-first’ with smartphone support. The 4.6-inch smartphone still looks like a first-generation product and opens into a 7.3-inch tablet, which supports three-app multi-tasking and app continuity between modes.

Photo supplied; Photo by Justin Sullivan via Getty Images

Days later at MWC Barcelona, Huawei unveiled its own folding screen device called the Mate X. The 8-inch tablet has no notch, and folds into two screens, a 6.6-inch on the front and a 6.38-inch at the back, primarily aimed at people who want more from their smartphones and to be productive on-the-go.

These innovations have generated a great deal of interest, says Joseph.

“Folding screen devices are considered a new type of device, like a tablet vs a laptop rather than just a new version of a smartphone.”

“The differences over the past few years have been mainly cosmetic, like the number of cameras, changes to screen size with internal changes like processor speeds, and memory increases. Folding screens are an entirely new range of devices.”

But is the market ready for a new category device, and is there a need for folding screens? Joseph thinks its success falls on how durable and scratch-resistant they are.

“If they break easily, they might be discarded rather quickly or limited to a niche category, e.g. office use only.”

Samsung claims the Galaxy Fold is durable for up to 200,000 folds, which translates to 100 folds every day for five years.

If they are durable – and only time will tell – there is huge potential, he says. “In the corporate market, their multi-tasking abilities could lead to industry specific solutions being launched on



Mark Joseph



**IT IS EASY TO COMPARE IT TO THE PC INDUSTRY WHERE THE CONSUMER SEES VERY LITTLE DIFFERENTIATION AT ALL ANYMORE.**

– MARK JOSEPH

their form-factor, in addition to being the primary office tool of choice for executives.”

Joseph says there is a growing corporate market using smartphones for daily tasks previously done on tablets or laptops, like reading and responding to e-mails.

“Folding screen devices will enable an increase in activities moving from tablets/laptops, which will then reduce the number of people who use both laptops and tablets.”

It will also double as a weekend/evening entertainment device of a busy executive who uses it extensively during the work day, he says.

As expected with any brand new technology, it won't come cheap. The Galaxy Fold has a starting price of \$1,980, and the Huawei Mate X will cost \$2,600, both of

which are expected to go on sale in South Africa, with local pricing to be announced at launch.

So who is expected to purchase these eye-wateringly expensive hybrids?


“Like all the newest devices in each generation, there is status associated with being one of the first owners, so naturally, there will be those who fit into this category,” Joseph says.

“Next, there will be the corporate user who currently uses both a smartphone and tablet.”

There are also those who generally upgrade to the “best” device every two years with their post-paid contract upgrade, he says.

“In addition, there could be a niche in private schools where this is a growing trend where students have smartphones and their schools are now using tablets as part of their curriculum.”

“The area that I'm most excited by is the ability for innovation around industry or corporate specific applications being developed for a purpose using this form-factor,” Joseph says.

“Hopefully, folding screens will make it to a second generation as this will allow for better pricing, better tech and, hopefully, a more robust product.” 



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**BEZOS BY FAR:**  
THE 5 LARGEST BILLIONAIRE  
DIVORCES IN HISTORY

Jeff and MacKenzie Bezos

Below are five of the largest settlements, in descending order.

### 1. JEFF AND MACKENZIE BEZOS – AT LEAST \$35 BILLION

The couple met while both were working at hedge fund D.E. Shaw in New York. After they moved to Seattle, MacKenzie helped Jeff get Amazon off the ground. On April 4, they announced the terms of their divorce, which will likely become official over the summer: she will receive about 4% of Amazon's outstanding shares — now worth over \$35 billion. Jeff will hold on to all of rocket company Blue Origin and *The Washington Post*. Once the divorce is finalized, MacKenzie will likely be the world's third-richest woman.

### 2. BILL AND SUE GROSS – \$1.3 BILLION

The Grosses' messy split minted a new billionaire and dragged down another. Sue filed for divorce in 2016 from her husband, the founder of asset-manager Pimco, and she walked away a year later with a \$1.3 billion fortune. That haul included a \$36 million Laguna Beach house and "Le Repos," a contested 1932 Picasso painting that she later sold for \$35 million. While Bill originally tried to hang on to one of their three pet cats, Sue eventually got custody of all of them. Bill lost his spot on The Forbes 400 in 2018 following 14 consecutive years on the list. Both now run their own charitable vehicles.

### 3. STEVE AND ELAINE WYNN – \$850 MILLION


The cofounders of casino giant Wynn Resorts divorced (for the second time) in 2010. That settlement dictated that Elaine, a Wynn Resorts board member since 2002, receive 11 million shares, then worth an estimated \$795 million. Steve also sold around \$114 million in stock that year — some, if not all, went to Elaine as part of the deal. She then sued Wynn Resorts in 2012 to sell part of her 9% stake and was kicked off the board three years later amid an ugly proxy battle.

After Steve stepped down as CEO and chairman in February 2018 amid sexual harassment allegations that he has denied, he sold all his shares. Elaine, now worth \$2 billion, is Wynn Resorts' largest shareholder.

### 4. HAROLD HAMM AND SUE ANN ARNALL – \$975 MILLION

After three years of bitter court proceedings, oil tycoon Harold in 2015 tried to finally end his 26-year marriage with Sue Ann (no prenup) by writing her a check in the amount of \$974,790,317.77 from his Morgan Stanley account. She deposited it, but then changed her mind, decided she wanted more and filed an appeal seeking a bigger share of the \$13.7 billion fortune tied to Hamm's 75% ownership in publicly traded Continental Resources. In April 2015 the Oklahoma Supreme Court ended the saga, granting Harold's motion to dismiss her appeal, reasoning from precedent that Sue Ann had agreed to the settlement by signing and depositing the check. Sue Ann subsequently funded a political action committee that succeeded in its effort to unseat the judge who presided over the divorce.

### 5. ROY E. AND PATRICIA DISNEY – \$600 MILLION

Roy and his wife filed for divorce in 2007 at the ages of 77 and 72, respectively, after 52 years of marriage. Roy, a nephew of Walt Disney, was worth approximately \$1.3 billion at the time. Previously a Forbes 400 mainstay, he lost nearly half of his fortune in the split and was dropped from the list. In 2008, he married writer and producer Leslie DeMeuse. He died a year later; Patricia followed in 2012. A family foundation with assets of \$122 million (as of 2016) bearing both of their names supports environmental and economic causes. 

- Compiled by Madeline Berg, Deniz Cam, Kathleen Chaykowski, Lauren Debter, Kerry A. Dolan, Alex Fang, Luisa Kroll, Chloe Sorvino and Jennifer Wang.

