

**CONSTRUCTION AT THE CROSSROADS**  
***THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE***  
**HOW TO EFFECTIVELY PIVOT?**

**A KEYNOTE ADDRESS PRESENTED AT THE ASOCSA 18<sup>TH</sup> BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE BY DR KOLOSA MADIKIZELA**

**15 JULY 2024 NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY,  
GQEBERHA, SOUTH AFRICA**

# CONSTRUCTION AT THE CROSSROADS

**The construction industry globally is at a crossroads, where each policy and leadership decision shapes the future of the industry and our ability to contribute to current societal infrastructure and human capital challenges that particularly plague emerging economies, such as South Africa. Our ability to efficiently respond and to pivot to a better sustainable construction industry for future generations is at the center.**

# KEY CONCEPTS

**Today's Construction Industry  
Landscape**

**Construction Industry  
Leadership Challenges**

**Construction Industry  
Contemporary  
Business Issues**

**People, Diversity, and  
Collaboration**

**Agility, Innovation and the  
Construction Industry**

**Sustainability and the  
Construction Industry**



# SOME KEY SUCCESSES IN THE SA CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



**ROBUST AND SOLID ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS THAT OFFER ACCREDITED EBE QUALIFICATIONS**

**INCREASED INTEREST AND FUNDING FOR PERTINENT RESEARCH AREAS**

**A COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHENING RELEVANT REGULATORY INDUSTRY BODIES**

**INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF FEMALE CEOS OF THESE BODIES**

**ACTIVE AND ROBUST CONVERSATIONS TO INCREASE INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL AND EXPENDITURE IN BUDGETS**

# TODAY'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LANDSCAPE

**A DECLINING  
WORKFORCE**

**INCREASED  
PRESSURE ON  
FINANCIAL CAPITAL**

**THE SMART CITY  
"FRENZY"**

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**DEVELOPMENT OF  
NEW SUSTAINABLE  
MATERIALS**

**TECHNOLOGY AND  
DIGITALISATION**

**INCREASED  
INFORMAL SECTOR**

**ESG AND DIVERSITY**

**Human capital, environmental sustainability, and  
technology adoption are the themes that integrate  
the current industry landscape.**

# CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Today's construction industry leaders are faced with unique and unprecedented challenges. Adapting and effectively responding to these is increasingly critical.

These are some of the top challenges leaders are faced with today

MENTAL HEALTH

RAPID TECH  
ADVANCEMENT

REMOTE WORK AND VIRTUAL TEAMS  
(HYBRID WORK ENVIRONMENTS)

DIVERSITY AND  
INCLUSION

EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNICATION

Leaders need to be **creative, innovative,**  
**attentive,** and **adaptive** to succeed

SUSTAINABILITY (ESG)

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP  
STRATEGIES



# WHY IS LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?



# 5 LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM BRENÉ BROWN

SisterSmart



## Vulnerability builds Trust

Sharing our **true selves** sends a powerful message of trust to others, fostering **connection** and **understanding**.



## Self-reflection is Vital

Take time to think about the **kind of leader** you want to be. **Pondering** over fears, feelings and scarcity helps become a more **intentional leader**.



## Embrace the Hard Stuff

Difficult conversations are a **part of life**. Face them **head-on** and **early** no matter how uncomfortable.



## Practice Acceptance

**Encourage** your team to **choose inclusion** above all else. People thrive when they can feel like themselves.



## No Success without Failure

Courage is **contagious**. True leadership is being brave enough to take risks and **embrace imperfections**.

# LEADERSHIP AND BRENE' BROWN



# THE KEY FACTORS OF LEADERSHIP



**‘Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate, and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand.’**

**Colin Powell**

# LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

**VOLATILE POLITICAL CLIMATE**

**POST APARTHEID  
TRANSFORMATION DIVERSITY AND  
INCLUSION**

**LACK OF LOCAL SKILLS AND  
EMIGRATION**

**INADEQUATE AND DILAPIDATED  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**POVERTY AND HIGH  
UNEMPLOYMENT**

**MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

# THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

Is multifaced and shaped by historical cultural and contextual factors, these are some key aspects

## Communal Orientation

- A collective well-being. Leaders are often seen as stewards, serving their people rather than asserting dominance.
- Ubuntu, a Southern African philosophy, encapsulates this communal spirit: "I am because we are." It underscores interconnectedness and mutual support.

