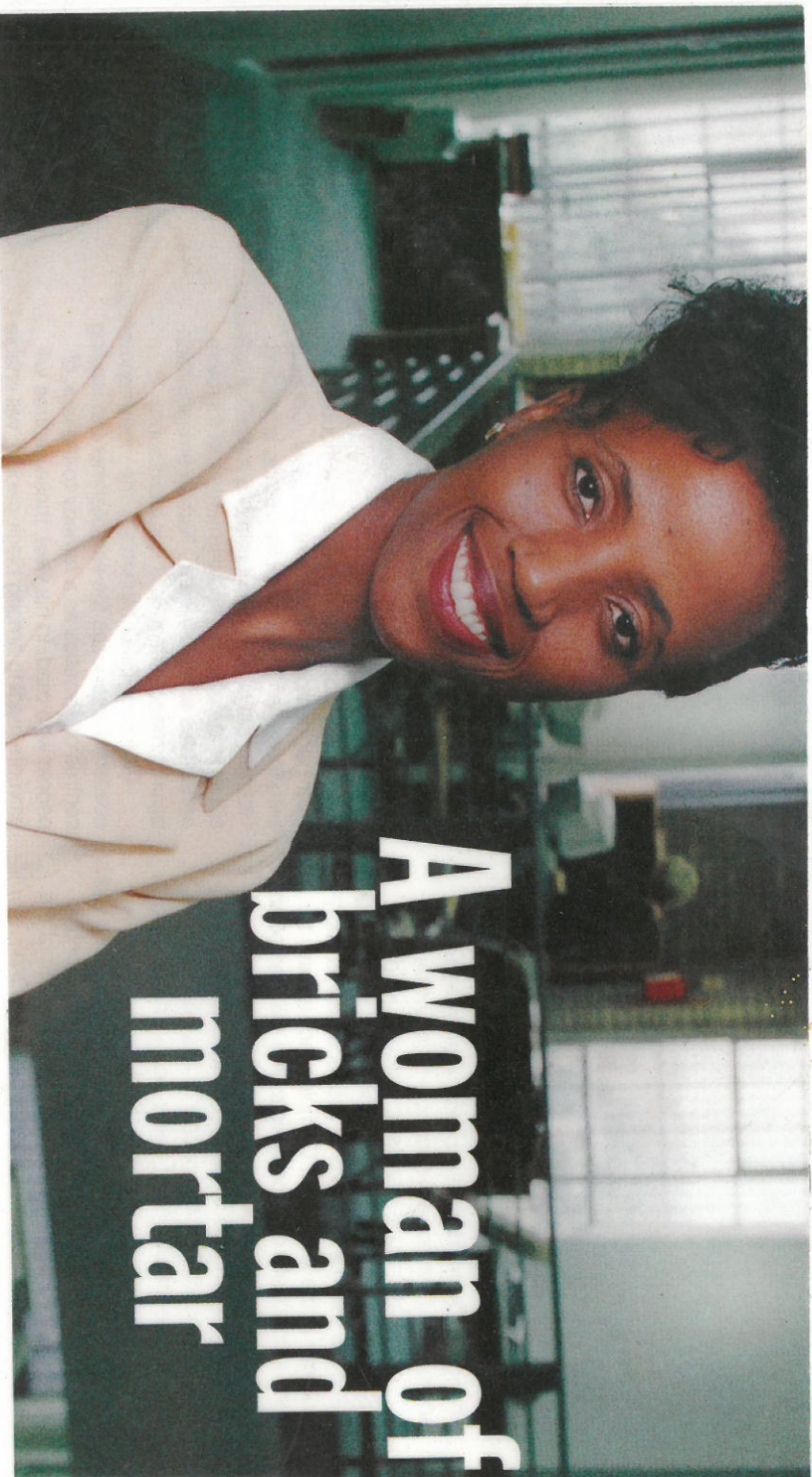


# Franchise



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## A woman of bricks and mortar

**Young, gifted and going places, Khanyi Mlambo was voted the Lebone Woman of the Year in 1998. All MPHAKI had a talk with her to find out what she has been up to lately. Photographer: ALAN KEARTLAND.**

**F**or us couch potatoes, it will be an uplifting experience to see Khanyi Mlambo among the throngs of runners competing in this year's Comrades Marathon. If by chance, television cameras happen to zoom in on Mlambo during the 89 km race, do not adjust your TV set and start doubting your eyesight. The figure you will be seeing sweating it out in her athletic gear is the same Mlambo who is the director of business development at Corobrik, one of South Africa's foremost face-brick manufacturing companies.

The Comrades Marathon must surely rate as one of the most gruelling, energy-sapping races in the world. Why, you may ask, would such a fortunate and successful woman voluntarily endure wear and tear on her joints by taking part in this race?

The reason is not hard to find. Mlambo is different. From her early years as a teenager, she has been rebellious. However, she is not a rebel without a cause. She's the kind of woman who does not want to be pigeonholed by being forced by society or cultural norms to do what other women do. Which explains why, instead of following in anyone's steps, she chose a new path and embarked on a career that is traditionally male-

dominated in an industry where she had no female role models.

Blessed are the young girls who can now look up to her as their role model. Unlike Mlambo, they will have someone to emulate.

Many eyebrows were raised when she decided to study Architectural Science at Wits Technikon. The youngest of 13 children who shared a four-roomed Soweto home, she had initially dreamt of becoming a motor mechanic, but then the world of bricks and mortar won her heart.

Although much has changed since those days, she still remembers how she was not allowed to live at the technikon's boarding house because she was black. Thanks to apartheid, she had to commute between Johannesburg and Soweto to attend classes.

With overloading being the norm in Soweto taxis, her drawings for her assignments would often be crumpled by the time she arrived at the technikon. It was a frustrating period for her, but at the back of her mind she knew that she had to persevere.

Persevere she did, and she ended up graduating with her Architectural Science Diploma. However, did she did not stop there. She went on to enrol for an Advanced Marketing Diploma with the