

5 businesswomen share the secrets to their success

By [Morné Stoltz](#)

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There has never been a better time to be a woman in business. Not only are role models aplenty, but there is also ample support available today to give entrepreneurial women the boost needed to get out there, get started and make the amazing happen.



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We have outlined how women who have taken their own personal paths to establishing their own businesses, achieve optimal life and work balance and take charge of their own destinies. From ‘intrapreneurs’, to those who have engineered a complete change of career, and those who have repackaged existing skills in new ways, South African women are showing that success is a choice. You too, can make the move.

What motivates you?

Bridget Theron, business development executive at LRMG, left a stable job in corporate HR, opting to turn her experiences in managing people to help create growth opportunities within established organisations. She is an intrapreneur: someone who has adopted a business development role within a company, focused on improving people and organisational performance.

“The role gives me the opportunity to drive change across society, business and people,” said Theron. “Once I realised that was really why I get up in the morning, it made sense to move into a role that allowed me to learn and influence many people across multiple organisations, not just one.”

Knowing what it is that motivates you (and what you find rewarding) is perhaps one of the best catalysts to guide your next move.

Find your happy place

It is a spark which can take you in unexpected new directions; that is what happened for Monica Haralambous; she had always worked in corporate finance, but it was the people aspect which she really enjoyed. Retrenchment provided the opportunity for introspection and a new lease on her working life: “I was plodding along in a corporate environment, which was dull and didn’t provide the fulfilment I was looking for,” Haralambous recalled – something many women can probably

identify with.

“Being retrenched was the perfect opportunity to take a leap and fulfill my dream.”

That dream is Sorbet Lonehill, a beauty salon which today employs 26 women and looks after hundreds of customers in the northern Johannesburg suburbs. Today, work for Haralambous is truly satisfying. As someone who had always had a passion for beauty and making others feel good above all, today she says it is about “Surrounding yourself with people who share your vision and are willing to work together to help everyone achieve and have fun!”

Use what you have

Of course, some women are born entrepreneurs, like Ingrid Moruane. “Since high school, I’ve always seen myself as the boss,” she says. She went out on her own in 2015 – and she is just 24 now and moving into her own offices in Joburg’s trendy Melrose Arch. Her business, Ing Management, provides non-core services to government entities and corporates – event management, team-building events, catering, stationery and even office furniture.

Moruane’s initiative comes down to something entrepreneurs tend to have in common; Cresi Heslop, founder of Wonder Towel, puts her thumb on it. “It’s all about using what you have and thinking a bit laterally,” she says. From spending much time among athletes came the idea of a microfibre towel designed with sports in mind and that South African athletes can use with pride. Wonder Towel looks like the South African flag, and the company’s flagship is supplemented with a range of other microfibre products.

Love what you do

Something else entrepreneurs have in common is passion and Marine Louw, founder of boutique fashion importer Bonufusion, explains how it works for those who tap into their initiative – and why it is important: “It’s up to you to be so passionate about your dream that you will inspire the investor to invest not just in the business opportunity, but in you as a person.”

Louw referenced something almost every startup must wrestle with. Securing finance. Passion plays a major role in winning investors over, but passion has to be backed by a solid idea and a watertight business plan.

Finally, it is often said that the path of the entrepreneur is a lonely and difficult one. Theron summed it up: “When the going gets tough – and it always does – you have to go back to what your fundamental intent and purpose is. This is what will give you the motivation to reflect, ask yourself difficult questions, put your head down and persevere.”

These successful women have shown it can be done – and the prize is a fulfilling life in every sense.

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