



What's in this issue

BOTSWANA: *Business Networking session at TBP Botswana explores the effects of recession on small businesses...*

MANAGERS' MEETING: *Stevie B puts TBP Branch Managers in the hot seat...*

TBP NETWORK: *So what does the Network actually do?...*

SWAZILAND: *New Swaziland branch manager close friends with the King...*

AMSCO: *TBP Alexandra clients benefit from business coaching...*

The Business Place Newsletter

“Ningumthunzi kwabatsha lilanga
lentlupheko nobukhoboka, ningamanzi
kwabanxanelwe ushishino.
Nilikhaya kwabaswele ulwazi.
Hlalani nisenza loo msebenzi wenu mhle
nophucula umnotho kuthi nowelizwe
umzantsi Afrika.”

“You are the shadow and protector to the
youth which is poverty stricken;
You are an ocean of knowledge and a home
for aspiring entrepreneurs thirsty for
knowledge;
Continue with your wonderful job that you
have been doing; you contribute positively
towards our economy and the country's
economy!”

Translation from isiXhosa

Mawaka Tomose, The Business Place Joburg client,
praising TBP in isiXhosa, March 2009.

BITS & PIECES

New Phokeng branch Agreement has been struck between Royal Bafokeng Enterprise Development to launch The Business Place Phokeng in North West, just outside Rustenburg and we hope to launch end of May. More in next issue.

Media exposure

The last few months have seen TBP staff and clients gaining considerable media exposure. Shaun Govender, Network Operations Manager was on the SABC 3 daytime current affairs programme *LunchBOX* talking about TBP.

Then Dumitri Hlatwayo, TBP Alex Branch Manager, was

BOTSWANA

The Business Place Botswana, in Gaborone, hosted a networking session in early March 2009 to focus on sharing information about the global financial crisis and sensitise entrepreneurs on the impact of the situation on small businesses.

Delegates included TBP clients, economics students from the University of Botswana, Citizenship Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) loan recipients and the media as well as a panel of experts from different financial institutions.



Some of the many participants at the event

Mr Omphile Sehurutshe, from the National Development Bank (NDB), emphasised the need to have savings to sustain businesses should they

MANAGERS' MEETING

In December 2008 all The Business Place Branch Managers plus the Network team got together for two days to share information on each branch and discuss strategic direction going forward.

To spice up the branch feedback we got Stevie B, who runs KayaBiz on Kaya FM, to interview each branch manager.

Martin was first in the hot seat representing the Network and this gave him the opportunity to answer several vital questions, the key one being “What does the Network actually do”? We provide a more detailed answer later on.

interviewed by Stevie B on Kaya FM during his KayaBiz slot, alongside two Alexandra clients.

We've also been busy shooting a promotional DVD for The Business Place which features the Kliptown and Alex sites and three Kliptown clients. This will be distributed shortly across the Network.

Kick-off of Business Advisor Programme

Finalists of both the Alex and Soweto Business Leader of the Year Awards were assigned Standard Bank Business Managers who will assist these small business owners with advice and information on various aspects of their businesses.



Sessions were recently facilitated at TBP Alex and TBP Kliptown with the relevant finalists and Standard Bank managers to start this process.

Cape Town piloting the Cobweb information portal

This tool allows both clients and navigators to access fact sheets on different industries and aspects of entrepreneurship. So far it is proving useful for TBP Cape Town who are piloting it.

not do well in this time of financial difficulty and encouraged clients to consider credit insurance as a way for safeguarding their business liquidity. He urged the entrepreneurs to take advantage of the government development budget by finding out what projects are earmarked for this financial year from the budget speech.

Mr Tinarwo from the Botswana Internal Auditors Association (BIAA) explained what an auditor does and demonstrated the relationship between economic crisis and fraud. He stressed the need for internal controls and processes to safeguard against fraud within businesses and government.

An entrepreneur, Mrs Monnakgotla of AT & T Travel and Tours, said the situation is real and they are feeling the impact of the crisis. She has four buses idle following the closure of Dukwe mine where the buses transported miners to and from the mine. Another TBP client, Thabiso Dideela, a fashion designer, says she is beginning to see a decline in the demand for designer clothes as people now focus on necessities.

Despite the bleak outlook participants were encouraged to use this crisis as a lesson for the future. They learnt that an entrepreneur's worst enemy is procrastination and all the presenters stressed the need to act immediately.

Boitumelo Marumo-Mthupha, TBP Botswana Branch Manager had this to say about the session:

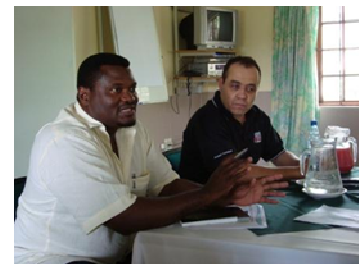
"I'm thrilled with the turnout and discussions at the business networking session. It proves that TBP Botswana continues to provide relevant and timely services."

