

entrepreneur

Absa Entrepreneur Award



IAN FUHR sorbet

Ian Fuhr has been nominated for Sorbet, a national chain of beauty salons, nails bars and drybars (express hair salons). There are currently 104 Sorbet stores nationally which employ approximately 1,000 staffers. 96 of the stores are franchised.

Sorbet is the largest chain of beauty salons in the history of the South African beauty industry. Ian describes himself as a "serial entrepreneur."

His business is unique in the beauty industry in various aspects, including: Branding and marketing; The service culture of the organisation; Its focus on people before profits; Its loyalty programme which has over 150,000 members; and Its strong relationship with the Clicks group.

Ian's recreational activities include gym, watching sport, writing and spending time in the bush. He also has a business interest in The Lion Park.

61-Year-old Ian matriculated at King David Victory Park. He is divorced and engaged to tie the knot once again in December.

Fuhr believes his greatest business achievement "lies in the creation of various brands and making a difference in the lives of the people who have been employed by these businesses and the customers who have been served by them."

On the other hand, his greatest disappointment in business was his being personally sequestered in 1986 "through the failure of a business with which I had been involved and for which I had signed a personal surety," says Ian.

HIS BUSINESS BOOK PUBLISHED THIS MONTH

He has also written a book entitled "Get that feeling" which will be released through Penguin Publishers in August 2014. The book, says Ian, tells the story of his entrepreneurial journey and focuses on his business philosophy of "people before profits and service before reward."

Going forward, Ian Fuhr says that "Sorbet has been growing its annual system-wide turnover at an average rate of 55 percent per

annum over the last five years," he says. In 2013 Sorbet opened 32 new stores. In 2014 they have opened 16 stores to date, "and we expect to open at least a further ten by year end," he says.

Despite the difficult economic climate, he says, "we expect to continue to take a larger share of the beauty salon market which, in its entirety, has been fairly static." He anticipates a growth of 45-50 percent in Sorbet's financial year ending in February 2015. He projects system-wide sales of R375-million for the year.

As if that wasn't enough to keep him on the go, Sorbet is launching an extension of the brand into a men's grooming salon called "Sorbet Man" in August. A serial entrepreneur indeed!

Ian Fuhr's personal business philosophy: "I believe in building a strong organisational culture that is focused on service - and putting people before profit."

And he isn't stopping there either! Sorbet is going international with the opening of their first Sorbet salon in London later this year.

Through their relationship with Clicks, who formulate and manufacture Sorbet branded products for exclusive sale in Clicks and Sorbet stores, they expect continued strong growth of this range throughout the year. Ian and Clicks are also excited about the pending launch of the Sorbet skincare range in November.

"Clicks has committed to building the Sorbet brand into one of their dominant beauty brands over the next five to ten years," he says.

As the CEO, Ian is no longer involved in the day-to-day operations of the company. He has passed on the role of MD to Rudi Rudolph. But Sorbet remains a predominantly family business.

He personally oversees all the induction training for every new franchisee and staff member throughout the country at which he explains the Sorbet philosophy and emphasises the importance of service before self-interest.



GIL SPERLING, DANIEL LEVY AND RYAN SILBERMAN

popimedia

Popimedia is a leading Social Media and Adtech Company in SA, providing social media services and technology platforms to many blue chip multinationals as well as companies in Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

The company's three partners have managed to elevate themselves above their competitors in the crowded digital marketing space by focussing on the product development side that social media platforms have opened up. They dominate the social media space due to their core pillars, focusing on media, digital and product development as well as constant innovation.

While understanding that social media campaigns must be strategic, Popimedia believes that they must also be precisely measurable in terms of the conversations a brand has with its consumers and, specifically, how those conversations convert into bankable sales for clients.

This led to the in-house development of the acclaimed proprietary tool, meedee8, which has piqued the interest of social media's largest players, including Facebook itself.

2014 has seen Popimedia sign strategic deals with major media agencies and multi-nationals, including L'Oréal, Clover, Energizer and Unilever.

Following the success of meedee8's global launch this year, Popimedia has set themselves the lofty goal of dominating Facebook and Twitter media-spend in emerging markets.

Not satisfied with their incredible success to date, Daniel Levy, Ryan Silberman and Gil Sperling now want it all.

Gil Sperling, 30, is a product of King David Linksfield, after which he did a B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering (Information). He relaxes in the gym or on his cycle.

Ryan Silberman, 34, also hails from King Linksfield. His B.Sc., though, is in Industrial Engineering and, as if he didn't get enough tech at the office, he relaxes by studying innovation and says he is a "tech enthusiast."

Daniel Levy, at 36, is the 'old guy' around Popimedia, He hails from King David Victory Park and went on to do a BA LLB. He is a member of Entrepreneur Organization (EO) and lists his recreational interests as gym, cycling and classic cars.

Joburg-based Popimedia employs 35 people and operates in Africa, the Middle East and Europe. They are one of 260 Preferred Marketing Developers (PMD*) in the world and the only one in Africa.

The make-up of their business is unique relative to competitors in that there are three distinct silos: (i) They are a digital agency; (ii) They are a media buying agency; and (iii) They do their own product development internally.

Daniel Levy says of his greatest achievement in business: "Starting from zero with two engineers and myself, a lawyer, taking on the IT and media industry and doing it extremely well."

Gil Sperling: "I started Popimedia when I was 23 and have grown it into Africa's leading social media and AdTech company."