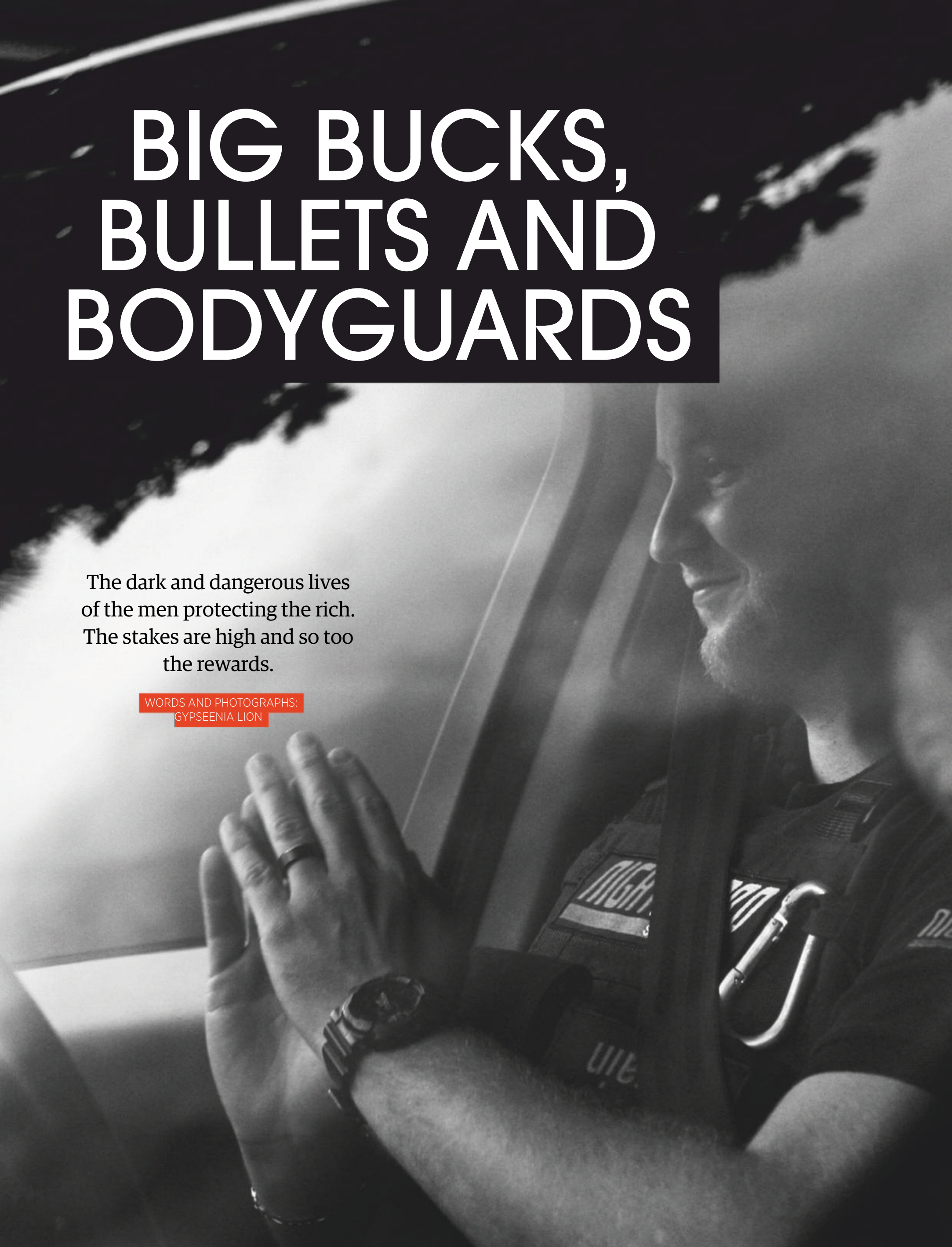
- Noah Kirsch; Forbes Staff

Jeff Bezos announced recently that he will give a 4% stake in Amazon — currently worth more than \$35 billion — to his wife, MacKenzie, as part of their pending divorce, making it by far the largest divorce settlement in history. In January, soon after the couple announced their separation, Forbes assembled a list of the largest, strangest and most notable billionaire disunions on record — at least where we could follow the money. In some cases, like the split between Google's Sergey Brin and Anne Wojcicki, we don't know the size of the settlement because divorce filings were sealed.

# BIG BUCKS, BULLETS AND BODYGUARDS

The dark and dangerous lives  
of the men protecting the rich.  
The stakes are high and so too  
the rewards.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS:  
GYPSEENIA LION



**M**USCLED MEN WEARING DARK sunglasses, black tuxedos and stern looks, at the entrance of one of Africa's most luxurious hotels. One of them whispers into a mouthpiece, and a metallic black SUV bearing a VVIP screeches into the parking lot.

Without wasting any time, the area is cleared of passers-by, and a man nattily dressed in a light blue-tailored suit is closely escorted by the men into the hotel lobby.

As the man disappears into a mosaic of opulent walls at The Michelangelo Hotel in Sandton in the pulsating business heart of Johannesburg, an unsuspecting vendor on the pavement slowly re-assembles his wares, oblivious to the high society stakes in the towers over his head.

It is a Wednesday afternoon and the financial hub is a motorist's nightmare, filled with garrulous weekday traffic. The dark shades of the men in black glint in the sun, as they stand in closed groups engaging in casual conversation but always alive to their surroundings.

These are the bodyguards of the rich and famous, who spend their days and nights putting themselves in the spotlight – and at times, in harm's way. And they are not to be found only in blockbuster action films. They can be seen in Africa's elite spaces – you just need to look for them to find them.

But the exaggerated imagery apart, players in this industry protecting high-profile people, say that things have changed.

Graham Ludwig, the Managing Director of BGA Protection, who has been in the executive protection and services industry for over 20 years, says: "There is a stereotype where the bodyguard wears a black suit, red tie and sunglasses. The reality is that you don't want to dress like that and stand out. You want to blend in and be seen as part of the client's entourage."

Often, protectors or 'detail' as they are referred to, find themselves dressed in simple chinos and a collar shirt to assume an incognito persona. Keeping a distance and providing protection while not getting too familiar with the client is the main objective.

The high net worth clients generally request these services. However, not all of them insist on subtlety as a prerequisite for the job.

"Generally, executives and high net worth individuals prefer a low-profile detail; they don't like the flashy lights. That is a big 'no' for them; they don't like driving in convoys. That is something we do in South Africa; but that is really frowned upon," Ludwig says.

BGA provides executive protection and close protection services, specializing in watching over visitors concerned about security in a particular area.

Other than executives, clients range from actors to musicians and even high-ranking corporate titans who receive mandatory protection.

There are myriad reasons why individuals would require services of this nature, and some of them are indeed reminiscent of action films – business deals gone wrong, political disputes and personal vendetta that result in life-threatening situations.

Threats are often directed to the targeted individual, their family or close business associates.

"Some companies mandate that their executive team have protection because it aligns with the 'duty of care' which is a big thing in the industry. Duty of care, effectively, says when an employee visits another country, every possible measure of safety is taken into consideration," Ludwig says.

Duty of care is commonly applied in finance institutions, the pharmaceuticals industry, and with actors, entertainers and individuals in the travel industry.

A meticulous program is tailor-made as each request is unique to the schedule of the client.

An example, Ludwig offers, is about a client who travels from South Africa to another African country for charity work.

The client makes contact with the service provider, in this case BGA, requesting on-the-ground protection.

"We travel to [the country] with the client's itinerary. We start the protection at the airport, guarantee that the luggage is handled with the security to ensure that when the plane lands, the baggage is marked to the dedicated vehicle, and that the passport is stamped quickly," he says.

In preparation for the client's arrival, an advanced route clearance plan ensures that all movement from the first point of contact to the last is secure.

A close protection officer leaves the NightGuard Security premises to meet with a high-profile pastor in an unknown location

Clinics, police stations and evacuation plans are painstakingly drafted into the proposal weeks in advance to prepare for any unforeseen eventuality.

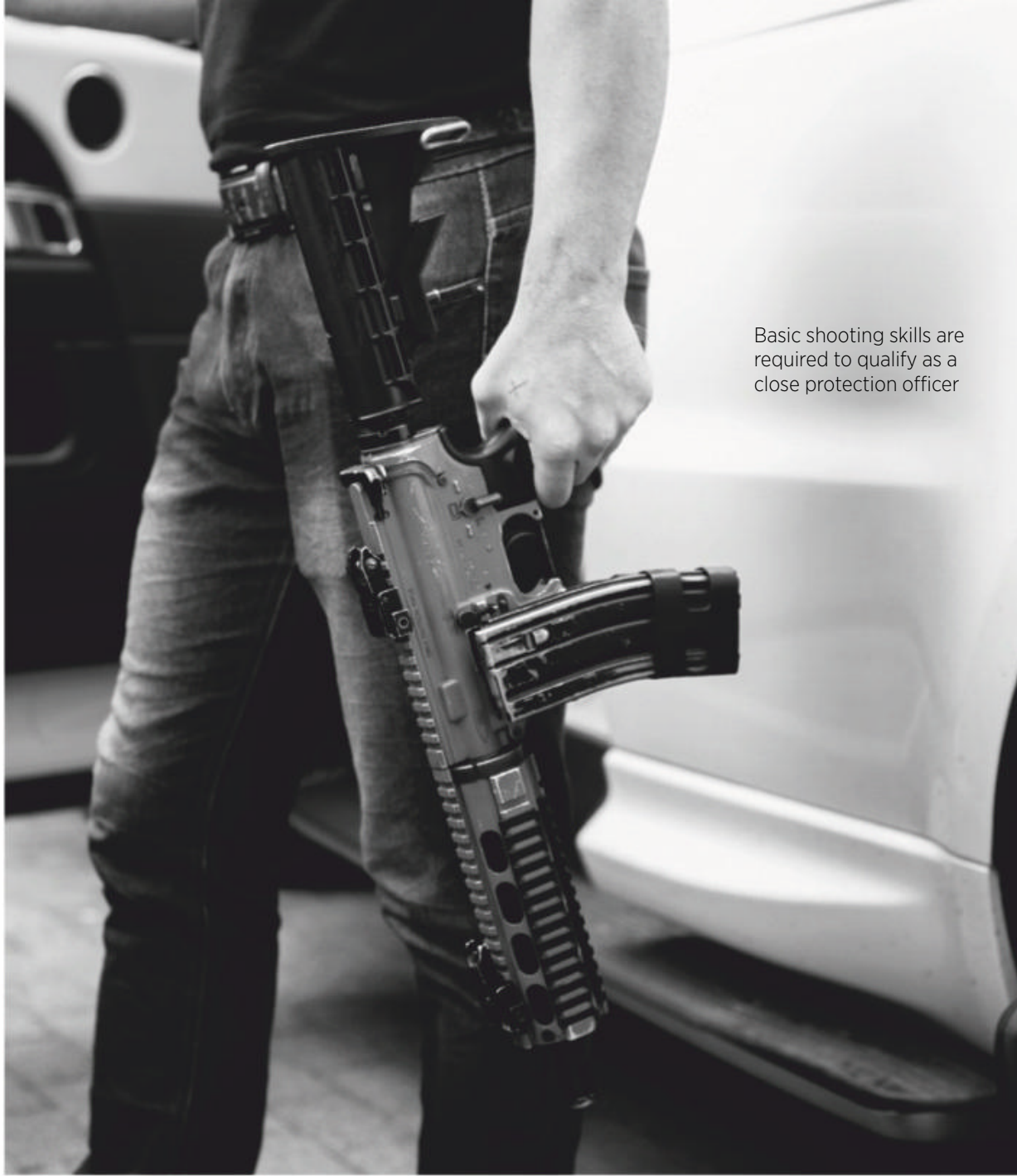
Every detail, no matter how minuscule, in the surrounding area is taken into consideration; even the number of stairs in a building is memorized.