TBP Botswana hosts these sessions on a monthly basis and always strives to cover relevant topics with expert presenters so that the participants gain real insights from the discussions.

Each branch manager then took turns to be interviewed in what was an informative and entertaining session. Stevie B was an incisive interviewer who grasped the various dynamics very quickly and added his own quirky style to the proceedings.

We all got to find out what everyone was doing and have a laugh in the meantime.

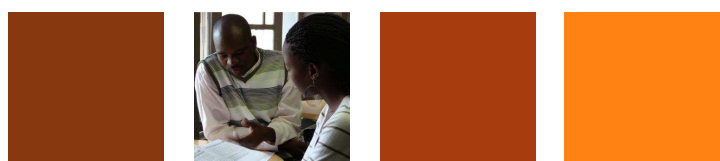
Finally, everyone voted on which branch manager gave the best presentation, which Dumisani Hlatshwayo of TBP Alex won hands down, congratulations to Dumi.



Sabelo Nxumalo, branch manager of the new TBP Swaziland, during his grilling by Stevie B

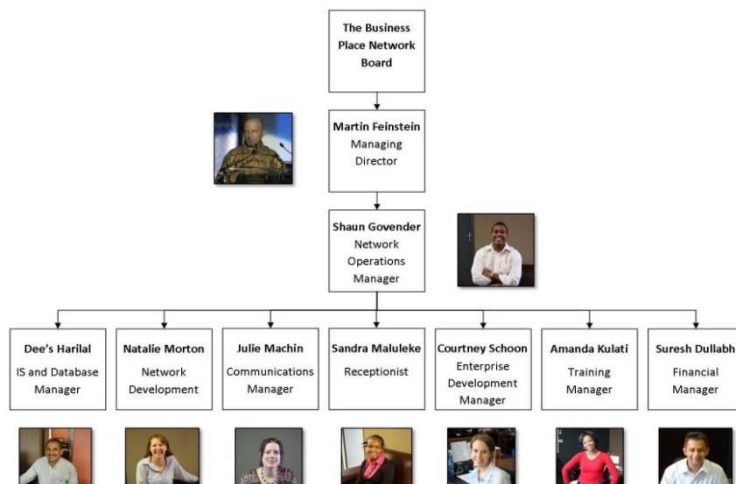
And to go back to the original question – what exactly does The Business Place Network do?

In summary, it is a professional team dedicated to supporting existing and new Business Place branches. The accompanying story gives more details.



THE BUSINESS PLACE NETWORK

The expansion of The Business Place occurred very quickly over the last few years and as more new branches were opened it became obvious that some form of centralised support structure was necessary to ensure the guiding principles of TBP were not diluted. This led to the creation of The Business Place Network. Now up to full capacity, the team is dedicated to supporting existing and new Business Place branches.



The TBP Network Team

Fundraising and Strategy (Martin Feinstein)

- Providing strategic direction for The Business Place and its network of branches.
- Providing overall leadership to the Business Place team.
- Fundraising for branch operations and specific programmes and products.
- Engaging and managing stakeholder relationships.

Operations (Shaun Govender)

- Managing the Network team.
- Ensuring smooth operations of The Business Place Network and Branches.
- Implementation of The Business Place's overall strategy.
- Managing of HR, operations, marketing, strategy and finance at The Business Place Network and Branches.

Enterprise Development (Courtney Schoon)

- Developing and implementing a national enterprise development strategy.
- Managing relationships with stakeholders and sponsors.
- Developing a list of enterprise development tools for beneficiaries.
- Assisting in raising enterprise development funders.
- Working closely with training manager around enterprise development.

Financial Management (Suresh Dullabh)

- Maintaining the financial systems of The Business Place Network and Branches.
- Providing financial support to the branches in respect of:
 - Budget preparation and management.
 - Financial reporting.
 - Year end audit preparation.
 - Compliance with statutory requirements.
 - Cash management.
- Regular reviewing of each branch's financial policies and procedures.

IT and Client Impact Statistics (Dee's Harilal)

- Developing and maintaining The Business Place database.
- Analysis and evaluation of information to monitor client impact.
- Website development to facilitate match making – client to client and outside to client linkages.

Marketing (Julie Machin)

- Developing and implementing a national marketing strategy to include:
 - A regular TBP newsletter.
 - Content management of the website.
 - Brand development and awareness.
 - Development and distribution of marketing and promotional material.

Network Development (Natalie Morton)

- Exploring options for the development of new Business Place sites.
- Managing stakeholders and participants of new sites.
- Ensuring new sites comply with all operational requirements of The Business Place such as:
 - Participation and licensing agreements.
 - HR and financial policies.
 - Marketing.
 - Corporate governance.

Training (Amanda Kulati)

- Developing and implementing a national training strategy.
- Updating training material.
- Developing new training material.
- Accreditation of training material.
- Assisting the internal training and development of The Business Place staff.