Ryan Silberman: "Creating the biggest social media agency in the country while growing a family of five."

On their own personal business philosophies?

Gil: "Work smart and hard. Be the best. Rather make the wrong decision than no decision at all. 80/20 rule with everything – better done than perfect."

Ryan: "I have two: i) Opportunity is everywhere, choose wisely; and 2) Commit to solving a problem and then figure it out. Iterate often. If you try to figure everything out before you commit, nothing will get done."

Daniel: "Wash, rinse, repeat with uncompromised competence and perpetual innovation."

On how each sees the business in the year ahead?

Ryan: "I see significant growth in the continent and award winning campaigns for clients."

Gil: "Another year of at least 100 percent year-on-year growth, more penetration into other emerging market regions, evolution of our technology to encompass all social channels and above the line media."

Daniel: "We see significant growth; aligning with global partners and more prolific penetration into Africa." Clearly these guys share common strategic goals.



SHELLEY GEFFEN *Shelley Geffen*

Shelley Geffen employs a staff of 26. "Our offices and kitchen are in Johannesburg and that's where we do most of our work," she says. "We also cater for national and international clients who require our services such as Safaris at Singita Lodge and conferences in Mauritius."

But the main activity of her business is "top quality kosher catering for a full range of needs from private functions for any occasion, Jewish festivals, shul affairs, corporate clients and our growing retail product line," she says.

We are equipped to provide glamorous, gourmet luxury cuisine and also home-style, simply delicious foods - to suit the broad spectrum of budgets and needs of our clients.

What makes Shelley Geffen's catering stand out from the rest is the diversity of services that they offer - from catering for the Yom Tovim to out-of-town and country catering services, as well as Friday night brochas, lunches, shabbatonim, brissim, weddings and bar and bat mitzvahs.

"We are unique in offering each of our clients a personalised menu to suit every taste, style and budget," says Shelley. "Every call we receive is treated with personal attention and details to match!"

STARTED WITH A STOVE, A BAKER AND R5,000

Shelley started her business with a loan of R5,000, one stove, her baker Paulina and herself. Today, she runs a successful catering company employing and empowering many people.

She says she feels blessed that she has also managed, "together with my soul-mate, life partner and endless support, David," to raise a beautiful family at the same time as building and running her business.

And, she adds, she paid back the loan!

Her only regret is that she "didn't start my business many years earlier, when I was a little younger," says Shelley.

She plans to increase her retail product range to make more of

Shelley Geffen's Specialties accessible to the consumer on a regular basis. "In this difficult economic time, our focus is (on) trying to streamline our expenses, striving to be sensitive to needs of the community in giving value for money - whilst not compromising on quality and style," she says.

Shelley sees her management team as being like a family. "We work very closely with each other and look out for each other - I am blessed to have employees who are fully devoted and loyal," she comments. "People are empowered by my acknowledging their strengths and trusting them, and I strive to pass on these messages."

Shelley exudes confidence about the year ahead for SA. "We are a strong, unified Jewish community with excellent leadership from our Chief Rabbi, Dr Warren Goldstein, and his team," she says. With initiatives such as Sinai Indaba and the Shabbos Project gaining strength and momentum, says Geffen, SA Jewry is headed for an exciting and inspiring time ahead.

"Our country has many challenges," she acknowledges, "but by maintaining our strength in our community, and serving as examples of success and integrity to those around us, we can impact the country for the better."

62-year-old Shelly is a product of Hyde Park High School and has a National diploma in graphic design from the Johannesburg College of Art (now known as Joburg Technicon). She also has a Post grad diploma in art and technology textile design, from the Sir John Cass school of art and technology in London.

Shelley doesn't have time for hobbies, she says, "all of my free time is designated to my family in SA and Israel."

Shelley's business philosophy: "Being positive, trying to understand things from the customers' perspective, giving good, honest service and striving for excellence." It boils down to hard work and not cutting corners, she says. "My motto keeps me from getting complacent: 'You are only as good as your last function!'" she says.

"And, mostly - when the going gets tough, don't forget that everything is from Hashem, and He gives the strength to achieve anything!" she says.



LEON RUBINSTEIN rubinstein's jewellers

Leon Rubinstein has a simple business philosophy that has always stood him in good stead: "To provide my clients with value for money and also to provide personalised quality service of the highest standard."

Leon matriculated at Florida Park High School before completing the second year of his B Comm Accounting degree. Unfortunately, or fortunately as it turned out, due to Leon's late father's illness, he had to take over the family Jewellery business.

At the ripe age of 70, Leon Rubinstein still operates Rubinstein's Jewellers in Florida, Roodepoort. He employs three full-time and two part-time staffers.

Leon's retail jewellery business has a secret weapon – he established a jewellery boutique on the world famous Blue Train. "No other top luxury train in the world has such a facility," he says proudly.

Leon is a service specialist in everything he does. He once kept a piece of jewellery for a client, he says for six years after repairing it in the early eighties. Leon still remembers the client's name, Mrs Pat Smith.

"I went to immense trouble to trace her because she had not collected her necklace and eventually determined that she was at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town in 1985. Two years later, in 1987, she collected her necklace and presented me with a gift in appreciation for keeping it for so long," he says. She had been in a serious motorcar accident and had suffered severe brain damage resulting in memory loss.

"To this day," says Leon, "her gratitude and appreciation strengthens my strong belief in human kindness realising that money is not everything."

