



PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT
WORKSHOPS

Module 1: Introduction

Property development is the most lucrative business in the world. It is this very fact that draws many to try their hand at it. It is not for the faint-hearted, however, or for those who are ill-prepared or uneducated in this particular field. So let me congratulate you for taking the first step in your journey by reading this book.

A myriad disciplines contribute to the knowledge base of the successful property developer. You will need to know about architecture, engineering, public relations, industrial relations, property finance, property law, construction, accountancy, general management, sales and marketing, communications, town planning, valuation, quantity surveying and land surveying, to name just a few.

So where do you find all this information? Practically, of course, you cannot go to university to obtain a degree in each of these disciplines. In this book I would like to share with you how I made my transition from senior executive in the corporate world of telecommunications to full-time property developer. The journey has not been an easy one, and you certainly do not have to travel the same rocky road that I took in order to become successful.

One of the biggest obstacles I struck when starting out back in 1998 (and little has changed in this regard since, I believe) was the problem of finding quality advice and information from experienced developers who knew what they were talking about. They were either too busy, bound by confidentiality agreements, or just unwilling to share their hard-earned and costly lessons with potential competitors. It's the 'secret sauce' syndrome. It really can be the most guarded of industries when it comes to getting practical advice. Which is one of my reasons for writing a book on the subject.

When I was doing my research, I found only three books, two by the same author, that more or less addressed property development directly. The authors were not developers, though, but rather had worked as consultants on development projects. Being a development consultant to the actual developer is like being a chef in a restaurant owned by someone else. The risk profile is vastly different. For the developer, the decision-making process at the holistic level is much more demanding.

Only the business owner bears the brunt of all the risks of that business and, more importantly, has the power to make the business succeed or fail. This Online Course and the book present invaluable knowledge and a step-by-step guide to orchestrating all the necessary elements that make up property development.

I will introduce you to my own Property Development Process through a framework that takes you through the seven phases of a property development project. The book provides a practical guide and a blueprint for any development project you are likely to undertake. Like the DNA from which an infinite variety of life forms are created, once mastered, the information and knowledge you accrue can be applied repeatedly to creating wealth through property development. I promise you an exciting journey, so enjoy the ride.



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My Background

I arrived in Australia at the age of eleven through the migrant gateway of Sydney's inner western suburbs. My father, who had been a primary school teacher in Mauritius all his life, had secured a job at the De La Salle Brothers Catholic School in Sydney. It was my first experience of Australian culture.

I remember my very first day at high school. The teacher had asked, 'And what would you like to do when you grow up?' The kids rattled off the usual suspects: fish and chips shop owner, builder, policeman, accountant...No one, as I recall, volunteered 'property development' as an ambition! Indeed, right through school and university, and my eighteen years in the corporate world, I had absolutely no clue of the existence of the property development industry.

Given that this is not just any industry, but one that affects each and every one of us in some way, and has the power to drive the whole Australian economy (although not necessarily in a positive direction), it is surprising that the average person – that's 99.9% of us – knows nothing about property development, let alone its career potential.

Property development is the driving force behind countless businesses, and in particular our retail industry. Think about the run-on effects of building a block of apartments. You will have provided employment for thirty or more consultants and public servants. At the same time, retailers of building materials, furniture and fittings such as carpets, tiles, taps, paint, curtains, beds, dining tables and chairs, kitchens and bathrooms, electrical goods, electronic devices and many other products will benefit either directly or indirectly from your venture.

I remember working on a seven-apartment development in Bellevue Hill in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs. We used to have our weekly site meetings at Birriga's Café at the end of the street. The builders and subbies would always buy their morning tea and lunches there too. We even held Melbourne Cup lunches there. To the delight of the café owner, who became a good friend, the development went on for much longer than expected. When we completed the project and moved on, the café suffered a severe downturn in business and almost went under. That was 20 years ago, and I am happy to report that Birriga's Café is still going strong.

What became apparent to me, though, was the importance of my development project to the community as a whole. In fact, what I do now when assessing a property development venture is to make a list of all the stakeholders and then learn who they are and how they might be affected, positively or negatively, by my venture. This exercise is vital to establishing my approach to my development and, indeed, to evaluating the project's potential for success.