But what happens when the client changes plan?

Ludwig says high net worth individuals are less likely to cause trouble when it comes to their own safety.

Unable to pinpoint a bad experience with a client, he highlights that demands, sometimes, have had the Close Protection Officer (CPO) driving through the city in search of a specific bottle of champagne in an unfamiliar environment or at an unearthly hour.

“We were looking after an actor at a premiere, and one of the other protection details [the bodyguards] working with the directors of the movie has a serious



Basic shooting skills are required to qualify as a close protection officer



**YOU CAN DO THREE TO FOUR GOOD JOBS DURING YOUR CAREER, PROTECTING ONE CLIENT, AND EARN MORE THAN ENOUGH MONEY.**

– WILLIE VILJOEN

background and he doesn't believe in allowing fans to get close to the stars. He almost broke a guy's hand who tried to get close, drawing attention to the detail,” Ludwig says.

This is a typical scenario leaving Willie Viljoen, Managing Director of Executive Protection Agency, with no choice but to keep VIP protection protocol to a minimum.

“The detail is often mistreated and we have to put up with ridiculous demands like picking up [discarded] tissue paper for the client. It just causes HR issues and draws too much attention,” he says.

Viljoen, who joined the company in 2007, but has not been out on the field as a protection officer for the past six years, hopes that a client worth his money will coax him to get out into the streets again.

From protecting Oscar-winning South African actor Charlize Theron to some of the continent's richest men, Viljoen will always remember his first day on duty.

He candidly offers an anecdote.

An executive in a Chinese construction firm arrived at the Durban harbor with unmarked and unregistered trucks and cranes.

A customs issue, Viljoen had to step in to

resolve it.

After spending hours at the harbor, eventually, the two five-ton trucks, guarded by a three-vehicle motorcade, drove off to the Mpumalanga province in South Africa to deliver the items, at a tedious speed of 40km per hour.

What would have been an eight-hour drive turned into a three-day journey that left Viljoen with a lifetime of distaste for the otherwise scenic route.

“Every time we pulled over, they would go into the garage for lunch or breakfast. They brought each of us a Chelsea bun and a Coke. For three days, that is all I ate. I haven't eaten a Chelsea bun since,” he exclaims.

This is where the passion for critical planning and problem-solving skills developed for the man who was once a CPO. He also says that improvising is an imperative for the job in order to seem personable.

“Sometimes, the plan changes and you have to spend a little more time with the client. You need to make sure you can talk about current issues and answer questions as much as possible. It makes the client feel more secure,” he says.

Creating a rapport with the client within

the duration of protection is vital as it builds trust, especially when in situations of danger. Which is why the stakes are high.

Protecting a Saudi prince, for example, is charged at R120,000 (\$8,517) a day.

The amount is significantly higher than the cost of a hitman. In downtown Johannesburg, an assassin can be hired for a mere R20,000 (\$1,435), Viljoen says.

The prince, who usually visits for three to 10 days, is offered the most premium protection money can buy.

His protection includes, but is not limited to, the dispersal of 12 bodyguards, and a motorcade of six cars divided into three teams.

Three CPOs keep a close watch on the client at all times while the advance teams clear the vicinity.

The evacuation team remains on standby, on the lookout for threats and tactical responses, while the back-up team keeps eyes and ears close to the ground from a distance.

All of these are considered when final expenses are being tallied.

“A close risk assessment on the client and what they require will determine the billing. If the risk is higher, the cost will increase but if it is a regular guy down the road, they will require one bodyguard at R4,500 (\$319) a day,” he says.

“You can do three to four good jobs during your career, protecting one client, and earn more than enough money,” Viljoen says.

BGA, on the other hand, bills the client directly, with a fixed salary of R6,000 (\$425) payable to the bodyguard.

“Our outlay is making sure that we look after our protectors and that they are remunerated correctly. In the past, there has been a lot of abuse of protectors. For example, during the 2010 World Cup, companies were selling protection services for R6,000 (\$425) a day and paying protectors R1,500 (\$107),” Ludwig says.

Extra needs like helicopters, cars, and accommodation are billed directly to the client.

An international client flying to South Africa for a safari that started at the Cape and

went all the way up to the northern game drives in the Limpopo province, paid for all costs incurred.

“If you are billing in dollars, depending on the country and climate, the billing can range from \$450 to \$800 a day,” he says.

Is this price enough to take a bullet for? Ludwig unequivocally states that it’s about the principle, not the price.

“If you are in this industry, you should be prepared to stand in front of your client to take a bullet. It is all very noble but you can’t protect a client if you’re standing and actually taking the bullet. I am not literally going to take a bullet but I will stand in front of it and engage the threat. If that means taking a bullet [while under threat], then that is what it takes, but you are not a bullet-catcher,” he says.

NightGuard Security has been operational for 44 years. It is under the management of the Eblen brothers, who began their work as CPOs immediately after they completed their final matric examinations. This, at the behest of their father, who founded the business.

The brothers take pride in running towards trouble as opposed to turning

away from it. Shortly after a ‘brief’ with an intermediary representing a high-profile pastor who is possibly under threat, FORBES AFRICA meets the ‘brothers in arms’, Zaine Eblen and Emile ‘Moolie’ Eblen, at their head office in a gated residential area in Fourways, an upmarket area in Johannesburg. Their brother, JP, also a part of the business, could not make the interview.

As we stand at the gate waiting to be ushered into the premises, we are met with curious looks from the protectors as they prepare to gear up to guard the rich and famous.

A hesitant CPO approaches the imposing gate at the entrance of the building, and looks around furtively before he offers assistance.

Behind him a small lobby filled with about nine men.

Their eyes are fixed on every move as we make our way to the boardroom on the second floor.

We are seated but there is nobody else in room.

In the blink of an eye, two muscular men



Emile Eblen briefing the detail before the convoy heads to an unknown location



walk into the room. Their hulking presence consumes the entire space, however, their genteel demeanour completely disarms us.

The duo feel the intricacies of their work are often trivialized.

“Everyone believes that they can do VIP protection because they have got a guy that is six feet tall. All your VIP protection has to go for proper tactical training, it doesn’t mean just because you are tall, you can be a bodyguard,” Zaine says.

“Family is a big word to us. When we say be a part of our family, we literally mean that,” Zaine says.

“We have to understand the target and his family. He has the hit and [therefore] the risk is for his whole family. So we do a check on his family. What school they attend, where they work and how big the threat is,” Emile adds.

In order to protect his life and eliminate a possible threat towards his family, the pastor is charged R10,000 (\$710) a day for protection.

The pastor’s intermediaries stand on guard as they prepare to be escorted by NightGuard Security to an unknown location where the spiritual leader awaits them. FORBES



**IT DOESN'T MEAN JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE TALL, YOU CAN BE A BODYGUARD.**

– ZAINE EBLEN

AFRICA watches as a white Land Rover, with dark-tinted windows arrives and in unison, all the men get into the vehicle without uttering a single word.

