

# Women entrepreneurs in construction and their experiences of the business process and managing growth

## 1. Introduction

This paper is aimed at learning lessons from the way women entrepreneurs in construction experience the entrepreneurial process and manage growth in their enterprises through a series of capacity building initiatives. Illustrative case studies from SA and the USA are analysed making use of internationally acknowledged models from a literature study to make it more meaningful as a learning exercise. Case studies were developed through interviews and some that had been published in trade magazines.

The Courtney Price Entrepreneurial Education Foundation's evaluation of Committee of 200's Growing Entrepreneurs Mentoring Programme that found the major benefits to be business growth through exposure to mentors, role models and the work of other protégés (Lloyd & Herko 2001:1). Another way to increase knowledge and expertise of women entrepreneurs in construction is through case studies.

Honing in on case studies, what is the purpose of a case study? The business or purpose of a case study is particularization and not generalisation. It is to take a particular case, getting to know it well, emphasising uniqueness, placing an observer in the field to observe the workings of the case. It is the objective recording of what happened, examining its meaning and redirecting observation to refine or substantiate those meanings.

What is a case study and where does it fit within research? The case study method is one research design method from several methods available to the researcher. Cooper and Schindler (2001: 135) describe research design as the strategy for a study and the plan by which the strategy is to be carried out. It specifies the methods and procedures for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. There is no simple classification of research designs that covers the variations found in practice according to this source.

A case study will study one topic in depth, while a statistical study will study several topics, thereby allowing for wider research. Case studies therefore reside under the topical scope - breadth and depth - of the study. Statistical studies differ from case studies as they are designed for breadth more than depth. They attempt to capture a population's characteristics by making inferences from a sample's characteristics. Case studies place more emphasis on a full contextual analysis of fewer events or conditions and their interrelations. Although hypotheses are often used, the reliance on qualitative data makes support or rejection more difficult. An emphasis on detail provides valuable insight for problem solving, evaluation and strategy. This detail is secured from multiple sources of information, allowing evidence to be verified and avoids missing data.

Case studies have often been maligned as scientifically worthless as they do not meet minimal design requirements for comparison; they in actual fact have a significant scientific role. Cooper and Schindler 2001:138 claim that a single well-designed case study can provide a major challenge to a theory and provide a source of new hypotheses and constructs simultaneously.

One organisation that is well-known for its case studies is the World Bank. Morra (Spring 1999) states that their Operations Evaluation Department uses case studies extensively. They use case studies for in-depth consideration of the results of a project or group of projects or to illustrate given points. Case studies have the advantage of being convincing and of capturing the reader's attention. She cautions that they are not generalisable, as with a case however well done, it is difficult to conclude if it is an isolated instance or whether the problem of success is widespread.

Linda concludes that a case study can be defined as a method of learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained through extensive description and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context. Case studies are used to determine why or how a programme or project worked or did not work. The key is an exploratory or explanatory purpose rather than a frequently or extent purpose. In this instance **descriptive illustrative** case studies will be

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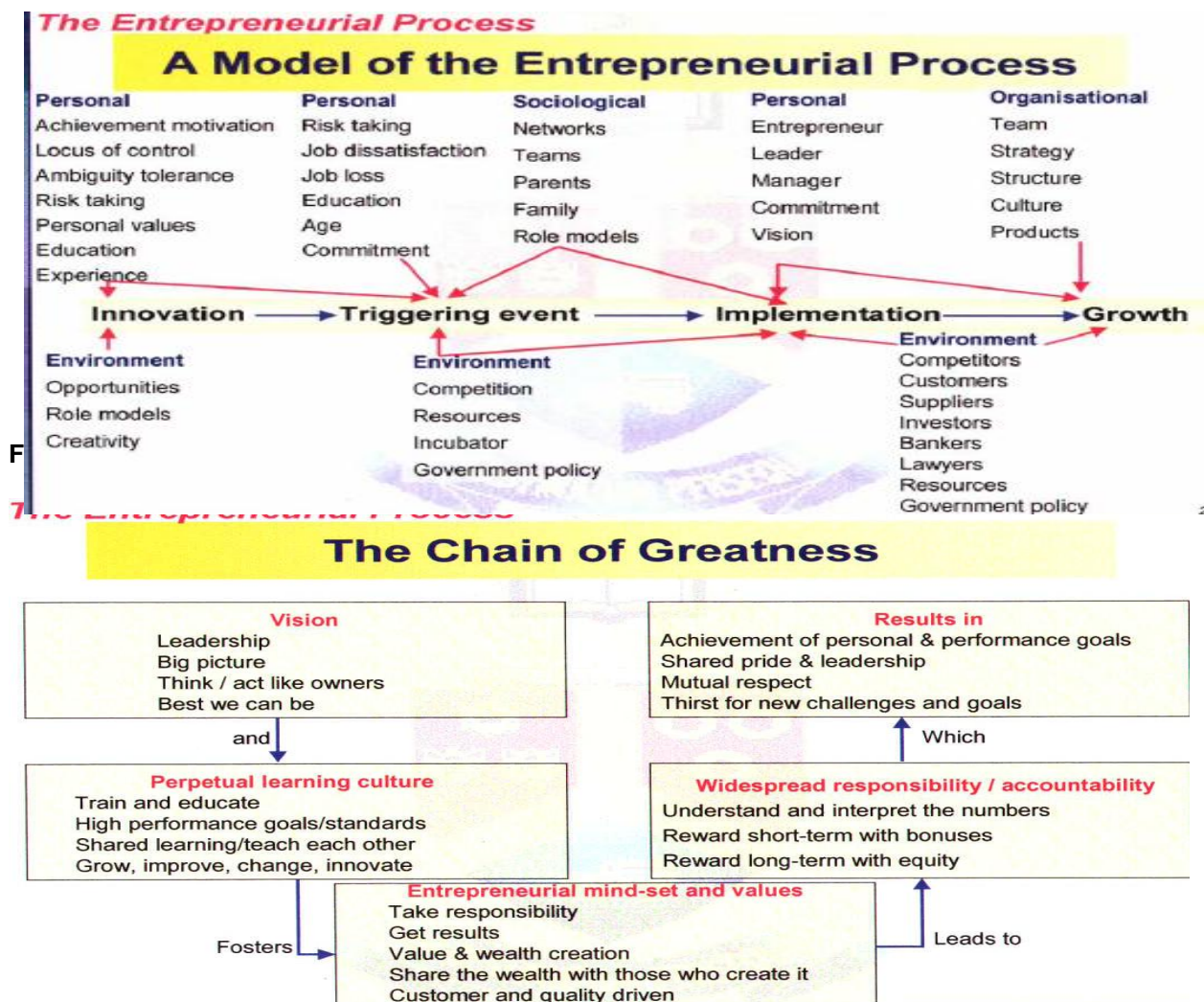
used as it is intended to enhance and add realism and in-depth examples to the literature and empirical studies. It describes what is happening and why, to show what a situation is like.

According Verwey (2003:65) and Worthen (1997:163), evaluators need to be patient to get behind the ethical aspects and truths in visiting and interviewing SMMEs. The best way is not to ask too many questions at all. "If you fire off a question it is like firing off a gun - bang it goes and everything takes flight and runs for shelter. But if you sit quite still and pretend not to be looking all the facts will come and peck round your feet situations will venture forth from thickets and intentions will creep out and sun themselves on a store; and if you are very patient, you will see and understand a great deal more than a man with a gun does." (Worthen 1997:163)

**2. Case studies and how it links to the entrepreneurial process**

Case studies can be more meaningful if it is linked to the entrepreneurial process that will now be discussed in terms of innovation, triggering events, implementation and growth. Using the Hisrich & Peters (US) model (Hisrich & Peters 1998:79) similarities and differences of women entrepreneurs in South Africa will be highlighted by way of SA and USA case studies in conjunction with the Entrepreneurial Process and the Chain of Greatness models to enhance the empirical study of the sample element:

**Figure 1.1 - Hisrich and Peters (1995:39)**



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## 2.1 Innovation

In terms of the environment and personal motivation, according to Wickham, entrepreneurship is about bringing change and making a difference. "The world is not the same after the entrepreneur has finished with it.... The entrepreneur has the power to drive changes in the structure of a society. The kind of world that an entrepreneur envisages, perhaps the possibility of a better world..." can be an important motivating factor (Wickham 2001:35,36). Entering the previously male domain of construction, women entrepreneurs in construction are changing the face of the construction industry. Green of the Stocks and Stocks Basil Read Bouyeagues Joint Venture on the N4 Toll Road to Maputo reports that, during the time spent on the project, the women entrepreneurs in construction were the most loyal and conscientious in their approach to the work undertaken of the companies who sub-contracted to them, "showing *excellent initiative* in producing a very fine standard of workmanship and good quality work" (SAWiC 2000:19). Thus they are excellent role models.

"Entrepreneurship often presents win-win scenarios. The *new value* the entrepreneur creates can be shared in a variety of ways." (Wickham 2001:36) Reviewing Tineke Meijer's eye-catching murals of African design carved in wet plaster, the new value shared in a variety of ways is manifested in the way she designed, created, "...unleashed and helped promote *innovative* techniques whilst also empowering other women entrepreneurs in construction" (SAWiC 2001:26). Tineke, like many other women entrepreneurs in construction, is a good role model and she taught other SAWiC members her innovative technique. In 2004 her daughters and three SAWiC women entrepreneurs were commissioned by the Development Bank of Southern Africa to do the feature wall of their new auditorium in the newly built Vulindlela Training Institute. "In order to understand entrepreneurial motivation, it is essential to recognise that for many entrepreneurs what matters is not the *destination* of the business they finally build up, but the *journey* - the process of creating the business. ...They provide fellow citizens with jobs"(Wickham 2001:36).

An **opportunity is a gap left in a market** by those who currently serve it. It represents the potential to serve customers better than they are being served at present. The entrepreneur is responsible for scanning the business landscape for unexploited opportunities, or the possibility that something important might be done *differently* from the way it is done at the moment and, critically, done *better* than it is at the moment (Wickham, 2001:38). For Kuratko and Welsch (2001:171) the "heart of entrepreneurship is an orientation toward seeing (and acting on) opportunities regardless of existing resources (Stevenson & Jarillo 1990)." Women entrepreneurs are filling the gap left by dwindling skills and technical expertise by taking up careers in project management for example (refer to Construction Education and Training Authority findings in CETA 2002:8). This happens regardless of existing resources, as is illustrated by the poverty profile of the sample element of this study.

## 2.2 Triggering events

Hisrich & Peters (1998:79) quote job frustration, interest in and recognition of opportunity in the area, as well as changes in personal circumstances as triggering events for women entrepreneurs. Dollinger (1999:44-45) theorizes that an entrepreneur's inclinations are propelled by negative displacement (e.g. losing a job), being between things (transition from school to career, etc.) positive pull (such as made by a parent, mentor, etc.), and are activated by situations which positively affect perceptions of desirability (message from culture, peers, etc.) and perceptions of feasibility (demonstration, etc.) and culminate in an entrepreneurial event.

The SAWiC association is a product of a programme of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), promoting sustainable development and job creation through empowering women and facilitating support for their construction enterprises. The DBSA is "proud to be the *incubator* to this dynamic process of women constructing a brighter future" (SAWiC 2002:6). This *incubation* service is one of the positive pull factors, as is evident from the growth in membership in the SAWiC database from 60 in 1999 to more than 600 in 2004.

## 2.3 Implementation

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After the minimum capital for start-up has been acquired, the entrepreneur must employ the capital through *implementation* of the business plan, according to Nieman and Bennett (2002:63). The business usually starts small with one or two employees besides the entrepreneur. The management style and key variables for success will need to be determined once the business starts growing. Managing and **growing** the business are sometimes difficult for entrepreneurs as this process "lacks the reward generally inherent in the establishment of the business" Nieman and Bennett (2002:63). To illustrate the 'how?' the Hisrich & Peters model in Chapter 2 item 2.6 will be used in conjunction with the case studies that follows below. Starting with *motivation*, the model quotes that need for Achievement and accomplishment of a goal is important to women entrepreneurs in construction. Three of the women in the case studies to follow won awards for their projects. In all three case studies the "Independence - to do it alone" of the model is illustrated, being 'self-made' women, capable of strong leadership in their teamwork, but not averse to working with teams.

Looking at the *'Departure point'* in the model, it cites job frustration, interest in and recognition of opportunity in the area and change in personal circumstances. Once again this rings true of most of the role models in the case studies under scrutiny. Thandi Ndlovu left her career as a doctor to become a construction entrepreneur, whilst Monica Dzwimbo, who wanted to become an airhostess, but was frustrated by her physical appearance, became a construction entrepreneur, following in the footsteps of her mother. Phumelele Siphayi likewise left her banking career to become a construction manufacturer and supplier, following and relating to her exposure to construction through her mother and grandmother's building of their own and neighbours' houses and responding to role models.

