



listed

Absa Business Achiever Award (Listed Companies)

MARK SCHWARTZ
SABMiller

Mark Schwartz began his career in banking in 1982 with Nedbank, moving into treasury in 1983 where he began his career in treasury risk management. He moved to First National Bank in 1987, where he spent 12 years as a trader, culminating in him becoming Chief Dealer Foreign Exchange, responsible for Africa and international sales.

Mark was then appointed to a role within the corporate treasury area, where he began managing several large corporate treasuries, before joining his present employer, SABMiller, in 2009.

His specialised knowledge in dealing in Africa-wide markets saw him appointed in 2012 to the role of treasury manager responsible for cash and foreign exchange risk management for SABMiller's Africa operations. His portfolio includes managing financial market risk for 18 countries and was the first to introduce centralised foreign exchange trading across multiple African operations and geographies.

Rob Wade of FNB and Tom King at Siemens remain Mark's greatest teachers. Meyer Kahn is his role-model

52-year-old Mark is married and relaxes by practicing as a musician – he plays guitar and bass and, in his own words, is “a very average golfer.”

The global brewing giant employs approximately 70,000 people worldwide.

“SABMiller is in the beer and soft drinks business, bringing refreshment and sociability to millions of people all over the world who enjoy our drinks.” Mark adds, with obvious pride, “Through our local businesses we work in a way that improves livelihoods and builds communities.”

Mark says SABMiller is unique in that they are “local beer experts” wherever in the world local may be. They produce over 200 beer brands “that are freshly brewed from locally-grown ingredients and only sold in their country of origin,” he says.

The company also brews “internationally famous beers such as Peroni, Nastro Azzurro, Pilsner Urquell, Miller Genuine Draft and Grolsch.” And, of course, Castle Lager, Black label and their other South African brands that we all enjoy over a braai.

“We produce our own soft drinks as well as beer and are one of the

world's largest bottlers of Coca-Cola drinks,” says Schwartz.

Mark Schwartz feels particularly proud of the fact that in his own specialised field of treasury risk management, he has been able to successfully take the group's global “best-practices” and then introduce these SABMiller's operations across Africa.

“Seeing the value it has created and what the spreading of this expertise has done for our businesses has been particularly satisfying,” he says..

Schwartz's greatest disappointment has been that he “would have liked to have seen Africa's financial markets respond to their challenges with a more open and less-regulated environment.” He says. “It has been disappointing that these regulated environments remain in place, and prevent Africa from showing its unrealised potential and becoming fully integrated into the global financial community.”

Mark Schwartz matriculated at Greenside High School before attaining his “SA Institute of Financial Markets: Associate” qualification.

His personal business philosophy is simple and bold: “Don't be put off by doing what appears to be against conventional wisdom. If you believe it is possible, then be the first person to try it,” says Mark.

BUILDING HIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

Mark Schwartz has built his management team – in other words those within his immediate and specialised environment, based on his desire to “try and surround myself with talented ‘can-do’ people who are prepared to challenge my thinking, as well as conventional wisdom.”

This fortifies Mark's approach of working outside the box – even in such a large corporate environment.

His management team “bring fresh ideas and always have the freedom to express contrarian views. I am most fortunate that this approach is deeply embedded within the ‘DNA’ of SABMiller as a group,” he says.

Schwartz sees South Africa in the coming year as remaining a challenging one “with significant economic headwinds, rising inflation, mixed with tepid economic growth is likely to remain with us until the end of the year,” he says.



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STEVEN BRAUDO
deputy CEO of liberty holdings

Steven Braudo is the Deputy CEO of Liberty Holdings Ltd, a Pan-African Financial Services company that offers asset management, investment, insurance and health products. They have a presence in 16 African countries, provide services to over 2.5-mil clients and manage in excess of R600-bil for their customers.

Braudo says that Liberty is an organisation “that understands the value of knowledge and its power to change realities when set in action. Great businesses do more than make great products or services – they change people’s lives.” He says.

“We want every South African to have a financial plan so that they can protect their family, retire with dignity or reach a desired savings goal. Our uniqueness is a combination of how we work with our sales partners, design innovative products and price and manage risk in order to deliver on our customer promises.”