A cautious Zaine reminds the driver that he should not hesitate to pull away if there are any moments of doubt on the road.

“If you feel that you are in a situation that you shouldn’t be in, instead of panicking, just move out of the situation,” he says.

“The biggest problem in the industry today is that people don’t take care of their staff,” he says as he leads us back into the office.

He emphasizes that the key to harmony in the industry is through ensuring that CPOs are as well taken care of as the clients they tend to.

“The bodyguards live in upmarket areas. We eliminate the risk by moving them to a safer estate so that they are not vulnerable to threats themselves. They have moved from areas where criminals have access to them,” Emile says.

The importance of security estates has been a particular area of interest for the protection company, and the dynamic industry is in a perpetual state of change, which means the guards are always adapting to the climate.

“The days of having bodyguards live with you have gone by. The only time they come in is if there is a hit on that person’s life. We do massive housing estates with about 400 units.

“We can’t predict how situations play out. We have been in situations where people start shooting.

“There was a hit on a Serbian drug lord and we got a call for back-up. He was shot in his car parked in Bedfordview, and he drove off. He was followed to his complex and was gunned down. He had R100,000 (\$7,165) next to him but they did not take any money, it was a pure drug hit,” Zaine says.

“You are basically scared for your life because you don’t know if you are coming home. My wife signs a cross on my forehead before I leave home,” Emile adds.

The scope of their work goes beyond the high secured walls of private residential estates.

In recent years, they have also dispersed VIP units into shopping malls in upmarket areas and they say this has reduced the high levels of armed robberies and hijackings in the

last four years. The payment model for this service differs slightly.

“The monthly fee means that the detail has a permanent post for the month; the cost would be for two CPOs for day shift and night shift, and a tactical team member. Cost comes down to R140,000 (\$9,941) a month,” he says.

There are jobs that stand out to the crew and affect the way they make future decisions. There are also instances where it becomes difficult to leave them in the past.

Zaine offers an anecdote about an incident where an individual living in one of the residential estates they were guarding was murdered and they had to follow the lead.


“We took a suspect we arrested for murder in one of the complexes. We linked him to 32 murder cases and he led us to a ‘kingpin’ in Hillbrow. We had intel that they were armed with AK47s. The whole drive you are reflecting, music doesn’t help so you are just driving there in silence,” Zaine says.

In another instance, residents felt their lives were threatened after they witnessed an attempted assassination in their complex in Johannesburg. The estate manager and NightGuard Security client (*who asked to be anonymous*), observed the high levels of crime in the upmarket areas he works in.

“They broke into the estate and without cutting any wires, entered the property. It was only afterwards we found out that the owner was involved in the tender business and he had a hit on his back,” he says.

They are very diligent about the security measures they have in place in residential estates. “Ninety percent of the problems come from outside, you need to make sure your cameras and devices work so you can identify threats before they approach you. The bigger the fence, the more the guys want to get in.”

“Camera analytics has made life a whole lot easier. Cameras on vehicles will allow us to see a threat before they are close enough to approach us. In this industry, you constantly have to upgrade your technology,” Zaine echoes.

So whether you are one of Africa’s richest or just love the spotlight, if you have the dollars to purchase a longer lifespan, there are people who will dodge bullets for you, and do it for a neat price. 

# RALLYING YOUNG AFRICA



Aya Chebbi

As the youngest diplomat in the African Union Commission Chairperson's cabinet, Aya Chebbi is galvanizing the collective power of the youth in Africa.

BY PEACE HYDE

**F**OR AYA CHEBBI, THE IDEA that we are equal stops at the ground beneath her feet. The soil of Tunisia, her country of birth, was chiefly owned by men. That is until the 2011 revolution. At the time, Chebbi was still a teenager in class learning about George Orwell's *1984*, a dystopian novel about a state in perpetual war, policed by an omnipresent government.

"It was interesting because the year of my graduation was the revolution year and we were studying *1984* by George Orwell. It was funny because everyone in the class knew what we were talking about but we couldn't say anything about it and then the revolution happened and we were like now we know what Orwell's *1984* means, now we know *Animal Farm*."

"We were sitting for exams in January and the revolution started end of December and they decided to shut all the schools because of the trouble we were making, but that was one of the dictator's mistakes because we had more time to organize rallies," recalls Chebbi.

Never one to shy away from challenges,

Chebbi started speaking out against the injustice suffered by Tunisians, during the revolution, through her ProudlyTunisian blog posts that were published on *openDemocracy* and *Al Jazeera*, among others. Tunisia has made historic leaps since then.

According to UN Women, about 47% of the local council positions in Tunisia were occupied by women, following the May 2018 elections. The increase is attributed to the 2016 electoral law that includes alternation between men and women on candidate lists for all elections. At 30 years old, Chebbi has played a significant role in shaping the narrative of women and youth in her own way.

"I started working for children's rights advocacy, where we would go to children's hospitals and community service centers. I spent two years working with different children's organizations like the Red Cross and all sorts of grassroots national and international organizations that had a children and youth focus. I think after 2011, I started to believe in movement building and saw that it is possible to organize, not only nationally, but across borders," Chebbi says.

That realization opened her up to a whole new world through her travels across Africa. She began to reflect on the challenges that young people faced all over the continent and found it absurd that, with the advent of technology, there was no real movement to galvanize the collective power of the youth in Africa.

Chebbi began to remedy this curious challenge by starting a mentoring program, which came from the understanding that youth



## I STARTED BLOGGING OUT OF FRUSTRATION.

often struggled while transitioning from school to work as they did not know what to do.

She founded the Youth-Programme of Holistic Empowerment Mentoring (Y-PHEM), to coach the next generation to aspire to be positive change agents, before going on to start the Afrika Youth Movement (AYM), one of Africa's largest pan-African youth-led movements, and Afresist, a youth leadership program.

"Afresist is documenting youth work in Africa from an Africa and youth perspective. I was really [upset] with the international media's reporting of the youth-led movement in Africa. So, I started blogging out of frustration of what international media was saying about us and began retweeting pieces for international media, saying you have to correct this narrative."

As the first African Union (AU) Youth Envoy and the youngest diplomat at the AU Commission Chairperson's cabinet, Chebbi's passion and goal is to change the negative rhetoric about Africa.

"I think that is very important. Like we say all the time, we have to own our narrative as Africans and say our story and social media provides a great narrative for that but we allow other western scholars to come in and tell our story. I think it has to be a collaboration, which comes from us, and that narrative has to be shaped by us as well." 

# SONGS OF AFRICA

Creators and consumers of music seek African online music platforms even as global entities and record labels hesitate to fully commit on the continent.

BY TOM JACKSON

**A**FRICA IS A CONTINENT OF over a billion people, with a young, increasingly tech-savvy population that has growing spending power and a desire to find new ways of accessing a wider range of content. And, at a sociocultural level, music plays a huge role in Africa.

A ripe environment for major global players in the music industry, you would think, but things have been rather quiet around digital music on the continent.

Spotify only launched in South Africa last year, and its only other African markets are Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and

Tunisia. Apple Music is still only available in the same handful of African countries as at the time of its launch.

Where these companies have, so far, looked on, others have filled the gap. Chinese company Boomplay, founded in 2015, through a joint venture between phone manufacturer Transsion and consumer apps firm NetEase, now has 42 million users across multiple markets on the continent, and recently secured \$20 million in funding to break into more countries.

Locally and regionally focused platforms are also seeing traction. Key

among them is the Nairobi-based Mdundo, which has more than 3.5 million monthly active users in countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria.

The company works with 50,000 musicians across Africa and has signed a licensing deal with Warner Music Group.

The company's CEO Martin Nielsen says the sector is seeing strong progress, with artists flooding to online platforms to distribute their music and labels paying more attention to the continent.

"We're experiencing an increasing interest in Africa and the music industry, both from commercial partners, record labels, music distributors and global music services. This is a very positive development, Africa is next in line," he says.

The growth of platforms like Mdundo, and the launch of new ones, has benefits for both creators and consumers of music on the continent. For artists, they provide new ways of getting their music out there.

Dumisani Kapanga is founder of the Malawi-based streaming platform Mvelani, which has almost 100,000 songs in its catalogue and claims to have at least 40,000 users each day. He says services like his have broken down barriers to entry for artists.

"It's now easier than ever for musicians to put out music to their fans without relying on record labels to do so. Within minutes an artist can

have their music on some of the biggest platforms out there. We are providing the means for artists to be heard easily, without the need for expensive middle men," Kapanga says.