Getting Transnet to agree to his Blue Train idea, says Leon, wasn't easy. In fact it was very frustrating for him. "I pursued the idea of establishing the unique jewellery boutique on the Blue Train over a period of some five years before Transnet accepted and we implemented the idea," he says.

During this period Transnet's formal written rejection in December 1993, stated that the idea was not viable and would fail. After all

the enthusiasm and work he had put into the project, says Leon, this was his most disappointing experience in his long business career.

"I persisted none the less," he says, "and Transnet finally accepted the idea. We have now conducted the boutique with great success during the past 15 years." The idea has reaped substantial profits for both Transnet and himself.

"Now," says Leon, "at the age of 70 I have decided to stay with what I know, the concept of what I achieved on the Blue Train - selling jewellery in a secure and relaxed environment by appointment only, where I can provide personalised quality service." He has extended this business model he so successfully pioneered on the Blue Train, and it "is now already established in my present business premises."

SA's trying economic times can be overcome by less regulation, particularly related to rigid labour laws, and allowing business to grow.

The management of the business has always vested in Leon and his wife. "We were both the management," he says, "and we are still happily married. We built our relationship through the tried process of give-and-take and ongoing compromise."

For recreation, Leon likes to walk with his wife and their two German Shepherds, he enjoys watching DVDs of André Rieu's concerts all over the world, and watching sport – particularly soccer, rugby and cricket.

Sharing his years of wisdom, Leon says that SA's "trying economic times can be overcome by less regulation, particularly related to rigid labour laws, and allowing business to grow." "The positives such as our tourist industry should be promoted, such as the world renowned Table Mountain, luxury Game Lodges and the Garden Route," he says.



ARTHUR GOLDSTUCK world wide worx

Arthur Goldstuck heads the World Wide Worx research organisation. He presents his insights to audiences across the globe. World Wide Worx produces the most widely accepted statistics for Internet use in SA. Most major local media outlets – across print, radio, television and online – rely on their data for commentary on technology trends reshaping the business world.

Goldstuck founded World Wide Worx in 2000 with a vision for a small, nimble research house that could leverage emerging technology in order to provide a clear, objective understanding of the trends reshaping business in SA and Africa. He has since built it into SA's leading independent technology research company whose findings have a greater impact on public debate than work produced by companies many times larger.

“Treat everyone with equal respect, whether the most high-powered decision-maker or the humblest individual in the most menial of roles.”

In his research projects, he has been partnered by some of the biggest technology and financial services companies in the world, including Google, Microsoft, HP, MasterCard, and Amadeus. Many of SA's biggest companies, including FNB, Standard Bank, Absa and Nedbank, have also been partners in World Wide Worx' research projects.

For his work in unravelling and demystifying technology and the trends around it, the Institute of IT Professionals SA named Goldstuck as their recipient of the 2013 Distinguished Service in ICT Award, and made him an Honorary Fellow of the Institute.

This year, the Minister of Communications appointed Goldstuck to the National Broadband Advisory Council, a body that has been mandated by Cabinet to guide the Government on its broadband policy.

Goldstuck is also an award-winning writer, analyst and commentator on Internet, mobile and business and consumer technologies. As a journalist, he was news editor of the Weekly Mail (now the Mail & Guardian), South African correspondent for Billboard, and a freelance feature writer for the Times of London,

among others. He publishes the online consumer technology magazine called Gadget.co.za, and is author of 19 books. His weekly gadgets column is the most widely syndicated technology column in South Africa. He also writes a weekly technology trends column for Business Times in the Sunday Times.

The 55-year-old Goldstuck attended Brebner High School in Bloemfontein before doing his BA at Wits.

He is on the management committee of the SA Board of Jewish Education and enjoys writing, gym, watching theatre and soccer, listening to music, collecting comics and travelling.

World Wide Worx employs six full-time and six part-time staffers and 50 more on contract. They are based in Johannesburg but conduct market research in technology use by businesses and consumers throughout Africa. They also provide input into the public debate on technology and telecommunications issues and policy; and provide media commentary on technology trends and statistics.

“We are a small business with a bigger profile than most other market research organisations in the country – some of which are many times our size,” says Goldstuck. We are a virtual organisation, able to expand on an ad hoc basis to any size “by utilising the Internet.” At times we have had more than 100 people working on a single project.”

WWW have been able to conduct research comprising some 6,000 interviews for one survey – among the largest market research projects conducted by a private company in South Africa, he says.

He is most proud of having been invited by Google, MasterCard and Microsoft, among other international corporations, to partner in research projects. “Our research findings have been acknowledged and used by the International Telecommunications Union, the British Commonwealth Secretariat, and the US Department of State, among others,” he says.

Goldstuck is focussed on the strategy for World Wide Worx going forward: “We are: consolidating relationships with some of South Africa's leading corporations; expanding our research in cloud computing; and further expanding our area of coverage and our strategic partnerships across Africa.”



ADAM LEVY play lifestyle design

Adam Levy has been nominated in the Absa Entrepreneur category for his main business, which is "Play Lifestyle Design (Pty) Ltd t/a Play Braamfontein." However, as will become clear, his involvement in the Arts and Braamfontein go very much deeper than that.

The 37-year-old Levy matriculated at King David Victory Park and went on to do get a Bcom; LLB degree.

Among the many other businesses Adam Levy is involved in, are: The Neighbourgoods Market; The Alexander Theatre; Anti Est.; The And Club; Craft Cocktails; Craft at the Market; and The Beach.

