

Shazia Essa is purposefully passionate about property

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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Shazia Essa is a self-described 44-year-old, married woman and a proud mother of three boys who's also a qualified physiotherapist. But her CV doesn't stop there. Essa stepped onto the real estate scene about 10 years ago, partnering up with her husband Yusuf Essa, and so began her journey with the award-winning real estate brand [Choprop](#).

She's now the principal of the company, overlooking the administrative and managerial aspects of the business in addition to mentoring and assisting its trade partners.

What started out as a "Sunday afternoon house-hunting pastime" has grown into an internationally recognised enterprise. In 2013/2014 and 2015/2016, Choprop was nominated and awarded by the International Property Awards in the categories of Highly Commended Lettings Agency for South Africa and Highly Commended Real Estate Agent for South Africa, respectively.

We interviewed Essa to find out more about her transition into the real estate sector, what some of the challenges are for women in the industry, and her message for Women's Month.

■ ***From physiotherapy to the property sector, that's quite a career change! Was it a difficult move for you?***

Shazia Essa: The transition from physiotherapy to real estate happened over a period of time. After graduating at the Medical University of Southern Africa, I practised for nine years and then joined my husband in his FMCG and telecommunications businesses in Mabopane which is in the North West province just north of Pretoria. These were retail businesses that were servicing the previously disadvantaged and emerging market.



Shazia Essa, principal, Choprop

I came from a family who was also involved in township business, so this transition was not difficult for me at all. As a teen, I worked weekends in my father's supermarket and was well prepared for the new challenge.

The move from retail to real estate just happened naturally as this was a hobby which later turned into a very successful business. Both my husband and I were purposefully passionate about property!

■ ***What do you think is the biggest issue facing women in the property industry today?***

Essa: Some of the challenges that women face in the real estate industry are around safety and security; support from spouses and family as this profession involves a lot of long and odd hours, especially after hours and weekends when clients normally would like to view properties. This tends to compromise family and leisure time. Successful agents are those that can act on the power of *now* and be available at any given time. Running a home and being a wife and mother at the same time can also pose a challenge at times.

■ ***Based on your experience, what advice would you give to women pursuing a career in your field?***

Essa: For any woman looking to pursue a profitable career in real estate, the following personality traits must be adopted: resilience, passion for the industry, passion for people, service driven, efficient and competent, ambitious, committed,

disciplined, and, most of all, solution driven.

The advice I would give any female who chooses this career is to adopt all of the above personality traits, love what you do and just strive to be the best. It is important when choosing a career path in real estate that you partner with the right brand as this can determine the difference between success and failure!

■ ***Is there a female figure that has had a positive influence on your life?***

Essa: The one person that I can say has had the most positive influence in my life is my mother. She grew up without a formal education and was taken out of school at the age of 14. She always stood by me as I grew up and always encouraged me to be the best version of myself and motivated me towards achieving my degree. I will always be grateful to her for instilling these values in me.

■ ***What is your message for Women's Month?***

Essa: My message to all women out there this Women's Month is to follow your dreams and your passion for it is never too late to achieve them. Please remember that if you love what you do, you will never have to work a day in your life!

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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