

Lee-Ann Morgan embraces her deep love for all things travel

 By [Robin Fredericks](#)

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In celebration of #WomensMonth, we chat to Lee-Ann Morgan, customer growth marketing manager at Club Med Southern Africa about what it means to be a woman in the tourism industry, the challenges she's faced and how important it is to own who you are.



With a background in tourism development, Morgan has always had a deep passion for the Africa continent, from travelling to gaining business experience – to effect positive change in the industry where needed and to advance Africa's development.

What made you choose a career in tourism?

As cliché as it sounds, tourism chose me.

I always had an urge to travel and explore Africa, and while I wanted to be a doctor (Doctors Without Borders), life had a different plan for me.

With tourism being a key economic driver in many countries around the world, if I am able to do my job well and contribute positively to the industry, it could help create jobs and provide opportunities for people to be educated and gain skills in the field of marketing and tourism. My life's dream is to add value to the lives of the people around me. My goal is to, in some way large or small, directly or indirectly (through my work within the tourism industry or beyond), help provide food and education where it is needed in the hope that it will make the world a better and happier place for those in need of it.

I also have a deep love for travel. One learns so much by having an open mind and taking in new experiences. I am lucky to be able to do this through my job and in turn use those experiences to do things differently at work and in my personal life.

▀ *What does a day in your life look like?*

Organised chaos!

Mornings are the most important time of day for me. It's when I have my best ideas.

I am an early riser and plan my day in the silence of the morning. When I get into the office, I hit the ground running and pretty much keep it that way throughout the day. I love the rush of the workday – meetings, deadlines, mapping out strategies and plans, meeting people, and most importantly, being able to add value to the business and the people around me.

The team and office spirit within Club Med are amazing; unlike anything, I have ever experienced and we ensure that we take time in the day to show how much we appreciate each other and have a laugh. It's good for the soul. We believe that "great things in Club Med are never done by one person, they are done by a team of people."

I pride myself on learning something new each day – my day is not complete until this happens.

▀ *Do you think it's important to have a month dedicated to women?*

I do. We as women play an important role in society in many ways, in different spheres. For me, Women's Month is a reminder that I have a uniqueness of being a female; that I should embrace it, and show appreciation for the generations before me, and the evolution they have gone through so that I can be where I am at this moment in time, and to remember for myself that the evolution needs to continue for future generations.

That said, I do also think it is important to have a month to celebrate human life in general and the positives that come with it - goodness, achievements, happiness and success.

▀ *Are there any barriers that you have faced as a woman - how did you overcome them?*

I have worked for a few international companies, The Rezidor Hotel Group, Sun International and Hilton Worldwide. Most of the positions were regional roles which required me to build and contribute to strategies, and to travel a lot. In some instances, in some of these roles, including now at Club Med, I was (am) the only female manager on the team. I used to feel intimidated; firstly, because I was much younger than most in the team, and secondly, because I had a preconceived notion after reading many articles on gender inequality.

Over time, and through gaining more experience, your confidence grows. As a female, you must be able to hold your own; know your worth and the value that you add to an organisation.

As Sheryl Sandberg says:

“ You have to lean in and know that you belong at the table. ”

I have to be completely honest in saying that in the companies for which I have worked, there has always been a great respect for women and a concerted effort to push gender equality and improve the rights of women in the organisations with strong programmes around Women in Leadership where I participated.

Growing up, my parents taught me never to see gender, race or religion, that we are all equal human beings and I should treat others as I would like to be treated: with dignity and respect. This is what I have come to expect of both my male and female colleagues, and it is this energy I project in the workspace each day.

■ **What advice would you give to women pursuing a career in tourism?**

The opportunities in tourism are growing every day and it is diverse. Find out where you want to be and pursue that. It is important to think logically and always weigh up the pros and cons of every career/job.

Be ambitious, and at the same time have clear, realistic goals and objectives. Tourism is an industry that requires long hours, hard work and some tough sacrifices if you want to be successful. Passion and confidence will be key to your success. I have had the privilege to travel to many countries, nearly 20, in Africa and the rest of the world. The opportunities are endless, you just have to find the right fit for you.

- Surround yourself with good mentors (you can have more than one).
- Never take no for an answer.
- There is always more than one way of doing things.
- Remember, there are no problems, only challenges, because challenges can be overcome. Problems weigh us down.
- Be forward thinking and always live your truth.
- Be respectful of others. Be courteous, be kind, be nice.
- Stay positive. Whatever you do, do it with integrity and give it your all.

■ **Who is your biggest influence or role model**

I have a few, but someone who has for some time and continues to inspire me is Richard Branson. He's a dreamer and a doer – a realist, just like me.

■ **What is your message for Women's Month?**

In anything you do, **BE YOU**. Appreciate and embrace your uniqueness as a woman. If you know better, you must do better. We have a responsibility to make a difference in the lives of everyone around us. Our talents, opportunities and gifts have been given to us with purpose. Don't waste it – share it, and share it well.

■ **Any words of wisdom you would like to share with women in the business of tourism?**

You can do anything you set your mind to. With determination, confidence, passion and the will to succeed, you can. It is not going to be easy, but it will be worth it - oh so worth it. Wake up and go to sleep feeling happy every day. Do what you love, love what you do and it will be possible. On that, I give you my word.

ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

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