

Magnastruct to launch 100% fire retardant, affordable informal dwelling

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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In October alone, fires have ravaged informal community settlements across Cape Town, including [Khayelitsha](#), [Philippi](#), and, most recently, in [Vrygrond](#), leaving hundreds of homes destroyed, thousands displaced, and incalculable pain and devastation for those who had to watch their belongings go up in smoke.



According to local entrepreneur Dave Lindup, MD of [Magnastruct](#), adding to the frustration is that local authorities once again rehabilitate these communities using zinc sheets to rebuild the lost homes.

Lindup strongly believes he's got just the solution to this persistent problem. Made from magnesium oxide, Lindup's company produces [MagnaBoards](#) - building boards that are said to be 100% fire retardant, water impervious, mould and mildew resistant, and potentially an ideal building material for informal homes. Using MagnaBoards, he is currently in the planning stages of launching a self-assembly, affordable informal dwelling made from this unique material, called The Square.

With an area slightly larger than 7m², The Square will be sold in a kit form which will include a roof, walls, window, door, floor and bolts and screws, with instructions for self-assembly. The kit, Lindup says, will be flat packed and will retail for under R7,500. With plans to launch later this year, the company is in talks with a finance provider to service potential small loan clients.



The Square

We chatted to Lindup to find out more about MagnaBoards, The Square, and what it's like to be an entrepreneur in South Africa.

■ ***Tell us a bit about yourself and your background, and how you came to found Magnastruct.***

Dave Lindup: My undergrad training at university followed a formal financial degree and later a postgrad in marketing. Early in my working career, I quickly learnt that understanding the rands and cents of what made a business work was essential to its success. Similarly, later becoming more involved in the marketing side of business proved that solving a problem or providing a need was a sure-fire way to get your product (whatever it may have been) sold.

Throughout my career I gravitated towards becoming involved in various building projects. Finding a product such as MagnaBoard with its multifunctional attributes of being a sustainable, green building material that is fire-, moisture-, mould-, and mildew-proof, that can equally service both the top end and lower end of the market, provided the opportunity to launch the business called Magnastruct.

■ ***MagnaBoards are said to be 100% fire retardant - what sorts of tests have been done?***

MagnaBoard has been tested with international testing bureaus and achieved an A1 fire rating – the highest rating achievable. In South Africa, we have several SABS fire rated certificates enabling us to build fire rated walls from 30 minutes right up to two and a half hours.

■ ***Apart from being fire retardant, what makes MagnaBoard unique?***

MagnaBoard is unique because of the multiple attributes it contains all in one building material. Its strength and lightweight nature make it perfectly suitable for building the walls of multi-storey structures in the quickest time of any building process.

Being a sustainable, green product that is 100% recyclable, it is the building product for the future. It is also moisture-proof, mould- and mildew-resistant, plus being hygienic in its composition, making it ideal for use in damp climates and medical facilities.

■ ***Tell us more about The Square, and how easy is it to assemble?***

The Square evolved out of the frustration of constantly seeing how often fires have repeatedly ravaged through the same

informal settlements, without government seeming to want to tackle the root cause of the problem - highly flammable informal dwellings!

We knew with MagnaBoard that we had the product to totally solve this problem, so we set ourselves the challenge to build the most cost-effective, fireproof informal dwelling in the market.

The Square has been designed to be supplied as a flat-pack kit that can be assembled by two people without any special training and with some basic tools. The easy-to-read instructions and simple diagrams will assist even the most novice DIY customer.



The Square

■ ***What are some of the challenges you've encountered as an entrepreneur, and how have you overcome them?***

Challenges – understanding your market's needs and the financial requirements and cash flow needs of your business in order to succeed. Building the right team of people to take the business forward.

How to overcome the challenges – do your proper planning and groundwork, establish a network of people that you trust for their experience and advice. Be bold, weigh up the risks, then go for it. Don't put off things for fear of failure.

■ ***Do you think anyone can be an entrepreneur or is it something you're born to do?***

There is no doubt some people are born entrepreneurs, but South Africans, generally, have enquiring minds, a sense of adventure and are not scared of hard work - all good attributes for a budding entrepreneur. If you have a genuine passion for something, do the training and gather the education required, know your strength and weaknesses and venture boldly forward.

■ ***As an entrepreneur, how can government create a more enabling environment for an entrepreneurial culture to thrive in SA?***

It is largely accepted that the future growth of SA lies in the growth of small businesses. This is going to need many young entrepreneurs. This environment needs to start at school level and in primary school specifically, so by the time one reaches high school, the entrepreneurial culture is already embedded in young learners. Government has to build this enabling culture into the total education system.

Government then needs to provide sufficient tertiary education facilities and funding through the various SETAS to provide the next stepping stone for young entrepreneurs to develop and succeed.

Budding entrepreneurs then need an enabling environment to get their ventures off the ground – the minimum of administrative red tape, less onerous labour legislation, and an efficient and affordable public transport system that enables the entrepreneur and their staff to safely and easily get to where they need to be, day or night.

For more info on MagnaBoards, [click here](#).



Dave Lindup, MD of Magnastruct

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

Sindy Peters (@sindy_hullaba_lou) is a group editor at Bizcommunity.com on the Construction & Engineering, Energy & Mining, and Property portals. She can be reached at sindy@bizcommunity.com.

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