

RICHARD VRIES

Striving for consistent improvement, personally and in the workplace.



Name
Richard Vries

Born
10 February 1973

Occupation and position
Group Chief Executive Officer

Steps to success
Consistent self improvement

Stand-out achievements
Becoming one of the youngest CEO's of a large consulting engineering company in Africa

Business Philosophy
There is always room for improvement.

Please give a brief summary of the company, and its current products and/or services, and which markets it caters to.

GIBB, a multi-disciplinary consulting engineering and science company has been operating in Africa for over half a century and in that time we've built a reputation as a well-established leader in infrastructure planning and delivery on the African continent and beyond, offering a range of services over a variety of sectors. Our commitment to changing the face of Africa - project by project - has contributed to our position as the partner of choice for the private sector, parastatals and governments who seek a dynamic, reliable, and loyal engineering and science stalwart. With our internationally aligned integrated group of highly trained professionals, we are able to deliver global expertise combined with local relevance, resulting in forward-thinking project development on African soils.

Ambitions and motivations are complex; what has driven you in the past, and what drives you now that you have achieved success?

My first instinct is to say that it is too early to claim success. However, what got me here is a combination of luck and hard work, and the ongoing desire to be the best.

In your experience, which comes first: people or profit?

People always come first. However, this should always be balanced against the business priorities.

What makes you passionate in your work life?
What makes me passionate is positively impacting on society through our engineering solutions.

Achieving your level of success has traditionally been considered a stressful journey; is that the case, and how do you manage it?

I know my limitations and listen to my body - that is the only way to run a business effectively.

The global markets seemed to be stabilising. It looks like Europe is not as stable as was thought. What impact is that having on business in South Africa?

The impact shows that investment remains uncertain and that it might take a bit longer for South Africa to achieve its desired growth trajectory.

Sustainability in business is becoming hard to ignore; how do you define it?

Sustainability is defined by ensuring the business decisions we make today, supports the continued growth and success of the business tomorrow.

If you could advise government on policy, what critical suggestion would you make right now?

I would advise government to do everything possible to remove the barriers to service delivery improvement.

Have you and your company benefited from the World Cup?

We participated in the design of two World Cup stadia and assisted with transport planning aspects.

What's next for your company?

Next on the horizon is our expansion into Africa. **tp**

