

# Empowering the future: A young woman's rise to leadership in property at Boxwood

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Boxwood Property Fund appoints Sarah Divaris as COO.



Sarah Divaris, new chief operating officer of Boxwood Property Fund

Boxwood Property Fund is proud to announce the appointment of Sarah Divaris as its new chief operating officer (COO). At the age of 29, Divaris stands as one of the youngest COOs in the sector, however she brings an extraordinary depth of experience, expertise and an innovative approach.

Holding a Business Science degree in Finance and Economics along with a prestigious CFA Charterholder designation, Divaris's combination of financial acumen, strategic mindset and creative flair have been instrumental in shaping Boxwood's trajectory.

Divaris's journey with Boxwood began eight years ago. At the time, Boxwood was in its early stages, lacking assets or formal structure. Despite uncertainties, Divaris was drawn to the vision of building one of the largest private property portfolios in the country under the mentorship of CEO Rob Kane and chairman John Oliphant, and committed herself to the journey.

Her early days involved planning, capital raising, and pursuing the company's first major acquisition. As the company evolved, so did her responsibilities, now spanning a spectrum of strategic and operational initiatives to manage and grow Boxwood's R3bn property portfolio across sectors and geographies.

Divaris's multifaceted approach is evident in her ability to handle tenant liaison, lease negotiation, development work, acquisition selection, feasibilities and due diligence. Notably, her commitment to driving value was showcased in her first landmark project, the revitalisation of a mixed-use asset in the centre of Cape Town, where she achieved a 31% increase in the asset's value within the first 12 months.

Divaris's ability to blend financial expertise with the creative demands of the property business is truly impressive. According to her, creativity is essential in every aspect of asset management, from devising innovative solutions to attract

tenants to redevelopment plans for previously unloved buildings! Divaris particularly enjoys the design side of Boxwood's redevelopment work and has been instrumental in delivering busy food markets and quirky, sophisticated common areas. She collaborates with architects, interior designers, design students and local artists to incorporate public art installations and integrates quirky architectural elements to create visually distinctive properties.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Divaris has a passion for fostering entrepreneurship in South Africa. This is evident through her partnership with the UCT organisation Phaphama, which she initiated to provide support and funding to entrepreneurs in Khayelitsha. Additionally, she is dedicated to developing young property professionals, contributing to Boxwood's talent development and diversity.

As the new COO, Divaris's leadership philosophy centres on collaboration, empowerment, and alignment with Boxwood's strategic goals. She is committed to driving innovation, fostering talent and shaping the future of women in property.

CEO Rob Kane adds that the promotion is thoroughly deserved and Boxwood looks forward to a dynamic and successful future under Divaris's capable leadership.

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