

## Commercial Feature

# Flat-Foot Engineering celebrates 15 years

## Company overcomes many setbacks to stand on solid ground



**FAMILY:** Flat-Foot Engineering staff. Pictures: SUPPLIED



**AT THE HELM:** Managing director Max Mabuti.

### NICOLETTE SCROOBY

Flat-Foot Engineering is a mechanical service provider that was started 15 years ago in Mthatha.

Now owner Max Mabuti has offices in East London and Port Elizabeth, with a growing presence in Johannesburg.

The company specialises in supplying installation and repairs

of boilers, laundry equipment, kitchen equipment, air-conditioners, refrigeration and autoclaves.

Starting from humble beginnings with just a wheelbarrow to deliver his products Max, who is also a retired professional boxer, can be proud of all he has achieved over the years. He admits there were many setbacks along the way.

Six years into the company Max didn't even have a business plan and was facing insolvency. After putting a plan together and seeking out some investors he had a renewed hope. One of the investors, Ravi Moodley, became his mentor and friend.

Recently due to Covid the company was under pressure again.

"We were affected quite hard

by Covid, like any other business. Thanks to government initiatives, banks and institutions like ECDC, SEDA and SEFA we received loans and assistance to navigate through the Covid storms," said Max.

"To have survived when so many businesses around us closed down is not something we take lightly.

"It has been a journey with ups

and downs. We're not saying we're out of the woods and there is still so much that we want to achieve."

The name of the company stems from boxing terminology. "I always told people not to be flat-footed when boxing. People then started calling me flat-foot, but I took that name and turned it into something positive meaning to be grounded and

solid," said Max.

The company currently employs about 60 people. They also have a programme for mechanical and electrical engineering students to do their in-service training at Flat-Foot.

It's all about paying it forward for Max.

"We are helping our future generations and that inspires me. I would like to thank the staff and management team for their support, understanding and always being by my side. A special thank you to my mentor Ravi for guiding me over the past eight years.

"I'd especially like to thank my clients, because without them I wouldn't have a business. Government has also been a huge blessing to us. "I am eternally grateful to my wife Vanessa and children. It's when you travel and are away from home and don't get to see your family that you realise how much they mean to you."

Max is passionate about helping others and he is a strong pillar in the community as can be seen by those around him calling out 'Bro Max' whenever they see him.

"What inspires me is to contribute to empowerment and create job opportunities.

That was one of my main goals when I started the company, and I'm happy to say that dream is a reality.

"I have staff members who call Flat-Foot their family – they are able to earn a salary and feed their families."

Flat-Foot has received many awards since their inception in 2006. Among the most notable are: Top Empowerment Awards 2018 winner for top empowered company fast growth black-owned SMME award; Rocci and FNB 2017 Business of the Year silver winner in the engineering category; West Rand Chamber of Business and Tourism's Business Achievers award 2018 finalist; Carrier United Technologists Top 20 Dealer in 2017; and Seda's National Gazelles Top 40 in 2016. Max was also a national ambassador for Seda in 2018/2019.

Looking to the future Max said he hoped to remain a top contender in the industry. "We want Flat-Foot to be entrenched in the Eastern Cape. The legacy must continue long after my existence.

"I can see the company growing nationally, but not at this stage.

"We want to focus on the Eastern Cape and have a strong

presence here, before branching out to other provinces.

"The future is bright. You just never know where it will take you. I'm open to opportunities. "Our slogan is stepping into the future and that's exactly what we intend doing."

### SERVICES OFFERED

Supply, servicing and repair of: Airconditioning and refrigeration; Boilers and steam; Laundry equipment; Kitchen equipment; and Autoclaves.

### Flat-Foot Engineering contact details

**East London**  
Tel: 043 721 2934  
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**Mthatha**  
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Cell: 081 350 4276  
Address: Suite 2, Thornhill Farm, Thornhill Road, Mthatha, Eastern Cape, 5099

**Port Elizabeth**  
Tel: 041 371 1699  
Cell: 081 313 3128  
Address: 34 G, B & E Business Park, Larch Road, Korsten, Gqeberha

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**Sterilizer Technologies cc**

"On this special occasion Sterilizer Technologies would like to wish Flat Foot Engineers all the best on their 15th Anniversary and thank them for the support throughout the years."

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Congratulations!  
Wishing Flat-Foot Engineering another 15 years of superb service!

**FLAT-FOOT ENGINEERING**  
Stepping into the future