

TAKING THOSE STEPS TO FULFILMENT

It took Ntaba Phili 10 years to follow his talent and passion – and now he's running his own successful interior design company

Most people try to hush up the little voice telling them to follow their dream – but not Ntaba Phili. It was this feeling of wanting to do something that was completely his which led him to start NAP Designs, an interior design and project management company in 2002. By starting small and strategically choosing clients and projects to move his brand forward, Phili has managed to build NAP Designs into a reputable and sought-after company, with prestigious clients like the Presidency, Absa and the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority. Recently, Phili expanded his stable to include NAP Developments, which strives to make the negotiating and acquisition of properties a seamless process for their clients.

But taking that first step to do his own thing only took place after months of researching the corporate interior design industry, while still holding down a job as a corporate executive. Phili researched relevant businesses, talked to industry players to get a balanced view of the industry and developed a sound business plan that took into consideration the successes

and failures of similar ventures. “Making that change was really a matter of understanding my entrepreneurial spirit and then applying the experience I gained in the corporate world to an area I knew would yield the best advantage,” says Phili. Thanks to his studious research and preparations, NAP Designs grew into a company with a turnover of more than R12 million a year.

“We provide a turnkey service – we're there from start to end,” explains Phili. “It's a bit of a balancing act, but we make sure we provide a tailored service that's managed completely by us.” In this way, NAP Developments can simplify the client relationship while creating a service and level of account-

Through a hands-on approach and his procurement background, Phili adds value to the broader industry through partnerships with nascent organisations, in the hope that they'll develop into fully fledged players in the field.

ability that's managed entirely in-house. Strategic partnerships have been key to NAP Developments' success – Phili feels that it just isn't possible to do the amount of business NAP Developments does without them, and strengthening these relationships is a pivotal focus of the company. “Strategic partnerships are multifaceted, integrated relationships that extend to suppliers, clients and other professionals in the building environment,” he explains.

PHILI'S TOP FIVE SUCCESS SECRETS

1. Be visionary in your thinking.
2. Be practical at all times.
3. Under-promise and over-deliver.
4. Do what counts.
5. Life rewards action.



Developing strong relationships requires trust and Phili says one of the biggest obstacles he had to overcome was building a credible relationship with suppliers.

NAP Developments also puts extra effort into the burgeoning BEE environment, helping to develop other BEE organisations by disseminating skills. Through a hands-on approach and his procurement background, Phili adds value to the broader industry through partnerships with nascent organisations, in the hope that they'll develop into fully fledged players in the field.

Looking forward, Phili intends to continue growing NAP Developments' scope, with a strong focus on property development. “Eventually, we want to be able to say that we have a complete office park you can just move into,” Phili says.