Liberty Holdings has 5,850 employees and 2,300 sales agents situated throughout Africa.

Braudo’s claim to fame is building and leading a team that turned around Liberty, regained its declining share of the market – and which is now continuing to grow their market share. “The task has been huge.” He says, “because in addition to dealing with technical issues relating to products and processes, I had to drive a massive initiative to change an old established culture and an aura of negativity into an environment where everyone now feels part of a family, with a clear purpose and vision, wanting to get to work each day.”

He says that this has been an intense task for him, as he “needed to bring new skills into the business, develop a completely new strategy, convince Boards as well as a huge workforce that the changes were necessary and introduce a culture of belief and innovation into the workplace.”

He obviously did it right, because, as he says, “the results have been spectacular, with world-first products being developed and launched, new approaches to partnerships implemented, customers are once again fans of our brand and real value has been created for all our stakeholders.”

Steven Braudo believes that the Liberty’s innovative product range and revitalised customer service offerings, both of which are continually evolving, “position us strongly in our marketplace for the year ahead. Product innovation, a clear focus on the customer as well as service excellence are vital as we continue to grow our business, especially in tough economic times where customers are more discerning,” says Braudo.

He has no trouble building his management team, he says: “I work with extremely smart people and trust them fully to deliver on their

commitments. Character is vital – we all hold ourselves to high standards of delivery and behaviour.”

Braudo, 42, matriculated at King David Linksfield before moving up to Wits where he did his BEconSc and BSc (Hons). He is a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries (UK); CFA Charterholder (USA); and AMP (Harvard).

He is married to Leanne, and they have four children: Jenna (12), David (11), Justin (7) and Carrie (6).

He is also involved in various Liberty Holdings subsidiaries, the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA), the Young Presidents Organisation (African Gateway Chapter) and the CFA Institute (USA).

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RONNY KATZ

– chairman: the workforce group

After completing his BCom and LLB, Ronny joined City Merchant Bank and worked in the investment division before completing an MBA degree in 1968 at the University of Cape Town. Then he purchased the legal practice of David Borkum. In 1972, Ronny started Workforce and has concentrated on its development ever since then. He was appointed Chairman in October 2006.

The Workforce Group is a large diversified group of companies offering an extensive range of integrated employer-centric, value-adding human resources management solutions.

“Our operating structure is made up of five segments, including staffing and recruitment; financial and lifestyle products; training and consulting; employee health management and process outsourcing” explains Ronny. 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 enables the group to add value to all aspects of the human resources management matrix across a broad range of industries. The extensive range of solutions offered by the group’s specialist business units, enable their clients to focus on their core business without spending important management time on the onerous administrative and legislative compliance burdens.

Put simply, Ronny Katz says he believes: “Success breeds success.” And he has sure proven his point!

“Through the application of cutting edge information technology skills and architecture,” says Katz, “our integrated business processes and systems have purposely been designed to integrate data and automate various administrative processes to improve our administrative capability, eliminate fraud and reduce risk.”

The group continues to play an important role in skills development of the youth and job creation, particularly 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.

72-year-old Ronny Katz is a product of Parktown Boys High and went on to complete his BCom, LLB, and MBA degrees. He is married to Estelle and they have three children and one grandchild. Ronny is also involved in property and other investments.

Ronny gives up his personal time to assist ORT Jet, the Fly Fishing Organisation, the Johannesburg Youth Music Society, and the Wildlife Organisation in association with Madikwe Game Reserve.

In terms of his own personal recreation, Ronny enjoys fly fishing, running, swimming, gym, golf and music, arts and theatre.

The Workforce Group employs around 1,000 permanent staffers and a further 26,000 contract workers. They operate nationally with 150 branches spread throughout the length and breadth of South Africa.

Ronny is disappointed in the attitude of the SA Government with regard to “its policy towards temporary employment services and labour politics in general,” he says. “The various attempts to ban our industry for various political gains had created a bad name” for the labour broking industry, he says. “Especially when we are viewed upon as taking advantage of the disadvantaged,” says Ronny, which “is definitely not the case. However, despite this negative perception, the need for our industry by business will never go out of fashion and we therefore support and embrace the change coming from the impending labour amendments,” he says.

