

Partnerships are key to surviving the pandemic

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2020 was a year like no other in our lifetime, with the Covid-19 pandemic ravaging the global economy. Despite the many challenges, women around the globe continued to show up, step up, and lead.



It's these types of women that global company Practice Ignition named in its Top 50 #WomeninAccounting for 2020 – a list that celebrates the amazing women who are driving advocacy, change, and creating opportunities in the accounting and bookkeeping industry.

Whether they do so through education programmes, providing free resources to support small businesses, or creating community-led initiatives and seeking to raise up the next generation of leaders, these women are actively and passionately driving the accounting industry forward.

When Nestene Botha CA(SA) looked for a partner to whom she could outsource the accounting needs of her clients so that she could focus on helping entrepreneurs to survive the pandemic, she turned to Howard Joel and Company. She quickly developed a valuable partnership with the firm, as they work together to

build something that will benefit both women and their businesses for years to come.

Botha completed her BCom (Hons) at North-West University in 2012, and in 2014 she completed her training contract and became a qualified CA(SA). She spent the first three years after qualifying as a lecturer on the audit programme at the University of Cape Town. Upon leaving her full-time lecturing career behind, Botha started her own audit, tax and accounting practice, the first virtual audit firm in South Africa. Within three months she grew this venture into a reputable online firm with more than 60 clients and two staff members.

When Covid-19 hit South Africa, she and her partner Peter Hingston launched Explore ProTech Entrepreneurial Haven to help entrepreneurs across the globe find the support, promotion and referral business they need to survive in a post-Covid economy. She still lectures on an adhoc basis at various institutions, including the South African Accounting Academy, and enjoys speaking at conferences, but spends most of her time making sure that entrepreneurs from across the globe have an online space to call home, and where they can get all the help they need to be successful in a post-Covid economy.

"I'm on a mission to save the global economy, one small business at a time, and I'm a proud member of the accounting profession," says Botha. "Our entrepreneurial haven is a business family of entrepreneurs who choose to work together, grow together and become successful together."

Botha is not your average accountant, and people find it hard to believe that this is her chosen profession. She says, however, that her knowledge of finance is what has enabled her to help entrepreneurs through several different channels. A prolific author, YouTuber and blogger, her latest book, *Small business big dreams: how we survived Covid-19*, acknowledges that the post-Covid economy is a scary place to operate in for most small business owners. In the book, Botha looks at what small business owners are doing to ensure the survival and sustainability of their business ventures, and what is working and what is not. She spoke to 150 small business owners and shares her findings.

"My aim is to give readers a clearer idea of what to do and what not to do to ensure their small businesses survive in the post-Covid economy," she says.

She is also an expert networker and it's this skill that she has put to work to help small businesses. She says tapping into new skills and new markets is essential to survival in a post-pandemic world. One amazing success story is that of Sommerville Lombard, founder of the Sommerville Agency, a provider of professional virtual assistant services based in Bela-Bela. Before meeting Botha and learning how to network, she had one client. After taking her advice and following her networking formula, she gained 12 clients within three months, from across the globe.

Botha is a prime example of how a chartered accountant can make a difference in the lives of others.

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