

Gender bias. Challenge or opportunity?

By  Nicci Botha

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Women are naturally subjected to gender bias, whether conscious or unconscious. This is an everyday fight, but you can choose to see this as a threat or an opportunity, says Nompandolo Pearl More, chief financial officer of Pule Incorporated Attorneys. "For me, this has pushed me to always work hard, and let my work speak on my behalf. By the time you physically present yourself, your work would have already created a platform of respect."



Nompandolo Pearl More

She says the biggest challenge is that she's always had to prove her competency to deliver, specifically, when it came to career progress. "I always believed this was the case because of being young and female. I recall when I got my first break, and was appointed into an executive position. I was excited for the opportunity to finally prove myself, only to find out that the appointment was only to fulfill the requirement to have a black female in the role, which is when I decided to leave and start afresh as a junior in a new organisation.

“ From that point, I was even more determined to work harder, pave my way up within the new organisation, but unfortunately, that did not translate to the acceleration I was hoping for. ”

More says that when she got the offer for the CFO position at Pule Incorporated Attorneys, she knew that was the big break she had been working hard for. "It was also good to know that being a female was not the criteria for the appointment, but rather a bonus," More says.

The 30-year-old joined the legal firm in January 2020, where she is in charge of the full finance function for the company. She is also a member of the executive team that is responsible for strategy development and management.

"Even though the organisation is smaller in comparison to the previous companies I worked for, my current role is definitely more significant, considering my portfolio, accountability and responsibility. As this is my first role at a law firm, I was a little nervous at first, because this is a highly regulated industry, and I had a lot of reading and learning to do. What attracted me to this organisation and role, is the culture and environment at the firm. The directors were open to what I had to bring to the table from Day 1, and that was exciting for me because that meant that I had the support to introduce what I have learnt, through experience and academically as a chartered accountant.

"I am falling in love with my role daily, as I am able to measure the successes that my team and I record. I also enjoy the learnings that come with working alongside a director who is a qualified attorney," she says.

In addition to her role at Pule Attorneys, More is a founder and director of More and Associates, a consulting company that aims to assist small businesses with their business development and financial management requirements. "I have recently started working towards developing an NPO, which will aim to equip unemployed graduates with work-readiness skills and basic entrepreneurship skills," she says.

What do you do to relax?

Everyone always speaks about work-life balance. As a professional, a mother and a wife, I strive to ensure that all three very important aspects of my life receive the best attention they require. This is not an easy solve, but if you constantly check-in, you will find that balance.

I love travelling, and ironically, I have never been out of the country. I had an international trip planned for May 2020, but little did I know that the world would be in lockdown due to the current pandemic. I am known as the family trips planner. I also love shopping, whether its for myself or others.," she says.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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