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Grace
Tshiwela
Thovhakale



Here to be Enterprising

From teacher to cement pioneer: Breaking ground in one of Africa's most demanding industries.

Long before Grace Tshiwela Thovhakale became a corporate CEO, she was a young teacher with a dream and who understood that creating her own opportunities would require initiative.

Raised in Venda, Grace completed her primary and secondary education pursued degrees in Music and Education in the region. Even as a student, her entrepreneurial instinct was already taking shape. To help finance her studies, she started a cool-drink business, learning an early lesson that would become central to her journey: sometimes the first investment in a dream is simply the courage to begin.

After graduating with a Diploma, Grace entered the classroom, teaching for five years. But while education gave her an opportunity to shape young

lives, entrepreneurship was calling. In 2009, she made the bold decision to leave teaching and enter the cement industry, a sector where women were, and remain, significantly underrepresented.

By 2012, Grace had established herself as a recognised player in Limpopo's cement market. Her determination and commercial instincts enabled her to build valuable experience across a range of industries. Between 2012 and 2017, she held directorships in businesses spanning farming, logistics, tourism and commodities, gaining an understanding of how different sectors of the economy connect.

When she returned to the cement industry in 2018, she brought with her a much broader perspective. She understood that cement was not simply about the product; it was about the entire value chain, from mining and manufacturing to logistics, wholesale and retail.

That insight became the foundation for Tiger Build Cement and Tiger Build Group (Pty) Ltd, the business she established with a vision of building a proudly-African cement enterprise.

Today, Grace stands as South Africa's only female cement company owner, a distinction that represents more than personal achievement. It is a statement about what is possible when women enter industries where they have historically had limited representation and refuse to be defined by the expectations placed upon them.

Tiger Build Cement has expanded its reach beyond South Africa, attracting customers in neighbouring African markets and positioning itself as a growing player with regional ambitions.

Her entrepreneurial achievements have her earned local and international recognition.

Yet, Grace's ambitions extend beyond building a successful company. She is passionate about creating opportunities for women and young entrepreneurs in the SMME sector and believes strongly in collaboration, calculated risk and collective growth.

Her ultimate vision is to build a flagship black woman-owned cement manufacturing company with a footprint across Africa and beyond. Grace is building proof that women can enter traditionally male-dominated spaces, claim their place and lay foundations for others to follow.

**Your
story
matters**