*'Sources of funds'* is the next element in the model. 'Personal assets and savings as well as personal loans' are given as the sources. Again this is true of our South African case study examples, as Thandi Ndlovu used her income as medical doctor to set up her venture and laughingly states that the banks are chasing her nowadays, begging her to borrow money. She does not need it, as her venture is 'quite profitable!' Monica Dzwimbo and Stephina van Rooyen ploughed back their profits and made use of 'labour only' contracts, carefully managing their cash flow so as not to become indebted. Phumelele Siphayi used her own funds, although at one stage she and her husband, in the start-up year, borrowed a small sum that they repaid the same year. Phumelele has never needed to borrow money again as she too manages her cash flow strictly and deals only with cash.

*'Occupational background'* in the model states 'Experience in area of business. Middle management or administrative-level experience in the field. Service-related occupational background'. Many of the role models in the case studies have had experience in the area of business, but not Thandi. Her only exposure to construction was through her sister who worked in the Housing Section of ABSA Bank and who subsequently also became a contractor. In her case, it was the needs of the community and the challenge that lured her into construction. A few of the role models came from middle management, but Phumelele Siphayi had administration level experience as per the model. Some but not all of the case study role models had had a service-related 'occupational background'. An example is Monica Dzwimbo who came into the field directly after completing her schooling.

*'Personality characteristics'* in the model are 'Flexible and tolerant. Goal oriented. Creative and realistic. Medium level of self-confidence. Enthusiastic and energetic. Ability to deal with the social and economic environment.' These ring true of the case models whose achievements and energetic creativity are reflected throughout the case studies.

*'Background'* is listed next in the model, quoting age when starting venture as 35 to 45. "Father was self-employed. College-educated - degree in liberal arts. First-born child." Here the South African (SA) role models differ from the findings of the model. Most of them started their construction entrepreneurial firms in their early or mid twenties. Most of the SA role models are middle children and only Thandi and Angela Broom have had a University or College education. Most of the USA role models have University or College backgrounds. Most of the SA role models' fathers were self-employed, the exceptions being Thandi's father who was a teacher and Stephina's father who worked for Stocks and Stocks Construction Company.

Under *'Support groups'* the model suggests close friends, spouse, family, and women professional groups, trade or women's associations. All four the role models in the case studies are members of the

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South African Women in Construction association and two of them have husbands who support their ventures. All of them count on their families and friends.

'Types of business started' in the model gives 'Service related - educational services, consulting, or public relations'. The South African case studies differ in this instance in that they are in construction and manufacturing, ironically the two types of businesses quoted for males in the Hisrich Peters model! This confirms that these two business types are viewed as non-traditional occupations (NTOs).

## **2.4 Growth: Defining the four growth perspectives model**

**Financial growth** relates to the development of the business as a commercial entity. It is concerned with increases in *turnover*, the *costs* and *investment* needed to achieve turnover, and the resulting *profits*, as well as increases in what the business owns: its *assets*. Related to this is the increase in the value of the business. It measures the additional value that the organisation is creating which is available for distribution to its stakeholders. It is a measure of the resources the market has allocated to the venture, the *success* of the venture and the business's performance in serving the needs of its markets (Wickham 2001:303, 304).

**Strategic growth** takes centre stage. It relates to the changes that take place in the way in which the organisation interacts with its environment as a coherent, *strategic*, whole. Primarily this is concerned with the way the business grows its capabilities to develop a presence in the market place. It is the profile of opportunities, which the venture exploits, and the assets, both tangible, which it acquires to create *sustainable competitive advantages* (Wickham 2001:304).

**Structural growth** relates to the *changes* in the way the business organises its internal systems, managerial roles, responsibilities, reporting relationships, communication links and resource control systems (Wickham 2001:304).

**Organisational growth** relates to the changes in the organisation's *processes, culture and attitude* as it grows and develops. It is also concerned with the changes that must take place in the entrepreneur's role and leadership style as the business moves from being a 'small' to a 'large' firm (Wickham 2001:304).

The *four types of growth* described are not independent of one another. They are merely different facets of the same underlying process. At the heart of that process is the awarding of valuable resources to the venture by external markets because it has demonstrated that it can make better use of them. That is, create more value from them, than can the alternative on offer. That better use of resources is a consequence of the entrepreneur's decision making (Wickham 2001:304). This model is applied to the case study on role model Phumelele Siphayi, Marketing Director of Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd.

## **3. Mentoring as it impacts on growth of women-owned businesses**

The Courtney Price Entrepreneurial Education Foundation published a paper based on an evaluation of the Committee of 200's Growing Entrepreneurs Mentoring Programme that was geared towards women business owners whose companies are grossing between \$3-8 million annual revenues in the USA. This mentoring programme annually selects up to 6 protégés, matched with two or three C200 members who serve as their mentors and act as an informal advisory board. The goal of this entrepreneurial education mentoring programme is to help these Chief executive Officers (CEOs) achieve their visions, grow their companies, increase their profitability, enhance their leadership skills, develop sound exit strategies and increase their philanthropic giving decisions. The results summarize key factors contributing to business growth and increased knowledge about business options.

The evaluation of the mentoring model and its participants revealed significant growth in revenues, changes in the number and calibre to employees, profitability and sales. Benefits recorded in terms of business growth were expanded networks, reduction of the feeling of isolation, a supportive peer group and increased knowledge gained to the areas of expertise of role models and other protégés in the programme.

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This study highlights the valuable role that mentoring plays in the development of women business owners and its direct correlation to their business' growth. C200 plans to promote mentoring as a meaningful and effective style of learning as it shares its recommendations and research with educators, policy makers and supporter of entrepreneurial development (Lloyd & Herko 2001:1).

#### **4. Growth, Gender and Business Size: Does one size fit all?**

A relatively unexplored dimension of entrepreneurship on which male and female entrepreneurs are supposed to differ is their attitude towards growth. An increasing number of researchers believe that the growth of a business enterprise is at least partially determined by the entrepreneurs' motivations and intentions.

Cliff (1998:523), however, researched whether gender differences do exist through quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of personal interviews with 229 small business owners in the Greater Vancouver area of British Columbia, Canada. Her study provided novel insights into the factors affecting an entrepreneur's growth decision and desired pace of expansion. She found that both male and female entrepreneurs desire growth, but there are important differences with respect to how they wish to expand.

Female entrepreneurs are more likely to establish maximum business size thresholds beyond which they do not wish to expand. Moreover these thresholds are smaller than those set by male entrepreneurs. This size relates to what she can manage and control with comfort, balancing work and personal life. They tend to deliberately adopt a slow and steady pace of expansion, as personal considerations appear to override economic considerations in the business expansion decision. According to Cliff the attainment of such size thresholds appear to be a key trigger in the no-growth decision.

This managed approach by female entrepreneurs to business expansion, not letting growth get out of control, may result in ventures that are able to out-survive those headed by entrepreneurs pursuing more risky high-growth strategies. This might lead to banks viewing women as lesser loan risks, given their more cautious approach toward growth. Further research is needed to determine whether these different strategy approaches towards growth would affect venture performance. If a more cautious approach leads to long-term survival of the firm, awareness should be raised of the favourable outcomes of a more cautious approach. "This would require recognition that one approach to business ownership - the desire to head a large quickly growing enterprise - may not necessarily fit all (Cliff 1998:524)."

#### **5. Gender differences in the value placed on growth**

The social feminism theory asserts that women entrepreneurs have different, but equally effective qualities, values and ways of thinking due to variations in early and ongoing socialisation processes (Black 1989). Men are expected to have high levels of self-assertion, self-expansion and the urge to master, whereas women are expected to possess higher communal qualities such as selflessness, a concern for others and interpersonal sensitivity (Eagly and Wood 1991).

Female entrepreneurs tend to have less industry, management and prior business start-up experience and that contribute to their modest growth expectations (Cliff 1998:526). Women face domestic demands, remaining the primary parent, emotional nurturer and housekeeper despite their entrepreneurial ventures impacting on their ventures' growth prospects report Lee-Gosselin and Grisè (1990:431). Women entrepreneurs are not threaten the pattern of family and conjugal relationships according to Goffee and Scase (1985:122). In contrast the primary family responsibility of men – to be a good provider (Unger and Crawford 1992) is compatible with heading a growing firm.

Empirical studies indicate that men tend to assign more emphasis on economic values and quantitative, non-ambiguous measures of achievement of success, such as status and wealth as opposed to women who tend to assign more importance to social values and qualitative ambiguous measures of achievement and success, such as personal fulfilment and strong interpersonal relations (Travis *et al* 1988; Unger and Crawford 1992; Williams 1987).

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In terms of success men look at size while women will look at interpersonal relationships and other less objective criteria:

'Brush (1992) noted that women business owners tend to pursue a balance between economic goals, such as profit and growth and non-economic goals such as product quality, personal enjoyment and helping others. Many women entrepreneurs regard growth as 'risky' because it would deter them from achieving their goal of 'employer-employee relationship based upon trust and mutual respect.

The following case studies will serve as role models moving through the entrepreneurial process and value chain and testing the four main constructs of this comparative analysis between women entrepreneurs in construction in SA and USA:

## **6. South African Case Studies**

Bliss and Garratt (2001:336, 343) highlight the crucial role that support organisations like SAWiC and NAWiC for women entrepreneurs in transitioning economies can play. They conclude that 'best practices' and understanding the unique needs of women entrepreneurs are the keys to developing effective support organisations that are viable. Networking and case studies are valuable learning tools for such organisations as SAWiC.

Kodithuwakkhu and Rosa (2002: 431) in their study of the successful emergence of entrepreneurs in a constrained environment concluded that the nature and impact of the entrepreneurial process on economic and business success is difficult to research as there are many intervening variables to consider. It is also a complex ongoing evolutionary process which can be only be fully understood in the context of the wider socio-economic environment. Conventional cross-sectional quantitative approaches can only provide limited insights and answers on the entrepreneurial process. They found that the case study approach is useful to explore success of entrepreneurs in relation to the entrepreneurial process. Learning from their experience, the same approach will be followed using the above models to analyse case studies in South Africa and the USA and how they relate to the four constructs of this research study.

### **6.1 SA Case 1:**

#### **Illustrative case study on performance hampering barriers:**

##### **The fatal barrier of a women entrepreneur**

Sarah Nhlapo was a successful construction entrepreneur, active South African Women in Construction (SAWiC) member and role model. She specialised in building houses and doing paving and she did it with love, passion and dedication. Sarah availed herself of many of the training courses that were presented via SAWiC and was mentored by the SAWiC guru, 'Magog' Xandra Vermaak, a contractor having 45 years experience and who is the SAWiC national treasurer. The nickname 'Magog' means grandma and guru and is the highest title of respect that African women give to another woman they respect immensely. Not only did Sarah constantly improve herself through training, but she cared also enough about other women and committed herself to develop SAWiC towards empowering women in the construction industry.

At the 2001 Rand Easter Show, she did duty at the SAWiC stall, marketing SAWiC and the women entrepreneurs in construction. Sarah, like many other women contractors, was also a wife and a mother of two children. The man in her life and their extended family often depended on Sarah's business ventures for an income. This prevented her from expanding her construction business to the extent that she would have liked to.

What SAWiC members did not realise was that her entrepreneurial performance sparked jealousy that brought out the "dark side of family life" (United Nations 1991:19). When Sarah wanted to grow her business she became the victim of discrimination, oppression and domestic violence and was beaten. At the height of her entrepreneurial career, and after she had completed an impressive housing project successfully, Sarah Nhlapo, in her early thirties, died a brutal death at the hands of her husband, his family and allies in their community. Her husband in turn was killed by Sarah's brother in revenge.

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Sarah Nhlapo featured proudly on the cover page of the SAWiC Annual Report 2000 with the houses that she had built with her mainly women team in the background. One year later pictures of her funeral appeared in the 'In Memoriam' section of the SAWiC Annual Report (SAWiC 2001:18). A tragic victim of discrimination, oppression and violence, inflicted on her by her 'loved ones'. Violent discrimination against Sarah Nhlapo ended her successful entrepreneurial career.

How many women entrepreneurs like Sarah Nhlapo must suffer and die before it is realised that legislation and implementing measures, mechanisms and incentives are cheaper than orphaned children and lost human capital? Sarah's tragic death is one of the reasons why the author decided to include the section on discrimination, oppression and violence against women hampering their entrepreneurial development and performance (Verwey 2003:48).

**Analysis of SA Case 1:** This case study highlights a woman with a high need for Achievement, highly motivated to do the best for her family, other women in construction and SAWiC. She was in construction because she loved it (positive pull factor), but also to raise the standard and quality of living of her family.

