



"IT'S LIKE A LIGHT BULB COMES ON"

How former teacher and principal Robin Booth has made property investment as easy as ABC

Interview by Siphosethu Nini

Top results

Booth says his company Capital Partners has solved some of the real challenges for both amateur and pro property investors.



Qualifying as the only South African male preschool teacher in 1996 proved to be the first of many achievements that Robin Booth would get under his belt. Passionate about solving problems, he went on to attain further achievements in the field of education: from the teachers' lounge to the principal's office, opening his own school in 2005 (and selling it five years later).

Booth founded the Synergy Schooling Approach, which demonstrates how easily personal and academic excellence can be achieved when a teacher uses skills in boosting self-esteem and developing the child's internal motivation for success. He also has his own website where he gives moms and dads intelligent solutions to their everyday parenting challenges.

In 2001, Booth built his home by himself, setting a solid foundation for what would be a great venture eight years later. Today, he's one of the biggest property dealers and investors, operating both locally and in the US through his company Capital Partners.

What inspired you to choose teaching as a career?

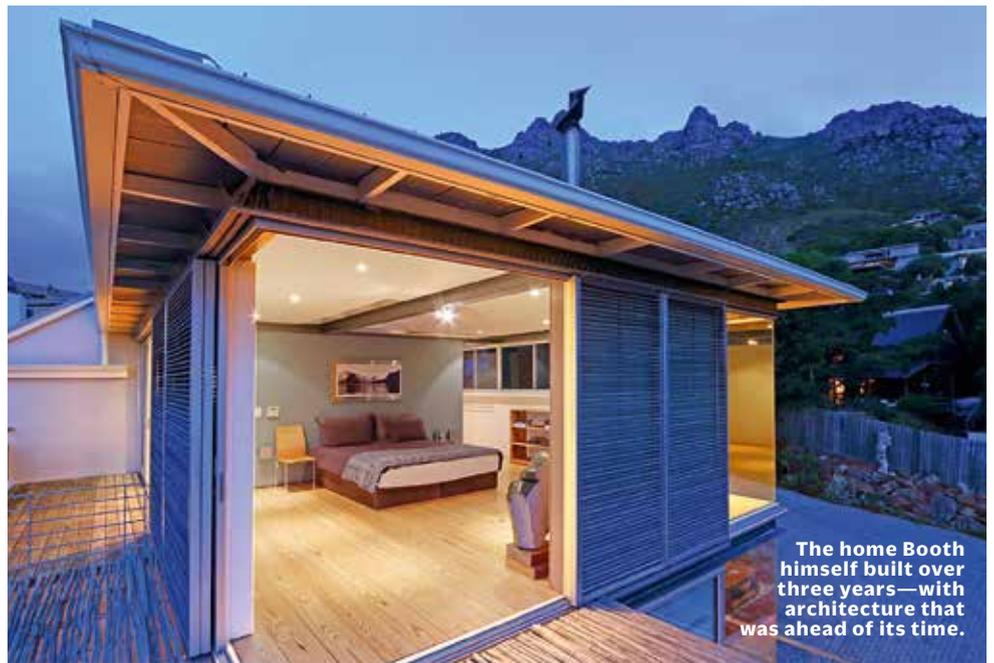
At a core level, I'm a great problem solver; when I find solutions to any type of challenge, I love sharing those solutions with others such that their lives are enriched and more fulfilling. I chose the preschool age range to specialise in, because in those formative years, for a child it's never about learning content but more about learning to be human. The things I taught them would last a lifetime and create the foundation for their life-long success and fulfilment.

What was your approach in opening your own school?

The quality of our learning about academics, ourselves and life is deeply connected to the relationships we have with the people around us. In business, what creates success is the quality of the team and the communication within the team. Ninety-nine percent of people will recall the class in which they learnt the most as the one with a dynamic and passionate teacher who had a respectful attitude toward the learners. In my school approach, all our teachers were highly trained life coaches and experts at empowering learners, while at the same time using their internal motivation to challenge their own learning. What would take three weeks to cover in a traditional school was covered in one day by our learners. The best thing about this approach is that it'll never be outdated, as it taps into the core of our striving to unlock our best potential.

Why did you then decide to sell the school?

Perhaps my greatest learning curve in this process and in business is that I can solve a problem in just a few weeks, but can spend a lifetime trying to convince people that the solution works. I was tied to the day-to-day tasks of running a school. I decided it was time to move away from this and focus more on the sharing of our experiences and insights on a global scale. The school was a non-profit organisation; the vision was a successful coming together of teachers, pupils and parents to create



The home Booth himself built over three years—with architecture that was ahead of its time.

something meaningful that would impact everyone. The school was then turned into a private school after I sold it, and the new owners reverted to the old methodology. A few months later, I asked them to change the name so they could create what they wanted, while my brand could be safeguarded.

In 2001 you started building your own house, which eventually took three years to complete. How was that experience?

