

5 vital factors that helped us build a development in 7 months

By [Shaun Roos](#)

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As a property developer, your biggest risk is delivery. It's that simple, and that complicated, at the same time. This has always been the case, but it is far more pertinent in current times with the commercial construction sector having become substantially more cost-driven over the past decade.



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It is in no small measure, due to Covid-19, that the last two years' returns have diminished, and over the next five to 10 years we expect to see a continued growth in cost-sensitivity. The need for property remains though – people are still buying houses and apartments. In fact, the trends (in urban areas) show that consumers are searching for an upmarket aesthetic even when they don't necessarily have the means to purchase at that level.

The challenge – and opportunity – then, is for developers to bring the desired aesthetics to market, while still keeping their offering budget-friendly.

Here are a handful of ways in which we managed to do that at 73 on Grosvenor – our contemporary 36 two-bed, two-bath residential development in Gauteng's upmarket suburb, Bryanston:

Build for the future

Regardless of how much we expand over the years, our plan is to remain true to this 'efficiency' philosophy so that we can deliver on each deadline. If you miss a deadline, credibility and trust is lost and once that happens in our game, you're done.

While cost and timeous delivery will always remain top-of-mind for us, building with sustainability in mind is critical, and is a philosophy that must be applied from the design and planning stage right through to construction and delivery. We have chosen to embrace sustainability, longevity and efficiency in every aspect. This is non-negotiable for us when bringing any new development to market.

With our roots on the costing side of the equation and a firm handle on what works in terms of design functionality and visual impact, we feel we are poised to thrive in the new construction climate.

Identify the need

Coming from a Quantity Surveying background, we're often regarded with mild derision as the proverbial 'bean counters' of the construction industry, but it is the basic economics of supply and demand where everything starts - and ends. My years in the commercial construction sector have allowed me to refine cost models and resource output requirements in a way that makes the company not only price efficient, but programme efficient as well. We identified this particular property and really liked it in terms of the location in Bryanston, with a demand from the middle class and its proximity to amenities. Our aim was to bring a product to market that would give consumers a real 'bang for their buck' in central Bryanston, offering them a beautiful, well-finished, modern apartment at a great price point.

Assemble the most efficient team

If you think about it, property developers really are 'just' big project managers, so we are heavily reliant on suppliers and subcontractors. In mitigating the risk of timeous delivery, it is crucial to pick the right subcontractors and specialists in the various fields. In this vein, we would rather pay a bit of a premium to A-grade subcontractors than take the chance of a subcontractor not delivering and creating a bottleneck for everyone else, which will end up costing overtime and potential irate customers down the line.

We really handpicked who we believe to be among the best in the industry, based on their understanding of design philosophies, their proven track-record of on-time delivery, and their efficiencies. As such, our all-star team included Mark Laburn from ML Architects, Michael Barbosa and his team from SCIP Engineers, and Johan van der Vyver, our conveyancer.

Smart material choice

What is important to understand here is the distinction between structural material – such as masonry, concrete, reinforcing- and structural steel – and aesthetic material; finishes such as tile choices, ceilings, doors and the like. People do not 'see' the structural integrity of the building, they see the softer finishes.

We made very carefully-considered choices with our building materials in every aspect from the structure to the tiles, selecting clever, quality materials that could be installed at a good price, so that we could pass that saving on to the end user.

In doing so, we managed to keep the aesthetic modern and contemporary at an affordable price through efficiency and

smart choice, without any compromise to quality or structural integrity.

Plan, plan, plan

We finished this project within six months; seven if you factor in the demolition. This is unheard of, but we were able to do it because of partnering with the right professionals, being as efficient as possible, and having a meticulous development and construction timeline and plan.

To give you an idea, our teams only worked six Saturdays throughout those seven months, and did no other overtime work. We simply did things carefully and methodically, planning well-enough to ensure that no deadline was missed.

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