In terms of the chain of greatness, it is clear that Sarah was a leader in her construction firm and had a vision for other women contractors and SAWiC as well as for her family. She was mentored and was mentoring her team. She did not have a college education, but believed in perpetual learning, availing herself of as many training courses as possible to improve her performance. She was respected in SAWiC and by her team of workers and respected them in turn. Her successful housing project is an example of how she achieved her goals.

She embraced and lived the NAWiC core values to which SAWiC also aspires: She believed in herself, persevered with the courage of her convictions and dared to move into new horizons. She was successful in what she did because of living out those core values and wanted to expand and grow her business but she tragically faced the final barrier to her entrepreneurial construction career dying a brutal death.

## **6.2 SA Case 2**

**Women entrepreneurs in construction teaming up for success: Kamarifi Consortium**  
(The positive enabling role of SAWiC in success and overcoming barriers through networking)

If you thought the business of bricks and mortar was purely a man's domain, think again. Women are fast making in-roads into the industry and in a big way too. Kamarifi, a women's consortium comprising Kedibone Nyanga, Mapule Leshega, Refiloe Mekgwe, Florence Seathlolo and Tham Tam, have been subcontracted to build student flats in Auckland Park by Beckers Construction (Komane 2004:26).

Formed in 1991, Kamarifi is an acronym made up of the consortium's co-founders' names: Kedibone, Mapule and Refiloe. According to the women who are the breadwinners in their homes, the idea came about because most of them were not working. Prior to joining the construction industry, they were involved in unsuccessful sewing, catering and clothes selling projects. Their decision to form a consortium originated from joining South African Women in Construction who encouraged consortiums among women contractors to overcome capacity problems and to enhance access to funding. Pooling their expertise and resources helped to overcome many obstacles. The camaraderie of the women and the comfort of the SAWiC support network on tap boost morale. Kedibone, Mapule and Refiloe say that South African Women in Construction (SAWiC) not only improved their networks, but since 1999 constantly empowered women contractors through the training and awareness workshops they offered. Kamarifi consortium were grateful for courses that over and above skills training like bricklaying, paving, painting and plumbing, also improved their tendering and pricing skills, not forgetting the Occupational Health and Safety Course that gives SAWiC members a competitive edge in the building sector.

Kamarifi is currently on site in Auckland Park, building the student village, which is called Laborie. They are in the fourth month of construction and are expected to complete the building work by the end of November (Komane 2004:26).

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The Kemarifi group's spokesperson, Mapule Leshega is a divorcee and mother of five. About being in construction as a woman and commenting on latest building project she says: "It is a challenge to build a four storey building. Life in the building industry is tough, especially for women. Our motivation stems not only from the need to feed our families, but the love we have for construction. One does not become a contractor over night. You must have perseverance, patience, dedication, as well as willingness to learn and to face challenges. My message to women is to form consortiums as each member has different skills and expertise to offer and by pooling resources it is easier to access and leverage more resources. Join an association in your field as SAWiC has offered us a platform to share experiences, expanded our networks and has been a voice for women in the building industry" (Leshega 2004).

**Analysis of SA Case 2:** The Kemarifi women are all single mothers who joined construction because previous entrepreneurial attempts at catering and sewing were not viable and they need to feed their families. Despite these negative push factors, they love construction and despite many challenges they choose to stay in construction because they love it (positive pull factors). None of them have college educations but all made use of SAWiC training courses and mentors like project manager Sita Vosloo (a woman and SAWiC service provider) and the Kemarifi women sought solutions to obstacles like finance. They believe in the nurturing provided by SAWiC and its networks. They too have the characteristics and behaviour quoted in the chain of Greatness in that they have the vision, are leaders in their communities for SAWiC as well as on their construction sites, are owners of their business, believe in perpetual learning, have the entrepreneurial mindset and values of taking responsibility, getting results, are customer and quality driven and pursue value and wealth creation. They have mutual respect in their consortium, their construction work force and share in the pride of SAWiC achieving women entrepreneurs. They look for new challenges and their latest project is successful as a first for them as a consortium. They, like Sarah in SA case 1 live out the NAWiC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in themselves as women; **persevering** with the strengths of their convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons.

### 6.3 SA Case 3

#### **Joint venture: Husband and wife team: LFS Building projects**

(Positive role of SAWiC and networking to overcome barriers, high motivation to mentor others and achieving success)

LFS Building projects is a construction company owned by a husband and wife team, Fred and Linda Smith. Their business was established in 1986, operating as a small contracting company in Eldorado Park, south of Johannesburg. Originally their market was confined to housing and insurance jobs in the black townships, until Caltex Oil gave them a breakthrough in maintenance work, re-branding service stations as well as concrete and steel work for Pylons. In 1996 they opened a hardware store to supply their construction projects and small contractors in the area. Subsequent to that they opened the first Dulux Paint Centre in the area in 2002.

They have an innovative team providing specialised services and they do not compromise on quality. "Success comes only with constant efforts and through education and training of your workforce." They see their role as meeting the client's needs within time and budget constraints, strategically adapting with changes in the environment.

Linda, a SAWiC member, comes from an accounting, secretarial and retail management background and she has a lot of experience in the financial side of the business. Linda believes for any business to grow it needs proper planning and administration. She was one of a delegation from Nafcoc/JCCI who travelled to Belgium in the Chamber's Gazelle Programme in 1996 where she improved her business management skills. In 2004 she joined a SAWiC delegation for intensive training at NAWiC Convention 2004 in the USA where the courses focused on how to professionally run and improve your construction enterprise, association and how to enhance personal growth. Her husband, Fred, started his career in construction in the early 1970s, later working as a buyer for Wits University as an importer and afterwards moving into the insurance field. He was instrumental in founding one of the first black brokerages.

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This husband and wife team is a living experience of a 'joint venture' of a different kind, complimenting each others skills and expertise, sharing each other's interests and working towards a common goal of empowerment, not only of themselves but also those around them. Their membership of SAWiC and NafcocJCCI illustrate the benefits of joining professional associations and industry bodies for their own advancement, but also for sharing and mentoring other construction entrepreneurs.

Their future plans include a second development project in the Vaal Marina where there is a huge opportunity in property development, as well as Phase 1 of their own shopping complex that includes a supermarket, hardware and bottle store (NafcocJCCI 2004:10). Their entrepreneurial flair is evident from all these initiatives. They continuously scan the environment, move with the times and their advice to other entrepreneurs is as you improve yourself, also uplift others around you, investing in a brighter future in true SAWiC spirit. (Smith 2004)

**Analysis of SA Case 3:** The Smith couple entered into construction because they love it and are interested in it. In a bizarre way the limiting of black and coloured people to trade in their own areas only created a window of opportunity for them. The skills and training they both had were also positive pull factors into construction whilst their marriage was also a positive influence of motivation through joining skills and complementing each other in construction and entrepreneurship. In terms of the chain of greatness entrepreneurial process model they both showed leadership in their company, their community as well as in the Associations they belong to. They have vision, saw the bigger picture in during the previous political era and they think and act as owners and do the very best they can. They believe in perpetual learning through their associations, share their learning and opportunities with others, grow, improve, change and innovate in expanding their business continuously. They show an entrepreneurial mindset, take responsibility, get results, create value and wealth and are customer and quality driven. Their successful continuously growing business demonstrated personal achievement of goals, as a couple share pride in what they are doing with mutual respect a golden thread that runs throughout their years in business enterprising. They are still looking at new challenges and do not rest on their laurels after so many successes in construction entrepreneurship. Like the previous cases Linda and Fred Smith live out the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in themselves as women; **persevering** with the strengths of their convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons.

#### **6.4 SA Case 4: Going it alone: SAWiC member Meisie Ndlovu**

(Overcoming negative barriers through positive high motivation and need for Achievement. Success crowned by African and SA awards)

Ten years ago Meisie Ndlovu lived in a corrugated iron and metal shack of 3x3 meters in the Soshanguve area North West of Pretoria. She was a domestic worker at first who later became a trainer for hairdressers. Her husband had left her for another woman and she had to fend for herself and their three kids as well as two kids from her brother's broken marriage. With her entrepreneurial spirit Meisie wanted to do better for herself and her extended family. She sent her one son to law school and the other one was trained in information technology, saying "I will get a pain if my children could not go to school, so I will work for the rest of my life for a better future for my children".

That same shack she lived in initially is now her tool shed. She still lives on the same stand, but now in a three-bedroom brick house. She built the house by herself and thought that she could do that for others too. Inspired by Soshanguve's reconstruction, she joined a women's construction co-operative called Bakgoni - Tswana for "we can do it". In the meantime she registered her own company, Meitho Construction. Lacking a truck, she hand-carried tools, cement and poles to her first job and hand-wrote invoices. That is how Meisie started her building career in 1999 (Framierg 2004).

She joined South African Women in Construction in the same year. For three months she hitchhiked 150km to Nelspruit in Mpumalanga to study construction management and skills. She received training on the N4 toll road, a project where women contractors tendered and participated successfully after preparatory workshops facilitated by SAWiC and the DBSA. A training budget was built into the contract package of the concessionaires. Meisie did paving and erected guardrails at the toll plazas and underpasses on the freeway project. Her evaluator wrote to SAWiC about her impressive work:

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"Excellent". It is therefore not surprising that the DBSA nominated Meisie with other women contractors for the prestigious Pan African Broadcast and Heritage Achievement Award for women builders in Africa during 2000 and that, together with two other women contractors, she emerged as a winner.

Subsequent to that Meisie worked on the Bakwena Platinum Highway, having had contracts with the Platinum Joint Venture. She was identified and sponsored through the Platinum Joint Venture's participation SMME programme in November 2003 to attend an Entrepreneurs workshop presented by the South African Excellence Foundation. The workshop involved three days of seminars, workshops and group work on entrepreneurial principles. At the end of the workshop, Meisie Ndlovu was awarded a certificate of recognition for an emerging company (Bakwena 2004:4).

Throughout her contracts Meisie regularly attended and participated in the SAWiC workshops and meetings. Together with 229 other delegates countrywide she received her training certificate for successfully participating in the training course on Occupational Health, Safety, HIV Aids- Risk- and Environmental Awareness and Respect for people at a Women's day function in August 2004 at DBSA. The workshops formed part of a sustainable development series financed by the DBSA Development Fund and presented by experts recommended by the construction industry development board (cidb). Meisie's message to other women entrepreneurs is to persevere, not to forget your roots where you came from, have a learning spirit and to share experience and draw support from an association such as SAWiC. (Ndlovu M 2004)

**Analysis of SA Case 4:** Meisie is a shining example of motivation, need for achievement, selflessly working to provide a better environment for her family and others and not daunted by obstacles such as her husband leaving her for another woman and to care on her own for 5 children, two of them not even her own. She does not lick her wounds and she does not know the meaning of the words jealousy or selfishness. She came into construction not only because of the push factor of a husband cheating and jilting her, leaving her alone to care for the family, but rather because of positive pull factors of her entrepreneurial spirit wanting challenges, success and a better life and education for her children, not having had that privilege herself. Those challenges and satisfaction she found in construction, loving it enormously. She overcame barriers such as lack of own transport and equipment, steadily growing her business and improving her training to eventually buy those things she lacked at first. In terms of the chain of greatness she showed vision, leadership in her community and in SAWiC, acts and thinks like an owner, is perpetually improving her learning, take responsibility, gets results and success crowned by an SA and an African Award. Like the previous cases she lives out the NAWiC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons.

**6.5 SA Case 5 Networking to make inroads into road-maintenance technology: Angela Broom - an entrepreneurial manufacturer and innovator**  
(Need for Achievement, overcoming barriers through networking and success)

Angela, an entrepreneur and innovator, originates from the United Kingdom and moved to South Africa in 1981. She holds a marketing diploma from Damelin but became interested in roads technology. She started to develop herself by working with engineers, firstly at a subsidiary of Murray & Roberts in 1984, where she in 1986 launched prefabricated products. She left them in 1993 to start her own company, patented and launched her product nationally and internationally. It was a common sense solution to potholes and the need to maintain SA roads. The writer of this case study jokingly said to Angela during the interview that she must have got the idea from 'band-aid' as that is almost the same concept to 'make the road sore better'. But Angela did not stop there. She joined the South African Entrepreneurial Network (SAWEN) who in turn introduced her to SAWiC. SAWiC then linked her to Technology for Women in business where she at the Women's day celebrations in Kimberley offered opportunities and training to women entrepreneurs (Broom A 2004).

