

TMT Cleaning Hygiene

There is such a thing as being in the right place at the right time – just ask Mpho Sono.

From being an unemployed graduate to Managing Director of her own company, Mpho is the kind of woman many aspire to emulate.

After completing her bachelor's degree in Environmental Health Management back in 2001, Mpho found herself unemployed and unable to study further due to a lack of funds. She only had three months' worth of work experience and very dim prospects in the job market.

Around about the same time, her (BROTHER/HUSBAND?) was about to quit his job at a state-owned entity to become a consultant. He spotted a gap in the organisation for a woman who possessed Mpho's skills, and she jumped at the chance to put her Environmental Health Management education to good use.

And that is how her entrepreneurial journey began – at home, with three contract helpers and a borrowed vacuum cleaner.

It was while servicing this government building with janitorial and hygiene services that Mpho became interested in the private sector. She was struggling to crack the government tender space, so she did the next best thing and turned her attention to the private sector.

Again, fate dealt her a favourable hand when she approached a mall construction site that was being built by Growthpoint. She was just in time for RFP but going through her documents, Growthpoint procurement realised she was nowhere ready to enter the sector, least of all because she could not even price correctly. Growthpoint suggested she get on to the Property Point programme, and since then TMT Cleaning Hygiene has thrived.

"I did not choose entrepreneurship; it chose me," laughs Mpho when she recalls her journey. "When I entered the Property Point programme, I saw that the business wasn't ready for private sector procurement. I was thrilled when we got to engage the private sector very early in the programme and eventually meet the standards required. The accelerator programme helped us access opportunities, gave us the skills to deal with stakeholders, and provide support needed to overcome many of our challenges. Even after the programme, Property Point has been a supporting hand for every stage of our organic growth."

Networking with her peers has left Mpho hoping for a robust alumni programme that will facilitate collaboration between businesses that have gone through the programme, as well as more access in the Growthpoint supply chain to ensure they (Growthpoint) maximise on their Return On Investment.

Over the last two years, TMM Cleaning Hygiene has grown by 20%, employs 390 workers most of which are women and has provided employees with on- and off-the-job training, employee

handbooks, written employment contracts, health and accident insurance, pension fund, productivity incentives, and salary increases.

“We will continue to grow our current business while investigating opportunities to diversify into another line of business as well as expand our product and service offering.”