

'Being goal-driven will make you unstoppable' - Matseleng Mogodi, Snooks Estates

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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Matseleng Mogodi, founder and principal of Snooks Estates, is a veteran in the property sector having been in business now for 24 years, creating employment and growth opportunities that have allowed others to thrive.

Today, Snooks Estates has six active branches in Soweto, Johannesburg South, and the West Rand, four of which are headed by women. She is also passionate about seeing young people grow within the sector, and has groomed and mentored a number of youth who have gone on to start their own real estate agencies or have developed into senior real estate practitioners at Snooks Estates.

This Women's Month, Mogodi shared with us some of the most important lessons that she's learnt as an entrepreneur so far, advice for other women pursuing a career in property today, and how we can drive greater gender parity in the sector.

■ Tell us a bit about yourself - your background?

Matseleng Mogodi: I've always thought I love teaching, but lately I think I've changed that to I love teaching people who want to move to the next level. I was a high school maths and science teacher, and after a few years, I realised I wanted a bit more challenge, and I started working after school to help my father in his property construction business.



Matseleng Mogodi, founder and principal of Snooks Estates

In those days we'd never really run a proper business, so I was helping him even with my limited skills. Then I later started Snooks Estates in 1997. I didn't know much then, and I didn't work for anyone to learn the ropes. I passed the real estate exam and started working, making mistakes along the way, but learning from them.

■ What does a typical workday look like for you?

Mogodi: I don't go out to see clients anymore, except once in a while. So I spend most of the time at the office, and I have several internal and external meetings. I must say that the lockdown has brought some relief from driving around to different venues for meetings or trainings, so I get to save a lot of time and use it effectively to work on the business and look for more opportunities.



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■ What do you love most about working in the property sector?

Mogodi: I love the fact that despite jobs being scarce, this is one sector where, if one is fully committed, they can make a good living and reduce the current stats of unemployment and joblessness. In real estate, one gets to become their 'own boss' but of course within the parameters of the company's policies. Self-driven and goal-oriented individuals do really well.

📊 *What's your favourite trend in the sector right now?*

Mogodi: Right now, I'm loving seeing more people looking into acquiring their second property for investment purposes. There's a lot of interest in buying for investment, and a keenness to know more.

📊 *When you're not busy working, what do you do for fun?*

Mogodi: I actually think I'm the boring type. I spend a lot of time at home, and because I also work from home sometimes, I never really have a cut-off time because I love what I do so I don't usually get tired. Plus, I get myself involved in things that bring fulfilment and joy, like the platform I'm running to get to speak to young people and hear their challenges and experiences, especially with adults around them, so that's keeping me busy and it's a lot of fun because young people are fresh, funny, open and very intelligent, so I enjoy engaging them at that level of discussion.



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📊 *How, if at all, has the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic affected your business?*

Mogodi: The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge negative impact on the business. Like everyone else, we've had to change how we work, and our success in the past had been to be in front of people and meeting people; now, we are limited to working largely virtually. But to sell a property, the buyer will still want to physically touch and see the place, and with the restrictions and people being cautious, the reduction in viewings has impacted progress. However, we now see people getting used to this new way of doing things and adapting and coming on board.

📊 *How can we drive greater gender parity in the sector?*

Mogodi: You know, I really can't tell you why the numbers are still so skewed. We have been talking about this for so long, and maybe it's time we asked why it's taking so long?

Perhaps from where I'm sitting, I think it's doable, but I know that the real estate sector could be one of those sectors where women could grow into these leadership spaces and take the lead. I will also ask the question, 'what exactly is stopping women, in the real estate industry, from going up the ranks?' My pain has been through me seeing some of the women that I've given opportunities to, to grow into becoming owners and leaders in their own rights, not grabbing the opportunity with both hands.

Sometimes you just need a yes, and despite other challenges, you make it work. The government, through the Seta, has tried to up the numbers; there have been programmes to try boost the numbers, and we can't really blame anyone because even the people that received the opportunities and lost them probably needed something else more for them to realise the opportunity, and again, despite the challenges from government or training providers, or even estate agencies themselves, there were still opportunities which could have worked towards empowering women in this industry.



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📊 *What are some of the most important lessons that you've learnt as an entrepreneur so far?*

Mogodi: The biggest lesson for me was the realisation that for me to become more effective, I had to learn to delegate and allow other people to do things their way, as long as we were all working towards the same goals. This allowed me to take a

step back and be able to see where the gaps are and work on the business. Looking at how others do things also helped to trigger creativity and think bigger. I see some entrepreneurs still getting stuck into wanting to do everything themselves, but this takes away from implementing strategy in the business; I was like that, and it almost broke me in many ways.

■ **Based on your experience, what advice would you give to women pursuing a career in property today?**

Mogodi: Empower yourself with knowledge so that you can lead by educating your customers. When you have knowledge, you get the confidence to approach bigger things and bigger opportunities.

The biggest one though is that as women, we tend to continue being nurturers, and it's very important to separate nurturing from caring for your team. When you become too nurturing, you kill your team's creativity and productivity. It becomes too homely and business suffers.

Therefore, it's important to ensure that upfront, you don't cross the line so that you don't have to face choosing between business and relationships within the company. Care for people by giving them what will build them, let them do it, don't do it for them.

There's still a huge gap to be filled by women in the industry, and believe me when I say, it can be done.



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■ **How is Snooks Estates supporting and empowering women in the property sector?**

Mogodi: Women have naturally taken the lead at Snooks Estates, even though I never really discriminated against men that showed capacity and a willingness to grow with the company.

I realised that I had great women within the company who were ready for management, and they got to have those opportunities to lead.

The best way to let people grow as the leader is to communicate your vision of seeing them take over the reins because when they work towards that, it pushes you towards more growth as you make space for them.

For instance, I've been doing this for 24 years now, and I know it's time for new blood, for more of them taking different leadership roles within the company. Speaking of which, Snooks Estates will be recruiting women to be trained for senior management, to bring managerial skills and knowledge into the business, to grow with us on this trajectory we are on currently.

■ **Do you have any pearls of wisdom to share this Women's Month or words of encouragement?**

Mogodi: Yes, I only started seeing that there were few women principals in the real estate industry after it was mentioned a lot of times and I was asked many times how I did it. Therefore, get knowledge, and focus on building, and I can promise you no man, or race, will stop you from doing real estate. Men may have certain advantages when it comes to real estate operations, but as a woman, we are great at multitasking, and therefore proper planning and being goal-driven will make you unstoppable!

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

Sindy Peters (@sindy_hullaba_lou) is a group editor at Bizcommunity.com on the Construction & Engineering, Energy & Mining, and Property portals. She can be reached at sindy@bizcommunity.com
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