



RIVERSANDS
INCUBATION HUB

MENTOR PROFILES

GROWTH & LEARNING



A mentor is defined as 'an experienced and trusted advisor' and mentorship is clearly an important part of an incubation programme.

At Riversands Incubation Hub, we have access to a range of business mentors with different experience and the good news is that you get to choose who you would like to have as your mentor!

molefe pooe



Molefe Poee is the managing director of Inertia Leadership and Business Coaching and a certified business coach, speaker, leadership trainer and member of the John Maxwell Team. Molefe is passionate about working with business owners and entrepreneurs to help them create sustainable and profitable businesses. The company's mission is to equip entrepreneurs and business owners with tools and skills that help them to successfully navigate through the various business development stages, avoid typical pitfalls and get lasting results. Since inception, we have turned around many businesses on the brink of failure and helped others attain greater levels of growth. Through the global affiliation with the John Maxwell Team of more than 11 000 members, Molefe also endeavours to raise the standard of leadership in every facet of society, especially business. He believes that entrepreneurs are key drivers and contributors of meaningful economic impact and the development of any country.

A qualified Mechanical Engineer with a Masters in Business Administration from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Molefe's career began in 1999 at Sasol Coal in Secunda and he later joined Unilever Foods as a Project Manager until mid-2003. That same year, the entrepreneurship bug stung, he registered and established Metamorphic Engineering – specialising in industrial piping and high pressure equipment for the construction and petrochemical industry. Through his leadership, the business grew organically for the first 5 years and then exponentially thereafter. By year seven, the company had grown to 150 with over R25 million turnover.

basia nasiorowka



Years of experience in business as an entrepreneur have resulted in a strong desire for Basia to share her experiences and knowledge gained concerning creating and executing the day-to-day challenges of running a business.

Since the inception of her first business 22 years ago, Basia has always coached, trained and educated her employees in many aspects such as customer relations, sales, marketing, communication, personal growth, motivation and will to achieve and always to perform to the highest standards for themselves. She introduced many initiatives for her employees such as Overachiever Award given on monthly basis as a reward for excellent service to customers. Another famous initiative was

Carrot and Stick leadership weekly appraisals focusing on the day-to-day delivery of service to customers without any hiccoughs.

She has a practical, hands-on approach and is very honest with her Mentees in assessing their knowledge and readiness to run a business. In cases where businesses are already established, she can help entrepreneurs find new ways of growth. She can also assess the current obstacles that the Entrepreneurs should address and change their strategy when necessary.

Her deep professional entrepreneurial includes the founding of companies in the telecommunications, ICT, robotics and virtual reality/augmented reality technology industries.

basia nas

In 1995, she founded her first company which provided Fibre Optic Solutions from design to installation, and support and maintenance of projects. The company introduced highly sophisticated Fibre Optic infrastructure equipment that was not available at the time in South Africa, therefore it allowed local corporations to use the above to run their business more efficiently. Basia also established the quality standards committee at the government level through the South African Bureau of Standards as the first in the country initiative to adhere to the international ISO standards in Fibre Optics.

In 2001 Basia found a new company that introduced Biometrics Technologies which at the time were only beginning to surface in the world. In particular she has brought to South Africa and then further developed together with the international partner Biometric Facial Recognition system for physical access control which was successfully deployed in the gold mines.

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peter geach



Peter Geach is the managing director of Siyabumba Consulting, a specialist small business consultancy. Peter is a successful entrepreneur who has been a shareholder and director of six businesses.

Over the past nine years, Siyabumba has assisted 19 small start-up businesses. Peter has been at the helm of these endeavours as a coach, mentor and facilitator. His focus has always been on the importance and discipline associated to simple financial planning and management. This is where Peter believes sustainability in business is derived from, irrespective of the size of the business.

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Barry Gonin



Barry Gonin believes that the fourth revolution, a combination of robotics, biotech and nanotechnology will bring about fundamental change to humanity that will not only progress our understanding of our human selves, but will give us the ability to exert far greater influence the outcomes of our lives.

He is an experienced businessman with a successful track record of 20+ years and an in-depth knowledge of energy, media and telecommunications. He has assumed CEO, board and shareholder level responsibility where he is required to weigh uncertain future outcomes and unstructured market realities to determine the best business strategy. His key skill lies in business development where he uses diverse commercial skills to create business opportunities and value adding partnerships.

Barry is currently working on developing ventures in the renewable energy space as a key enabler for technology and to help in a small way to save the planet.