**Analysis of SA Case 5:** What is remarkable about Angela's life story is that she came to a foreign country, deviated from her marketing comfort zone and plunged into the highly sophisticated field of technology. The challenges she faced was firstly to be accepted as a foreigner in a new country, with no

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existing networks and having to build up her future from scratch. The next challenge was to be accepted in the male dominated building industry. Angela worked hard at establishing her networks and credibility. Her dedication, good inter-personal skills, professionalism, hard work and success earned her respect. Combining her entrepreneurial flair with common sense, learning from being interested in what happens around her, spotting an opportunity, working purposefully and dedicatedly to come up with a new invention, as well as applying good business skills and her marketing background is what lead to Angela's unprecedented success in a new area of expertise, a new country and a male-dominated area. Angela is a role model worth following and one of SAWiC's champions concerned with empowering women. Like the previous cases she lives out the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons.

**6.6 SA Case 6: Family as a role model - positive pull factors - Monica Dzwimbo**  
(Civil contractor: roads – Positive pull factors, Need for Achievement and Success)

Monica always dreamed of being an airhostess, but her weight kept her grounded, until she learnt to love the road. Today, she has a team of labourers helping her prevent soil erosion along the R2 billion Maputo Corridor Toll Road that cuts through South Africa's Mpumalanga Province on its way to Maputo, Mozambique. Her entrepreneurial mother, Mary, who used to own a housing construction company, MG Dzwimbo & Daughters, and built 450 low cost houses in Palm Springs, Vereeniging, is her inspiration. When Monica was in her matriculation year at school, she began mixing building sand for her mother's company. She initially thought the job was not smart enough for her, but now she is standing proudly under the blazing sun along the Schoemanskloof alternative road west of Nelspruit (Mpumalanga). She employs five men and five women having been awarded her first tender in 1999 to install underground drains. In 2001, she won the prestigious Pan African Broadcast and Heritage Achievement Award (PABHA) in Nigeria. The Southern African Development Bank nominated her for the award, which is coveted by many women entrepreneurs in Africa. She has completed a number of courses in civil engineering and business management and believes that women should seize such opportunities. Her hectic schedule allows her to see her husband and five year old son every second weekend only, but she has set her sights on scooping a tender for N4 Platinum Corridor Road that stretches from Warmbaths to Botswana. When she retires one day, she intends to start a truck hiring business, because she won't have the physical strength to work on roads.

Trans African Concession (Trac) won the 30-year concession to build, operate and transfer the Maputo Corridor Toll Road, and has eight women sub-contractors out of a total of 36, according to Trac Human Resources Manager, Hannes van Wyk (Singwane 2002:1).

**Analysis of SA Case 6:** Monica is woman who has dreams and goals and therefore vision, thinking into the future into her retirement age. She plans carefully, is accountable, achieves her goals and has received an African entrepreneurship award to crown her success. She believes in perpetual learning, perseveres, make sacrifices to see her family only every second weekend. She is in construction because of positive pull factors, her mother being her entrepreneurial example in construction. Although in the beginning, having had to start from the bottom and work her way up it did not seem very glamorous for her. She reaped the reward for that perseverance because receiving the Award and seeing your completed work contribute to the economy of South Africa that is truly glamorous. She fits all the criteria of the Chain of Greatness and aspires to live the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons.

**6.7 SA Case 7: Overcoming barriers in a non-traditional occupation as civil projects contractor - Stephina van Rooyen**

Another bright star in the SAWiC constellation is **Stephina van Rooyen** of Soshanguve, who is in the process of completing some projects for the Department of Agriculture. The projects are to install electric fencing at game farms, close to Potgietersrus (19 lines 40 km in length) and in the Marble Hall district at Arbie village, as well as a water canal construction project in Machadodorp. Stephina handles projects of R100 000 to R150 000 on a labour-only basis. This unique woman started her career as a construction entrepreneur because of her passion for building. Stephina's father worked for Stocks and Stocks and she

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sometimes used to accompany him to work. That is where it all started. Stephina, along with other SAWiC members, made a breakthrough as sub-contractors on the N4 Toll Road to Maputo through SAWiC intervention. She did so well completing her contracts ahead of time that she was soon approached to carry out more work in Mpumalanga. Once she told a consultant that she did not have the experience to do a specific contract he had asked her to take on. He told her that having watched her performance on the toll road sub-contracts, he was convinced she could do it - and she did!

Stephina, in the true SAWiC spirit, also empowers other women in construction. She works with a core team and then recruits local labour in the area where she works. In Marble Hall she was battling to find workers who could do calculations, measure accurately and work with a spirit level. She began to search for ladies who had taken Mathematics as a subject at school and who had passed their matriculation examination. She found five young women who were unemployed and who met these criteria. They were a huge success. They had previously had some training through exposure on Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) projects for Ruto and Eskom. Stephina currently employs 38 people, 10 of them women.

When asked how she manages the male workers in her team, being so petite and beautiful, she says that a professional attitude, being firm and fair, as well as laying down the rules in terms of productivity and related compensation (site economics) during the first personal interview, does the trick for her. She is permanently on site and makes sure she knows what is going on. Her core team is loyal and a great help on new projects and environments. She laughingly recalled an incident where some workers came to ask for jobs. As Stephina arrived to do the interviews one man, mistaking her for a fellow job seeker said: "Hi baby!" She pretended not to hear him and proceeded to the office. He was embarrassed when Stephina conducted interviews with prospective workers and when he realised she was the one who would be paying him! She is a no-nonsense person and tells them clearly that if they make trouble or do not perform, they will be in danger of losing their jobs.

Stephina says her success is because she personally interviews workers for employment, treats them strictly but fairly, and prices and plans her projects thoroughly. She does not experience problems with cash flow and bridging finance as she makes sure that she ploughs back some of her profits into the next project. She maintains that pricing correctly, being productive and having a hands-on approach leads to success. She never takes on more projects than she can handle, making sure that she delivers quality work on time and within budget. Although she owns a bakkie, she only uses it when suppliers cannot deliver items and makes use of public transport (taxis) to move from site to site. This is more cost effective and saves her unnecessary wear and tear and maintenance costs on her bakkie. She is full of praise for the Department of Agriculture and also for Siyaya fencing company in Potgietersrus, who went out of their way to empower her as a sub-contractor on one of their projects. Stephina is grateful for SAWiC's networks, support and interventions that have given her and other women contractors a breakthrough (Verwey 2003:23).

**Analysis of SA Case 7:** Following the criteria of the Chain of Greatness Stephina reveals leadership and vision, she acts and thinks like an owner in handling her business venture. She is in construction because of her father's example which is called positive pull factors. She makes choices based on the economic viability of her enterprise like how and when to use own transport and when best to use public or delivery transport of supply firms. She is perpetually learning and encourages her staff to do the same. She watches out for opportunities to use women and youths in her projects thus empowering them. She recruited and successfully trained some jobless matriculants with mathematics for measuring work on site is a good example. She has an entrepreneurial mindset, takes responsibility and deals fairly with her staff. Attempts at sexual harassment by a man on one of her sites, she handled firmly and nipped that kind of behaviour in the bud by making an example of the culprit. She is customer and quality driven and for that reason received more work from Government after her good performance on the N4 Toll Road to Maputo. She gets results and achieves her personal and performance goals constantly. She is in demand by public and private sector clients alike. Her workers respect her and she respects them, giving them training opportunities and rewarding them for good performance. She is constantly on the look out for new opportunities that she shares with pride and leadership. She aspires to live the NAWiC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons.

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**6.8 SA Case 8: The Growth construct, networking and success as manufacturer and supplier - Phumelele Siphayi**

Phumelele Siphayi, Marketing Director of Phumken Trading as Kenny's Bricks registration number 90/00948/07, this small manufacturing concern is situated on Stand 1170, Zone 8 Pimville, Soweto, along Old Potchefstroom Road. The company manufactures cement bricks and roof trusses, also rendering related building supply services mainly to emerging contractors, to some established contractors and home owners in the vicinity. Phumelele happens to be the secretary of Gauteng Women in Construction and she was awarded the Pabha (Pan African Broadcasting Heritage Award) in October 2001 in Nigeria, for her contribution to management influence and social development in Africa.

Phumelele is married to Kenny, a former disco owner and well-known show biz personality who headed the band "The Movers" in 1979. Phumelele comes from a banking background. They have four children, the first a daughter aged 20, who is an actress, the second daughter is an excellent swimmer and athlete, the third child is a twelve year old son, who is the SA Junior Champion golfer (under 12 boys) and is known as 'the miracle child' of SA golf. Their fourth child is another boy who is following in his brother's footsteps as a golfer. Phumelele is devoting a lot of attention and energy in promoting this sport to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Ironically the political scene offered Phumelele and her husband a window of opportunity. It was Kenny's show biz and band background that led to his discovery by Corobrik. Like many established or white building supply companies in the period 1983 to 1984, Corobrik was head-hunting well-known black personalities to take their products into the townships as they were not allowed to trade there. Kenny and Phumelele started their marketing campaign for Corobrik on a piece of land they bought in Diepkloof. At that time black people started owning their homes in the townships. As they were allowed to buy and sell houses, Phumelele and Kenny decided to build a show house. They demonstrated the use of face bricks, Hullett's Aluminium ceilings, imported tiles from Brazil, marble baths, window frames and other products in their show house. It was immensely successful, as home owners started to improve their homes and their lifestyle or sell and make a profit. This was the beginning of a house market for black people as they were acknowledged as a buying power and potentially profitable market.

The Siphayis then started a hardware store 'Soweto Brick and Tile', but the township people associated this name with Corobrik and they were forced, for cultural reasons, to personalise and change the name to Kenny's Bricks. So it was perceptions that necessitated a cultural name change! As the business grew, it increasingly became Phumelele's responsibility and they therefore decided to trade as Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd. The Siphayis were so successful that they moved from Soweto to Bryanston, a suburb close to Sandton.

Phumelele believes that entrepreneurs should talk and listen to their clients. By handing out free samples and arranging many well handled promotions with Kenny's show biz know-how, business boomed. They listened to what people asked for at their counters and thus responded to the market by selling all housing related building materials. This proved to be much more effective than formal and costly market research initiatives! Their premises were big enough to manufacture cement bricks and they started manufacturing roof trusses under licence. They still sold Corobrik and other products.

In terms of the business concept, culture and dimensions of growth Phumelele and Kenny believe in a one-stop service approach. This approach was triggered because the banks had a policy of issuing one cheque only when they granted home (improvement) loans. The Siphayis started in a small way, did their homework listening and responding to clients needs, while scanning the political, cultural, economic and legal environments. At first they manufactured and supplied all the different needs of their customers and clients. Their staff and they themselves were trained to ensure best practice, and kept up to date with the technology of their suppliers, e.g. Corobrik, South African Pulp and Paper Industry (SAPPI), Lafarge. Once they saw how well their staff managed some of these services, they empowered the staff members to purchase them. The staff members thus became business owners, running these services from the Phumken Trading premises. They created a *culture* of focused service, trust, delegation, empowerment and reward. This approach reminds one of the Richard Branson model. He sells off parts of his business as soon as it becomes too big. This method allowed Phumelele and Kenny to focus on what they do best,

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ensuring that they do not carry unnecessary overheads and earn some income while still benefiting from the mini 'Industrial Park' they created. In times of decline this helped them to survive. The fact that they are a one-stop shop and are located in Soweto, gives them a *competitive advantage*.

The venture's main clients are emerging contractors, some established contractors like Rainbow Construction, Nare and Rodascila construction firms and to a lesser extent home owners in Soweto and surrounding areas. Their main suppliers are Corobrik, SAPPI and Lafarge. Should a client want a specific brand, Phumken Trading makes an effort to obtain it from that specific supplier. Their main competitors are established manufacturing and supply firms in and around Johannesburg and Gauteng.

Assets of the venture comprise of land and buildings. They own a prime site in Pimville, Soweto, less than 10 km away from South Gate, well connected to the N1, N12, M1 on Old Potch Road, close to railway station and taxi ranks. Enough buildings to accommodate their own business, as well as other related construction supply businesses, to deliver a one-stop service to customers.

As far as staff, furniture and office equipment, show room and stock were concerned, in the beginning, pre-launch and start-up it was only Phumelele and Kenny and later on a secretary was employed. Phumelele now has a full time office manager, Esther, a sales lady named Cecilia and a secretary, Pearl Motaung. There is also a tea lady, as well as a lady who designs the trusses. Each of the manufacturing initiatives has its own manager and work team. This is also the case with the delivery trucks. On site there is the brick making, steel doors, security gates, mobile toilet structures and windows and truss plant and equipment, along with the timber, steel, sand and cement. They stock the normal hardware supplies and have a show room adjacent to the offices. Phumken Trading owns all the equipment needed for manufacturing bricks, roof trusses, etc., as well as several big delivery trucks. At times they use their supplier's delivery services e.g. Corobrik when theirs are fully committed.

