



## NTABA PHILI

### PERSONAL STATISTICS

**AGE:** 40  
**MARITAL STATUS:** Single  
**CHILDREN:** None

### CLOSE-UP

**MENTORS:** There are a number of important influences that has shaped my life ranging from church ministers and businessmen I have met with during my corporate and entrepreneurial life

#### **MOST SIGNIFICANT PROPERTY DEAL?**

I have been able to benefit from a commercial & residential distressed sales in early 2011

**HOBBIES:** Golf reading motivational books & Biographies, painting, the outdoors, entertaining friends & family

**WHAT ARE YOU READING AT THE MOMENT?** Building Agreement by Roger Fisher, Zero Limits by Joe Vitale

**WHAT IS YOUR LIFE MOTTO?** Do what counts first, as there are no rewards for ploughing a straight furrow if the crops don't come up. Life rewards action, dreams alone won't get you there as the world cares little for thought without action.

## Dream Big! But Life Rewards Action First

### Spot the opportunities and then move fast

by Neale Petersen

**N**taba Philo is the Managing Director NAPD Holdings, a diversified investment company with ownership in multiple and strategically selected sectors of the property value chain, as well as investment activities - in the commercial, corporate and retail space environments. Ntaba is an inspiration to all South Africans, and is a prime example of what is possible when you set your mind to a goal and focus on achieving it. NAPD is a wholly black-owned property and investment company that invests, develops and manages premier business properties.

It is fast becoming a leading investment company primarily focused on trading and management of property within the commercial, corporate and residential space. They deliver end-to-end property solutions that look incredible but also offer the best use of space. The company operates through four integrated businesses: NAP Investments, NAP Properties, NAP Developments, and NAP Designs.

### Making the change was really a matter of applying the experience gained

#### Roots for success

Ntaba grew up in the progressive township of Clermont in the KwaZulu-Natal province as a middle child in a large family of eight children.

His father was a self-made businessman and all of the children had to work in the business after school and during school holidays, on top of house chores every morning before school.

Although this was undoubtedly a frustrating experience while growing up, the discipline in the home from a young age has proven to be an invaluable tool in his adult life, and serves as a great source of strength as the exposure to business at a young age has also played a pivotal role in preparing him for running his own business.

#### Passion for property

Ntaba became involved in the property industry after spending ten successful years in the corporate environment working for both public & private companies in a variety of disciplines including sales, marketing & customer service, business development, policy and customer relationship management. Having initially pursued a career in the sciences, he realized that he really had a passion for was interacting with people by offering business solutions that add value to clients. Eventually, his entrepreneurial spirit eventually won, coupled with the desire to create his own future which drove the decision to start his own company within the property sector in 2002, with a specific interest in interior design & project management."

#### Earning the stripes

Ntaba says making the change was really a matter of applying the experience gained in

the corporate world to an area he knew would yield the best advantage, and at the same time create an opportunity to marry business acumen and my creative skills. “After a lengthy period of research and planning, I chose property and took what had until that point been a personal passion people, customer service and creativity, and turned it into a business – interior design and space planning”, says Ntaba. The property industry is creative, technically challenging and it requires a lot of interaction with people.

### Starting up

“My experience with property started with buying my first property, where I bought an old property and immediately started renovations as a hobby”, he mentions. After this turned out better than expected, Ntaba invested in a course in design & construction management as he wanted to add a professional flair to future projects, and to learn more about the process of design and construction. Years later, his employer at the time, was relocating their offices, and he realised that the same concept could be applied from residential to commercial properties for corporate clients, and that he could do this work professionally.”

He says spotting a winning deal in the corporate listed sector is easier than any other investment type as the history, track record and record of performance of the company is in the open and easier to monitor. Due diligence on unlisted and private deals is not as easy although the better deals could be wrapped in disguise. Industrials in particular have a good track record of stable rental returns. It is a matter of identifying a good growth node but keeping your focus on a particular area whether storage or warehousing. Ntaba has developed a sense of finding a good deal in the current market in the distressed markets even in residential where there are development opportunities and rental income streams are ominous.

### Becoming an entrepreneur

“NAP Designs was launched 8 years ago to focus on interior design and project management for corporate, commercial and retail clients. The vision to expand their services within the property sector came about 6 years later from an identified need to offer clients turnkey property solutions, and to provide the businesses with an

organic growth path. The idea of establishing a property Investment & Development Company was a natural progression as the company was already offering a dual function of services to their clients.

## My first property was an old property which I reneved as a hobby

This meant that the company was already getting involved in many projects where these activities were already being undertaken, and thus coupled with the vision for property investment, it was time for restructuring the business. NAPD was formed in 2009, to house all three entities: NAP Investments, which focuses mainly on property acquisition and ownership; NAP Developments, which focuses on new developments and existing redevelopments; and NAP Designs. Through this business model, NAPD is able to provide a full turnkey property solution to clients.”

### Success recipe

Ntaba says, “I am a focused individual and believe in making concrete long-term goals and then creating appropriate action plans towards achieving short-term targets. This ensures that adequate flexibility is built into the process to allow for flow so as not to let little frustrations and life’s diversions take away from the goals made. I have found life is unpredictable, as we can’t always predict what will happen and how things will turn out. I am true believer in that one’s aim is to ensure that you are in the right space spiritually, emotionally and in your actions, and the rest is left to the universe to conspire with you and not against you.”

Having come from a corporate background, Ntaba understands the importance of identifying and meeting client requirements, and proposing solutions that offer value to clients and resonate with their own goals.

While most clients are able to articulate the problems that they have with their existing situations, they are not always able to translate those into workable solutions – which is where he comes in. With the establishment of NAP Developments, the process of understanding



## NTABA'S KEY INVESTOR TIPS

- *Do your research; this is key to making the right investment decisions.*
- *Learn to spot local opportunities, against national and global trends.*
- *Be visionary in your thinking, but realistic in your actions.*
- *Aim to under-promise and over-deliver to your clients.*
- *Start with the end result in mind*
- *Aim to create real wealth i.e. what you have when all the money is gone.*
- *Realise that failures earlier on are simply lessons needed to prevent you from making bigger mistakes in the future.*
- *Work hard and focus on your abilities and strengths – as well as those of your team, instead of their inabilities and weaknesses.*

a client’s requirements and tailoring a solution to fit them is undertaken earlier in a project, resulting in a far more satisfactory solution.

The needs of corporate South Africa are changing. Not everybody wants to be tied down to a five-year lease, for example. Clients are starting to look for more innovative property solutions – and we find this a growing trend.”

## RESOURCES

**NAPD Holdings**  
www.napd.co.za