Among Adam's civic involvement are the following organisations:

- Vice-chair of the Braamfontein Improvement District;
- Ambassador to the National School of Arts; and
- Benefactor of the Kalashnikov Art Gallery.

Play Lifestyle employs eleven full-time staffers and operates out of offices in Braamfontein – between Wits and the Johannesburg CBD.

The main activity of the business is Play Braamfontein, which Levy describes as "ostensibly a property development company dedicated to making a positive impact on the urban landscape of Johannesburg."

But, he adds, the business is "also responsible for the cultural curation of Braamfontein."

"Play has almost single-handedly been responsible for the revitalisation of this once depilated area," he says, and strives to maximise the potential of each building with the utmost attention to detail and design.

"The tenants in our spaces become a vital part of the community and share our vision to revive Braamfontein into the creative networking hub of Johannesburg," says Adam Levy.

He points out that, considering the public's resistance to uplifting the area several years ago, "the sceptical views and perceptions are being transformed into enlightened opinions as 'the new city-goer' is discovering this growing mecca of aspiration and inspiration through the offerings of Play."

Adam feels that his greatest achievement in business has been "recognising the opportunity to redevelop the city when no-one believed it was possible."

He has earned himself a steadfast reputation of getting things done, with a steely resilience and unwavering integrity.

"I'm pleased to say that to some degree I've been able to communicate with such varying groups of people that a platform for modifying status quo in our city now has a solid foundation to grow from," says Adam. "Johannesburg is no longer the pariah and the world seems to be intrigued about how our differences are our bond."

However, it seems that the powers that be don't share Adam's passion for urban renewal. He says that his greatest disappointment in business has been his "continual and seemingly perpetual disappointment with those responsible for the governance of the City of Johannesburg who have done little to promote and assist with the process of upliftment and integration."

Adam Levy relaxes by mountaineering, traveling, running and enjoying arts and culture of all types.

AFFORD CAPABLE PEOPLE THE SPACE THEY REQUIRE

Going forward, says Adam, he intends to continue to innovate. "My business has always had a reputation of being pioneering in the field of design and entertainment," he says. "We will endeavour to continue to bring new ideas to a broader range of people in the coming years."

He believes he has reached a "critical mass of believers in the sustained improvement of our city and consequently our culture and we will continue to create new forums for young South Africans to be inspired."

To build a management team, says Adam, one has to lead by example. "You always have a willingness to do the things you expect of others and, accordingly, afford capable people the space they require to want to emulate only the good that you do."

"When I see the thousands of people coming through to Braamfontein every week - of every colour, creed, age and nationality - I can safely say that my business often feels like a periscope into a utopian future - where our diversity is our strength," he says. "I live in perpetual hope - that tomorrow will always be better than today... it's the domain of dreamers."



NADAV OSSENDRYVER

latest sightings

Latest Sightings (Pty) Ltd is a unique, social media driven platform aimed at promoting tourism in South Africa and supporting conservation projects while educating followers about the correct way to behave in the bush.

It currently has 100,000 members and, at this stage, primarily focuses on visitors currently in the Kruger National Park, be they rangers or tourists. The idea is to get people in the Park to report in real-time on animals and events that they see. They report their location, time and sighting to Latest Sightings, which in turn broadcasts these "tings" (a reported sighting) over the various social media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, BBM and smartphones).

Despite their incredible success, they are currently developing an improved App that will "cache sightings when visitors are not within signal area, and then report the sightings when they reach signal, place sightings on map according to geolocations, and automatically update sightings across the media," says Nadav.

Latest Sightings has five staffers, is based in Johannesburg, but operates in the Kruger National Park and Pilanesberg. They plan on expanding to game reserves throughout the country and worldwide.

Nadav Ossendryver is just 18-years-old and is currently doing his matric at King David High School in Linksfield. He is a typical (except for his enthusiasm and entrepreneurial skills) teenager and enjoys drumming and playing tennis.

He is involved in a host of conservation and wildlife projects such as Virtual Honorary Rangers, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and their various projects - such as KNP Wild Dogs, Ground Hornbill Project, etc.

Latest Sightings' project meets many needs not previously possible:

1. Enhancing safari experiences by enabling visitors to go directly to interesting sightings;
2. Contributing to research projects like the Wild Dog Project, the Ground Hornbill project, the Leopard Identification project, Pangolin and Bat projects. Nadav also contributes to EWT special projects like road kill awareness.
3. Contributing to wildlife conservation: "When I receive a report

of a snared animal or suspicious activity, I report it immediately to the authorities," he says. To date, Latest Sightings has saved rhinos (which they don't report sightings of due to poaching), hyenas, wild dogs and lions which have been injured by poachers.

4. Educating their followers about the correct behaviour acceptable in the bush. Each morning, the first posts on all the media are about "bush etiquette" and how to report poaching and suspicious behaviour. "I have also lectured to youth, trying to inspire them to love wildlife and conservation," says Nadav.
5. Communicating with wildlife enthusiasts who have become addicted followers of the sightings. Nadav says many ex-pat South Africans report how they are living in Kruger virtually - by following Sightings!
6. Promotes tourism to South Africa!

NU, BUT IS IT A BUSINESS?

The success of the business model is built around this passion for wildlife and three revenue streams: the most profitable of which is the YouTube channel. The other revenue comes from online bookings and advertising. Nadav's YouTube channel is the fifth most viewed SA channel, with over 64 million views.

