



**Next  
ON THE SPOT  
Gen**

**FOSTERING  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN  
EMEA, VENTURE  
CAPITAL AS A CATALYST  
FOR CHANGE**

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📍 Online

**ie**  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF  
ARCHITECTURE  
& DESIGN

**Andre Bothma**  
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## ANDRE BOTHMA

### JLL/SPARK AND VENTURE CAPITAL: NURTURING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN EMEA

In the latest online event for the IE NextGenProgram, “Fostering Entrepreneurship in EMEA: Venture Capital as a Catalyst for Change,” program coordinator Paula González was joined by Andre Bothma, a corporate real estate professional with over 20 years’ experience in the sector.

Andre has been on quite a professional journey! Until recently he worked as the growth principal for JLL Spark, who have become pioneers within the real estate venture capital market. But his working journey began as a farmer in South Africa, and even after coming to Europe to study engineering, he would not have predicted where he is today. Learning “how buildings operate” over 11 years in the built environment, by the time he was 26 he was a director in the real estate field, managing 240 people.

His entrepreneurial spirit is clearly evident in his professional history. Having set up a company in the renewable energy sector back in South Africa, his next move was to JLL, where he helped the firm grow to over \$400 million of investments in more than 55 startups. But he eventually took the bold move of leaving JLL Spark and setting up his own company, MyScale, aimed at both venture capitalists and startups. Fitting a niche that Andre spotted in the market, MyScale supports investments from both sides, helping both VCs and startups towards long-term growth and success.

### On entrepreneurship and investment in PropTech

With the downturn in venture capital in recent years, startups have been faced with shrinking investments, forcing them to reduce costs in order to stay afloat. Venture capitalists, meanwhile, have simultaneously felt more uncertain about where to invest their money. Andre saw an opportunity there and from this, MyScale was born. “It’s more advisory, through counseling and providing insights to get the answers you need.”

It’s difficult out there for startups, so knowing where to start and finding support is a challenge for many entrepreneurs. Having a clear vision is key, even of what they’re looking for from a VC partner. “First, understand what it is that you’re trying to solve,” Andre advised. Simple explanation of what you’re doing is better, he warned; you should be able to quickly and easily explain your proposition. Equally important is knowing that there’s enough demand in the market for your product, and what your investors are looking for.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, Andre highlights the importance of a credible team in the very early stages of a startup, and therefore of growing your network: “The people you’re friends with could end up being a client or a business partner.” For Andre, the best time to work for a startup is when you leave university, because you learn to wear different hats and you learn to take risks—something that you’re protected from when you work for a big business.

### A complex future

For him, the future of real estate is difficult to predict, with many of the changes coming as a response to what’s going on in the world and the needs that appear around that. Sustainability will undoubtedly play a big role, with the push towards carbon zero. The potential of AI and robotics, too, will change the way we work, with huge potential to improve efficiency.

Inevitably, markets respond to changing demands and regulations. But the tech that comes from this evolution doesn’t work on its own; a large proportion is dealing with change management. What’s key, Andre concluded, is how we humans adapt and change our ways of working towards these new demands.