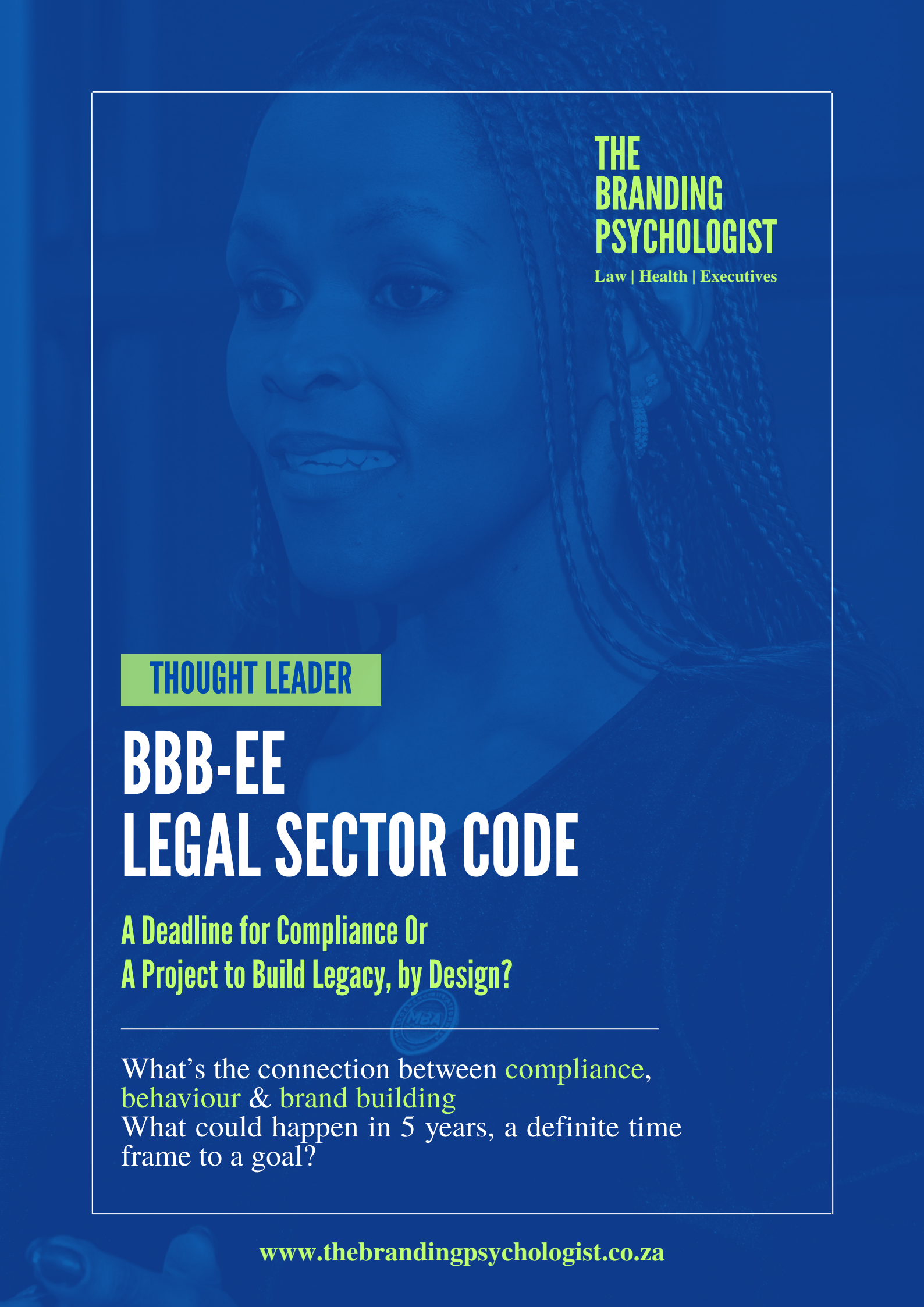




THE BRANDING PSYCHOLOGIST

Law | Health | Executives

THOUGHT LEADER

BBB-EE LEGAL SECTOR CODE

A Deadline for Compliance Or
A Project to Build Legacy, by Design?

What's the connection between compliance,
behaviour & brand building
What could happen in 5 years, a definite time
frame to a goal?

www.thebrandingpsychologist.co.za

The Legal Sector Code (LSC) has raised the bar on how we think about the relationship between compliance and legacy. It introduces something transformation has [maybe] unintentionally minimised: *Time*.

For years, Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) has encouraged transformation through continuous annual proof of effort & compliance. The Legal Sector Code goes a step further by introducing defined targets, more detailed criteria and, most emphasised, cascading timeframes. Lawyers understand deadlines. Businesses understand targets. Psychology understands what those two things do to human behaviour.

It has been just over two months since the opposition to the Legal Sector Code was heard before the courts, brought by leading law firms who, no doubt, have established good, compliant practices that enable them to continue participating in government procurement. The legal arguments around the Code are important, what interests me more is what it reveals about how people and institutions change, and the conditions around that, not so much about whether one is for or against it.

Transformation is deliberate, calculated and often uncomfortable. In psychology, we know that behavioural change opens the door for workable belief systems. Sometimes people must practise a new behaviour long enough for the mindset to follow (once the benefits are experienced) also known as "fake it till you make it". We don't always act because our hearts are convinced; often, we act because structure requires it, and over time the behaviour becomes habit, then culture. That is psychology well applied to organisational change.

