

Dumisani Madi marks 25 years at GVK-Siya Zama

Dumisani Madi, chairperson at GVK-Siya Zama, is celebrating his 25-year anniversary with the company. When asked about what he most enjoys about working in construction, Madi says that it is to see a building take shape from scratch.



Dumisani Madi, chairperson at GVK-Siya Zama, celebrates 25 years with the company.

"I love being involved from the conception and planning stages through foundations to a final product with a lifespan of many years," he says.

"I also enjoy problem-solving and finding solutions to complex problems - whether they're on-site or managing relations with clients and finding solutions to enable projects to develop. It's a daily challenge that continues to stimulate me and the team. Along with this, the very thought that I am contributing to the industry and, in doing, so I am a part of the economic resurrection, is one of the things that I love the most about my job."

Biggest challenge a cultural one

Madi says that his journey in construction has not always been smooth and he had to overcome some hurdles to get where he is today. "As a youngster from rural KwaZulu-Natal, the biggest challenge I faced was a cultural one. Growing up, we were taught to be humble, respectful and even shy. Moving to the city and making my way up the corporate ladder demanded me to be confident and more forthcoming than I was ever comfortable with being."

"I also had to embrace diversity in the business environment, which was a soft skill I had to acquire to make my way to the top. In my heart, though, I'm still a young farmer from Newcastle who loves the land and my cattle, despite the bright lights of the city," he adds.

Madi joined GVK-Siya Zama as a quantity surveyor in 1996, a position he held for a few years whereafter it grew to include site management duties. "I then became more involved in different operational areas and took on leadership and general management responsibilities. This led to my appointment as group managing director in 2015," he says.



21 May 2021



Modernising operations

Six years ago, Madi and his partners bought the group from the original founders and since then they have been focusing on modernising operations and putting systems in place to take the company to the next level. "We've experienced considerable growth in the last few years and while this is encouraging, we still aim to retain the positive aspects of working at GVK-Siya Zama. We have a lovely atmosphere and work ethic in all our offices across the country and it is important for us to maintain this," he explains.

He goes on to express how proud he is of the diverse milestones the company has achieved over the years. "The formation and growth of GVK-Siya Zama, from a former traditional smaller works company to constructing large-scale buildings in various sectors and employing extremely smart young professionals, is something we should all be proud of as an organisation."

Madi was appointed as the chairman of the board in November 2019, three months before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa. As such, his time in the chair has largely been taken up by daily strategy sessions with the board to keep the teams and various projects on track working closely with the CEO of the company, Eben Meyburgh.



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Career highlights

He recalls some of his highlights during his time working in the industry: "After a quarter-century, there are many things to celebrate but if I must pick a few, it would be seeing the company change from its former core business of restoration work to green fields construction to a full-service construction and civils company that offers a wide spectrum of services today. Mostly though, the opportunity I've had of finding my own style as a leader, and of course improving my golf handicap!"

His hopes and plans for the company in the next few years include building a sustainable company with measured and responsible growth. "We hope for interesting projects and collaboration with clients that make it all worthwhile. In addition, we hope that we will always retain our core construction work and that our talented team will lead us to new and innovative avenues such as work in the field of sustainable energy. I'm hoping for something different or even groundbreaking. Mostly though, I hope that we can contribute positively to the country's economic revival after the pandemic."



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Be humble, prepared to learn

His advice for young individuals who are still trying to build careers in the industry is to be humble and prepared to learn: learn from others, irrespective of the position they hold, find a mentor, and soak up as much as you can; furthermore, you should train yourself to work well in a team, that is invaluable in our industry and just about anywhere you go in life. Be authentic, work hard and develop empathy for others, especially your clients, develop an understanding of their challenges so that you can add value to the relationship.

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