For consumers, it is ever easier to access music new and old, in a variety of different ways. Damola Taiwo, co-founder of Nigeria-based music downloads platform MyMusic.com.ng, says download platforms such as his own remain the most popular due to factors such as accessibility and affordability, but sees a future in Spotify-style streaming services in Africa.

"The download services seem to still be the preferred method, where individual tracks are downloaded on devices and permanently owned. This is probably due to the cost and quality of internet access on the continent," he says.

"However, there are other more structured platforms that also exist where listeners consume music. Some of them are streaming services similar to Spotify and Apple Music while others are download services, or a mixture of both."

What business model to pursue, and how to monetize, are key challenges faced by local music platforms, and the fact that there are, as yet, no clear answers might account for the wariness of the likes of Spotify and Apple Music to bet big on Africa. Taiwo says another key issue is the lack of major record labels on the continent.

"Most artists will fall under the 'indie' bracket, and even the ones that have record labels are more like a one-man business with a maximum of three artists. This makes licencing difficult as there are too many entities to talk to," he says.

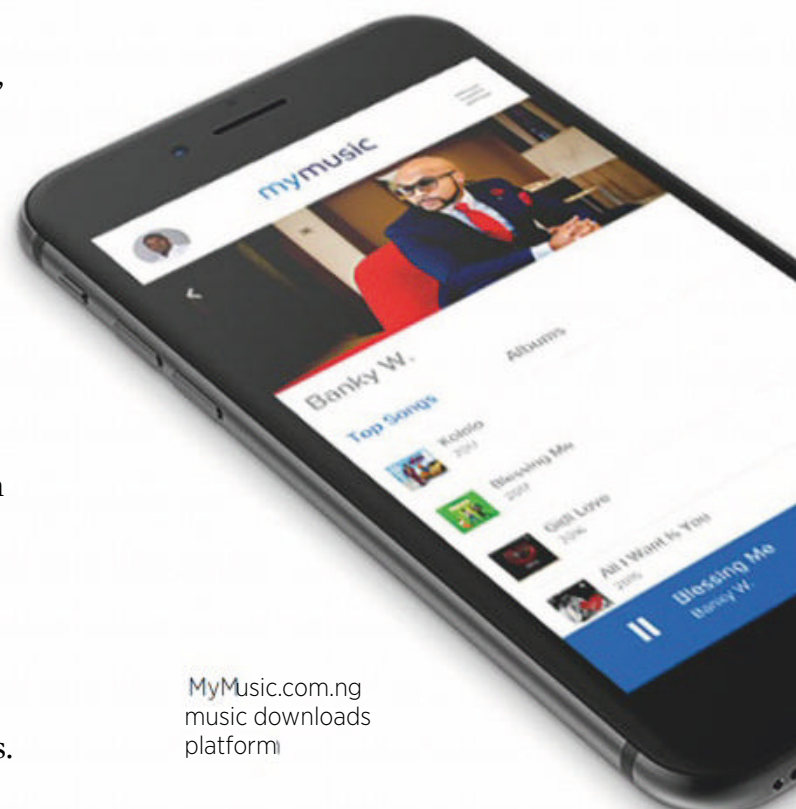
The diversity of what is loosely referred to as the "African consumer", but is, in fact, a huge mass of people with differing tastes and preferences, also poses a problem for music platforms. Nielsen says there is a rapidly growing middle class that demands the same service that global music services offer, yet they are still very data-cost conscious.



**IT'S NOW EASIER THAN EVER FOR MUSICIANS TO PUT OUT MUSIC TO THEIR FANS WITHOUT RELYING ON RECORD LABELS TO DO SO.**

– DUMISANI KAPANGA,  
FOUNDER, MVELANI

"Plus many of the smart devices have limited storage, so we tailor-make our solution to their needs. In addition to that, we have a mass-market segment on our service with low-end smartphone devices that we see a huge potential in with simpler music offerings," he says.



MyMusic.com.ng  
music downloads  
platform

# WORK AT LEISURE

Athleisure attire is slowly making an appearance in office spaces.

COMPILED BY: JULIA RICE



Not every piece of athleisure attire lends itself to every workplace or every workout, but there are more options than ever before. And as with any wardrobe, it should start with a solid trouser and jacket combo and finish off with a belt bag.

1. Half-zip silk-blend polo shirt, Falke Ess, **R2,430 (\$174)**

2. Arrow-jacquard track jacket, Needles, **R4,257 (\$305)**

3. Waterproof logo-patch belt bag, Satisfy, **R2,430 (\$174)**

4. Mid-weight frayed-hem track pants, Satisfy, **R3,106 (\$222,39)**

5. Side-stripe track pants, Valentino **R4,724 (\$338.52)**

6. Men's arena leather sneakers, Balenciaga, **R10,900 (\$776)**

7. Shiny calf leather low-top sneakers, Givenchy, **R9,000 (\$641)**

*Dollar prices are approximate figures as per the exchange rate at the time of going to press.*

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# 'THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A NEED FOR LIVE ART'

South African dancer Mamela Nyamza revived a 30-year-old dance festival to help local artists connect with the rest of the world.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY GYPSEENIA LION



*Do I Look Pretty*  
by Chandre Bo,  
a dance theater  
production that  
explores the  
notion of 'pretty'

**A**N EIGHT-YEAR-OLD GRACES the pulpit of her hometown church capturing the attention of the congregants with her nimble dance moves. Little do they know she would go on to dazzle audiences on some of the world's most prolific stages.

As the deputy artistic director of the South African State Theatre, it all still feels like a dream for the award-winning contemporary dancer who never imagined her passion for dance would lead her here.

Mamela Nyamza owes it all to her childhood.

"Your upbringing will always find a way back to your artistic life," she says.

From running in the rain to dance classes, with a leotard packed into a plastic bag, to curating one of the biggest dance festivals in South Africa, Nyamza is hoping to transform the art form in Africa.

Sitting in her office in South Africa's capital Pretoria, she understands the responsibility of her position.

"I know how important it is for people to come and showcase their work in this theater because I came from a space where doors were not opened for me. The space I come from has taught me a lot as an artist and it has

actually made me the artist I am today because everything I do will always reflect that life," she says.

She hopes to merge the line between art and life by curating the Dance Umbrella Africa Festival.

The festival, formally known as Dance Umbrella Johannesburg, which downed its curtains in 2018 due to lack of funding, has been revived by Nyamza to incorporate a continental approach towards contemporary dancers.

She took it upon herself to revive the program that gave her an opportunity at the start of her career.

"I cannot sit back and watch a festival that groomed many artists in this country close in front of me while I am watching. If it was not for Dance Umbrella, I would have never performed internationally," she says.

For Nyamza, the festival brought programs to South Africa which opened a gateway for artists to connect with the rest of the world, allowing them to showcase their body of work on international stages.

Institutions that support the dance community are needed to assist both aspiring and established dancers, she says.

"You cannot do it alone; you need these



Mamela Nyamza





structures to help you help others. Our role here is to serve the patron, the audience, the artists and everybody.”

The position seemed daunting to her, at first, but she soon realized it was time for change in the industry.

An office job has not tethered the artist’s free spirit.

“I was not going to leave the industry; it is all about leading the industry. I still go out there and work, I still practice my art and I feel, as an artist, I have done Mamele a lot. So why am I still holding on to me? It is time to give back. Right now, being here, I feel like there is a reason for being here. I feel like this is a calling.”

Heeding the call to make a difference, Nyamza, who is dressed in African print, recalls the challenges she faced when she turned her hobby into a profession.

As a black woman, taking it on as a career was the hardest part, thus turning a love into a strange relationship.

Being the only black woman in her dance classes made her feel like “the other” at all times.

“It [ballet] was not accepting me as a black woman. It made me interrogate [ballet] as an artist. Hence, most of my work will always go back to ballet,” she says.

“I was deconstructing something that I know. I was not just talking about ballet, I was deconstructing something that did not accept me as a black woman or did not accept my body.”

This interrogation is reflected in most of her work.



**WE DON’T HAVE MANY BLACK FEMALE DANCE TEACHERS WHO THESE KIDS CAN RELATE TO AND ASPIRE TO BE.**

Surprised by the high number of artists in their early 20s who showcase their work at the State Theatre, Nyamza applauds the transformation that has made these spaces accessible since her early 20s.

A kind of access she had to fight for.

