

Six of the best property developers unpack green trends

More and more property developers are opting for sustainability, not only as an alternative building initiative, but as a unique selling point to discerning buyers. Why green? What value does it give to property developers as a company and does it help with a company's bottom-line or public perception?

Six of the best In a “power talk” concurrent session that forms part of the upcoming [Green Building Council South Africa Convention](#), happening from the 16th to 18th of October at the CTICC, six of the leading local property developers will engage on green trends and what their motivations have been to integrate them into the way they do business.

On this charged discussion panel is Rudolf Pienaar of Growthpoint, Richard Thomas from Nedbank, David Green from the V&A Waterfront, Jurgens van Huyssteen from Menlyn Maine, Martin Evans from the Brydons Group and David Savage from the AblandProperty Group.

“There are clear environmental benefits for building green as well as a compelling business case. Going green is not just about the environment, the bottom-line benefits of building and operating green buildings are particularly important considering South Africa's rising energy costs and water scarcity – coupled with lower risks, improvements to employee productivity and ultimately, better investment returns and higher property valuations,” says Brian Wilkinson, CEO of the Green Building Council South Africa.

Globally, property owners and developers face the challenge of ‘future-proofing’ their buildings. Going green is now broadly regarded as the smart choice which takes account of sustainability, responsible investment requirements, aesthetics and critically, profitability.

The Responsible Investment Mega Trend

Both the Responsible Investment Code, that most of the major Asset managers have signed up to, and the King Code of Governance, require that organisations record and report on their actions in respect of, amongst others, environmental sustainability. The effects of this will be long reaching and profound – an organisation that performs badly in respect of their sustainability initiatives will be punished in terms of the ultimate measure – their share price. Asset managers are including so called ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance) requirements in their investment mandates and, by definition, poor performers will suffer as investment moves to better performers. So there is a wonderful “virtuous triangle” in respect of commercial property development and management. By adopting environmentally sustainable practices in their property portfolio, i.e. green building practices, they benefit in three major ways:

- They are being responsible in terms of the bigger picture of climate change mitigation
- They are being shrewd investors – green building has a proven and significant economic business case
- Their Share Price will attract a premium as investors shift to the better performers in respect of ESG.

“Could there be a more compelling argument?”, concludes Wilkinson. **What else to expect** This year is designed to maximise peer to peer networking and exposure to the key influencers in the global and local sustainable building space., as the local council hosts the World Green Building Congress in parallel. The 2013 programme is designed to strike a captivating balance between big picture sustainability and the more technical aspects of sustainable building and communities. This premier event is complemented by a world-class exhibition of sustainable innovation.

Who else is coming

Amongst those eagerly anticipated in the 2013 [programme line-up](#) are:

Gunter Pauli, entrepreneur, author and initiator of the Blue Economy concept; **Cameron Sinclair**, the co-founder and CEO of Architecture for Humanity; **Jason Drew**, an entrepreneur, passionate environmentalist and visionary who advocates for the sustainability revolution; and **Lewis Pugh**, an ocean advocate, pioneer swimmer and explorer who was named as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum. Global counterparts, **Richard Fedrizzi**, founding chairman of the US Green Building Council and current Chairman of the WorldGBC and Romilly **Madew**, CEO of the Australian Green Building Council – voted as one of Australia's top 100 most influential people in 2012, are also part of the programme. A refreshing local addition is **Dion Changa** respected trend-spotter and the duo of **Justin Smith** and **Alex Kuzma** who share their work on the Woolworths good business journey.