



# EMPOWERING WOMEN

## IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE

Women hold some of the toughest jobs worldwide. In 2009, 12 Fortune 500 companies were run by women and 25 Fortune 1000 companies boasted female CEOs.

While not all women necessarily hold senior positions and positions of leadership, women are a force to be reckoned with in workplaces worldwide. In South Africa, women constitute almost 41% of the work force.

BY: VICKI MARAIS-SWANPEOEL

Their ability to demonstrate empathy, while at the same time driving delivery and results, coupled with an extraordinary work ethic, is key to business success. It is not surprising therefore that there is a very compelling business case to empower women within the workplace.

As the youngest Managing Director of PAG, and a female to boot, I am firmly committed to empowering women, simply because this makes good business sense. In fact, at PAG women hold 87% of the staff positions, and our entire senior management team are women.

'The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity' carried out a study, confirmed that in terms of financial performance, companies with larger representation of women in senior positions outperformed companies with few women in senior management positions.

There are a number of reasons why women excel in the workplace. Most importantly, primarily because of their family responsibilities, women are able to achieve a good work-life balance. They also generally ensure that employees who report to them do the same. There is no escaping the fact that an estimated 30%-40% of South Africans experience high levels of stress. This often translates into divorce or burnout. Either exigency is likely to impact negatively on productivity, and the bottom line. A good work-life balance clearly makes business sense.

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Women are also able to bring a great deal of emotional intelligence (EQ) to the workplace. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills often help to unlock the potential in others. Being a good listener, is often far more effective than wielding a big stick. This is particularly important given the proliferation of baby boomers, generation y and generation x in the workplace, with each preferring a specific management style.

Talent is a scarce commodity in the world of work. The glass ceiling, while still prevalent in some work places today is an anachronism, an organisational dinosaur. Prudent employees recognise that their employees are their greatest asset. Empowering every employer and enabling every employee to succeed makes good business sense.

My 'World on Work' blog has just been launched and this exciting development provides my thoughts and insights into the workplace and staffing matters. Should you wish to follow this blog and receive regular updates, please visit [www.pag.co.za](http://www.pag.co.za) and subscribe to the RSS feed on the blog page. ■



### BONNIE CURRIN

GENERAL MANAGER:  
MARKETING AND OPERATIONS

*A company's branded culture should be as well known as the services the company offers.*

#### BRANDED CORPORATE CULTURE

It is critical for a company to create a working, living brand that is driven by an effective internal communications strategy. What better way to re-activate this culture in the minds and behaviour of its people than to continuously remind them what the company vision is and the values the company aligns itself with. It is also important to position your company in such a way that it will differentiate your brand and ensure your company speaks in a unified voice to the public. Your employees have to live the company's values and ethos which is the foundation of an organisation's core DNA. Your branded culture should link to your products and services. One of PAG's key focuses is people and their career and staffing needs. We ensure exceptional service by employing staff who are aligned with our branded culture and value systems. Our culture is further embedded through a Brand Champion programme which is an active communication programme focussing on the development of EQ and soft skills. The effectiveness of our branded culture is measured through an independent customer satisfaction index survey. This feedback mechanism encourages people to protect,

support and promote the brand while living the values that drive the culture. It is also important to outline the company's high-level strategy in a simple Leadership Blueprint that will allow your leadership team to drive the culture, define the service offering, highlight the key performance indicators and strategic imperatives and define its stakeholders' needs.

*This Blue print formula requires the passion and skills of its people to ensure success.*

Your branded culture should be an intentional strategy as it infuses everything, including appealing to your target market and attracting and retaining world class talent who identify with it. Organisations need to realise that their logo alone does not merely represent your brand; your brand is the commitment you make to your stakeholders about the experience they can anticipate from your brand.

Innovative leaders who believe in a branded culture, enriched with diversity and equal opportunity, thought leadership and excellence, will find that these elements bode well in a results driven organisation. PAG embraces its culture to create a successful and sustainable brand in the market.

*Leadership – developing our people, maximising their strengths*

#### UNLEASH THE POTENTIAL

Successful organisations are surrounded by the right people who maximise on team strengths. In an effort to develop current leadership and potential leaders in a company, PAG has introduced Living Leadership which centres on experiential learning through measured simulated experiences that provide a quantifiable return on investment through the implementation of a developmental plan which incorporates business coaching. "The programme has a direct impact on management and potential leaders and the participants are led and challenged by experienced and qualified facilitators and coaches" says Bonnie Currin.

Living Leadership provides the individual with a holistic approach to learning and development. This means that participants will be examined from all angles including their behaviour, intra-physic make-up, employee perception and their physical health.

Living Leadership simulates a typical

working environment in which people deal with the type of scenarios that they encounter regularly in the workplace. The benefits of participating in such a programme are that participants are encouraged to step out of their comfort zones and test new ways of doing things in a safe and confidential environment alongside experienced facilitators who are proficient at observing participant's behaviour, reinforcing positives and giving constructive guidance for improvement and areas of development. The purpose of these interventions is to create a forum to give the leaders of tomorrow a platform to gain further insight into themselves, their strengths, skills and development areas. Through Living Leadership participants formulate a personalised development plan which is supported by internal and external coaches and mentors of the company to assist with the individual's developmental journey.