The primary criticism of the Legal Sector Code has been that its implementation timelines are unrealistic and therefore unworkable. Others argue that the Code undermines the progress already achieved through the B-BBEE Act of 2003 by imposing accelerated expectations on an already evolving system - fair points. Yet psychology teaches us something interesting: A goal without a timeline is just hope, "Hope is not a strategy!" And it's true - It's a positive disposition at most.

Consider something as relatable as weight loss (something I know far too well and will weave into almost everything I teach). If I wanted to lose seven kilograms in two months, having never managed to lose that amount in six months, the goal would seem unrealistic. But if my life depended on it, my behaviour would immediately change. I would seek out specialists, employ resources I had never considered before, follow stricter routines and become far more intentional about every decision I made.

Urgency changes behaviour. It changes what people believe is possible. That is why I believe the conversation around the Legal Sector Code gives insight into the level of willingness to innovate, collaborate and rethink systems that have remained largely unchanged. (Right now I am feeling advised by my own advice!)

During the 2025/26 financial year, while working on an enterprise development initiative at an award-winning medium-sized law firm, we opened applications to firms between zero and three years old with an annual turnover of less than R5 million. Without paid advertising, and relying solely on our 3 social media platforms, we received more than sixty applications within one day, 12 hours before applications closed, just minutes after the final advert launched into social media. That is proof.

As I reviewed every application I was reading ambition, capability and potential. Many of these firms had already met the minimum qualifying requirements. What they needed was access: funding, mentorship, training, development and opportunities. Can we create an ecosystem that invests with urgency?

Legalcy is currently doing that.

According to the Statistics South Africa, Black Africans make up approximately 81% of South Africa's population, while women account for approximately 51%. At the same time, youth unemployment remains above 40% on the expanded definition. These figures describe the future, whether we train or not. (Read that again).

I don't think the Legal Sector Code is asking firms to abandon quality or promote prematurely. Maybe it's asking whether the systems that produce excellence can themselves be transformed. With intentional investment, quality and quantity can coexist. In Psychology when someone needs to change their life, we call this "accepting the need to change". This is likely part of the battle.

I have also sat around dinner tables where lawyers of different races and genders openly shared their reservations about briefing Black women advocates. Those reservations are fair. We won't pretend that they don't exist. Branding psychology begins by observing reality before attempting to change it. Lack of confidence, why so? Where there are barriers, let's interrogate them. Where there are biases, conscious or unconscious, let's raise them with dignity.

Law | Health | Executives

That is how ecosystems evolve. The Legal Sector Code also compels us to reconsider how long it takes for lawyers to reach partnership or ownership. In many firms, this journey can take decades. Maybe that deserves reflection. Who started this? And why? I admit my own bias from time-to-time. I have often felt safer placing my trust in lawyers with more years of experience. I kind of wanna see they grey hair. But South Africa's demographic can rarely rely on template like approaches. We live in a unique country and **Legalcy** recognises this.

Women and young professionals represent the future leadership of this country, what happens if we delay investing in them today? If it doesn't begin now, then ten years from now we cannot reasonably expect progress.

As The Branding Psychologist, I often say that legacy is branding stretched across time. Every hiring decision communicates what a firm believes. Every briefing decision communicates who is trusted. Every mentorship programme communicates whose future matters. Every partnership decision communicates what leadership is, not what it wishes. These operational decisions are atomic habits because brands are built through repeated behaviour, and behaviour, repeated consistently over time, becomes culture. Culture becomes reputation. Reputation becomes legacy.

Whether the courts uphold every aspect of the Legal Sector Code or adjustments are ultimately made to its timelines, one thing is : The legal profession is building its legacy right now, and that of the country.

Legacy is by design. For law firms, the Legal Sector Code presents an opportunity that extends beyond compliance. It is an invitation to ask a more meaningful question: What kind of legal profession do we want to grow & leave behind?

The firms that will be remembered five, ten and twenty years from now are those whose brands became synonymous with developing people, expanding opportunity and strengthening the legal profession for generations to come. **Legalcy** cultivates this idea.

What could your firm accomplish in the next five years if compliance became culture, and culture became your greatest competitive advantage?

Join the Legal Sector Code Network - Legalcy today, a network of law-firms, legal practitioners and entities that are advancing the ecosystem that is promoted by the Legal Sector Code. Whether you are for it, against it, or looking for ways to work with it but don't know how, join the network & we will take it from there.

Written by - The Brand Psychologist | Legacy By Design.

Written for **Legalcy - Legal Sector Code Network**

Join our **WhatsApp Group**

Apply **Here** - No fees required.

Follow @lthelegalsectorcodenetwork on IG



LEGALCY

THE LEGAL SECTOR CODE NETWORK

**DO YOU WANT FUNDING, MENTORSHIP, DEVELOPMENT AND
ACCESS TO WORK IN THE LEGAL FIELD?
JOIN A NETWORK OF LAW FIRMS, ADVOCATES AND
LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ALIKE & START THE PROCESS.**

JOIN THE NETWORK IF

You are registered with LPC.
You have 51% Black Female Ownership & Leadership Status.
Your Annual Turnover is less than R5 000 000.
You are upto 3 years in Operation.
Nation Wide Applications welcome.

Follow us
[@thelegalsectorcodenetwork](#)
[WhatsApp Group](#)
[Application Link](#)



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION IS LEGACY

www.thebrandingpsychologist.co.za

THE BRANDING PSYCHOLOGIST | LEGACY BY DESIGN

Law | Health | Executives

thato@thebrandingpsychologist.co.za

WhatsApp Me +27 73 530 9454