Katz believes that in the next year, “our country’s political and economic position will continue to face challenges; however I am optimistic that by mid-2015, we should see an upturn that will have a positive impact on growth and business.”

In terms of building his management team, says the chairman, “We have created an environment of entrepreneurial thinking to provide opportunities for people to think out the box and grow their leadership capabilities.” Not everyone can work in this environment, admits Ronny, “therefore we take the time to identify, attract and retain the right talent for our business.”

They invest time mentoring and guiding their talent through leadership and knowledge transference. “We also provide competitive reward structures to motivate and encourage performance excellence,” he says.

Ronny Katz’ business philosophy, he says, is having “a strong leaning towards capitalism. Profit motives drive and develop the economy and people. This should be supported by state interventions, but on a limited scale.

Put simply, he says he believes: “Success breeds success.” And Ronny Katz has sure proven his point!

He says his late parents laid the foundation for him and were his greatest mentors. “But I was also fortunate to have good friends who also fulfilled this role for me,” he adds, listing the late David Borkum and his “late great friend, Les Weil.”



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MARK KAPLAN
arrowhead properties limited

Mark Kaplan has been the Chief Operating Officer of Arrowhead Properties Limited, which he co-founded in October 2011 after it was unbundled from Redefine Properties Limited.

Mark, a Durban boy, attended Carmel College (which had changed to Crawford College) by the time he matriculated, which he did in style with an A aggregate and two distinctions - in science and mathematics.

Mark then spent a gap-year of in depth religious studies in Israel at Yeshivat Shiloh before returning to Cape Town to do his Bachelor of Business Science (BBusSc), and Finance Honours at UCT – which he completed in December 2004.

34-year-old Kaplan is Married and for recreation he spends time with his family, at the gym, running, enjoying wildlife and taking holidays.

Arrowhead employs nine staffers and operates in Johannesburg. The business acquires retail, office, industrial and residential properties across South Africa.

Kaplan says that Arrowhead's acquisition policy focusses on "higher yielding properties. Arrowhead follows a niche strategy with less competition and as a result is able to purchase attractively priced properties," says Mark.

The company has a narrow niche and, stresses Mark Kaplan: "Arrowhead ONLY acquires yield-enhancing properties (acquisition yield higher than cost of funding)."

His greatest achievement in business, he says, was "listing on the JSE on 9 December 2011."

And his greatest business disappointment? Mark says it was the frustration after the "final credit committee at one of the banks turning down a sale of a business that we thought was a done deal."

Mark is very bullish about the year ahead. He sees Arrowhead becoming "bigger and better and significantly outperforming the property sector for a fourth year in a row," he says.

Kaplan is very specific with regard to how he goes about building a management team. "To build a management team it is important to get 'doers' - people who get the job done no matter what!" he says.

In the year ahead, says Kaplan, he believes that South Africa will continue to be volatile. He foresees "an unstable political and economic environment," he says, but "abundant with opportunities."

His personal business philosophy, like so much of his business approach, is well-defined and simple: "Ethical dealings, delivering on promises and exceeding expectations," says Mark.

Gerald Leissner, says Mark Kaplan, has been a mentor to him "in both life and business."

Mark's meteoric rise in business started in 2004 when he founded Sixteenth Personalized Corporate Solutions which dealt in corporate clothing and promotional gifts. His clients included Sobranie, the AA, SAB, Genesis Capital, United Fashion Outlet(UFO), and SLO-JO.

"To build a management team it is important to get 'doers' - people who get the job done no matter what!"

From 2005 to 2007 he was a partner in, and manager of, Mann Made Media which focussed on video and photography of weddings, functions and life stories.

In 2007 and 2008, Mark headed up the bond origination division of Aengus Lifestyle Properties (ALP) where he managed the process from the sale of sectional title units until registration in deeds office.

He obviously delivered the goods because in 2009 Mark Kaplan was appointed a director of ALP - which at that stage owned a portfolio in excess of R300-mil in affordable housing units and student accommodation. Aengus Property Holdings (APH) owned ALP and Aengus Property Manager (APM) which employed over 150 people.

By the time mark resigned from APH and ALP in April 2011 to start Arrowhead, he was the the MD of APH and a director of ALP.

