

# Herbalife Nutrition's Ilanda Els recognised as HR Rising Star of the Year

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Human resources, or HR, plays a significant role in developing business culture, improving employee engagement and productivity, and ensuring the implementation of labour legislation through the systems and processes of a company. It's, therefore, no wonder that HR is regarded as one of the most influential departments within a business.



*Ilanda Els*

The Future of HR Awards acknowledges the hard work and dedication of HR professionals and recognises their outstanding achievements in people management through an annual Best in Human Resources Management ceremony.

This year, during the virtual awards held on 26 November, Ilanda Els, Herbalife Nutrition SA senior HR manager of Africa, Turkey, and Germany, won the HR Rising Star of the Year (35 years or younger) category for strategies and practices directly impacting business performance and innovation.

"It was a big surprise to be chosen as the winner in this category, but I'm greatly honoured," remarked Els after the announcement was made. "My win confirmed my belief that you can do whatever you believe in, as long as it supports your personal purpose and has a positive impact on those around you."

## **Ilanda Els, an ignited passion for HR**

With more than 11 years of HR experience under her belt, Els has worked in various industries, including manufacturing, automotive and now health and wellness.

Her passion for HR started once she realised that, in order for a company to succeed, it needs to focus on people first. This revelation gave her the purpose she felt she needed to contribute to the field and build long-lasting relationships with many colleagues who continue to stay in touch and reach out whenever they need.

Today, she holds the position as senior HR manager for Herbalife Nutrition, a role that extends her responsibilities beyond Africa to Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Turkey.

“I believe anyone can rise as high as they aim for, as long as they actively take ownership in their development. Be the change and challenge the norm,” explained Els.

It's this mindset that set her on a course to improving Herbalife Nutrition's HR processes. First, she introduced a Career Progression Programme, where she developed a formal process that identifies areas of training and a way to optimally run the end-to-end process, including succession planning for new role possibilities. Her forward thinking in making development a priority saw a 20% increase in internal promotions over the course of three-and-a-half years since joining the company.

Second, she sought to break down the silo mentality that plagues many businesses by promoting key focus areas in the teams: development, recognition, communication, diversity and inclusion, leadership transparency and a fun-spirited environment. This approach was implemented and sustained by an engagement committee which represented each of the departments.

And lastly, she championed localising the Herbalife Nutrition employee handbook and policies and procedures. The handbook now covers all the corporate policies linking to global policies in an easily consumable package that creates transparency in the policies and benefits applicable to South African staff.

“Our HR department is increasingly seen as a business partner that balances the business' strategic needs and employee welfare,” concluded Els. “We have created a new era of HR where employees are comfortable to approach management and provide constructive input to make a difference to our working environment. This is a contributing factor to our improved employee retention. Other European markets have even asked for our input to help them make positive changes within the business units.”

When prompted on her personal career goals, Els expressed her ambition to evolve into an HR director and expand her influence and learnings into other departments to support local HR business partners.

“As a company that cares about our people, we're very excited and proud of Ilanda's achievement,” added Thilo Naidoo, Herbalife Nutrition Southern Africa country director. “Since bringing her onboard, we've seen a great improvement across the board, not only in terms of operations, but also in creating a more engaged culture that speaks to our values of ‘we always do what's right, we work together, and we build it better’. Herbalife Nutrition is honoured to have such a talented woman on our team and can't wait to see how she will continue to set new standards for the industry.”

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