

Women boost company IQ

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What makes a management team smarter? Women. That's one of the trends identified by *Top Women*. The *Top Women* publication identifies, researches, profiles and celebrates excellence in gender empowerment, and this year, it puts the spotlight on trends in women in business and government.

The 9th issue of the annual publication was launched at the glittering *Top Women Awards* which took place at Emperors Palace on 8 August.

Publisher Karla Fletcher says research shows that companies who have all-male boards or senior management teams may be limiting their corporate performance. Research from the MIT Sloan School of Management indicates there is little correlation between a group's collective intelligence and the IQ of its members. If a group includes more women, its collective intelligence increases.

"Women are moving onto boards in South Africa and 28 percent of senior management positions are held by women - compared to a global average of 21 percent," says Fletcher.

Some of the other trends identified by the publication include:

Trend: SA's government wears a skirt

South Africa has one of the highest rates of female representation in government in the world. Forty-two Parliamentarians are female. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development has set the goal of ensuring that women hold 50 percent of decision-making posts in government by 2015. The *Top Women Awards* was an evening that showcased some of the top women in government with a list that included Home Affairs Minister and the incoming chairperson of the African Union Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma; The Ministers of DIRCO and Social Development; Deputy Ministers from Energy, Economic Development and Women, Children and People with Disabilities, MECs from various portfolios from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the North West.

Trend: Women have dynamite role models in business

There are young, dynamic, outspoken and successful businesswomen taking centre stage as role models on both a global and local arena. High profile leaders like Shanduka Group CEO Phuti Mahanyele, the DA's Lindiwe Mazibuko and Google's Marissa Mayer are putting a new spin on gender in the workplace and are inspiring a new generation of SA leaders.

More women are building businesses

Another way for women to make it to the boardroom is to build their own businesses. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring rankings put our female entrepreneurs 23rd of 42 countries. The global average for female entrepreneurship is 7.7 percent of the population. South African women are currently at just 4.8 percent, but it is rising. Forty percent of South African adults who invest on the stock exchange are women (up from 33 percent in 2004). There are also several funding programmes targeted at fostering women in business.

Trend: Women are moving into mining

The role of women in the South African mining industry has changed quite significantly in the last 15 years. Today, women not only work in the mines, but they also own mining companies.

Trend: Women are green leaders

In the sustainability sector, women are witnessing rapid advances not found in other fields.

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