## Adaptability and Resilience

- African leaders face diverse challenges: colonial legacies, economic disparities, and environmental issues.
- Resilience, adaptability, and resourcefulness are essential traits. Leaders navigate complex terrain with creativity.

## Pan-Africanism and Liberal Movements

- Leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, and Nelson Mandela championed Pan-Africanism.
- Liberation movements fought against colonialism, apartheid, and oppression. These leaders symbolized resilience and unity.

## Spiritual and Ancestral Dimensions

- African leadership often intertwines with spirituality. Ancestors are revered, and leaders consult diviners or elders for guidance.
- Rituals, ceremonies, and sacred spaces play a role in leadership legitimacy.

## Oral Tradition and Storytelling

- African societies have rich oral traditions. Leaders pass down wisdom through stories, proverbs, and rituals.
- Leadership lessons are woven into narratives, connecting past, present, and future generations.

## Ubuntu Leadership

- Ubuntu, meaning "humanity," emphasizes interconnectedness. Leaders prioritize relationships, empathy, and shared prosperity.
- Ubuntu leadership seeks harmony, reconciliation, and inclusivity .

## Gender Dynamics

- African women have been leaders throughout history. Matriarchal societies exist, and women play vital roles.
- Gender-inclusive leadership is gaining prominence, challenging traditional norms.



**WHAT IS OF KEY IMPORTANCE FROM A CONSTRUCTION  
INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE WHEN CONSIDERING THESE  
LEADERSHIP FACTORS?**

# CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CONTEMPORARY BUSINESS ISSUES



**INFLATION AND ECONOMIC  
DECLINE**

**ACCELERATED DIGITAL  
TRANSFORMATION**

**LOGISTICS AND  
TRANSPORTATION**

**INCREASING CUSTOMER  
EXPECTATIONS**

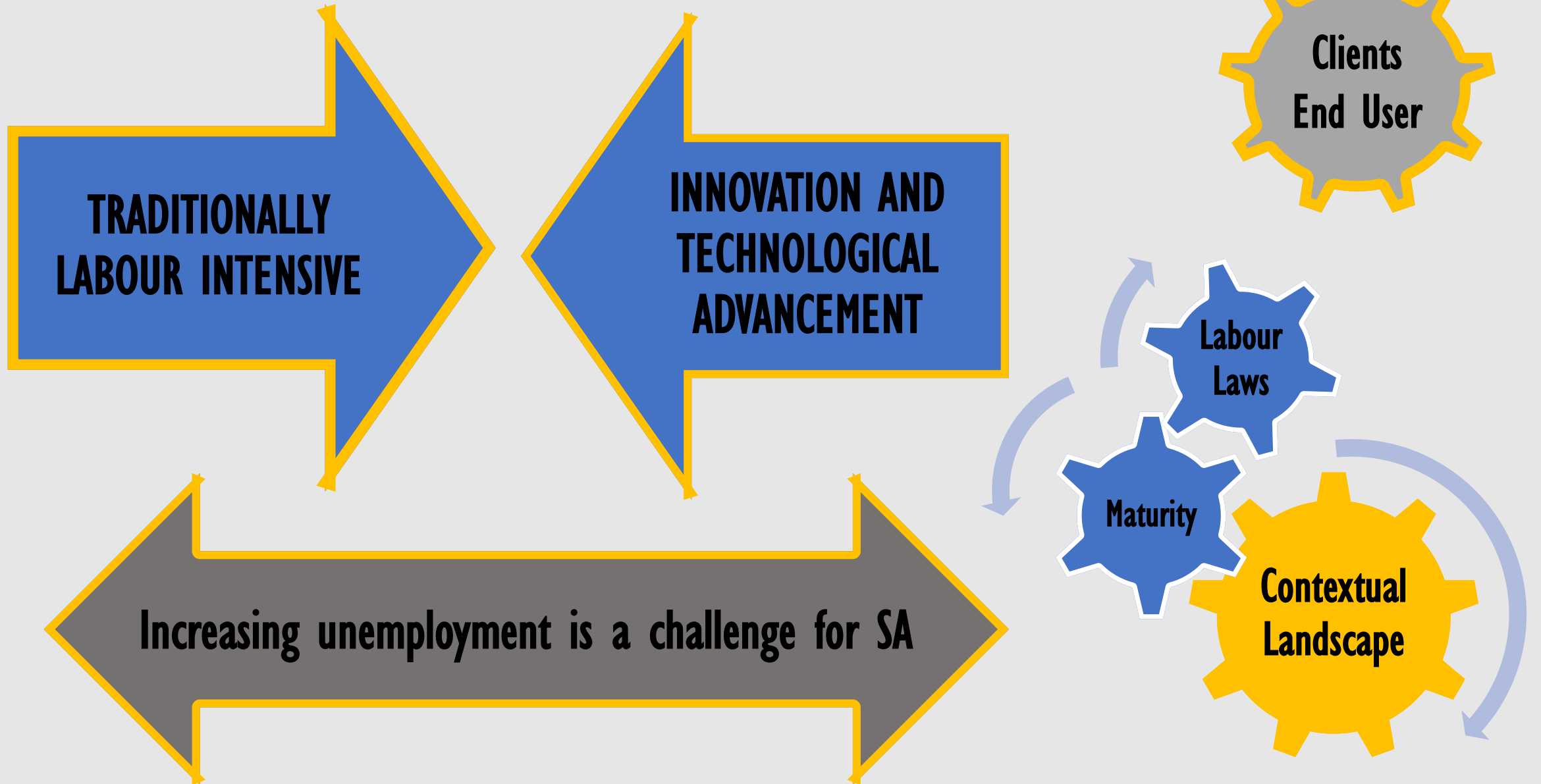
**THE 'WAR' FOR TALENT IS  
INTENSIFYING**