The Living Leadership programme is a novel and unique approach in the unleashing and mobilisation of leaders to achieve optimal performance across human, organisational and relational capital to deliver great value. The Living Leadership outcomes are measurable and provide a quantifiable return on investment.

#### 3 P'S: PEOPLE, PASSION EQUALS PROFITS.

*People + Passion = Success*  
**"People drive profits and stakeholder loyalty."**

Leaders create the positive business environment which drives behaviours, values and culture, enables productivity all of which promotes morale and ensures sound service ethic." PAG's empirical belief is that "Our people are our business. We are a service company; without our people we don't have a business" states Margie Phiri. PAG was voted Best Company to Work For in the Business and Professional Services Category of the 2009 Deloitte Survey, and is a preferred supplier to most leading South African companies. This recognition is vital to us to attract the correct people who have the passion we require to deliver on our promises.

How does an employer become an employer of choice? Inspiration is key and it should start from the top. Managers need to be inspired and then inspire the talent working within the organisation. Once this talent is unleashed, it is important to retain it and develop this talent into the future leadership while constantly building up a talent pipeline. You may be wondering why becoming an



### MARGIE PHIRI

GENERAL MANAGER:  
SALES AND SOLUTIONS

employer of choice should be a key strategic imperative for your organisation. More than 2,210,000,000 results appear when this catchphrase is Googled highlighting the importance of this status.

*People who choose to work for an employer of choice will dedicate themselves to their own as well as their company's success.*

So why do it? Why become an employer of choice? Because people are the very heart of every business, every process, every functional area, and every customer interface.

If people are not satisfied, they become less motivated, and this will impact heavily on the productivity of these employees, and eventually this leads to a negative impact on the profitability of the company.

This means that if you want to ensure a successful bottom line, employers need to partner with employees. Leadership needs to drive their people's passion through sharing the right information at the right time in the right format, across each level of staff in strategic, tactical and operational elements of the business.

Where do you start? Find the key holders who will unlock information to empower your people. Most would say the key holders are found in the marketing department,

the public relations or corporate affairs departments. After all, one would expect these are the departments who are empowered to communicate all sorts of information across a company. Or perhaps it is the revered executive management or the Chief Executive Officer. In part that would be correct, but why not try the "C2C" – "Cleaner to the Chief Executive Officer" approach, as each and every level, every person, in the organisation needs to unlock the power of his and herself, and enable fellow colleagues to do the same. Every level in the company is important and adds to the bottom line, so none should be discounted. The balancing of people and profits starts with the perceptions, passions and productivity of the people. It is imperative to develop the passion in an organisation in order to drive the profits and this means that employees need guidance and a platform on which they can unleash their potential and grow successfully.

*Take a moment - do you see and hear your people? Can you unlock the power of your people, and ignite their passion? If you can, you will enjoy the profit.*



### SAMANTHA KONKOL

GENERAL MANAGER:  
FREIGHT SPECIALISATION

#### TALENT PIPELINE

*Are organisations doing enough to attract, develop and retain talent?*

The Polish air force Tu-154 air crash earlier this year, which killed the Polish President, Lech Kaczynski, the first lady, central bank governor, senior commanders of Poland's ground, air, naval and special forces, bishops and dignitaries, got Samantha Konkol thinking about the importance of talent management within organisations. While the likelihood of organisations losing talent on this scale and under such tragic circumstances is remote, it begs the question: "Are organisations doing enough to attract, retain and develop talent, and what is the best way to do this?"

Samantha tackles this issue and provides some useful tips:

Even though it is essential that your company shows empathy for its employees, ensures fairness in the workplace and communicates effectively, more is required to retain top talent. Proper career planning and pathing is undoubtedly the best weapon in any manager's arsenal. If executed properly, both the employee's personal goals and the organisation's business goals can be achieved. This is particularly important in the case of high performers because if they are sufficiently challenged and their career goals are met they will be less likely to look for opportunities elsewhere.

At the heart of career planning should be a Personal Development Plan for every employee. Essentially, employers should ensure that necessary coaching, support, training and development are in place. Because organisations tend to employ a combination of baby boomers (aged 45-60), generation x (aged 30-44) and millennials (early 20's) it is important to realise that personal development plans for each generation will differ and be unique. A company staffing strategy should include an incubator of potential skill and a leadership bench of identified skill which both require developmental programmes to ensure access to a talent pipeline as and when required.

Despite recent global business challenges and taking into consideration the shortages of critical skills in South Africa, the observation by the Global Talent Index of "Talent is the new oil and just like oil, demand far outstrips supply", holds true. It is therefore critical to realise that even during challenging business periods, organisations must continue to attract, retain and develop talent to ensure growth and success. ■

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\*Awarded first place in the Deloitte Best Company To Work For Survey, in the Business and Professional Services Category



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