

A portrait of Tshepo Mahloele, a Black man with short hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a patterned yellow tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a blurred, blue-tinted architectural structure, possibly a modern building or office interior.

LEADING THE WAY
PINNACLE
MAGAZINE

Tshepo Mahloele

ABSIP's CEO of the Decade for 2014

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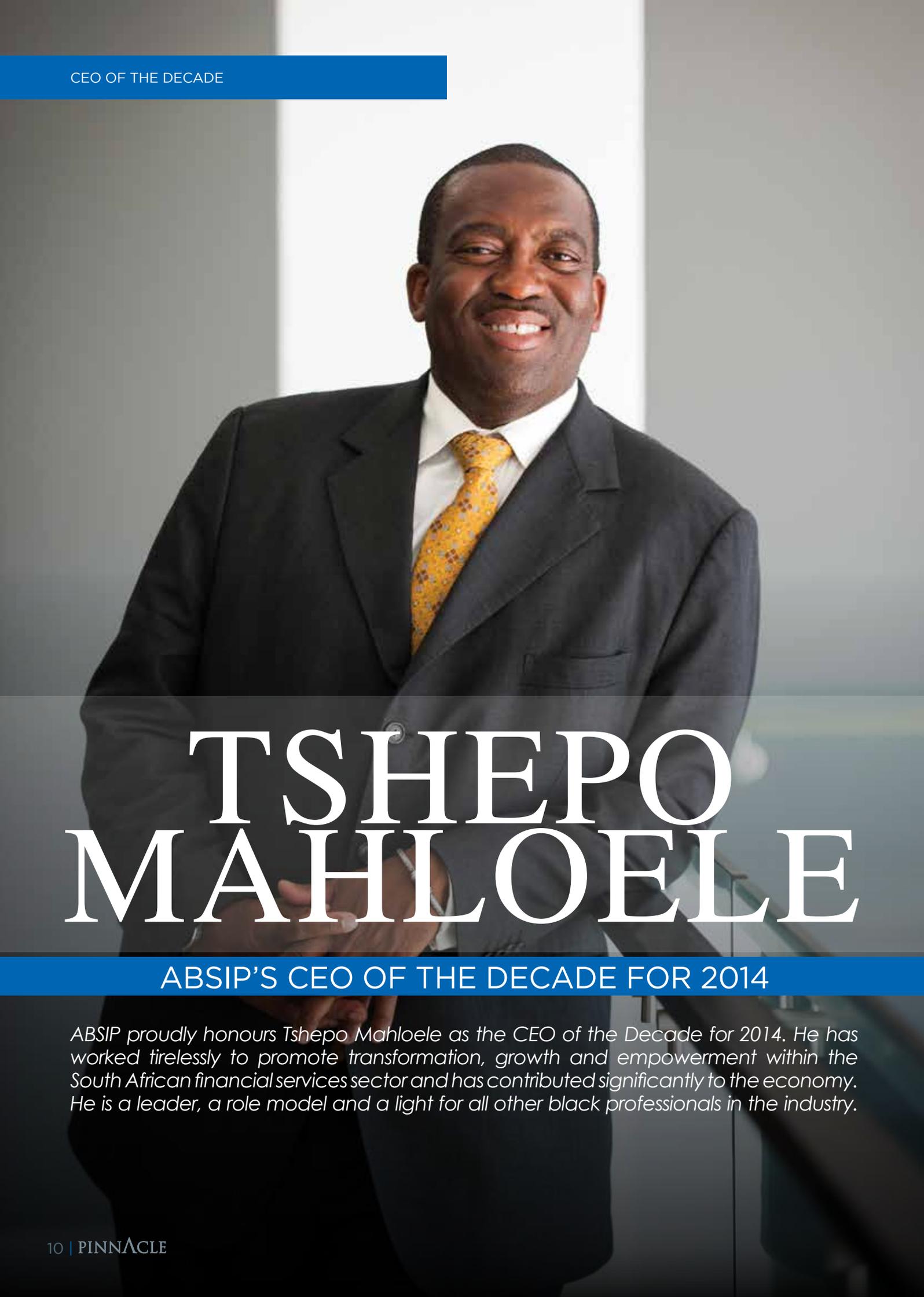
Issue 4 - September 2014

RECOGNISING LEADERS AT THE HEIGHT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

produced and published by:

ABSIP

www.absip.co.za

A portrait of Tshepo Mahloele, a Black man in a dark suit and yellow patterned tie, smiling. The background is a blurred office setting with a window.