“Right now, my son does not know that we used to walk while it was raining to go to ballet classes. We were not dropped off in cars. It was not easy, it was something you did for love and that is when passion is created. Because of the different times that we come from, it took me years to even put my work at the Artscape [Theatre Centre in Cape Town]. You always look at these differences and not that you are against them, you always just say ‘wow, this is great’.”

As much as there has been the incorporation of digital innovation to ease access to dance and performance, the need for live theater will always be imperative for her.

“There will always be a need for live art because it touches different parts [of us]. When something is live, you remember the liveness of it, the body of it. With technology, you can see it [a performance] there and also have it here, it is easy access but a live body is not easy access and that is what people forget. You have to go out there, pay money, support and watch it live because that live memory stays with you,” she says.

“As artists, it is hard for us to say, ‘here’s my DVD’ and as artists

who perform outside of the country, people ask ‘can you show me something online?’. I tell them that they can see me online but it is not the same. It is never the same. It is all about liveness and experiencing it live.”

The upside is that it opens the window of opportunity for African artists on international stages, which, at times, may pose cultural barriers.

“By being a solo artist, it has been easy for international people to get the whole history of South Africa from one artist and you don’t have to bring the whole [cast of] 80 people to talk about the story. It is easy because you are in South Africa, you are South African. Your work is South African. How you do it is up to you because you are an artist and as an artist, you can interpret your work in any way.

“When showing your work, there is already the assumption that you are from Africa and you need to do celebratory work or ceremonial work and if you don’t do that, there is a question of, ‘I did not accept that from an African woman’. There are so many ways people engage with us as artists coming from Africa,” Nyamza says.

At times, it was easier for men to succeed in the industry, she says.

“When we came as women, we didn’t entertain too much. There was an element of [not all men, some], ‘we are men showing six packs and the body’ and actually giving exactly what the other wants to see. With women, we came with issues that needed to be interrogated and debated. We provoked things and sparked some conversations that will stay with people. We were talking about things that are happening in our country and became the window to our country.”

But back home, the locals are still grappling to understand the art industry, leaving artists like Nyamza with a greater popularity beyond African shores. Locally, she feels the audiences are not as supportive and open to attending live shows.

“At home we don’t have that culture of knowing what is good and understanding our own artists. It is not something our people have grown up with. Much like me studying dance was questioned as ‘what else do you do?’ Nobody will know that I am an international artist. They know us internationally but at home they will ask ‘who is Mamela?’ Not that I want them to know. I am an artist, I just do my work and it speaks for itself.”

Looking at the growing interest for ballet-dancing among black people in South Africa, Nyamza argues that ballet is moving away from the traditional format of only wearing pink tutus and has become more accessible, thus allowing locals to make their own interpretations of the artform. However, the lack of continuity concerns her.


“I always see young black kids doing ballet and then later on there are none. Where are they? What happened to them? But then again, I think this situation is because we don’t have many black female dance teachers who these kids can relate to and aspire to be.” It is a fact most artists and art managers agree on.

The Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative managing and

artistic director PJ Sabbagha says the arts are socially marginalized but it is the artist’s responsibility to change the way it is viewed. Through exposure in his community-based work in Mpumalanga, Sabbagha has realized that an appreciation for the arts is increasing.

“The art is very alive in communities and so is dance, in various forms. We still live in a world where people don’t view the arts as being real. They view it as a hobby or part-time activity. It partly has to do with the way art has positioned itself and also the way society views the arts, it has, basically, never really been seen as a real economic driver with potential for social change.

“The older generation doesn’t see how people’s lives are impacted through the arts. They can earn an income and that it can be a meaningful career or that it can benefit society. Although, things have changed, the economy in the country does not help; there is less investment in the arts because we need to save failing infrastructure,” Sabbagha says.

These are nagging concerns to answer. Because the work of many unknown artists is based on personal impact and interpretation, it becomes challenging to assess what art in small pockets of the world mean to those viewing it. Perhaps, the greater question is, what can be done to get people interested enough to attend an art show? Should it all lay at the feet of artists or should people be more proactive about who and what they view? 



*6x7 Feet Dimension*, named after Nelson Mandela’s prison and the size of the bedroom in Winnie Mandela’s house, is a play about the love letters they wrote to each other



# 'IF YOU ARE AN ARTIST, YOU NEED TO BE OUT THERE AS A HEALER'

An artist and theater owner who  
interrogated his own cultural story.

BY GYPSEENIA LION

**W**HEN CULTURE MEETS ART AT THE REVIVED Dance Umbrella Africa Festival, a rapturous applause offers the stamp of approval to the cast of *Ubizo, The Calling* who take their bows through the exaggerated plumes of smoke at the South African State Theatre.

Under the theme, *Figure-ring - the state of dance in Africa*, the annual festival which shut down a year ago, has been rebranded to incorporate a continental approach.

With over 54 shows performed, over 100 artists were given a platform to showcase their work from March 31 to April 7.

A diverse program celebrating narratives from beyond South African borders, the new home of the annual gathering encompasses a variation of dance genres, ranging from the local dance popular in townships, *Isipantsula*, to diverse classical contemporary performances.

A tribute to Africa performed by the Inkaba Theatre Productions, *Ubizo, The Calling* enticed the audience with a riveting set.

A man dressed in a white and blue cassock wails on his back, as he stretches his arms to the ceiling, his rhythmic movements emphasized by the sounds of wind created by a plastic pipe.

He is pleading to his ancestors for a son.

The show was directed and performed by Sibusiso Mbokazi, the artist from Durban who came to Johannesburg to pursue a career in theater. Unable to explain to his father that the arts are a recognizable career, Mbokazi was left to fend for himself in his first year of studies in Johannesburg.

"I survived with a two-liter coke and a loaf of bread for a week. It was that hard, but my mother saw the passion and love. Today, every time I go back to KwaZulu-Natal, every high school wants my attention because they have that understanding that I worked hard," he says.

Today, he owns a theater company with the focus of raising awareness of the arts in his hometown and communities across the country.

With Inkaba Theatre Productions, learners are given a platform to showcase their talent at a much younger age than he was at the beginning of his career.

A performance alongside South African entertainment personality Somizi Mhlongo changed his parents' perception of the arts.

"We need to invite our parents; we need to be open with them too," he says.

Mbokazi's work is deeply embedded in spirituality which speaks to his personal and artistic life. He says art shouldn't only be created for money but for passion.

"One thing you lose when you create your craft for money is the focus of your creativity. You will lose the audacity of your work. You will lose the understanding of who you are in your craft work. If you are an artist, you need to be out there as a healer..

"We create work with a storyline and a motive but the audience may read it differently."


Performed for the first time in 2013, *Ubizo, The Calling*, amalgamates Christianity and African spirituality in order to interrogate misconceptions around rituals.

"When you are called by your ancestors, it becomes a calling. I realized that people think being called by your ancestors is stigmatized. If you trace it back, you will be told that religion and ancestry has not been separated," he says.

He feels African artists need to go back and interrogate their own cultural stories in a way that will celebrate the authenticity of the continent.

It starts with remembering, he says.

"We are running out of an understanding who we are because we do not have [a place] where we are teaching and giving the understanding of our own culture. To embody and remember them, is something we need to start teaching," he says.

Mbokazi argues that a lack of self-love is what stands in the way of the future of most black artists. 



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# NOMZAMO MBATHA'S KENYA

The South African actor immerses herself in all things Kenyan, from the natural wonders to cultural experiences, and has an awakening.

BY BUSI LETHOLE

IT'S A WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON in Sandton, South Africa, and the sun is a couple of hours away from its daily disappearance down the horizon. FORBES AFRICA makes a phone call. A voice at the other end says a deep “hello”. It is award-winning South African actor and entrepreneur Nomzamo Mbatha, who is in New York City and has just woken up.

From the Big Apple, her mind travels to Africa.

When she's not scorching television screens, in the award-winning South African drama-series, *Isibaya*, Mbatha spends a lot of time traveling.

She has been to 13 countries, but as an African, none has made her feel at home quite like Kenya.

She describes it as the warmest place in Africa and speaks of her endearing memories of the East African country.

“Kenya makes you feel like you should live there. Kenya makes you feel like you're at home...” says Mbatha.

She traveled there for the first time

when she was 16, handpicked by Save the Children, a non-governmental organization promoting children's rights, as one of three South African children representing the country at a conference hosted by Kenya.

Mbatha recounts her first impressions.

