

PROUDLY

AFRICA

WHAT LESLIE SAYS:
'If we don't make an effort to buy local, our country will become nothing but a warehouse for foreign goods.'

The CEO of Proudly South African believes social cohesion will only come on the back of economic success.

Leslie Sedibe is the main man behind Proudly South African, a project, he says, that's all about national identity. 'This job's not just about patriotism, it's about investing in the country, about job creation.' Sedibe is an advocate and served as the legal eagle for the 2010 Fifa World Cup organising committee. He also served as CEO of the South African Football Association during the 2010 Fifa World Cup. He's worked for the music industry (at EMI) and did a stint at the SABC. But now it's all about supporting the country's economy. 'A healthy economy means more time for discussions on social cohesion,' he says. 'Right now there's no room for that; there are too many angry empty stomachs.'

What is your vision?

This country faces massive challenges of unemployment, poverty and growing inequalities. We've got to find solutions and the most simple is: buy local. That will grow our economy and increase jobs.

Your toughest day on the job?

I sometimes feel like all I do is carry a fire extinguisher. This campaign has gone through some difficult times, but we're keeping focused on getting South Africans to commit to supporting local business.

How would you like to be remembered?

It may sound like a tall order, but I'd like to be remembered as a force of change.

What frightens you?

I don't live in fear, but remarks by Pieter Mulder of the Freedom Front disturb me. His call for the creation of a ministry for minorities was insensitive, especially during a time when we are really trying to build solidarity in SA.

What advice would you give young professionals?

South Africa needs youngsters who want to make a difference to the lives of ordinary people, youngsters passionate about making South Africa succeed. My advice? Put into practice the philosophy of ubuntu - learn to give back to society.



Leslie Sedibe

MISTER SOUTH AFRICA

THE BIG REVEAL

YOUR MENTORS?

Danny Jordaan and Dr Irvin Khoza. Danny gave me the Fifa World Cup opportunity, which increased my knowledge and experience. Dr Khoza helped me mature as a man.

YOUR HOBBY?

I collect vintage cars. I recently bought a 1969 Chrysler Valiant Regal and am in the process of getting a 1961 Chevrolet Impala.

BY DAMON BOYD
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