

LEADERSHIP AWARD



Vikashnee Harbhajan

Executive Director

Masterbuilders Kwazulu-Natal

Vikashnee Harbhajan is the Executive Director of Master Builders KwaZulu-Natal, the leading voice in the KZN building industry.

She has held senior positions in both the public and private sector, has a Master's degree in law and is an admitted Attorney and Conveyancer of the High Court of South Africa.

She commenced her career at the University of Durban–Westville and Technikon Mangosuthu in the faculties of Law and served her articles with the Legal Aid Board. Ms Harbhajan also practiced as an attorney for her own account and served at the Free State Department of Education as Director: Legal Services and Labour Relations, before taking up a position with the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) as the Programme Director.

She then joined Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), the national voice of organised business in SA where she served as Executive Director responsible for Social Policy for over four years. Her portfolio at BUSA included inter alia labour market policy, education, training, skills, health, immigration, social security and anti – corruption. In her role, she represented SA business at various platforms. Her role at BUSA gave her the opportunity to be part of a business delegation that engaged with key Government leaders, Labour federations and the Community constituency.

Vikashnee has acquired expertise in the key areas of leadership and executive management, strategic and operational planning, advocacy and lobbying, project management, stakeholder negotiations and networking, knowledge of corporate governance, effective social dialogue and the ability to deal with diverse interests.

During her career, some of the key engagements included:

- Representing Department at Provincial ELRC, GPSSBC and PSCBC Chambers.

- Representing employer delegation at National ELRC.
- Member of Legal Committee of National ELRC.
- Member of EXCO of National ELRC.
- Member of HEDCOM legal subcommittee.
- Member of Legal Advisers Forum.
- Representing BUSA at meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Employment and Labour in Lesotho.
- Alternate Business representative at South African National Aids Council (SANAC) Plenary
- Business representative at SANAC Programme Implementation Committee
- Business representative on JIPSA Technical Working Group
- Business representative on National Anti – Corruption Forum (NACF)
- Chairing panel discussion on price fixing and its impact on communities at the National Anti- corrupt forum.
- Business representative at NEDLAC: Labour Market Chamber, Social Security, Social Plan Review, Atypical forms of employment, Employment Equity and Skills Development, Insolvency, HIV and Aids, Labour Market Policy Review, Decent Work Country Programme, Education, immigration.

She has served on the National Board for Further Education and Training (NBFET), Advisory Council for Occupational Health and Safety (ACOHS), South African Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS Board (SABCOHA), Wholesale and Retail SETA Board (WRSETA), Construction Industry Development board (CIDB) National stakeholder forum and the Essential Services Committee (ESC). Vikashnee currently serves on the Equality Review Committee (ERC) as well as the KwaZulu-Natal Human Resource Development Council and is a member of the Institute of Directors (IOD).

Vikashnee steers the helm at Master Builders KwaZulu – Natal which successfully runs several business portfolios offering a one stop shop to its members, stakeholders and the public. The Association prides itself on transformation initiatives and she has overseen the implementation of the Association’s Emerging contractor programme, Vuka Makhi programme and the bursary fund. These programmes are designed to increase the pool of skills in the industry and to make construction a career of choice. She also introduced an award for Women in construction to showcase and celebrate the success of women in the industry.

She has prioritised the upliftment of the KZN building industry and in the quest for excellence has been instrumental in implementing a Quality Improvement Programme, which gave rise to a collective industry voice with the establishment of the KZN Building Industry Forum. Having steered the BUSA anti-corruption programme, she continued to drive this campaign in the building industry.

Her advice to those aspiring to join the sector is that despite being a challenging industry, construction is significantly rewarding in the broader economic context, leaving legacies long after the buildings are completed and paving the way for future generations.

Vikashnee is a well-rounded, career- oriented and sporty wife and mum, boasting provincial and national colours and was fondly called “the legal eagle queen of spikes.”