Phumelele grew up in an environment where her father worked in the urban areas to bring income back to his family in the rural area. Thus it was the responsibility of her mother and the children to build and maintain their home. Her mother and the children manufactured bricks in their backyard and they built their own home and helped neighbours to build theirs. So this business environment was not unfamiliar to Phumelele – it is the way she grew up! The Siphayi family nurtured and harnessed their show biz, golf, banking and Phumelele's women forum networks to build up and grow their family business. Combining all of that with their talent, expertise and experience they were able to spot and open the window of opportunity. As entrepreneurs they attracted and applied the required resources to serve their community (Verwey 2003:20).

**Analysing SA Case 8:** Phumelele conforms to most of the criteria of the Chain of Greatness. In terms of vision Phumelele and her husband certainly had it when they built a first show house in Soweto with quality finishes and were able to sell it and get orders for more. They kick-started the property marketing in Soweto at a time when no one thought it was possible. They saw the big picture, spotted the gap and capitalised on it. Watching their entrepreneurial careers they both moved out of their comfort zones not missing an opportunity to get training with SAWiC and other organisations. Phumelele believes in perpetual learning and also attended the international training offered at the NAWiC Convention 2004 in New York with 19 other SAWiC members. Phumelele has won several awards, amongst others the African Phaba award for her entrepreneurial ventures. She continuously grew, improved, changed and innovated and those are the reasons for the success of the entrepreneurial ventures. She has demonstrated that she can take responsibility, get results, create value and wealth, sharing that with others around her, giving them entrepreneurial opportunities and supporting them to achieve like she did. Especially remarkable is her efforts to empower other women and it is noteworthy that the persons who does the roof truss designs in Phumelele's firm is a woman – in a non-traditional job. Phumelele is customer and quality driven and has shown that she rewards her staff with short-term bonuses as well as long-term equity, handing over some parts of her business over to them to run for their own accounts. She shares her pride and leadership with those around her. That shows mutual respect. Phumelele achieves her personal and performance goals and always thirsts for new challenges and goals. She like the previous SA cases aspires to live the NAWiC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons. (Verwey 2003:20-23)

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<b>Growth Stages</b> (Nieman & Bennett 2002:64)	Pre-Launch: Incubation "The heart of the entrepreneurial process. The People's Club	Start-up and Infancy Hands-on approach by entrepreneur Soweto Brick & Tile	Growth/ Breakthrough Kenny's Bricks later trading as Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd	Maturity Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd Manage time & delegate, control key issues	Decline/ Rejuvenation Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd
<b>Time Frame</b>	1982-83	1984-1987	1988-94; 1997-2000	2000-2003	1992; 1995-1996
<b>Pressure on Resources</b>	Ideas sifted, opportunity identified and crystallised. Business plan developed. Licensing, staff selection and legal form of business attended to. Being dependent on established suppliers' delivery trucks and drivers who played their own games, often delaying their deliveries. Then they started making use of emerging contractors in Soweto, with only gentlemen's agreements, that worked well for them.	Business opened and started trading. Growing pains experienced. Siphayis were close to business and identified and removed obstacles. The Riots in Soweto; Trucks were burnt. They overcame this problem by using their own business names on the trucks belonging to white established business to safeguard them. The police escorted them in convoys for protection.	Acquired truss manufacturing plant and operations under licence - MII Mitek. Growth put pressure on resources. Had to match opportunity with resources. Closely watched and balanced cash flow, production, delivery and appointment of personnel. For cultural reasons had to change company name as the people in the township associated the name 'Soweto Brick & Tile' with Corobrik creating the perception that they were fronting for Corobrik! They therefore had to personalise the business name to 'Kenny's Bricks', later trading as Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd and that was acceptable. Competitive Advantage: Soweto-based One stop service ranging from designing houses and trusses (architectural & engineering	USAID conference on franchising. They wanted to go into a franchise with Corobrik, who became their main competitor and the deal fell through. Learned to manage time and to delegate. Key issues were expense control, productivity, entry into niche markets, investment in plant and equipment. Empowered and rewarded talented & committed staff members who performed well. Outsourced and sold many of the successful ventures on their premises to staff members. Shared the running costs and currently focus on their core business. Focus more on community services and effectively use their networks to the advantage of their business. They acknowledge the role that organisations such as SAWiC have played in expanding their networks, promoting their businesses and helping them to secure business partners. Phumelele started focusing on marketing. She found that the Junk	Transnet and Mining retrenchments impacted negatively on their business. Fewer contracts from those who previously had secure jobs. Had to come up with new and innovative ideas to maintain competitive advantage. Outsourced those activities that were not part of their core business, but retained them on their premises. Created a mini industrial park in Soweto, thus sharing running costs. Beneficial to all parties involved; provided one-stop service.

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			services) to manufacturing cement bricks, steel windows and doors and security gates, to the range of hardware needed for housing schemes. Training of staff by suppliers	Mail brought them more business than the Sowetan advertisements. Held promotions & training sessions for their supply companies run on their business premises. Used discount coupons, brochures, leaflets at traffic lights, trade shows and used signboards.	
<b>Growth Stages</b> (Nieman & Bennett 2002:64)	Pre-Launch: Incubation "The heart of the entrepreneurial process. The People's Club	Start-up and Infancy Hands-on approach by entrepreneur Soweto Brick & Tile	Growth/ Breakthrough Kenny's Bricks later trading as Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd	Maturity Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd Manage time & delegate, control key issues	Decline/ Rejuvenation Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd
<b>Time Frame</b>	1982-83	1984-1987	1988-94; 1997-2000	2000-2003	1992; 1995-1996
• <b>Capital</b>	Diepkloof premises. Land & buildings	Diepkloof & Chiawelo show houses	Developed new site in Pimville, Soweto with SAPPI. Acquired new business in Dobsonville, acquired plant and equipment.	Maintained the status quo.	Closed Dobsonville operations and incorporated into the Pimville plant
• <b>Cash</b>	Personal savings Debtors and creditors strictly cash Turnover: R50 000	<b>Personal savings &amp; SBDC loan, repaid the same year Debtors and creditors strictly cash. Turnover: R100 000 up to R300 000</b>	Ploughed back profit to grow Debtors and creditors strictly cash. Turnover: Up from R1 million up to R2 million during this period	Profit Turnover: R2 million up to R3 million	Survived on personal savings & retained profit. "Survived due to good management of cash." Maintained turnover
• <b>Assets</b>	No delivery trucks. Personal vehicle No computers or office equipment	Acquired one delivery truck and second personal car	Acquired a fleet of trucks and maintained personal vehicles	Maintain fleet of trucks and acquired new personal vehicles	Maintained fleet & used supplier vehicles where more cost efficient

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<b>Growth Stages</b> (Nieman & Bennett 2002:64)	Pre-Launch: Incubation "The heart of the entrepreneurial process. The People's Club	Start-up and Infancy Hands-on approach by entrepreneur Soweto Brick & Tile	Growth/ Breakthrough Kenny's Bricks later trading as Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd	Maturity Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd Manage time & delegate, control key issues	Decline/ Rejuvenation Phumken Trading (Pty) Ltd
<b>Time Frame</b>	1982-83	1984-1987	1988-94; 1997-2000	2000-2003	1992; 1995-1996
• <b>People</b>	Phumelele & Kenny	Phumelele Kenny and secretary, lady to check truckloads and stocks. Driver.	Phumelele, Kenny, office manager, secretary, sales lady, staff member to check truckloads and stocks. Drivers, operations managers and supervisors, Roof truss designer, architect, labour & plant as needed. Staff complement of 60!	Maintained key staff, focused on what they do best	Maintained key staff and outsourced operations that could be viable on their own, empowering and rewarding deserving staff, but kept businesses on their premises to deliver one-stop service.
<b>Growth Opportunities</b>	Specialisation: New service in Soweto	Specialisation: Overcoming obstacles, gaining control over distribution channels and suppliers	Specialisation. Improving customer service. Acquisition. New product. Diversify Technology and market based. Geographical expansion.	Specialisation. Mergers with competition.	Holdings; maintenance. Pruning-outsourcing. Staying put.
<b>Growth strategies</b>	Grow organically – internal growth	Internal growth through increasing market share	Expansion into new markets. Branding. External growth through acquisition	Stabilising during maturity	Outsourcing non-core business elements

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<b>Growth methods</b>	Strategic growth	Strategic and structural growth	Organisational growth and financial growth	Strategic, structural, and organisational growth	Strategic growth: Increase in turnover, profit, total assets, net assets, net worth and number of employees.
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**6.9 SA Case 9: How being a medical doctor can make you a successful contractor – Dr Thandi Ndlovu** (Overcoming barriers, nAch, love of construction and success)

Dr Thandi Ndlovu was born and bred in Soweto, the middle child in a family of five. Both her parents were school teachers; they were poor, but at least had a stable income. She worked hard to obtain scholarships and grants. From an early age Thandi was determined to portray herself as successful and never to let the world see her difficulties. Her motto is: "You are as good as you feel about yourself!"

In her final year Bachelor of Science (B Sc) degree at the University of Stellenbosch, a tragic event changed the course of her life when her brother was shot on the first day of the students' uprisings in Soweto in 1976. Because of harassment by the police and the impact of her brother's death, Thandi lost hope and confidence in the future of South Africa. She and her two sisters went into exile, where she worked full time in the Women's Section of the African National Congress (ANC) headquarters.

She came back to South Africa in 1991. On completing her medical studies, she went into partnership with doctors in Vereeniging, where she managed the practice for them. During this time she became aware of the needs of the community in Orange Farm where there was no doctor. The people had to travel by train and could not afford medical services. At the time a woman doctor was killed in the nearby Palm Springs. The unemployment rate was high, people were poor, crime was rampant and professional people became the target for attacks.

All of this did not dampen Thandi's spirit. Her entrepreneurial characteristics of facing challenges, spotting an opportunity, taking calculated risks, linked with her deep sense of social responsibility towards the community, came to the fore. She felt that if she built a relationship with the community, they would protect her. Their inability to pay would be overcome by the volume of patients and by charging low fees that included inexpensive medicine. At the time there were an estimated 250 000 people in Orange Farm. There was a hospital only 13 km away to which to refer serious cases. Thandi saw the gap in the economics of scale and charged R40 instead of the R60 to R70 that other doctors were charging. Her practice was profitable.

Thandi's triggering event to a career-change happened while working in Orange farm Thandi saw many women in her practice and she talked to them about their problems. There was a serious shortage of housing, especially for the many single parent families often headed by women. Their poverty and desperate situation led Thandi to research housing subsidies and their accessibility to women. It so happened that her sister was working in the Housing Section of Absa Bank at the time. She realised that she did not know enough about construction and that apart from her research, she needed other skills on board, like that of an architect, land surveyor and town planner.

Having to create a new venture, she arranged a strategic planning weekend ('lekgotla') with her newly found housing developer team. She visited housing schemes across South Africa and soon realised that there was something missing in most of them. She and her team came up with a concept that included the essential community infrastructure like schools and clinics, lacking in other schemes. They aimed to create sustainable communities through their housing development schemes. In 1995 Thandi established a company named Motheo Construction (Pty) Ltd. 'Motheo' is a Sesotho word meaning 'foundation'. Her vision was to create a foundation for a different way of benefiting the community by means of the housing process.

In Orange Farm there was an illegal settlement where Thandi consulted with the Local Authority and the community. Land transfer was a challenge, but she managed to complete the pilot project, successfully serving the community in which she had built trust, and they benefited from more than her healing skills alone. The profit she made from her practice was ploughed into the construction firm and the pilot project. Her vision, driving force, dedication, entrepreneurial flair, love and care brought a better life to the community she served. A hobby brought hope to a seemingly hopeless situation!

Using her network led to a change in the scope of her project. Thandi met with the then Premier of Mpumalanga, Matthews Phosa, telling him about her vision of helping communities who did not have access to housing subsidies and her project concept for 1000 houses, a school and a clinic. Two days

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later she was invited to make a presentation to a gathering of mayors of six town councils. Three days later, the Premier called her with the news that her company could construct 10 500 houses in six areas!

The size of her vision had changed dramatically. Her hobby was getting out of hand!

Undaunted by this sudden escalation, Thandi embarked on this exciting, but challenging project. At an early stage, she engaged in talks with the National Department of Housing to make the urban-only subsidies available to the rural areas. She undertook to use her own money to carry out the project. Then a hitch occurred. Unknown to Thandi, budgets were controlled by the National Department, and Mpumalanga had to budget for draw-downs at the time. Policy issues should never be underestimated. The Director-General then informed her that there was no budget for the Mpumalanga project. This resulted in a fight for the budget between Mpumalanga and the National Department of Housing. The contract had already been signed at that stage and Thandi realised that she would have to look for someone to take over her medical practice.

