

47^{of} 100
Nobuhle
Mbonde



Here to be Driven

From one room Nobuhle Mbonde's growing hospitality business has created twenty jobs: Supporting economic activity in the surrounding community.

When Nobuhle Mbonde opened the first room at The Signature Venue and Guesthouse in Florida, Roodepoort, in 2021, she was starting small. There was just one fully-equipped room, but within two weeks it had been booked from January through to April, largely by students from Unisa and other tertiary institutions attending weekly practicals in the area.

The demand was enough to show Nobuhle that the idea had potential. Nine more rooms followed and, in 2022, she converted a second residential

property into a six-bedroom guesthouse. By 2023, she had acquired another property as the business continued to expand.

Today, The Signature Venue and Guesthouse has 23 rooms and employs 20 people. Alongside holiday accommodation, the business offers conference and outdoor venue facilities and shuttle services, catering to students, business travellers, families and both domestic and international visitors.

The growth has also had a knock-on effect in the surrounding community. As the properties have been developed and maintained, Nobuhle has used builders, tilers, plumbers, electricians and general labourers, providing ongoing work beyond the people employed directly by the business. The guesthouse reinvests 60% of its profits into constructing additional rooms, allowing the business to continue expanding while creating further work.

Nobuhle's approach to the business is grounded in a career that started in finance. She moved into property management, and after returning to Johannesburg, she joined a company managing a portfolio spanning commercial and residential property, student accommodation and construction.

By 2015, she was financial manager of its student division and responsible for a property portfolio valued at R1.2 billion. It was during this period that she began acquiring properties herself and established The Marvel Holding, her property consulting business.

Hospitality came about more organically. Nobuhle had started an events and catering company, The Signature Parties, in 2005, and the need for a

permanent events space eventually led to one of her properties becoming The Signature Venue in 2019. When guests began asking whether they could stay overnight after events, she saw another gap in the market.

Her experience building the guesthouse has since allowed her to help other emerging bed and breakfast operators through her consulting work. For Nobuhle, the business has grown well beyond that first room, bringing together her experience in finance and property while creating employment and bringing more visitors and economic activity into the Roodepoort area.