

Lara Rosmarin aims to change the playing field for businesswomen



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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The digital economy has forever changed the way the world does business, but those who do not adapt will be left behind. Unfortunately, women globally lack access to both technologies and digital skills that could enable them to seize the opportunities of the digital economy.



Lara Rosmarin, Head of Entrepreneurial and Enterprise Development at QTi

With the theme of this year's International Women's Day (8 March) being 'I am Generation Equality', Lara Rosmarin, Head of Incubation and Entrepreneurial Development at the Cape Innovation & Technology Initiative (CiTi) is helping to level the playing field for South African businesswomen through CiTi's Women in Business Programme. The fully-funded programme equips female entrepreneurs with the tech tools and skills they need to participate in the digital economy.

Could you describe a typical day in your job?

My day starts at around 05h30 with an exercise session of either pilates or cardio. I am usually in the office by 8am. My days consist of meetings, planning sessions, presentations, strategic think tanks, checking in with my team, checking in with clients and working on projects that are currently in our ambit.

■ ***You have a wealth of corporate experience. Can you tell us briefly how you got into the innovative tech space?***

I was given a fantastic opportunity many years ago to join an innovative team of strategic thinkers who created one of South Africa's first tech-based business accelerators. It was the start of an exciting journey.

■ ***You're very passionate about the role of innovation in solving challenges. What are some of the trends you see happening?***

There is a massive focus on supporting female entrepreneurs and those in the youth categories. There is a shift towards specialised high impact incubation programmes.

■ ***As Head of Entrepreneurial and Enterprise Development at CiTi, what are some of the obstacles you've faced and how did you overcome them?***

As a team, we work really hard to ensure that we are creating meaningful and impactful interventions across all our verticals. To remain relevant, we need to ensure that we are creating offerings that support market demand in a high impact meaningful way.



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■ ***What was the best advice anyone ever gave you?***

In business, remain strong principle while exercising compassion for people. Forget perfection. Giving back is essential.

■ ***What does the future of entrepreneurship look like to you?***

For me, it looks incredibly positive. Opportunities for entrepreneurs are exponential!

■ ***Could you list a few, if any, specific challenges entrepreneurs face in this country?***

Limited seed funding and limited access to business networks often pose as a stumbling block

■ ***What would you like to see changed in the South African startup landscape?***

We need to be continually creating environments in which entrepreneurs can flourish.

■ ***Would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?***

For sure. Not everybody's thinking fits a conventional corporate environment. Entrepreneurs want to shift things, build things, change things, solve things. Entrepreneurs are out-the-box-thinkers in a landscape where that quality is celebrated.

■ ***What advice would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs?***

Ensure you surround yourself with the right people. Select a qualified mentor with lots of experience and a track record of success. Keep moving forward. Be accountable. The results of your efforts are not all in yet.

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