This was a serious test for Thandi. She was accused of having caused the dismissal of the Director General (DG) of the National Department of Housing. They alleged that Thandi was a "front", she had no track record and she had benefited from her "friendship" with the Minister of Housing! Thandi was devastated at the time. After a three-year investigation, Thandi was finally cleared. She immediately restarted the project, building on the same principles she used in 1994. Thandi won the Developer of the Year Award 2001 from the prestigious Institute for Housing for job creation, using local labour, empowering SMMEs, using local supplies and for setting up a block making facility next to the building site.

Thus Thandi achieved glory and victory, and her slanderers were shamed. Thandi managed to build 250 houses per month using 19 local small contractors, 3 of them women! Her management skills were key to this success story. She founded the Motheo construction firm, managed it through times of extreme trial and tribulation to acknowledged success. Longenecker (2003:448) states: "Ideally, the founder is able to add a measure of professional management without sacrificing the entrepreneurial spirit and basic values that gave the business a successful start." Thandi is an excellent example of such an ideal Founder. As Executive Manager, Thandi has "legitimate power based on position and acquired authority to delegate tasks to sub-ordinates", Nieman & Bennett (2002:113). In addition she has "expert power, based on the skill and knowledge of the person". She is an expert with a unique combination of medical, construction, entrepreneurial and managerial skills. Other people "depend on her for her knowledge, information and skills". She is respected not only in the Motheo Group, but also in the construction industry. Relationship building and interaction with clients are important aspects of her work. In conclusion, Thandi's recipe for success is: "When you are an entrepreneur there is something that goes beyond profit. It is perseverance, the conviction to succeed and to make a difference!" (Verwey 2003: 17)

**Analysis of SA Case 9:** Thandi changed over to construction because of positive pull factors, like spotting a gap and addressing the needs of women in her community. She was not daunted by attack and malicious gossip as she had vision. As a true leader and caring about women she worked hard to raise their quality of life. She did not shy away from sacrifices to reach her goals. She had vision and believes in perpetual learning, acquiring new building skills and leaving her comfort zone as a medical doctor. She concerned herself with value and wealth creating not only for herself but also for others. She was customer and quality driven and therefore her firm grew to be one of the largest construction firms owned by a woman. Her scale of economies approach shows that she understands numbers and she shared her pride and leadership through empowering the communities that she worked with and they mutually respected her. She continuously looks for new opportunities and her success has been crowned when she received the Housing of the year Award. Thandi aspires to live the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons.

## **7. USA Case Studies**

### **7.1 USA Case 1: 2004 Crystal Achievement Award Winner Alise Martiny**

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Alise Martiny was the recipient of the 2004 Crystal Achievement Award. The author of this paper, Ingrid Verwey, was the 2004 International Crystal Vision Award winner. Alise, a member of NAWIC's Greater Kansas City, Missouri, Chapter, received NAWIC's highest honour given to a member for repeatedly mentoring women in construction and breaking down barriers women face in the industry. Alise's knowledge of the construction industry has enabled her to forge a broader path for women in this male-dominated profession through recruiting, training and mentoring.

Alise began her career more than 24 years ago after hearing a radio advertisement recruiting women and minorities into the construction field. Alise applied for the programme and was accepted into the Kansas City Cement Masons Apprenticeship Programme in 1980. Alise's decision to enter the construction industry was not too surprising. Alise's sister Yvette was accepted and enrolled in the Cement Masons' Apprenticeship programme a year earlier, and Alise's father founded and owns the family business, JJ Martiny Concrete. With her sister's continuous encouragement and support, Alise successfully completed the three-year apprenticeship programme and worked as a journeyman in the family business on hundreds of job sites throughout the following years. It wasn't long before Alise earned the admiration and respect of her co-workers for being a hard worker and a team player. Interested in workers' rights, Alise became active in the Kansas City Cement Masons Union Local 518, and in 1990, she was elected to its board. In 1993, Alise accepted the position of Cement Mason Apprenticeship Coordinator at the Builders' Association Education Center in North Kansas City. This position allowed her to pursue her **passion** for recruiting women and minorities into the trades and to personally train the future cement mason workforce. In addition to the apprenticeship programme's mission, Alise wanted to make non-traditional jobs, like cement masonry, accessible to more women. When Alise took over the programme, it was under used by the industry and had the lowest female participation rate in the area. She became involved in outreach programmes to entice women into the construction industry with real opportunities to earn between 25 to 35 dollars per hour plus benefits. Recognizing the lack of female interest in the cement masons trade, Alise built relationships with other crafts and assisted women into their apprenticeship programmes.

She concentrated on smaller class sizes, followed a hands-on approach and maintained close supervision of students. This approach helped grow the programme from eight students to more than 50 students each year. Alise's programmes now have the highest percentage of females in the community. In 1999, Alise accepted the position of Business Representative with Northwest Missouri and Kansas Cement Masons' & Plasterer Union Local 518. This natural advancement allowed her to be directly involved with the apprenticeship programmes and help with retention and the future employment of students. As Business Representative, Alise believed she would be able to help recruit and place more females than she could ever employ at that time. Upon Alise's resignation from the programme, the Department of Labour presented her with an award for maintaining the most proactive recruitment agenda for women and minorities. Alise resigned from the programme in 2001 to help disadvantaged youth obtain positions in the construction industry at the Operative Plasterers' & Cement Masons' Job Corps Training Programme as its Region 5 Director.

Alise has made and continues to make positive contributions to various civic and political organizations where she actively promotes women in the construction industry. Through her NAWIC involvement, she makes presentations to the local Girl Scouts about the opportunities available to them in a construction career and assists them in obtaining their construction badges. Alise holds an annual job fair in conjunction with Block Kids so children can see the skills possessed by a Journeyman. In the mid-90s, Governor Mel Carnahan appointed Alise to serve on the State of Missouri Employment and Training Council, a position she held for 6 years. On the council, Alise was responsible for supporting legislation and working with the governor's office to ensure policies were put in place for the betterment of women in the workforce.

In 2000, Alise received the "Woman of the Year" Award from the Missouri Women's Council for helping women in the state of Missouri break down traditional barriers and advance their economic, civil and family lives. She currently serves on her national union's international apprenticeship and training committee, while also serving her second term as president of her union local. Alise was the first woman in Missouri ever elected as president of a construction union local, and the youngest regardless of gender.

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Alise is a delegate for union local 518 at all state conferences and national conventions and has served as NAWIC Region 6 Director for two years. In addition, Alise has been recently appointed, again, by Governor Carnahan to serve on the State of Missouri Employment and Training Council. An industry leader by any measurement, Alise has gone above and beyond to represent women in the construction industry. As for Alise's success - she attributes it to her mentors, like her sister, Yvette.

Alise believes the invaluable support **mentoring** provides is the **key to success**. This is why Alise has endlessly dedicated her time, energy and support to help other women and young girls recognize they have the strength and ability within themselves to succeed. Undoubtedly, Alise has positively impacted many women's lives and the world of construction by enabling women to succeed and advocating their acceptance within a male-dominated industry. Alise has served as a role model, leader and mentor to women, children and men alike. Her vision and determination to help others' dreams come true is a testament to the strength of her character. SAWiC and NAWIC acknowledge her as a role model of motivation, mentoring and success: A champion for the role of women in construction (Martiny 2004).

**Analysis of USA Case 1:** This case study highlights positive push factors as Alise was motivated by her sister, inspired by her father's entrepreneurial example and driven by a need for achievement not only for herself, but for women in the construction industry. She was 'pulled' by a love for and interest in construction and for mentoring others and in that way she achieves her goals constantly. In terms of achieving success she sees mentoring as the key. Alise as a highly motivated person felt a strong need to remove barriers for women in construction and for them and herself to achieve. She has vision, believes in perpetual learning, is a learning go- and long for challenges and always pursues new horizons. That is why she won the Crystal Achiever Award 2004 following many other similar awards previously. She is accountable, has an entrepreneurial spirit and is a great networker. She too fits the criteria of the Chain of Greatness the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons.

## **7.2 USA Case 2: High need for Achievement and perseverance to overcome barriers - Deborah Naybor**

Deborah Naybor was born in Manhasset, New York in 1957. Her father, Edward V. Naybor, was an electrical engineer and inventor. He was self employed as the owner of Naybor Laboratories. Edward died in 1972, when Deborah was 13 years old, changing the family's economic situation from comfort to struggle. Unlike her older brother and sister, there would be no financial support for university studies and Deborah went to work at age 13, tending to gardens, caring for children and working two or three jobs at a time to raise funds for her studies.

Deborah always loved the outdoors and in 1975 she enrolled at Paul Smith's College to earn an Associates degree in Forestry. While attending school, she cleaned homes and classrooms to help pay for her studies. She graduated with honours in 1977 and moved to Buffalo, NY. Unable to find a job as a woman in the male dominated field of forestry, she worked briefly as a gardener, planting flowers and cutting grass. Her studies had included 2 drafting and two surveying classes and with no experience, she applied for a job drafting maps for a professional land surveyor but her desire to work outdoors caused her to change job in 1978. She worked for various companies as a field surveyor.

Deborah got married in 1984 and the couple built their own home together. In 1985, she became only the 12<sup>th</sup> woman in New York State to become a professional land surveyor. She had excelled in her examination scores enough to be noticed by the National Council of Engineering Examiners and in 1985, became the youngest professional to serve on the board which wrote national professional surveying examinations.

Always finding it hard to accept the rules made by others, Deborah started her own business, Deborah A. Naybor, Professional Land Surveyor, in 1988 with \$1000US and an old truck which often had to be pushed onto the project site because of engine troubles. She hired a friend to work part time and trained her to assist with field measurements for construction surveys. Deborah worked long hours to find new clients, perform calculations and drafting of projects, and manage the economic health of the company.

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Her husband had received his professional surveyor's license in 1987 but continued to work for other companies until 1990, when he encouraged her to hire him and his former employer to run the day-to-day business. This disastrous decision caused many difficulties and after approximately a year, the older surveyor was dismissed for inept management. Her husband remained with her company, constantly arguing over control of operations and the future of the firm.

By 1990, the company was well known for work on government projects and well established as a Women's Business Enterprise which gives some advantages to women owned firms bidding on public improvement projects. By 1991, the firm had grown to 23 employees and was contracted to perform over \$1.5 million in government contracts over a two year period. Unfortunately, a change in regional leadership in 1992 caused all contracts to be cancelled. Decreasing staff from 23 to 3 employees over the next few months was not easy and the loss of work shook Deborah's confidence in herself and her career choice but she made the decision to rebuild her firm by finding privately owned construction and design firms who would hire her to perform surveying services. By 1996, she had rebuilt the company to 18 employees and was invoicing over \$1 million per year. She has held at approximately this same size until the present time despite economic downturns in the United States.

Deborah won many awards for her business success, her ability to overcome obstacles and her community service. In 1997, she was honoured as one of the top women business owners in the United States as a winner of the national Women of Enterprise Award. The highest honour for a woman business owner at this time, the award was extremely prestigious and Deborah knew it would be life changing.

Her husband became increasingly jealous and angry, claiming the company's success was due to his management skills though he never was a partner nor managed the operation of the company. He became increasingly violent and threatening until Deborah filed for divorce in 1999. The divorce lasted three years and in order to maintain ownership of the company and its assets, she gave up her home, was evicted from the office building her company had occupied for 3 years and lost all her personal investments and assets. But her ability to overcome difficult times helped her to continue to run the company through difficult economic times and recover from her personal loss.

In 1998, Deborah met two women who would change her life. Joyce Banda of Malawi met Deborah for only 10 minutes at an awards dinner in New York State. Ingrid Verwey of South Africa met her at a conference of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) in California. Both women asked her to travel to Africa to speak to women about empowerment issues and to teach leadership and business skills. In 2000, Deborah travelled to Malawi and South Africa to speak to various groups and found her ability to see clear solutions to complex problems was extremely useful in helping African women. She created a strong bond with South African Women in Construction and helped strengthen the union between SAWiC and NAWIC. In 2004, after a joint effort between Deborah and Ingrid and the members of both organizations, 21 women from South Africa travelled to the United States to learn about construction, business and culture and to educate women in the USA about life in South Africa.