During the 26 years I spent growing a small training centre with a handful of students into a national education institution, I learned a lot about what makes a business successful, and these lessons I also taught to the students. I not only taught entrepreneurship, I lived it.

I sold this thriving business and 'rebooted' my life as a mentor, advisor and trainer to can-do entrepreneurs and small business owners through DoBetter.Business.

Today, I share my experiences and expertise with enthusiastic start-ups and SMEs across Southern Africa helping them to be more successful too.

How I help small businesses owners to be more successful

YOUR BUSINESS • Develop an effective growth strategy • Know how to sell your product or service successfully • Manage your money, understanding the 'books' • Do you need a business model and/or a business plan? • How to source finance • Making technology work for your business • Exploiting traditional and digital • How B-BBEE can benefit your business • Only paying the tax that you have to pay • Management and leadership • Your biggest asset: your people • Red tape: complying with legislation • Could better organisation and systems improve your business?

YOU • Are you entrepreneurship material • You make your own 'luck' • Innovative thinking, creative problem solving • Making mistakes, failing better • Looking after yourself • Exploiting change • Doing good and doing well



Rod Cairns is a seasoned entrepreneur who has run and managed a number of successful businesses for over 20 years. As a semi-retired "grey top", Rod is keen to give back to society. He believes that by offering and sharing his business and life experiences as a mentor, he can add value to the country he so dearly loves. Riversands Incubation Hub offers him a great opportunity to do this on a pro bono basis in his spare time.

Rod spent his formative years in Pretoria. From 1974 to 1978, he studied electronic engineering and after graduating, he moved to KwaZulu-Natal and was appointed as the resident engineer for ICL computers based at the Barclays Bank computer centre in Durban. After realising that he had chosen the wrong vocation, he made a radical career change and started as a trainee mushroom grower with Tongaat Mushrooms in 1979 – the largest mushroom producer in Africa. Over the next 18 years, he worked his way up through the ranks of the organisation and was eventually appointed Managing Director in 1997.

Due to his exceptional leadership skills, in 2009, Rod was approached to join JoJo Tanks as CEO. Under Rod's watch, the business grew at a phenomenal rate following the enhancement of product quality and range, improved marketing and the introduction of improved business processes. Today, the business is the leading tank manufacturer and is the market and brand leader in the water storage space in Southern Africa. In 2015, Rod introduced a new CEO to the business and after a phased handover to the new incumbent, he moved into the role of non-executive chairman and he remains invested in the company.

rod cairn

Overall, Rod is a well-rounded executive who has a deep understanding and experience of front line and strategic management imperatives across several industries. He has a wide network of business associates across most professions, including Agri-processing, food retail, hardware retail as well as engineering and construction. He has served and continues to serve in the mushroom and rotomoulding industry associations, as an honoured life member in the mushroom industry and an executive member in the rotomoulding industry.

Rod is a goal-driven individual who is sensitive to the DNA of an organisation. He engages in a participative management style, but, he is not afraid of making the hard decisions often needed in business. He'll be using his years of experience to help drive your business to success.

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jean-francois barral



After 46 years in the corporate environment and lately, in managerial positions, Jean-Francois Barral is retired but cannot completely sever his bond with the business world. As someone who is passionate about small business development, he wants to assist entrepreneurs to improve their performance and achieve their business goals. As a business incubator, Riversands Incubation Hub is the perfect platform for JF as he is affectionately known to do this on a pro bono basis.

From French ascent, Jean-Francois has qualifications in Chemistry, Business Management and Languages from French universities. After working as a lab assistant, he joined Philips Data Systems as a System Developer. In 1973, he joined Renault as a Business Analyst and stayed in the company until 2008. While at Renault, he occupied various positions including Business Management, Logistics and Finance and he spent six years in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in bartering operations on commodities. JF's last position with Renault was Finance Director of the South African subsidiary and at the end of his assignment, he decided to make South Africa his new home. After all, the country is known for its rich culture and kind-hearted people – something that influenced JF to stay in the country.

Following his decision to stay in the country, JF was then offered the position of CEO of Suzuki SA and Motana SA, two subsidiaries of a Belgium Group specialising in motorbikes and related accessories. In 2014, the shareholders took the decision to divest from South Africa and the operations were transferred to other operators.

Given his extensive experience, JF can assist you in most aspects of business management, including:

- Finance and cost management;
- Marketing; and
- Sales and distribution; and
- Customer relations.

On a personal note, Jean-Francois enjoys aerobics, classical guitar and touring on a motorbike; he has a son and is a grandfather since 2015.