Latest Sightings is unique in that it is based on crowd-sourcing and a strong, passionate, dedicated community worldwide. Wildlife enthusiasts contribute their sightings, called a 'ting,' in real time. Nearby followers of the free App get alerts and join the excitement.

Nadav is especially proud of the fact that Latest Sightings has become an integral part of wildlife research - teaming up with mega players. "I have been involved in saving wildlife such as rhinos, hyenas and wild dogs from poaching," says Nadav.

His work has not gone unnoticed and he has been an "Eco Ambassador" for the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the youngest "Virtual Honorary Ranger" appointed by SANParks and the first Lead SA Youth Hero for his work in wildlife and conservation; got the EW Radio Nelson Mandela Day Youth Community Leadership award; and attended a Youth Meeting with President Obama during his visit to SA in 2013.



JACQUELINE CLINGMAN *pinnacle digital solutions*

Jacqui Clingman's Pinnacle Digital Solutions (Pty) Ltd. (PDS) specialises in doing large format dye sublimation printing of banners, gazebos, flags and the like. "We also do large format Digital printing of PVC banners, billboards, pennants etc.," she says. The business's third division manufactures aluminium flagpoles to order as well as steel banner poles. "We also offer installation of these items," she says.

PDS, says Jacqui, offers a unique service level and quality of product across the range of what they do. "We are also very innovative in that we strive to be the first in our industry to get the latest technology and keep abreast of what is going on in the market," she says.

To remain at the cutting edge of international innovation in her industry, says Jacqui, she needs to constantly travel worldwide, to markets such as Asia.

Clingman, who matriculated at Eden College, is based in Johannesburg and employs 34 people. She is particularly proud of having built a business from scratch. She started with four staff members and R50,000 in capital.

Jacqui feels that the economic situation in the country is questionable. "It depends on which way the government goes," she says.

Today, she says, PDS is one of the biggest digital printing companies in South Africa and building ever-stronger relationships with both its suppliers and customers.

Jacqui always has her mission statement top-of-mind: "Quality, quality, quality! Quality of people, quality of product and quality of customer service," she says. Jacqui is constantly disappointed at the lack of morality in competitive businesses.

She is also irked by the crumbling infrastructure in South Africa. "As far as electricity and the internet are concerned," she says, "they are making business growth very difficult."

But she remains up-beat as far as her own business is concerned. "I see PDS growing even more with continued customer care and keeping abreast with the latest technology. I have just returned from the States and will be going to Hong Kong in October to look for new ideas and products," she says.

Jacqui Clingman is passionate about animals and active in Beauty Without Cruelty and various other animal rights organisations. And for relaxation?: "With the little time I have available, reading and watching television," she says.

She believes in growing her employees by investing her time in education and motivation. "I do a lot of in-house training and spend time with management discussing strategy," she says. "I also have an 'open' door policy."

She insists that everyone at PDS is treated with respect. "Giving people an opportunity to express their ideas," she says, "leads to creative thinking."

Jacqui feels that the economic situation in the country is questionable. "It depends on which way the government goes," she says.

At a personal level, says Clingman, "I have a very positive outlook from a business point of view as long as the infrastructure is improved and more assistance is given to small and growing businesses." She feels that it is imperative that job creation is made a priority along with education and health care.

"But jobs, jobs, jobs!" she stresses. "This country has so much to offer and enormous potential but only with the will of government and, to a smaller degree, big businesses, can we really look forward to a positive future." Right now, she says, the country faces challenges unless the capital expenditure needed to support growing businesses is made available.

"My philosophy is to always be ethical in business," she says. "I am still of the adage that one's word is sacrosanct. My business and personal outlook are the same." She believes that if one treats people with the respect and dignity they deserve, and does everything within one's power for their upliftment, the rewards will be reaped.



PAUL BERMAN

Berman Bros Property Holdings

Paul Berman has been nominated in his capacity as CEO of Berman Bros Property Holdings (Pty) Ltd.

48-year-old Paul is a product of the renowned Cape Town Herzlia Schools after which he did his BA LLB. He is married and has various other business interests including various other body corporates.

Berman Bros employ over 150 staff and operate predominantly in the Western Cape. Historically, residential and commercial construction has been one of the core competencies of Berman Bros, says Paul. And, over the years, they have built up a formidable reputation for their exemplary attention to detail.

Today, they only build for themselves and only engage in large developments.

"In recent years," says Paul, Berman Bros has built up a significant residential and commercial portfolio, teamed up with strategic partners and embarked on significantly sized residential and commercial developments, as well as mixed use residential and commercial property developments."

With ample internal experience, their organisation is in an excellent position to coordinate both large and small-scale projects, he explains, "either as property developers, business partners, or as project managers."

"We also focus on the acquisition of commercial and retail properties in prime locations for development and investment."

THEIR UNIQUENESS LIES IN THEIR CUTTING EDGE

Berman Bros is a cutting edge development company which has created, and strongly maintains, a hard-earned reputation for reliability, financial jurisprudence, ethics and creativity.

When Paul and his brother Saul joined forces and launched Berman Bros, they used an extremely bold slogan: "Berman Bros is building – on time as usual!" It meant making big promises, says Paul, and then beating all expectations. "This is what we believe makes Berman Bros unique."

