

your business

● Hiring best talent is key for ROV Durrant Engineering

‘People, passion drive this business’

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ROV Durrant Engineering will celebrate their 55th birthday on November 1, and they say they are doing better than ever.

Their secret? According to MD Garth de Villiers, people are the most important element of their business.

Please share some background on yourself and how the business started.

I knew from a young age that I wanted to be an engineer so I could create and manufacture things — this was about 1983.

Engineering was an odd career choice as most of the people in my class wanted to be astronauts or policemen, but I wanted to follow in the footsteps of the grandfather who raised me.

After school, I studied mechanical engineering at the now Nelson Mandela University and then worked at ACS, now known as Comau.

After working, I went back to NMU to do my BTech and completed my Government Ticket for factory engineers.

Having studied everything I needed for engineering I wanted to know more about the business side of things, so I decided to get my MBA.

The business was originally started in 1964, when a British engineer by the name of Raymond Osmond Vivien Durrant started a general engineering company.

ROVD changed from a general engineering company to an industrial engineering company in 1988, and we became project-driven.

Twenty-one years down the line we are celebrating our 55th

birthday and doing better than ever.

What is your core service?
Our core service is full turnkey industrial automation projects, typically within the agricultural, mining, and automotive sectors.

Where was the idea born?
ROVD has always been a first principles company, with a strong ability to solve complex problems for others.

We never build off someone else's designs or software programs.

What makes your business unique?
I feel our corporate culture and philosophies stand out from the rest.

We don't compromise on quality and we have the best materials on-site.

If someone wanted to copy your business model, how would they start?

All it takes is hiring a creative group of passionate engineers.

This company started with Durrant and three engineers.

Passion has driven this company from the start, but hiring the best talent is key.

Do you have any tips for budding entrepreneurs or new business owners?

Bring courage and an open mind to the table.

It takes courage to start up your own business, but above all you need a passion for the work you are doing.

What are some of your biggest challenges in day-to-day operations and your industry?
Managing people is often the



STILL GOING STRONG: ROV Durrant Engineering managing director Garth de Villiers Picture: EUGENE COETZEE

biggest challenge.
Trying to understand your market can also be a challenge because the market is changing much faster than 20 years ago.

What is the best advice anyone gave you on success?
I was once told by Durrant "anything worth doing, is worth doing well".

Do everything to the best of your ability.

How do you measure or define success in your business?

My way of measuring success is simplistic — it is based on the energy and morale of the team.

People are the most important element in our business.

What are some of the best practices that have made your business successful?

Don't let success go to your

head — be humble about your accomplishments.

What kind of advertising do you do?

We have never really been big into advertising.

We have a few dozen major clients, but our product doesn't sell to the masses.

What is your company's vision?

We design and engineer the best products, and inspire with outstanding service and an unparalleled experience, resulting in cost savings and increased efficiency for our clients

What is your target market?
We are seeking to diversify into different markets beyond the current markets where we are well-known. We are well suited to diversify because our skill set

applies to just about any industry that uses machines.

I also have a passion for Africa — how can anyone not?

Africa is so diverse — there is nowhere else like it in the world and the opportunities will continue to expand.

We have also made great strides in the US with automotive projects.

We see much opportunity for expansion in the US, too.

Q: What have some of the highlights been in running your business?

A: The greatest highlights involve the projects where we have had opportunities to strategise and provide our clients with innovative solutions to great challenges.

I remember doing a task at Summer Pride in East London where the engineers were convinced the project would be impossible.

Three weeks later, I went back to them with designs.

We built it and it worked.

Another highlight was back in 1999, when we re-did the entire assembly hall for Daimler.

Some other memorable projects would be building the huge salt harvesters.

The common denominator with an epic project is a good client; a client who understands the process of providing winning solutions involves teamwork from both sides.

Q: How important is social media and an online presence?

A: We may be a bit late jumping into social media, but we are excited to share the good things we have going on not only in terms of projects, but by showcasing teamwork in action.

It's time for people to get a glimpse into our culture and see for themselves what's going on in our company.

Q: How many people do you employ?

A: We have 101 full-time employees.

Q: Do you have any plans for expanding and how would you go about this?

A: We would like to expand the businesses and we need to achieve critical mass to expand.