TSHEPO MAHLOELE

ABSIP'S CEO OF THE DECADE FOR 2014

ABSIP proudly honours Tshepo Mahloele as the CEO of the Decade for 2014. He has worked tirelessly to promote transformation, growth and empowerment within the South African financial services sector and has contributed significantly to the economy. He is a leader, a role model and a light for all other black professionals in the industry.

Tshepo Mahloele is Chief Executive Officer, Director, Member of Executive Committee and Member of Human Resources and Remuneration Committee at Harith General Partners and has been as such since September 2007. He has been the head of Corporate Finance at the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) and the Isabaya Fund and has a list of previous experiences and positions that are impressive to say the least. Mahloele is a dynamic and inspirational man with boundless energy and a remarkable passion for the financial services sector.

"I was born and bred in Pretoria, in Mamelodi and then went to Cape Town to boarding school which was followed by a stint at Rhodes University where I completed my degree," says Mahloele. "Then I did my LLB and my articles for ten months. I was earning R700 a month and I thought, no, this amount of money isn't going to work for me so I decided to go corporate."

It was as this stage of his career that he joined National Breweries and, during his time at their Nelspruit branch, he was able to double their turnover in just under 24 months. It was an impressive feat and one that had him realising that he had the potential to do things and grow things and manage teams effectively.

It was as he approached his thirties that Mahloele thought it would be a good time to become an entrepreneur so he started a furniture business that did very well.

"It was my first lesson in ensuring that my staff complement of over 30 people got paid and managing interest rates," says Mahloele. "It was costing me interest of 25% at that stage and we had to liquidate even though the business was doing well because we couldn't cope with the debt. It was a very tough time and a great lesson about entrepreneurship and risk."

Mahloele went back into corporate to rebuild his career and he was lucky enough to go back into financial services.

"It was where I came from and I had this opportunity to join the DBSA investment team that was examining infrastructure across SADEC and then I moved to head the Corporate Finance and Isabaya Fund Division of the PIC."

Mahloele believes he is one of the lucky people who has been around before and after the transformation stage in South Africa.

“IF I LOOK AT FINANCIAL SERVICES AND WHERE WE COME FROM I THINK THERE'S STILL A LOT TO BE DONE, BUT THERE ARE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN DONE.”



"I managed teams at a very early age and I was lucky to have had the opportunities that I've been given," says Mahloele. "I went in at the deep end, as it were, and worked at the breweries until I was about 25 when I joined Rand Merchant Bank. They had a programme that targeted young professionals and I stayed with them for about three years."

"At my age we've experienced the worst of things and the best of times and, at the same time, it has been a tremendous journey that we have been able to go through," he says. "If I look at financial services and where we come from I think there's still a lot to be done, though, but there are things that have been done."

He wants to believe that we could have done better, but he also believes that there have been many lessons learned and that now is the time to possibly be more righteously aggressive in terms of applying the lessons learned.

"I think that financial services, through the control of capital and the direction of capital and in giving capital an agenda, we can be in a much better position to bring about some of the much needed changes that we need," adds Mahloele. "I think we have, in the last few years, started developing talent that is much more enlightened and broader based in terms of understanding global dynamics."

Mahloele is determined to make a changes and a difference and he believes that South Africa needs to create a space which makes it possible for other talent to come to the country and build it up.

"We are not creating the environment to inspire our talent in the right ways, like Ghana and Kenya are doing, and I think South African capital is falling behind with regards to playing in this space and being committed to long term development," says Mahloele. "I think there needs to be more alignment and conversation and trust between capital, work talent and the public sector."

He believes that South Africa has a lot of potential and that the country needs to make itself attractive so that capital wants to base itself here – to play in this space hard and well. When asked about the role that ABSIP plays in the sector Mahloele is warm in his thanks.

"I think the whole phenomenon of engaging with policy makers and saying it can be done and that our impact can be broader is really possible," says Mahloele. "I am very honoured that ABSIP has recognised a bit of what we have done and what we aim to do and we really do believe that we are at the beginning of our journey in terms of what is possible and what we still want to achieve."

Mahloele paused for a moment when asked what three essential things that leader should know or have.

"It's a difficult one, but for me you must have an attitude that says – this is not going to be an overnight thing, there are going to be turns and twists and potholes, you must have stamina," concludes Mahloele. "Then you need to find what makes you stand out and consider your context within the long term space and determine your unique value. Have energy and staying power and make a difference."



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Partnerships that create legacies

We are spearheading Africa's potential and changing landmarks by developing infrastructure that grows economies. We aim to ensure that the public and private sectors capitalise and enjoy great returns by investing in infrastructure in the continent.

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