Paul is a community man of note. The list of both civic and Jewish organisations he represents seems daunting:

- Deputy chair: Sea Point City Improvement District;
- Chair: Bantry Bay Fresnaye Security Precinct;
- Africa Chair: Young Presidents Organisation;
- Chair: Jewish Community Services, Cape (since 1998);
- Chair: Jewish Sick Relief;
- Chair: Board of Guardians;
- Executive member: Welfare Council (since 1998)
- Executive member: Priorities Board;
- Chair: Cape Town Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (since 2000); and
- Governor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (since 2000).

Despite all of these extra-curricular duties, Paul still manages to find time to enjoy water-sports and gym.

Paul believes that his greatest achievements in business have been his decision to take the risk of leaving practicing law and creating a new and successful business in property development.

Paul believes that while the economy remains "pressing and very challenging," it is at times like these that hard working companies that have earned their reputations come to the fore. There is no good reason not to believe that we will continue being successful and fulfilling the trust that people put in us to deliver quality products on time.

As an employer, Paul is driven by "giving people opportunities to grow and flourish in an innovative and creative environment."

Building a management team, he says, is about ethics; only employing people who share one's values and ethical approach and who are prepared to work hard and be rewarded for it. He likes to surround himself with people who can teach him something too. "We pride ourselves on the fact that more than 60% of our current staff members have been with us from the very beginning," says Paul.

"Development from within is essential to the success of Berman Bros. In addition to an on-the-job programme for trainees, we've initiated a number of staff training projects, such as a programme on industrial relations, to improve supervisory skills and an interactive participation and communication scheme.



LAWRENCE DIAMOND the workforce group

44-year-old Lawrence Diamond is the CEO of The Workforce Group. He is a product of Highlands North High School, has a BA in Industrial Psychology, as well as a PDM and Honours both in Business Admin.

Lawrence is also a director of Jet Talent, an initiative he started in 2013 to assist in placing members of the Jewish community. He is further a director of the CAP security organisation.

Lawrence is nominated in the Entrepreneur Award category for the Workforce Group. The group provides labour services to a broad range of industries, has an extensive footprint comprising of 150 branches, and spans the country's provinces, and neighbouring Mozambique.

The Workforce Group specialises in the provision of staffing, recruitment and human resources services, including training, health management, financial and allied services. It offers "an end-to-end holistic solution for a client's human resources requirements," he says, all enabled by integrated technology solutions.

The Workforce Group consists of a large number of diversified companies, each offering a range of human resources management solutions.

Their operating structure is made up of five segments:

- Staffing and recruitment;
- Financial and lifestyle products;
- Training and consulting;
- Employee health management; and
- Process outsourcing.

Within each segment, the group's services are delivered through multiple brands in the market place, each of which targets a specific market/industry.

Integrating the services of each of the closely aligned specialist business units and the application of cutting edge information technology skills and architecture, allows Workforce to ensure their integrated business processes can integrate data and automate various administrative processes to improve their administrative capability, eliminate fraud and reduce risk.

The group plays an important role in skills development of youth and job creation. Nowhere is this more evident than at grass-roots

level, where first-time job seekers use temporary assignments as an entry into the job market and improve their employability as a result of on-the-job training and skills development provided. Workforce is expecting to grow within SA as well as opening up new markets in Africa in the next twelve months.

The company was established in 1992 by Ronny Katz. In 1997 they acquired Fempower to expand into permanent recruitment. In 1999, private equity group, Cycad, acquired a 20 percent interest, the company consolidated its various trading names under "Workforce" and the group turnover exceeded R100-mil. By 2002 the turnover was R276 million and they had 50 branches.

In 2005 Workforce did a 20 percent BEE ownership deal when Vunani Capital replaced Cycad. The following year they successfully listed on the ALTx. By now they had grown to 68 branches.

When Lawrence Diamond was appointed as CEO of The Workforce Group in 2009, their branch network had grown to 80. Lawrence and the team promptly set about expanding the business. In 2010 they established Dreams Direct; Workforce Healthcare broke into the Government employee wellness market; they entered into the process outsourcing market with the establishment of Programmed Construction; Accotech Interim Outsourcing was established to target the financial and IT recruitment industries; Workforce Infotech acquired the SMME Superdata and rebranded itself Workforce Superdata; and a special projects division was established.

In 2011 Workforce Group turnover exceeded the R1-bil mark; the business was restructured into five focussed areas to facilitate diversification of products and services; Interchange Business Consulting was established; and Process outsourcing division grew with the establishment of Programmed Process Outsourcing and Debtworx.

With no intention of resting on his laurels, CEO Lawrence Diamond ensured that 2012, the Group's 40th birthday, was another year of massive growth. They established a branch in Mozambique; established Allmed under Albrecht Nursing Agency to widen the scope of their healthcare professional recruitment offering; grew turnover by 50 percent to R1.5-bil; had 24,000 contractors in the field operating out of 125 branches; had 850 permanent management and support staff; and attained their B-BBEE level 3 status.



MARK SAMOWITZ *accounting made easy*

Mark Samowitz' Accounting Made Easy™ does just that – it makes accounting “easy” by offering a one-day course which teaches accounting and financial literacy using a visual, colour-coded approach. “We deliver training to students, small business owners, corporate clients and government,” says Mark.

Accounting Made Easy's™ accounting and financial literacy course is unique in many ways – among the most significant being:

- It is visual and uses an interactive, colour-coded approach;
- The entire course takes just one day;
- It is facilitated by chartered accountants with a flair for entertainment;
- It is customisable for corporate clients; and
- It is based on the principles of “discovery learning” rather than traditional lecture-based learning.