That was a crazy experience, but it gave me valuable insight into building and development. I worked every day with my own

hands for three years, and learnt everything from first-hand experience because I did everything myself: carpentry, cabinet work, tiling, shuttering and welding. At that time, we were pushing the boundaries of modern residential home building, using steel beams, cantilevered columns with huge glass panels, and off-shutter concrete walls. Now that style is common. It was really fulfilling, especially when the TV show *Top Billing* wanted to do a prime-time story on the house.

What have you done your own way to ensure you always stay ahead of the game?

I value the ability to reinvent myself. Our traditional school system indoctrinates us into believing we are static, and that we choose a career for life, and that we must spend our childhood preparing for adulthood. Our own beliefs are the things that limit us from achieving and experiencing more. In my companies, we challenge the status quo and that's why we continue getting asked to be keynote speakers at conferences and at the annual GIBS Career Expo for more than 2 500 of South Africa's top students.

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How does the South African property business compare to that of the US?

The fundamentals of property and business in any country are the same. What vary in each country are the market, the regulations and the people. You'll find that successful investors are not limited to a country's borders. A good deal is a good deal no matter the location, as long as you've done your due diligence.

Are there different risks involved in investing in big developments or single ones, family or commercial residences?

There's only one big difference between all these: your belief system. Henry Ford said, "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't—you're right." This isn't about skills or expertise. The first time I did a big development I was honest with myself about what I didn't know, and then got people who were experts to support me. But I believed I could, so I went ahead and did it. Know thyself, be thyself, and then go get it!

How do you go about coaching and mentoring investors for business and property investment?

The most important thing about mentoring and coaching investors and businesspeople is understanding their natural path to wealth and success. Although there are many different paths to wealth and success, we can put these into eight different categories. Most people fail in business because they're following a path to wealth that doesn't work for them. So with me, they first do a 10-minute online test and once they know and understand their results, it's like a light bulb comes on for them. Then I coach and work with them to develop strategies that get them to their financial dreams and to having fulfilling lives. It's incredible to watch!

Tell us more about your company Capital Partners. What differentiates it from other property businesses out there?

We're doing what no one else is, having solved some of the real challenges for the everyday, amateur investors as well as the pros. We've found a way for foreign investors to buy real-estate property in the US with up to 90% finance, without needing a credit history, without needing to prove income, at interest rates between 3% and 4%, with no transfer or closing costs—all within five days, at no risk. On top of that, we get that property tenanted and managed for the investor by the best national property group in the area, and then ensure all legal and tax compliances

are set up and completed. All of this is totally legal, transparent and compliant. We've solved perhaps the biggest stumbling block and challenge all investors have in wanting to grow and profit from investing in real estate. It's actually difficult to believe at first.

So you ensure property buyers/investors get the best deals?

If we're not willing to buy it for ourselves and our own portfolio, then we wouldn't offer it to anyone else. This is important, because we're also investors, so we know how to evaluate and provide what investors are

30 SECONDS WITH...



Robin Booth

FAVOURITE QUOTE?

"If I keep doing what I've always done, I will keep getting what I've always got."

FAVOURITE BOOK?

"The notebook that has my name on it, constantly inviting me to create the life I want."

FAVOURITE DESTINATION?

"That place in my heart and soul that lights up and makes me feel like shouting into the wind. It's a bit like kitesurfing a big wave towering overhead, and every ounce of my focus and attention is alive right in that moment."

FAVOURITE TECH GADGET?

"The 3D printer. This is going to allow us to colonise Mars, print new body organs if ours fail, and print houses to fill up the housing shortage."

HOW DO YOU UNWIND AND RELAX?

"Surfing big waves, or going kitesurfing and coming out the water having given it my all, or doing some serious CrossFit."

BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"I love reading books by people who have believed they can do it: from Ernest Shackleton, to Nelson Mandela, to Elon Musk."

BEST MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE?

"That light-bulb moment when I was 28 years old and realised I could create a belief system that focused on the empowering of the new, as opposed to the fear of the past and unknown."

looking for. Creative problem solving is the strength of this team, and the solutions we've created totally redefine what makes a good deal. As we are the 'good teacher', we don't have to sell ourselves to the investors, or get them to trust us—they can see for themselves how great the deals are. They can take ownership of the process from the start, and remain in control at all times.

How has having a business coach influenced you as an entrepreneur?

I've known my business coach JT Foxx for a few years now, and I'm still continually learning from him and his other coaches. His insights into marketing and branding are incredible, and these have really paved the way for our growth. He has shaped the way we negotiate deals and create joint-venture partnerships, and the way we place importance on relationships. We couldn't have taken this company to the next level without his coaching.

Any projects in the pipeline? What can we expect from you in the near future?

Three weeks ago, I paid R1 300 for a house in Florida that was worth R1.5 million. Fully financed, already tenanted, and all expenses and finance costs paid by the rental income—and with no risk to me at all. We're so excited by this model of investing that we're buying property deals like this for ourselves and are now sharing them with other investors. No one out there has done this before. Here in South Africa we're in the process of developing apartment blocks of between 100 to 200 units, and we also cater for short-term house flipping and developments. Our main drive in all our deals is to bring the concept of ethical investing to the table. As investors, we feel that as we're creating wealth and success for ourselves, we can share with other people so they can do the same for others. ☺