

# New JHI director to focus on African retail

JHI Properties has appointed Gielie Visser as director: retail strategy for JHI Properties, focusing on Africa.



As increasing global attention focuses on developing countries in Africa and as growth on existing business tends to be muted, an ongoing trend is for retailers to expand into the continent in order to increase their number of stores and turnover.

"Developers are seeking out opportunities in stable economies where they can make sound returns and when you can still offer US Dollar transactions, even better. Developments on the continent are increasing in size and sophistication, which is not surprising given the size of the market," says Visser.

"There remains scope to promote sometimes simple innovations such as LED lighting and energy efficient design. The challenge is to sell such concepts in the context of long-term cost saving and not just the responsible thing to do. Our aim is to become involved in developments from the outset and guiding the decision-making process in a responsible way. There are also great opportunities to do simple things better, for example, sometimes it is more important to have skilled staff and clean toilets than the very latest in European fashion."

## Extensive retail experience

Visser has considerable experience in the retail property arena, having over the past 20 years held various managerial and senior executive positions with PEP Stores, Shoprite Checkers Properties, Investec Properties and Cash Bazaar Holdings in Botswana. While consulting to Cash Bazaar Holdings he was involved in sourcing retail opportunities in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia. He was national retail manager at Broll Properties and a development manager at Edcon.

With a project team for Africa of seven highly skilled and experienced development and project managers, the company is also involved in a variety of development projects in Africa, including acting as development and project managers for an Innscor retail outlet in the DRC.

"Our ongoing strategy is to continue to increase our presence and activities in the retail property management sector on the African continent and we are committed to securing the best strategic retail letting skills in the region. Because of the significant scale of property already under management, JHI can offer cost effective services with the highest quality over a broad range of property related disciplines," says Marna van der Walt, CEO of Excellerate Property Service. JHI is a member of this group.

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