

Business Partners Entrepreneur of the Year® 2007 FINALISTS

Congratulations to the Business Partners' **Entrepreneur of the Year®** finalists for 2007.

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There are some people who just stand out from the crowd, people whose vision and drive are behind the country's most successful business ventures.

Business Partners honours these entrepreneurs for their innovative contribution to small and medium enterprise in South Africa



Lennin Marule

Marule Property Holdings, Witbank

During his tenure as Industrial Relations Manager for Samancor during the 1990s, Lennin Marule of Marule Property Holdings was struck by how difficult it was to find suitable accommodation for the company's single employees and interns. It was then that his entrepreneurial spirit kicked in and, in order to solve this problem, he invested in several old houses, set about renovating them, and resigned from his job to start a business providing accommodation for students and young working people.

He was soon buying and selling residential properties and, in 2005, expanded his core business by buying what was at the time the Witbank Youth Hostel, which had become available in the CBD. He was able to fill the 116 rooms of the re-named Shalom Village as soon as he'd bought the property, and he still had waiting lists.

This encouraged him to buy the old Highveld Steel single quarters in Klipfontein when they went up for sale in 2006, and he was soon able to fill these with anxiously-waiting tenants as well. Marule Properties now provides safe, clean accommodation and access to healthy meals for hundreds of young people.

"This is a passion for me," says Marule, "there's nothing more rewarding than providing homes for young people who are just starting out in the world."



Vincent Bazier

Mab-One Mechanical and Civil Contractors CC, Cape Town

Mab-One Mechanical and Civil Contractors is owned and run by husband and wife team, Vincent and Catherine Bazier. An engineering business specialising in repairs and maintenance for the petrochemical and construction sectors, it provides such services as pump and tank installations, plant and forecourt maintenance, and the re-location of heavy machinery.

Since partnering with Business Partners in June 2005, the company has acquired several large clients, amongst them the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA, Eskom and most of the large petroleum companies. Demonstrating phenomenal growth, it has exceeded sales projections by 247% in the past two years, and has recently been awarded a R4 million ACSA contract.

"We're very proud of what we've achieved," says the Baziers, "and are particularly proud of our stringent quality standards."

In recognition of these, the company received the **Best Landside Provider Award for 2004 from ACSA.**

"The airport management company sets very demanding standards," says Vincent Bazier, "and we feel awards like the one we received from ACSA and now this one from Business Partners are testimony to the attention we give to quality and service delivery."



Altus Mostert

Robotic Innovations (Pty) Ltd, Irene

Robotic Innovations is a recognised leader in robotic system innovation and integration, and designs turnkey automation systems for a number of manufacturing applications.

Altus Mostert founded the business in 2004, and ran it on his own for four months from a home office equipped only with a desk, laptop and fax/printer. He was soon, however, able to appoint his first employee, and reported a turnover of R55 000 in that first year. A brief three years later, Robotics Innovations now employs 10 people and has an annual turnover of R15 million.

"We pride ourselves on providing solutions of the same or better quality than those manufactured internationally," says Mostert. "We're also very proud of the fact that we use only local sub contractors, and that we provide comprehensive training for all our employees."

Robotics Innovations does all of its mechanical and electrical design in-house, providing automation systems for companies in the automotive, mining and consumer goods industries.