“I remember seeing furniture doors just piled up on the side of the road and thought ‘whoa! I've never seen this’ and then I just remember Kenya having lots and lots of bananas.

“Because we were always on a bus, we didn't get to see it (Kenya). My misconception of it, as a child, was that there's not much to do as a tourist.”

In 2018, Mbatha was in Kenya again, flying first class on Kenya Airways with a carry-on and two big bags. “I don't know how to travel light,” she confesses.

She recalls there were times in the earlier years as a traveler when she would pack everything, leave the house and get to the airport only to realize she wasn't carrying her passport.

“So passport... that's like your golden

item! The number two [must-have item] I'd say is sneakers. It's always great to have comfortable sneakers so you're able to walk around the city, around the towns and just be comfortable. So always carry sneakers no matter what!

"Number three – I always have a nice little bag of small decanted toiletries. I have like 20 different things that I use.

"So when you're traveling, especially long-haul flights, you want to be able to have your [face] cream because you don't want to end up using what the airline gives you...

"When I'm traveling and connecting flights, I always make sure I go to the bathroom and use my products and keep my skin hydrated and clean.

"And, of course, the fourth must-have, is a book; it's always a great travel mate."

On her last trip to Kenya, Mbatha traveled with her manager and they were scheduled to fly out to Kakuma on a United Nations mission, however, she requested three days to be in Nairobi before the trip.

"I really just wanted to experience it and see more of it. Also, I was in a space where I hadn't traveled in a while.

"It completely changed me. I went to the K1 Flea Market which is so amazing. Everybody has a smile. Everybody is so welcoming.

"I got to go to the Maasai Market which is absolutely fantastic. And there is so much art and craft you can find there... And then the fanciest restaurants; five-star restaurants they don't tell you about, that they don't show you. The party scene in Kenya is amazing. And what I really loved about Kenya is I felt completely safe."

She then explored the Karura Forest, saved from deforestation by conservationists led by the late



“**FOR ME, IT WAS BETTER THAN SEEING THE EIFFEL TOWER.**”

Wangari Maathai (Nobel Peace Prize laureate, leader of the Green Belt Movement, and environmental and political activist). Karura presented the most memorable moments for Mbatha while in Kenya.

"It was lush. And it was just inspiring to know that a woman's name was behind all of this. I just remember thinking how massive it was. We just stood there and it was one of the best experiences of my life... it was beautiful. For me, it was better than seeing the Eiffel Tower. It's nothing like you've ever seen."

While the visit to Karura Forest left Mbatha in awe, it also taught her a valuable lesson.

"It was emotional in the sense that there is so much we can do for the planet. And it implores one to really do better in terms of our own social responsibility when it comes to environmental sustainability."

Mbatha says the African continent has much to learn from Kenya.

"A lot of innovative businesses in Kenya [are] self-started. The government of Kenya is very cognizant of the fact they are not going to bring international brands. In fact, they empower local brands to start their own businesses, down to potato crisps. It's very motivating for people to have the entrepreneurial spirit," says the globetrotter in love with Africa. 🇰🇪



Nomzamo Mbatha



# AFRICA'S STARS IN EUROPE

Soccer players from the continent are kicking it up a notch as they become instrumental in their European teams contesting championships.

BY NICK SAID

**A** NUMBER OF AFRICAN footballers have excelled at their European clubs in the 2018/19 season, growing their reputations and showcasing the skill, artistry and power of players from the continent.

But there have also been some new names to savor, players who have stepped out of the shadows to boost their reputation and suggest they can become not just stars in their own countries, but also on the global stage.

Belgian coach Tom Saintfiet, who led Gambia in the recent Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers, has worked extensively in Africa and Europe, and is highly-regarded for his tactical acumen and views on the game.

He keeps a keen eye on African players in Europe every week and says there has been much to admire this season.

“You have to start

at Liverpool with Mo Salah and Sadio Mané,” Saintfiet tells FORBES AFRICA.

“The impact that their goals have had for the club has been immense and if they win the English (Premier) League, for the first time in 29 years, this season, then you can truly say this would be a triumph made in Africa.”

Egyptian forward Salah and Senegalese striker Mane are arguably the two outstanding talents from the continent in Europe, at present, but Saintfiet reveals there is much more to admire.

“Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Alex Iwobi at Arsenal have had excellent seasons too, even if their team has struggled, a bit, at times. But you cannot ignore the contribution they have made.

“But one player that has really stood out for me, who is maybe a surprise, is Adam Ounas from Napoli. For me, he is the future. He is only 22 years old, but he is already a fantastic player.”

The winger has had a growing influence at Napoli this season as they emerged as the only real challengers to Juventus for the Serie A title, even if they were some way off the pace in the end.

“He can score goals and provide assistance, and at his age, his potential is simply huge,” Saintfiet says.

“He played against my Gambian side for Algeria and I saw that day a player who can become a star of the game. His opportunities with the national team have been a little limited because of the quality of the competition he faces, but I think in the next few years, he will emerge as a top player from the continent.”

Another who was relatively unknown before the start of the season was Togolese defender Djené Dakonam Ortega, who has been inspirational for surprise-package Getafe CF in the Spanish LaLiga. Ortega has been virtually ever-present for the side in what many consider the best league in the world, and has played a large role in making Getafe challengers for the UEFA Champions League.

“He can play as a left-back or a right-back, and sometimes in the centre too, and he has been very consistent this season. He is a very hard-working footballer who has obvious natural ability,” Saintfiet says.

“I don’t think anybody expected Getafe to have the kind of season they are having, they have been exceptional. I doubt many people had heard of Djené before the start of the season either, but they will know him now.”

Saintfiet is also full of praise for Tanzanian striker Mbwana Samatta, who has been banging in the goals for Genk in Belgium and turned them into surprise championship challengers.

“He is scoring a lot of goals, the best season of his career. I don’t think anybody in Belgium expected Genk to be challenging for the league, but Samatta’s goals have given them the chance to do that.

“He has made a big contribution to the team and, in my opinion, he is ready for a higher level [league].”

Saintfiet also pointed out the quality of Ivory Coast striker Nicolas Pépé at French Ligue 1 side Lille, Burkina Faso forward



**THE IMPACT THAT THEIR GOALS HAVE HAD FOR THE CLUB HAS BEEN IMMENSE AND IF THEY WIN THE ENGLISH (PREMIER) LEAGUE, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 29 YEARS, THIS SEASON, THEN YOU CAN TRULY SAY THIS WOULD BE A TRIUMPH MADE IN AFRICA.**

– TOM SAINTFIET

Bertrand Traoré at Lyon and Senegal defender Kalidou Koulibaly from Napoli.

He has also been impressed by the Champions League exploits of Cameroon goalkeeper André Onana, who plays for Ajax Amsterdam.

“He is a very good goalkeeper, but you know in the Dutch league, he plays for a team [Ajax] that is very dominant and so it is hard to judge his ability. Ajax do not allow their opponents to create many chances, so Onana is, maybe, not tested as much as many other keepers.

“But having watched him closely in the Champions League, it is a different story. There he has been able to show what he can do and for a young goalkeeper, he has acquitted himself very well.

“He will get even better, but he has good physical attributes and comes from a country [Cameroon] that is renowned for producing very good goalkeepers.”



# ‘BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN THE OCEAN’

From the Caribbean to the South African coast, marine archaeologist Matthew Arnett's work involves recovering treasures from the deep - and preserving them for posterity.

BY GYPSEENIA LION

“I HAVE A PET PEEVE WITH people like Elon Musk who want to jet off to space,” remarks Matthew Arnett, who has made it his business to explore the depths of the world's oceans.

“I would think 99% of the sea is left unexplored. I believe there are answers there that come from energy and renewable resources. There is a twilight zone that we don't even know is there, and they want to go to Mars!”

It is the planet we are in that Arnett, the co-founder and CEO of PO8, has made his priority, uncovering treasures that date as far back as the 1400s.

“Millions should be spent under the ocean instead of jetting off to space so quick. There are many aspects of the blue economy that have not been explored and there are so many opportunities that come out of it,” says the explorer who is based in the Caribbean and visiting South Africa.

PO8 is a marine archaeology startup that uses blockchain technology to recover sunken artifacts from the ocean floor.

Using the blockchain model, through PO8, ownership of the recovered treasures and artifacts is with non-fungible tokens, which are asset-backed tokens.

Arnett says the sensitive, more lucrative approach is preserving these artifacts in museums and not giving them away to private collectors.

“They [the artifacts] have to stay in the public domain and that is why there are the museums.”