The 36-year-old's business employs 15 staff and they work throughout South Africa.

Mark Samowitz matriculated at King David Victory Park and went on to qualify as a BCom; BAcc; CA(SA). He is involved in ORT JET and the Victory Park Hebrew Congregation.

He is by no means the archetypal accountant and lists his recreational activities as: singing, composing and table tennis.

Mark was featured on the cover of the July 2014 edition of “Accountancy SA” for creating, developing and taking to market a product which is empowering financial literacy in South Africa and which has been embraced by more than 50 JSE-listed companies.

But not everything has gone his way. The young entrepreneur was very disappointed to have lost a big contract he had worked on for a couple of months on. But, he points out, it was “due to factors beyond my control.”

Samowitz believes that the prospects for his business in the next year “are extremely exciting. We expect major growth as we are moving into new markets – taking colour-coded accounting further into schools, universities, government and to online learners!”

He says that Accounting Made Easy™ has also developed new courses: “Financial Analysis Made Easy” and “Personal Finance Made

Easy” which they have just launched to the public.

Mark employs people who share his vision for accounting literacy in South Africa. “People with high integrity who are passionate about the business, and growing it,” he says. Each one of his management team has been with him since the inception of the business.

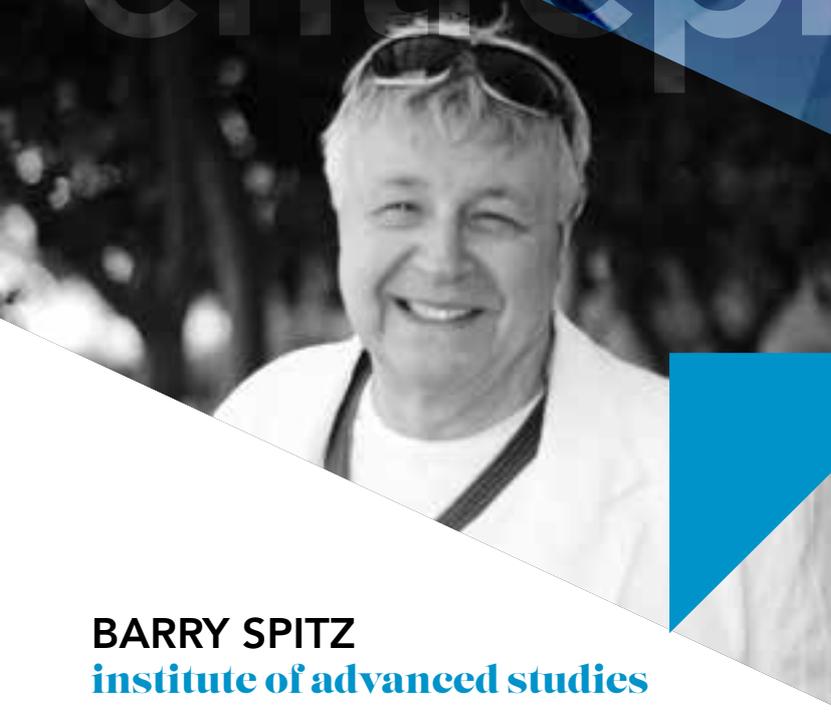
I have always believed that the key to improving South Africa is education – improving both the access to and quality of education. It is very encouraging that the lion's share of this year's budget was allocated to education.

Mark Samowitz was featured on the cover of the July 2014 edition of the authoritative “Accountancy SA” magazine - for creating, developing and taking to market a product which is empowering financial literacy in South Africa and which has been embraced by more than 50 JSE-listed companies.

There is a commitment to building 433 new schools over the next three years and, in the current year, R21-billion was set aside for university subsidies. “Within the next few years,” he says, “I am hopeful that we will start to reap the benefits of these initiatives.”

Mark has his business philosophy all laid out:

1. I believe in building long-term relationships with both suppliers and customers. Loyalty, transparency and consistency are paramount;
2. I believe that people buy people – the customer is happy to spend on a product if it provides the required solution and the people behind the product are likeable, upstanding and honest;
3. I believe that ‘No!’ just means try harder or find another way to make it happen; and
4. I believe that if you don't try, you'll never know.



BARRY SPITZ **institute of advanced studies**

Barry Spitz describes himself as an “advisor to, and negotiator on behalf of, governments and international organisations worldwide.” Barry’s main business interest, for which he is an Entrepreneur finalist, is the Institute of Advanced Studies.

Barry’s CV, in short, reads: “Former Advisor to SARS, SA Department of Foreign Affairs and the NPA (Pretoria), IRS and the US Congress (Washington), The Hague Academy of International Law; Ministries of Finance: Jamaica, Lesotho, Burundi, Namibia, Malaysia, Malta, Singapore, Swaziland; Ministries of Shipping of Saudi Arabia; Kuwait; Iraq; UAE; Bahrain; and Qatar,” Impressive indeed.

A sprightly 81, Barry still plays tennis – as a sparring partner and trainer of athletes to compete in world events.

He matriculated at KES (King Edward VII School) and went on to obtain his Doctorate at the University of Paris Law School (summa cum laude), his degree as a Diplomat of Comparative Law from Luxembourg University, and Diplomat of International Law at The Hague.

Barry says he has staff of 900 stationed at Telkom International, Gondwana, Telcoserve and Energy Giant. “My US associate law firm has over 1000 partners and many thousands of employees throughout the US,” comments Spitz.