In May 2004 Deborah was awarded the Women's Venture Fund's Highest Leaf Award (NAWIC 2004:15). This unique honours programme recognises senior women executives in all segments of business and professions across the US nation for their entrepreneurial spirit, ability to leverage resources and stature as role models and mentors within their businesses. (Naybor 2004)

**Analysis of USA Case 2:** Deborah aspires to live the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons. She has a high need for Achievement coupled with a caring nature that makes her mentor and promote other women entrepreneurs. She came into construction because of a high need for Achievement, with her father as a role model pulling her positively into construction. When he died, she was pushed into jobs to survive, but she went to college and her decision to enter and study a career in construction came only later and as a result of love for construction and challenges. She overcame the barrier of a jealous threatening husband, losing her assets, going through ups and downs in the construction cycle. Yet she rebuilt her business, even venturing into new related areas. Deborah has great networking skills. Fortunately Deborah's case did not end as a fatal barrier the way the SA case of

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Sarah Nhlapo ended, but she was able to take charge of the situation, change it and setting new challenges went on to enrich her own life and that of other women entrepreneurs.

### **7.3 USA Case 3: Brick by Brick: A woman's journey - Lynn Donohue:**

Lynn Donohue delivered her 'Brick by brick' - a woman's journey presentation at the NAWIC Convention in August 2004 in New York. She was a school drop-out at the age of 15, going nowhere in a family that looked good from outside but inside had no structure, with a dad that had few good words for their mother when she read an advertisement about a course in masonry. Surprisingly she was interested, took it up and embarked on a career as a bricklayer. The work was hard and the money good, but the beauty and rhythm of the work gave her a sense of purpose and empowerment.

Lynn learns the hard way to break through the union, prejudice and the perception that a woman cannot be a foreman. She started her own company that became a multi-million-dollar business with 50 full time employees to earn her a solid reputation in the construction world, having built schools, hospitals and public buildings. Behind her tough-as-nails exterior, she was still vulnerable taking on the journey of personal growth. She faced the demons of her troubled past and learned to open her heart to family, friends, love and forgiveness realising that those things placed her even more 'in charge' and to emerge as a winner in all respects, having inner strength and peace. She then created her 'Brick by Brick' Foundation to help school dropouts. She conducts workshops and speaks on entrepreneurship and personal success. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband and two children. Her message is clear and simple: Have structure in your home and in your workplace, set goals, small in the beginning and as you gain success and confidence go bigger and higher...brick by brick, not forgetting where you come from and mentoring others facing similar odds (Donohue 2000).

**Analysis of USA Case 3:** Lynn aspires to live the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons. She started off in life with a negative family situation of a father not treating her mother with respect. In rebellion she almost ruined her life by reacting in a negative way. This is however not what made her go into construction. In her dire straits she saw an advertisement of construction, it positively pulled her out of a negative situation into a career that she loved. Deep down she had a need for achievement. She loved the challenges that construction brought, she loved showing men that women should be respected for the good work they do and then she started out making sure that other people do not fall into the same destructive path that she pursued, by showing them that constructing useful and beautiful buildings and infrastructure, is therapeutic and brings healing, respect and success. Her networking skills ensured her success.

### **7.4 USA Case 4: Growth in construction as experienced by women in construction in the USA - Nobleza Magsanoc President of the NAWIC Hawaii Chapter**

Nobleza Magsanoc looking back at how she ended up in construction can only see it as destiny and a calling. As an operations manager for The Pacific Resource Partnership in Honolulu, Hawaii, which promotes the benefits of the carpentry industry for unionised contractors, she always thought she would be part of 'corporate' America. After graduating from the University of Hawaii (UH) Manoa, Nobleza she worked in public accounting for the big, very corporate accounting firm Coopers and Lybrand (they are also in SA!). A couple of years later she got her MBA in management from UH before going to work for Morrison Knudsen, a large Mainland construction firm. In 1994 Nobleza joined Pacific Resource Partnership after Honolulu City Council voted down a proposed light –rail mass transit plan and Morrison Knudsen, one of the proposed contractors, closed up shop in the state. Her timing could not have been worse as the state slipped into a decade-long economic slump that hit the construction industry and trade unions particularly hard. According to Nobleza the Carpenters' Union lost half of its 8000 members from 1996 and 1997, most of whom relocated to the Mainland.

However, that was a different decade and a vastly different story. With a revived economy and billions of dollars being spent on military housing construction, the construction industry in Hawaii is looking forward to a decade of steady business. Nobleza believes that proper planning for steady growth will keep the upcoming construction boom in Hawaii from going bust.

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Nationally women in construction in Hawaii make up about 10% of the total construction work force. They comprise of contractors, trades people, engineers, architects, administrative workers other related occupations that are all integral parts of the industry. The trades women in Hawaii make up only 5% of the workforce locally and nationally. On the positive side, enrolment of women at the UH school of engineering is increasing rapidly. In Hawaii there are a lot of single women who have to support a family and construction is an area in Hawaii that pays well so that you do not have to work two or three jobs at a time as is often the case with women in Hawaii.

As a 'numbers person' Nobleza finds it encouraging that in 2003 there were \$3,1 billion's work in Hawaii and in 2002 they had \$2,4billion. In 2004, they are looking for double-digit growth over 2003, largely because of the military-privatisation projects, which kick in \$1,7 billion over the next ten years. However it is not just military work they are optimistic about. Over the last five the construction industry has been experiencing steady growth across the board. It was slow but steady growth despite Sept 11 and the SARS virus. To the contrary a lot of once-stalled projects are coming back to life. Projects are now larger which is good for the state and good for the union. Nobleza is representing union carpenters that are signatories with the carpenter's Union. The Union has made a commitment to train as many tradespeople as needed and they are in the process of building a training facility. The biggest concern Nobleza, NAWIC and the Union has is enduring that they are accurate about the industry demand for labour.

There is the danger of bringing in many new workers just to realise later that there is no work for them. Nobleza has poled NAWIC and the Union in close collaboration with UH and they have come up with an estimate of 7000 to 10000 new and replacement workers that will be needed. On being asked what lessons the union has learned from the last downturn in the industry that are applicable to the coming boom times she responded that the old school leadership would have answered recruit, recruit and recruit to get as many workers out in the field as possible but the union takes a more business-like approach. The keys are studying exactly what the needs of the market are and then go out and train workers as best one can. Construction is cyclical, so there will be another slowdown in business. With current prospects it is not likely to happen for a while though. Even so Nobleza, NAWIC and the Union will be preparing for that eventuality. They have been waiting long in Hawaii for this turnaround in business and they are all excited about how the industry is shaping up. Nevertheless the cycle will come to an end sooner or later and they will prepare for both the good and the bad times (Choo 2004:19).

**Analysis of USA Case 4:** Nobleza aspires to live the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons. She entered into construction during a time when the industry was in a down-swing and bad shape. There is no doubt that Nobleza loves construction and entered into it because of positive pull factors that included love of challenges that it would bring. She is a great networker, using her financial expertise and knowledge of the economy to plan for growth of construction in her area.

#### **7.5 USA Case 5: Taking a chance on dreams - Anna Cecilia Merenda**

At the age of 82 Anna Cecilia Merenda is retiring after 53 years working as a construction contractor in Houston Texas. A member of the Houston Texas chapter since 1967, Anna is content with where life has taken her - or rather where she has taken life! Her life and mindset echo NAWIC's core values: Believe in themselves as women; Persevere with the strengths of our convictions; Dare to move into new horizons.

Anna, standing at barely 5 feet tall, lives in the house her family built in 1934 when she was in fourth grade. An only child, her father was a baker and her mother a housewife. Anna, never one to be afraid of taking chances, 'has done a little bit of everything'. After high school she held a variety of jobs, like inspecting rocket ironworks for the US Navy during World War II. She was also a flight attendant for Pioneer Airlines, worked in a brewery and obtained a broker's license. She learned to fly an airplane somewhere along the way, but it turned out she was too short to be a pilot.

In the early 1950's Anna was introduced to the construction industry by a boyfriend. She loaned him money to start a concrete business. Anna did not know how to run such a business, but her business partner needed her help. After only a short time answering phones, Anna began working-up estimates for jobs. When her relationship with her boyfriend ended, she started her own business, AC Construction and

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Supply, to prove she could run a business without him. She succeeded, all by herself and AC Construction and Supply became extremely successful. The company built road construction, flood controls, sewer lines, sidewalks and home foundations. At its most successful point the company had an average weekly payroll of \$30 000 and bid on jobs up to \$500 000. Anna says she has done work for everyone, both government and private entities.

When asked about challenges she faced as a woman in a male-dominated industry Anna says, "I never had a problem as a woman contractor. I did what I needed to do and did it well." There was a time though when she could not oversee a plant project because women were not allowed on the site. Also she was denied a business loan once because she was a single woman, but she just went to another bank. To Anna these were not obstacles but only small challenges and they did not stop her from going after her dreams.

She credits the good people who worked for her as another reason for her success. Anna treated her employees like family, often loaning them money to help out during the tough times. She has been described a tough woman with a good heart. However, she was a stickler for doing things right. Everyone knew she expected only the best, which is no less than what she expected of herself.

Anna prides herself in her honest business dealings. She believed in being honest and doing her best on each and every job. She remembers a time when a well-known customer threatened not to give her any more jobs if she did not buy the customer a Cadillac®. She did not buy the customer a Cadillac® because she knew it was not the right thing to do. She never worked for that customer again. She comments, "If my work did not satisfy I should not be working for them." Anna admits that it was not always easy and she had her share of battles to fight. One of the most difficult incidents occurred in 1987 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent a double mastectomy and survived the disease. Within a couple of months her mother passed away and her business had acquired a \$1 million debt. It would have been easy for Anna to give up, but she persevered. She developed a strategy to pay back the company's debt that included selling her business equipment. It took seven years, but she paid back every cent of the company's debt. She then turned around and began buying equipment for her business to rebuild it – and she did!

Once again Anna is in the process of selling equipment, but this time it is not to pay back a debt. Although she is retiring from being a construction contractor, Anna's future is still shining brightly. She is considering opening a real estate office and why not? After all, she already has her broker's license. Houston Texas member Grace Dockal says "Members like Anna is few and far between. She is great! While NAWIC is made up of many great members, Anna is an inspiration to all. It is clear she never settles for less than she deserves from life. She has done and continues to do what is difficult: She believes in herself, she is not afraid to take risks on something new and she knows how to persevere."

Anna urges women following in her footsteps to not be afraid to take a chance on their dreams. She advises, "Do whatever you want to do so you do not have regrets later on. Be honest and to the best you can." Her words challenge women in construction to live out NAWIC's Core Values – Believe, Persevere. Dare (Overman 2004:8,23).

**Analysis of USA Case 5:** Anna aspires to live the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWiC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons. Anna started in construction to show her ex-boyfriend that women can be successful in construction. Her need for achievement and for challenges and success, pulled her into construction. She was able to turn her business around when it was in trouble and to overcome problems and barriers, learning from her mistakes and that of other, keeping her integrity and even at a high age, she is moving into a new area.

#### **7.6 USA Case 6: Making to the top - Nancy Eaton installed as National President of NAWIC**

Nancy A Eaton, CCA CIT, leads NAWIC into its 50<sup>th</sup> year of taking care of business in the construction industry. In August 2004 the National Association of women in Construction (NAWIC) USA installed Nancy A Eaton as its 50<sup>th</sup> national president during NAWIC's 50<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting and Convention in New

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York City. Nancy is Chief Financial Officer for Par-3 Landscape & Maintenance, Inc located in Las Vegas Nevada.

Nancy was born in Meadville, Pa. where she developed an interest in construction at an early age while visiting job sites with her father. She attended Florida State University in Tallahassee and moved to Las Vegas, Nevada in 1977 where she began her construction career. After 25 years with Las Vegas Fertilizer Company, a distribution wholesaler for landscape and irrigation materials owned by the Jaramillo family, Nancy retired and went to work for Par-3 Landscape & Maintenance Inc also owned by the Jaramillo family. She commutes from Las Vegas to her home in Utah, where she spends time with her husband William. Besides NAWIC her interests include horses and snowmobiles.

Nancy became a member of the Las Vegas Nevada Chapter of NAWIC in 1986. There she served as chapter president, director and treasurer. She later served as a national director of region 12 which encompasses southern California, Hawaii and Las Vegas Nevada. Nancy has participated in the following capacities: Treasurer 2000-2002; Vice President 2002-2003 and President-Elect 2003-2004. Nancy aspired to promote NAWIC's 50 years of enhancing success of women in the construction industry by 'taking care of business,' and she hopes to ensure the Association continues to take care of business for the future construction work force (Lopez 2004:19)

**Analysis of USA Case 6:** Nancy aspires to live the NAWIC (also adopted by SAWIC) core values of **believing** in herself as a woman; **persevering** with the strengths of her convictions; **daring** to move into new horizons. Being positively pulled into construction by role models (family/friends), she is a great leader and networker as is proved by her position as President of NAWIC, excelling in financial expertise and professionalism.

## **8. Findings and Conclusions**

For purposes of comparison between SA and USA cases, the Hisrich Peters model (1998:79), the growth-, entrepreneurial process - and the chain of greatness models discussed earlier in this paper are used.