With innovative ways of looking at the blue economy, the PO8 project, based in the Caribbean, also aims to connect lost histories across the globe.

The growing historical tourism market in the Caribbean generates revenue without selling any of the recovered artifacts, leading to social and economic impact that he says can be duplicated in Africa.

“Because of the success in the Caribbean, it only makes sense to come back to Africa to put the same model in place.

“There are millions and billions of dollars in the ocean,” Arnett says.

“We are going to find other things that relate back to Africa, so we might also be able to find some missing links from an anthropology stand point.”

He believes his work contributes to transforming the narrative of the Caribbean that's often only known for tourism. “When you look at the Caribbean, it is no longer just sun, sand and sea; there is a tech tsunami that is coming,” he says.


“I am from an island known for pirates. There is a pirate who was able to withstand the British government for 31 years while the British government controlled other parts of the Bahamas. He used the Bahamas as his treasure chest... and that blood is soaked in the soil; that is out of which I am born. I was raised with these stories of piracy.”

As Arnett taps into new knowledge systems, he believes that there is value in



**WE ARE GOING TO FIND OTHER THINGS THAT RELATE BACK TO AFRICA.**

ensuring that all have access to his findings.

“These artifacts are open to anthropologists, archaeologists, or to university programs all over the world to come to the Bahamas and study these objects to draw parallels between other pieces and artifacts that might be similar to them. Essentially, we are telling the story of our past in a way that it can be globally accepted and people can own a part of history.” 



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# ‘PUTTING MONEY TO GOOD WORK’

Formerly with the British Army, Kenya-based 4G Capital CEO Wayne Hennessy-Barrett speaks about investing in artificial intelligence and fintech in Africa.

## **A MILITARY MAN AND NOW THE CEO OF A FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY CREDIT PROVIDER. HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?**

I moved into tech and financial inclusion after a career in the military, followed by a period of consulting. As an Infantry Officer in the British Army, I saw extreme suffering and poverty in Bosnia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

In all these places, there were highly capable people who had lost their businesses, homes and, often, entire societies.

They didn't need more war. What they needed was investment and the opportunity to grow their communities in peace.

This affected me deeply and was, ultimately, the reason I left a military career to try to create positive value.

I wanted to directly address the problems that caused these conflicts: exclusion, injustice, ignorance, fear and a lack of opportunity.

## **WHAT MAKES YOUR CREDIT PRODUCTS UNIQUE FOR AFRICA'S INFORMAL MARKET SECTOR?**

We design, execute and iterate around our clients' needs. Credit alone can be highly risky for all parties; we work hard to right-size our loans, and optimize the term and price-point to really boost our customers' business.

If we can't provide the right solution, then it's important to be honest and wait until there is a fit, rather than just lend and risk that business getting into trouble.

## **WHAT IS THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN AFRICA AND HOW ARE YOU INVESTED IN THE CONTINENT?**

There are great returns to be had if businesses solve customers' problems on terms that work for them. I am 100% invested in our operations in Africa. But the African investment climate has its own particular characteristics: business

models and execution teams have to be resilient, innovative and robust, and deals will often be smaller than in other markets. Investors need to be as savvy and adaptive to opportunities as entrepreneurs.

## **YOUR MOST REGRETTABLE FINANCIAL DECISION AND LESSONS LEARNED?**

I've been extremely fortunate up until now. I took a position on gold in late 2012, believing that quantitative easing in the west would lead to strong prices in physical assets. This wasn't the case, and 2013 began with some huge exits on the gold market which crashed prices for some time. The lesson is that markets run on sentiment as well as logic, and you have to respect this.

## **WHAT DO YOU SPEND YOUR MONEY ON MOSTLY?**

I believe in investing in quality, whether in a business capacity, or in great life experiences. I love traveling with my family to amazing places and having really special times together.

I'm afraid I'm also a total geek – I love tech and gadgets, but as long as they're useful and don't gather dust, I can justify it!

## **HOW DO YOU STAY FINANCIALLY DISCIPLINED?**

I didn't have a lot of money growing up. I was raised by a single mum who worked incredibly hard to try to give her kids the best chance in life. It's a very common experience echoed by about 80% of our customers. I reflect daily on how lucky I am. I believe in making money, putting it to good work, and enjoying the journey. Living within your means is pretty important to achieving this.

## **WHAT IS THE MOST YOU WOULD INVEST IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND WHY?**

AI is both fascinating and immeasurably



**THEY DIDN'T NEED MORE WAR. WHAT THEY NEEDED WAS INVESTMENT.**

important. We all need to be active investors here to make sure it goes in the right direction. We have it in our power to design and utilize AI for the betterment of humanity, but these must be designed responsibly from the outset. 4G Capital is continuously evolving its AI to protect the individual and the values that build healthy societies. Our 6% NPL (non-performing loan) rate is under half the continental average in Africa, and a strong indicator of the overall financial health of our client base.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR INVESTMENT DECISIONS FOR THE FUTURE?**


Any investment is based on a better return for the future. We, therefore, cannot and must not invest in anything which threatens that future. I am very keen on the greentech/cleantech sectors as well as financial inclusion. Keeping a balanced portfolio between hard assets, longer term plays and cash is always wise. 

– Interviewed by Gypseenia Lion

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# THE TABLEAU OF THE WILD

The beasts and the drama of the African bush, far from the harsh lights of big city Johannesburg.

BY JILL DE VILLIERS

**T**HERE IS A MYSTIQUE ABOUT the African bush that enchants visitors from all over the world. Some of them become so captivated they decide to stay on, or return time and again.

Even a born and bred African like me, albeit of European descent, cannot say no to a few days of “bundu bashing”. There is nothing quite like escaping the bumper-to-bumper traffic and constant hum of the big city, to experience a range of smells as you move through the bush. The scent of the long grass. The whiff from the marula trees. The odor of fresh dung.

And at night, when you look up to the canopy of the sky, you feel as though you could reach out and touch the stars. The Southern Cross. Orion’s Belt. The river of the Milky Way. Venus, the morning and the evening star. The red glint of Mars.

On the day our group arrives at the exclusive Sable Camp at MalaMala within the larger Sabi Sands Game Reserve, which shares a 19-kilometer open border with South Africa’s Kruger National Park, it is hot and humid.

On this day in the country’s Mpumalanga province, it hits 39 degrees. We settle in and get ready for the first game drive of our stay.

We are here for the launch of a beautiful book by renowned wildlife photographers Gerald Hinde and Will Taylor – both men with a deep love for animals and African landscapes. We pile onto four game-viewing vehicles to find and photograph the heroes

and heroines of their book – *The Big Seven: Adventures in Search of Africa’s Iconic Species*.

The roads are rough and rudimentary as we head into the bush, cameras with long lenses at hand. We drive along a river bed. As the sun moves slowly down towards the western horizon, its rays glint in the waves of green and yellow grass. The wheels skid in the white sand. We drive past a large bush and suddenly an elephant appears, tugging and tearing at the foliage. He looks at us and flaps his ears lazily.

A bit further on, after literally bashing through the bush, off-road, we see her. Slinky and quiet, her pelt shines in the setting sun. The lone female leopard looks at us with the disdain of a cat disturbed by bothersome humans. She slinks through the bush as we follow her. Then she sits perfectly still, slowly turning her head from side to side.


As darkness settles, the vehicle lights come on and we head back to the lodge. In an outdoor boma, tables are set up in the round, and a five-star dinner is served under the expanse of the night sky. We are treated like royalty by all of the staff of MalaMala. Most of them come from the community that now owns the reserve, after the conclusion of a successful land claim deal in 2014.

The next day dawns. Overcast, with a soft, insistent rain. The temperature has dropped 14 degrees. Donning rain ponchos, the group of adventurers set forth on the morning game drive. The mission is to encounter every one of the Big Seven. The traditional Big Five tourists flock to game reserves to see are:

elephant, lion, rhino, leopard and buffalo. Two more have been added, both on the endangered list – the wild dog and cheetah.

Just as humans are shy of rain, so are animals. They lie low in the grass or huddle under trees where they can’t be seen. An hour or so into the drive, the drizzle lifts and we see movement in the grass.

A lioness lifts her head and looks at us. Slowly, slowly, one lion after another stands up to look at the vehicles. There are, at least, eight of them. They lose interest in us again, and stretch out on the ground.

The time to leave comes far too soon. The quiet and beauty of the bush have soaked into my soul and I feel completely at peace and one with the sky and the grass and the trees and the animals and the river and the world. 



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