In January this year Arrowhead Properties acquired eight buildings in the Maboneng Precinct just east of Marshalltown in the Johannesburg CBD for R180-mil from the developer, Propertyuity.

The popular Maboneng Precinct is an urban neighbourhood development that comprises 40 buildings used for commercial, residential, industrial and retail purposes.

The precinct was once derelict and is part of a project to rejuvenate the inner city by bringing in more cultural and creative spaces.

The transaction provides for a guaranteed return to Arrowhead of 11 percent in the first year, with an eight percent escalation into year two.

Mark says the recent spend on properties is part of its strategy is to increase its portfolio to R10-bil over the next two years through selective acquisitions.



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PHILIP SMITH
super group

Philip Smith is an executive director at Super Group Ltd, the global logistics group with its head office in Johannesburg, and operations in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The company has a strong footprint in Africa with operations in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Mauritius, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria.

Founded in 1986, Super Group is a leading transport logistics and mobility group providing end-to-end supply chain solutions, fleet management and dealership services to a diversified global customer base, which is listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange. Philip qualified as a Chartered Accountant in January 1990. He joined Macsteel Proprietary Limited from 1991 to 1995, where he gained valuable managerial and corporate finance experience. Philip was appointed by Super Group in 1996 to perform due diligence on the Motolink Group. In 2002, Philip became the Managing Director of the Supply Chain Management Division. In 2008, Philip assumed responsibility for Fleet Solutions and the closure of the SGIP Division. Philip has been extensively involved in many of the corporate finance activities of Super Group.

The business is essentially a supply chain mobility company revolving around the optimisation of supply chain processes and vehicle fleets with a strong IT focus and technology underpin.

“Our business encompasses the planning and management of all activities across the supply chain from the sourcing, procurement, transport, warehousing and distribution of goods and services,” says Philip.

“This is made possible through coordination and collaboration with our valued channel partners; be they suppliers, intermediaries, third-party service providers or customers. In essence, Super Group integrates supply and demand management within and across companies.”

“If someone offers you an amazing opportunity and you’re not sure you can do it, say yes – then learn how to do it later” says Philip, quoting Richard Branson

Philip famously brought the business back from the brink.

They turned Super Group around from a loss of R1.3-bil in 2009 to the 13th best-performing South African company over the last five

years according to the Financial Mail’s Top Companies 2014.

This was achieved by successfully retaining all core senior management through the transitional period, and successfully exiting from loss making operations. “Once the turnaround was completed we were able to concentrate on rebuilding the core divisions along with a couple of strategic acquisitions,” says Philip, who is the only Director from the original Executive team to stay with the Group throughout this transformational period.

The headline results of the turnaround strategy speak volumes:

- Converted Net Debt of R3.8-bil in 2009 to Net Cash of R429m in 2012;
- Increased Revenue from R7.1-bil in 2009 to R11.7-bil in 2013;
- Converted a loss of R1.3-bil in 2009 to a profit of R816-mil; and
- Increased the share price from a low of R2.40 in March 2009 to R30.27 on 25 July 2014, an incredible 1,161 percent increase!

49-year-old Philip was a Highlands North High boy who went on to get his BCom, BAcc, and CA(SA) qualifications.

He relaxes by playing golf, playing taxi driver to his three teenagers, reading, water sports and travel.

And the saving of Super Group nearly didn’t happen. “As a result of a disagreement with the then MD as to the strategic direction of the Group,” says Philip, “I resigned from the Listed Board by not offering myself up for re-election at the AGM in 2007. The decisions made at the time resulted in the near collapse of the Group in 2008.”

Philip has worked with his core team from 2002 to date. “Some members of the team were in place when I joined Super Group, some joined through acquisition and some I recruited,” he says.

“This high level of retention can be attributed to the following:

- I am a demanding taskmaster and set high goals for the team , challenging them to think beyond what they believe are their limitations, and then working with them to achieve these goals;
- I empower the team to make decisions and take accountability for their respective business units, while working together for the benefit of the group;
- I enjoy working with the team and mentoring them to achieve their own personal goals; and
- An example of this is one member of my team, the CEO of Fleet Africa, Kamogelo Mmutlana, being awarded The Top Black Businessman of the year at the Metropolitan Oliver Empowerment Awards in 2011.”