### **8.1 Comparison between SA and USA cases**

Having discussed the SA and USA case studies, analysis show similarities and differences between the women entrepreneurs in construction in the two countries, as follows:

- **Childhood and family.**

In the SA cases only Angela are not from a disadvantaged background where as none of the USA cases came from a disadvantaged background. From the USA cases only Deborah Naybor' situation changed when her father died, when she became disadvantaged. None of the SA cases had negative family situations or bad childhood experiences in terms of family life, whilst in the USA two cases had negative family situations that could be termed as unhappy childhoods.

- **Educational background.**

From the SA cases three women entrepreneurs had college or university education, namely Angela, Phumelele and Thandi. From the USA only one, namely Anna, did not have a university or college education.

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- **Marital status.**

In the SA case studies, 4 women are single mothers, their husbands having deserted them, while the rest are married. In the USA case studies 4 women are single or divorced.

- **Reason for becoming entrepreneurs in construction**

Four SA entrepreneurs, namely Monica (mother role model), Stephina (father role model), Thandi (sister role model) and Phumelele (mother and grandmother role models) went into construction because of positive pull factor of a family or friend being in construction. In the USA four of the case study models joined construction because of positive pull factors, namely Alise (sister role model), Deborah (father role model), Anna (ex-boyfriend role model) and Nancy (family and friends as role models).

- **Age on becoming entrepreneurs in construction**

In both SA and the USA all the case study examples joined construction between the ages of 25-35, contrary to the GEM 2004 report on women entrepreneurs that SA women entrepreneurs start their ventures are a later age.

- **Type of entrepreneur**

In SA all the case study examples own their own businesses. In the USA case studies three women entrepreneurs own their own businesses, namely Deborah, Lynn and Anna. The others are corporate entrepreneurs. Two SA cases are husband and wife teams that work together successfully. In SA there are two women manufacturers/inventors, namely Phumelele and Angela.

- **Barriers**

In SA all the case study models at some stage experienced problems in accessing finance. In USA the three business owners have at some stage experienced problems in accessing finance. In SA all the single mothers had problems with jealous men who could not handle their success and in Sarah's instance it was fatal. In USA Deborah had to divorce to escape a threatening husband and Anna was deserted by a jealous boyfriend.

- **Success**

All the SA and USA examples are successful in what they do. In SA Thandi, Phumelele, Meisie and Monica have received awards while in the USA Alise and Deborah both have received awards. The size and scope of firms and projects are generally of a much greater order and magnitude in the USA than in SA. Women entrepreneurs in SA often form joint ventures to overcome capacity or financial barriers to become successful as per the Kemarifi example.

- **Networking and mentoring**

In SA most of the case studies have been mentored, whilst Stephina, Thandi and Phumelele are mentors to other SA women entrepreneurs. In the USA most of the entrepreneurs are mentors to other women entrepreneurs. SA and USA case study models all believe in extensive networking as a success factor and they are dedicated members of their associations, seeing it as a positive influence in their careers and for promoting women in the construction industry. They all share their experiences and expertise in their associations.

- **Growth**

Cliff (1998:523) as mentioned in item 5.4 found that women and men are equally committed to growth but that women set thresholds and expand their businesses in a managed and controlled manner. This was found to be true of all the SA and USA cases, but in SA Linda, Thandi, Phumelele and Angela were more adventurous in terms of growth than the other SA cases and in the USA Lynn and Anna as business owners were more adventurous in terms of growth, whilst Nobleza as a corporate entrepreneur very carefully planned and ensured sustained growth for the Hawaii chapter, taking a special interest in it. All the SA and USA cases agreed with the following statement by Amy Miller, a Texas-based entrepreneur often featured in business media (Cliff (1998:523): "Our success lies not in bottom-line growth, but in our

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ability to meet challenges adequately: our responsiveness to our communities' changing needs, our continued commitment to innovative employee training and motivation and our commitment to constant improvement in service standards".

**8.2 Comparisons in relation to constructs**

The SA and USA case studies each in more than one way affirms the constructs outlined in table 1.2. In summary the conclusion is as follows:

**Table 1.2: Case study findings illustrating the constructs**

<b>CONSTRUCTS ILLUSTRATED</b>	<b>Construct 1: Positive pull factors</b>	<b>Construct 2: Negative push factors</b>	<b>Construct 3 Negative barriers</b>	<b>Construct 4: Positive motivational &amp; success factor</b>
<b>CASE STUDY</b> <b>SA CASE 1</b> <b>Sarah Nhlapo</b> (a couple in construction)	nAch; Love of construction		Fatal entrepreneurial barrier – killed by jealous husband; family burdens restricting growth	Successful housing project Successful training, mentoring and networks through SAWiC
<b>SA CASE 2</b> <b>Kemarifi Consortium</b>	nAch; Love of construction	Previous unsuccessful ventures in sewing and catering; single mothers needing to take care of their families	Financial	Successful three storey student accommodation. Successful training, mentoring and networks through SAWiC
<b>Table 1.2</b> <b>CONSTRUCTS ILLUSTRATED</b> <b>CASE STUDY</b>	Construct 1: Positive pull factors	Construct 2: Negative push factors	Construct 3 Negative barriers	Construct 4: Positive motivational and success factors

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<p><b>SA CASE 3</b>  <b>Linda and Fred Smith</b>  <b>Husband and wife team</b></p>	<p>nAch          Love of construction;          Entrepreneurial opportunities in construction. In a bizarre way 'apartheid' created some of those gaps as whites could not safely enter or trade in the townships</p>		<p>Initially the previous political dispensation restricted them to operate in their community only and not in the 'white' areas.</p>	<p>Various successful ventures in construction. Successful training, mentoring and networks via SAWiC and NAFCO JCCI Successfully sharing with and mentoring others</p>
<p><b>SA CASE 4</b>  <b>Meisie Ndlovu</b>  <b>Going it alone</b></p>	<p>nAch;          Love of construction          Love of training and mentoring others</p>	<p>Husband left her for another woman,; a family of four to care for;          Previous job training hair dressers not satisfying in challenge or financial rewards</p>	<p>Single parent caring for a family of four;          finance;          lack of own transport and tools and equipment</p>	<p>Successfully growing her business through motivation &amp; perseverance. Overcoming obstacles via SAWiC network -&amp; mentoring</p>
<p><b>SA CASE 5</b>  <b>Angela Broom</b></p>	<p>nAch          Love of construction innovation and technology and entrepreneurial challenges</p>	<p>lack of personal opportunities for her in her home country Britain led her to look for opportunities in SA that she saw as having more entrepreneurial opportunities</p>	<p>New country new field moving out of her marketing comfort zone          Male dominated field</p>	<p>Successfully patenting a new roads product in her new country. Through SAWiC TWiB and SAWEN offering franchises and opportunities in her own company to other women</p>
<p><b>SA CASE 6</b>  <b>Monica Dzwimbo</b></p>	<p>nAch          Positive pull factors of her mother as a successful woman contractor and Love of construction</p>		<p>Finance</p>	<p>Successful in her roads projects          Received an African Award though SAWiC mentoring and networks</p>
<p><b>SA CASE 7</b>  <b>Stephina van Rooyen</b></p>	<p>nAch          Positive pull factor of her father as a successful contractor and Love of construction</p>	<p>Single mother left with two children to care for</p>	<p>Jealous husband who could not take her success and then took off.          Sexual harassment on site</p>	<p>Successful civil contractor whose excellence was spotted on site of the N4 toll road and landed her private sector contracts beyond her comfort zone</p>

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<b>Table 1.2 CONSTRUCTS ILLUSTRATED</b>	Construct 1: Positive pull factors	Construct 2: Negative push factors	Construct 3 Negative barriers	Construct 4: Positive motivational and success factors
<b>CASE STUDY</b>				
<b>SA CASE 8 Dr Thandi Ndlovu 'The construction doctor!'</b>	nAch Love of construction networking and mentoring and entrepreneurial challenges	Single mother with one son, but more than capable of taking care of herself and her son	Husband could not handle her success, independent spirit and took off	Thandi is a stunning achiever, role model & one of few construction firms in SAWiC handling work of R30-100million
<b>SA CASE 9 Phumelele Siphayi and her husband Kenny of Kenny's Bricks The manufacturer and growth example in construction</b>	nAch Love of construction, property development, manufacturing and entrepreneurship		Political environment and perceptions it created in the community	A role model per excellence in growing your business, using networks. African Award Winner
<b>USA Case 1: 2004 Crystal Achievement Award winner Alise Martiny Going it alone in the trades as an industry leader</b>	nAch Love of construction, motivating and training others, Sister is in construction and her example drew Alise			Pioneer in the construction trades. Several awards and achievements in construction especially for motivating and mentoring others. Highly successful and motivated
<b>USA Case 2: Deborah Naybor High achiever Initially a husband and wife team</b>	nAch c College Educ; Love of construction, motivating and training others and love of entrepreneurship and new challenges Father was an electrical engineer having his own business and this example drew Deborah into construction.	Death of her father	A husband who could not handle her Achievements, slump in the industry	An achiever par excellence who firmly believes she should make a difference in the world and her achievements are honoured and awarded across the globe for her motivation and mentoring others as well as job creation across the globe

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<b>Table 1.2 CONSTRUCTS ILLUSTRATED</b>	<b>Construct 1: Positive pull factors</b>	<b>Construct 2: Negative push factors</b>	<b>Construct 3 Negative barriers</b>	<b>Construct 4: Positive motivational and success factors</b>
<b>CASE STUDY</b>				
<b>USA Case 3: Lynn Donohue: Brick by Brick: A woman's journey</b>	nAch Love of construction College Education	Negative family situation	Rebellious as a teenager because her mother did not stand up to an abusive husband.  Having to conquer her own negative thinking, hatred and eventually drug addiction Men's reaction to her in a male dominated field	Hugely successful construction firm. Motivational speaker and youth leader Successful networker and mentor. Writer of motivational books
<b>USA Case 4: Nobleza Magsanoc President of the NAWIC Hawaii Chapter Going it alone breaking through non- traditional job barriers: Growth in construction</b>	nAch Love of construction, trades and finance – a numbers person! University Education		Male dominated field Industry slump in Hawaii during which time she joined construction, not being deterred by that	Highly successful Trades Union leader, NAWIC Hawaii Chapter President. Growth strategies for construction Successful networker, mentor and motivational to others in the industry
<b>USA Case 5: Anna Cecilia Merenda - Take a chance on your dreams: Going it alone!</b>	Initially boyfriend went into construction. She financed & partnered him, loving construction, challenges and full of new ideas nAch		Single child Jilted by boyfriend Attempt to blackmail her to pay a bribe. Finance refused at one stage. Company debt	Highly successful turnaround of her business Successful mentor and networker and at the age of 82 starting a new venture!
<b>USA Case 6: Nancy Eaton installed as National President of NAWIC 2004 to 2005 Corporate Entrepreneur</b>	nAch Love of construction Example of family business drew her Love of nature and a financial 'numbers' person. University Education		Have to commute to her work daily	Highly successful in family corporate initiative as well as the achievement of becoming President of NAWIC

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### **8.3 In Conclusion: Lessons learnt**

In terms of lessons learnt it can be concluded that:

The entrepreneurial process is important for the creation and success of new business ventures in SA and USA. As women and male entrepreneurs have different attributes, the model of comparison in Hisrich & Peters (1998) illustrates how women in their own unique way pursue the entrepreneurial process.

The case studies helped to bring a local perspective compared with the international study findings of the Hisrich & Peters model. For the Siphayis and Smiths, the growth, direction and success of their family business "is a reward for identifying the right opportunities, understanding how they might be exploited and competing effectively to take advantage of them" (Wickham 2001:305). They had the right attitude, built on their networks, skills and talents, managed their venture the right way, created the right culture and provided direction using their joint vision and leadership as entrepreneurs and so realised the potential for their business to grow.

There are both similarities and differences in comparing SA and USA case study models as indicated in the table above.

The evaluation paper on the mentoring programme of the C200 group concluded that mentoring is an important ingredient in success and it provides tremendous advantages and economic impact to those who engage in it across a wide range of industries and throughout a business owner's career.

The statement: "Cash is the lifeblood of the small business" (Nieman & Bennett 2002:65) is proved true in the survival of all the women entrepreneurs in construction under scrutiny during difficult times in the entrepreneurial process. They prospered as a result of prudent management of their cash flow. Apart from running successful businesses and managing growth responsibly, they must be commended for empowering others and for their achievements in the 'non-traditional occupations'. Maslow's theory that once the basic needs of human beings are met, they advance to higher levels of needs, is proved by these successful initiatives: These case studies are good examples of job and wealth creation by managing growth!

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