

# BUSINESSLEADER



Henning  
Rasmuss

Paragon Architects

**Full Name:** Henning Rasmuss

**Position:** International business director at Paragon Architects

**Main Activity of the Company:** Architecture and interior architecture

**Date and Place of Birth:** September 12, 1967

**Education:** Bachelor of Architecture (cum laude), University of the Witwatersrand, 1994

**First Job:** Selling electronic keyboards during school holidays at Beares Furnishers, in Eloff street, Johannesburg

**Career History Prior to Current Position:** I worked in Berlin from 1991 to 1992; in Johannesburg, at Stauch Vorster Architects, from 1995 to 1996; and at Wong Tong & Partners, in Hong Kong, in 1997

**Size of First Pay Packet:** R3 400 a month, at Stauch Vorster Architects

**First Job with Present Group:** I founded Paragon Architects in 1997 with Anthony Orelowitz and my first job was director of the firm

**Value of Assets under Your Control:** Not stated

**Number of People under Your Leadership:** Together with other leaders – 115

**Management Style:** I am an inspirational storyteller and invest high levels of trust in those I lead – I am not a micromanager

**Personal Best Achievement:** Being a debt-free South African at the age of about 40

**Professional Best Achievement:** I guess working on the Cape Town stadium for the 2010 soccer World Cup is a highlight, and remaining in business for 20 years, during which South Africa experienced three recessions, is probably my best achievement

**Person Who Has Had the Biggest Influence on Your Life:** The writer, Italo Calvino, followed closely by my history teacher at school, Myrtle Dittberner

**Person Who Has Had the Biggest Influence on Your Career:** Dhiroo Kalian – architect and director at ADA

**Person You Would Most Like to Meet:** I do not have those kinds of fantasies

**Businessperson Who Has Impressed You Most:** Henry Ford

**Philosophy of Life:** I went into the woods/ Because I wanted to live deliberately/ I wanted to live deeply/ And suck out the marrow of life/ And not to discover/ When I came to die/ That I had not lived

**Biggest Ever Opportunity:** Living in Africa in the twenty-first century

**Biggest Ever Disappointment:** Failing to maintain our business in Brazil, which we opened in 2009 and closed in 2014

**Hope for the Future:** Better leadership across the board

**Favourite Reading:** Short stories

**Favourite TV Programme:** I do not watch TV

**Favourite Food/Drink:** Moqueca/Lagavulin

**Favourite Music:** Buraka Som Sistema

**Favourite Sport:** None

**Favourite Website:** Anything that books flights

**Hobbies:** I love photography – probably the closest to a hobby for me

**Car:** Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG

**Pets:** One dog, one budgie (catatonic), two bunnies (which belong to the children)

**Miscellaneous Dislikes:** Dishonesty, vanity

**Favourite Other South African Company:** The Conservation Corporation

**Favourite Foreign Company:** Virgin Galactic, which wants to fly people into space

**Married:** To Philippa Rodseth, since March 1998

**Children:** Natascha, 12; Alexander, 9

**Clubs:** Various theme camps at AfrikaBurn every year. This year, it was the Birthday Suits