**SUPPLY CHAIN  
RELIABILITY**

**SUSTAINABILITY**

**Sustainability includes effective leadership  
and management..**

# PEOPLE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY





# DIVERSITY AND WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION



**IT'S NOT JUST  
ABOUT THE PINK  
HARD HAT...**

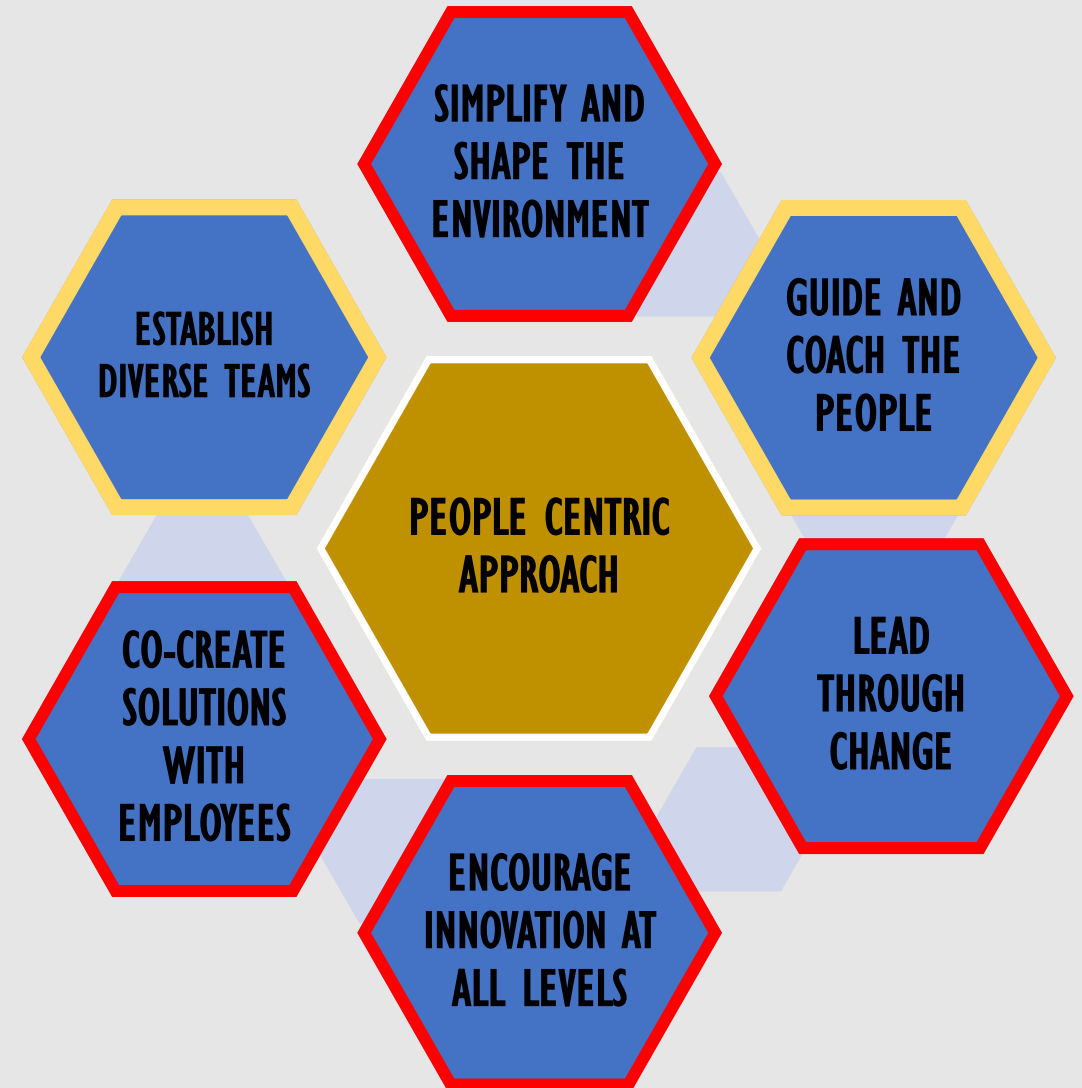
An illustration of multiple hands of various colors (including shades of orange, purple, blue, red, green, yellow, and brown) reaching upwards from the bottom of the frame. The hands are stylized and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. A dark grey rectangular box with a white border is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text.

## **DIVERSITY AND COLLABORATION IN CONSTRUCTION**

**The advancement of diversity and collaboration through effective diversity management is a critical leadership imperative. Without these, the construction industry cannot effectively pivot to a more sustainable, efficient, and people-centered industry.**

# AGILE LEADERSHIP IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**AGILE  
LEADERSHIP PUTS  
PEOPLE AT THE  
CENTRE...**





# SUSTAINABILITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



**ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY**



**HUMAN CAPITAL  
SUSTAINABILITY**



**ECONOMIC  
SUSTAINABILITY**

# SO, WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TO EFFECTIVELY PIVOT?

**CLEAR, CONCISE,  
COURAGEOUS  
AND DECISIVE  
LEADERSHIP**

**A COHESIVE  
INDUSTRY  
STRATEGIC DRIVE**

**ENHANCED  
COLLABORATION  
ACROSS  
DISCIPLINES**

**INNOVATIVE  
DIVERSE TEAMS**

**PSYCHOLOGICALLY  
SAFE  
WORKPLACES**

**ALL UNDERPINNED BY A MORE PEOPLE-CENTRIC  
APPROACH — HUMAN CAPITAL AT THE CORE...**



## **CLOSING REMARKS**

- **Effective leadership is a key catalyst for a more collaborative and people-centered industry.**
- **Overcoming the challenges faced by the industry and its leadership requires a robust strategic and cohesive approach.**
- **The construction industry will remain stuck unless it unlocks value through more diverse and innovative teams.**
- **The construction industry remains an integral solution to societal infrastructure challenges.**





# COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS



**THANK YOU**

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