The Network team is guided by **The Business Place Network Board** consisting of:

- **Mr Martin Feinstein**, Managing Director TBP Network.
- **Ms Lisa Kropman**, Head of the Investec Bank Entrepreneurial Development Trust.
- **Professor Michael Hay** of the London Business School.
- **Mr David Lawrence**, Deputy Chairperson of the Investec Bank Board.
- **Mr Linda Mngomezulu**, Chairperson of the GEP and Small Enterprise Development Agency (seda) Boards.

SWAZILAND

The Business Place Swaziland has been up and running since beginning of February 2009. Located in Big Bend in the heart of Swazi's sugar plantations it has a strong agricultural focus heavily supporting emerging sugar cane farmers. Although a fledging branch it has already got some exciting developments planned.



The entrance to TBP Swaziland



Irrigation of sugar cane fields

There is a big drive to have sugar farmers Fair Trade compliant and TBP Swaziland has been recommended to be the main coordinator and trainer for anyone wishing to apply for this certification. In other SADC countries this means more than \$60 per ton extra for sugar.

There has also been training done with seven groups of farmers with more planned shortly. On top of that the branch is the official representative running a business plan competition with TechnoServe (a non-profit development organisation) which brings in lots of people to the offices, collecting forms or submitting business plan entries.



Sabelo and Shirley hard at work in the office before the branch opened

But what made Sabelo Nxumalo, the new Branch Manager, relocate himself and his family from Mbabane and move to rural Big Bend when he accepted the post of Branch Manager?

"I like a challenge. I'd been involved in starting things up from scratch for a long time. I was involved in the start up of the first mill in Swaziland, a flour mill, also a feed mill and later bought a maize mill. I started these with my father, the late Dr Sishayi Nxumalo and our capable partners at a cost of R21 million. We also started the first sugar packing plant in Swaziland for the SA market, before that all the sugar went to SA in bulk to be packed there" says Sabelo.

AMSCO

A few months ago Albert Gumbo from AMSCO (African Management Services Company), a special project of the UNDP, contacted The Business Place Network looking for clients to mentor and coach as part of AMSCO's CSI programme.

AMSCO was established to address the issue of management and management capacity building in private sector companies in Africa, enabling these companies to enter the global market competitively, profitably and in a sustainable manner. To achieve this aim AMSCO provides management and capacity building services to African businesses, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

However the AMSCO definition of an SME is a company with annual turnover exceeding 3 million US dollars which is much higher than average TBP clients normally reach. So they wanted to also do something for the smaller guys which led to them proposing a mentorship/coaching project. After various discussions, this turned into a schedule of nine workshops utilising AMSCO staff's skills and covering topics such as leadership, customer care, HR tools etc.

The first session kicked off on 13 February 2009 at the AMSCO offices in Illovo. Six clients from Alex attended the two hour seminar and feedback was very positive.



Alex clients attending first seminar at AMSCO

So he is no stranger to entrepreneurial ventures. After the mills and packing plant he started the Swaziland Small Business Development Association which lobbied government, successfully, to enact laws and policies to support small business.

He also spent ten years as a director of the MITC Skills Centres in Manzini, an initiative run by the Catholic and Anglican churches to provide skills training such as upholstery, carpentry etc for young people without Matric.

But then Sabelo has connections in high places. He finished his "A" levels and started his degree in the UK and it was while there that he used to socialise with the current King of Swaziland, Mswati III (before he was King) at the Swaziland Embassy in London. When Mswati's father died he returned to Swaziland to become King and Sabelo moved to Botswana to continue his education. It was only later that he returned to Swaziland to finish his degree in Economics and Statistics.



Sabelo with King Mswati III

So becoming Branch Manager of The Business Place Swaziland is a logical move for him and we wish him and all his colleagues at the new branch much success in supporting entrepreneurship in Swaziland. Finally, just for the record, Sabelo is a Swazi with only one wife.

Morris Siweya, owner of Cooler Event Management commented:

"It was very informative for me, something I really needed. After the session I really need to implement in my business. We spoke about defining the vision – where are we heading with our business. Analysing each and every aspect [of my business] – this is what I need to grow."

Amanda Kulati, TBP's Network Training Manager was also pleased with the first session:

"I was thrilled and amazed by the level at which the session was facilitated. Normally, business executives struggle to interact with the small guys but Albert spoke the very same language with the participants and challenged their thinking to a somewhat deeper level."

The rest of the sessions will be held once a month on Tuesday evenings. This ensures that the AMSCO staff give up some of their personal time to this cause.

ABOUT The Business Place

The Business Place is a national network of business information and referral centres. It offers a friendly, accessible walk-in environment where aspiring and existing entrepreneurs can go to access information and support relating to small business.

The model is a collaboration between government, the private sector and local communities with the aim of promoting entrepreneurship and the creation of sustainable businesses.



For more information please go to our website at:

www.thebusinessplace.co.za

or contact The Business Place Network team on network@tbp.co.za / 011 833 0340