He works globally and “we advise some 20 governments and international organisations and many hundreds of banks, financial institutions and multinational companies,” he says.

His company works in an advisory capacity to “governments and government agencies in SA, the US, Europe and Asia,” explains Barry, “and consults to multinationals.”

They handle negotiations; mergers and acquisitions; international arbitrations, mediation and conciliation; corporate and group structuring; international tax planning; assisting in resolving alternative energy needs; advising on telecommunications supply networks; teaching and training of thousands of post-graduates worldwide in the fields of deal-making, banking, tax planning, exchange control, and financial compliance.

“The uniqueness of our organisation,” says Spitz, “lies in the wide

range of professional resources that we can draw on worldwide and in our considerable success rate.”

He says they have “virtually no failures.”

Among his most memorable successes, says Spitz, are: “Enabling the SA Department of Foreign Affairs to resolve international problems; Assisting the introduction into SA of the laws governing VAT and taxation of foreign shareholdings; Resolving successfully the ownership rights of the Société Internationale des Télécommunications Aeronotiques; Assisting the US Government in dealing with corruption and criminal activities in the Caribbean, particularly the Cayman Islands; Assisting the US Congress in negotiations with the Netherlands and other countries; and Assisting the US Department of Shipping in its control over access of shipping coming from Arab countries.

His most challenging and successful achievement in business, he says, “lies in the role that I was called upon to play in sitting as President of the European Parliament in Luxembourg to resolve a dispute where incalculable financial interests were involved. It is impossible to even try to quantify the trillions of dollars that were in issue.” The background to this harked back to the Cold War, says Barry. “We achieved the desired result.”

Barry says he looks forward to strong expansion in their existing activities. “The discovery of the largest fuel supplies in the world off the coast of East Africa is requiring major exercises in ADR (alternative dispute resolution). There are significant political forces affecting rights of access to the seabed,” he says.

“The UN has pronounced new regulations opening access to the sea for landlocked countries. New transportation links are opening up new opportunities. In the mining and related industries, this is leading to significant negotiations between Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Botswana on the one hand and countries such as China and India on the other hand.”

He also sees opportunities in the fact that “the shortage of spectrum is requiring new arrangements to be made between the user countries and the developers of new technologies in the field of telecommunications.”



SHALYA HIRSHSON the uvemvane project

Shalya Hirshson heads up The Uvemvane Project which has seven employees. The Joburg-based project provides psychotherapeutic support to children and adolescents who experience illness such as cancer and amputations and whose access to healthcare is limited due to a lack of funds.

This is done by enhancing the skills and experience of those working with children as well as to parents. The service provided is often limited due to lack of state resources, or where children live in remote areas where access to mental healthcare and emotional support is unavailable.

"I envisage that the project will move to other specialised wards in the two hospitals (other than the oncology wards)," says Shalya who has been approached to develop a psychology department for a new hospital in Joburg.

The use of creative expressive arts in therapy is a new field within South Africa. The Uvemvane Project is therefore a pioneering force in how therapy is provided for individuals and groups.

The Project is active at the Johannesburg General Hospital and Chris Hani Baragwanath. Students and community art counsellors are placed at these two hospitals as part of their practical training requirements for completing art therapy training courses and qualifications.

Shalya completed Grade 11 at King David High School Linksfield and matriculated at Eden College. She went on to do a BA Psychology and English (UNISA), Honours Clinical Psychology (UNISA), M.Ed Educational Psychology (Wits) and a PhD (D.Ed Educational Psychology) (UJ) for which she is awaiting results.

Shalya participates in a host of recreational activities, including: writing; studying, spending time with her family, reading, dancing, traveling, and facilitating training and development seminars.

"My greatest achievement in business has been seeing the Uvemvane Project transition from a gesture in honouring the generosity of one person and one organisation, to a project which continues to grow and develop. Our target was to bring in R10,000 each, as an entrepreneurial project. I managed to raise R75,000. I decided then to commit myself to expanding and sustaining the project on a long-term basis," she says. To date, she alone has

raised over R150,000 for the Uvemvane Project and continues to lead the fundraising for the provision of much needed services for children and their families.

But, despite the dire need for funding for children and vulnerable population groups, she says, potential funders are restricted in terms of their target recipients and the criteria set out in their corporate social responsibility policies and guidelines.

The name 'Uvemvane' is derived from the Zulu word for butterfly. Born out of the caterpillar in the chrysalis, butterflies have come to symbolise rebirth, regeneration, change and even happiness.

"As mentioned previously, I have been approached to develop a psychology department for a new Hospital to be established in Gauteng, which provides specialised treatment for children," she says.

Physical and emotional well-being, growth and development remain the primary focus of everyone involved in the Project. "The potential for expansion and growth of the project is immense. The team comprises enthusiastic, driven individuals some of whom provide services on a voluntary basis (i.e. without remuneration)."

She says she believes a realistic time frame in which meaningful change can take place within SA - meaningful and sustainable change on intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, social, economic and financial levels - occurs within a process which seldom happens within a short space of time.

However, she explains, there seems to be a movement towards acknowledging and highlighting some of the major problems in social, educational and healthcare settings and encouraging businesses and companies to become active participants in the change process. This means that companies and organisations with financial means are encouraged to support initiatives which better the lives of individuals and communities in the arenas of HIV/AIDS, education and sustainability, for example.

"People are seeing the merit in becoming personally involved in 'making a difference' and contributing time, money, knowledge and care to empowering families, communities and the South African community at large."