

Finalists in Businesswoman of the Year Awards selected

The Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (Bwasa) has announced the names of the 13 women who have made it through to the final round of the 37th annual Businesswoman of the Year Awards. The theme for this year's event is 'Women with no filter - Celebrating leaders who honour themselves and others'.



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The Corporate, Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship and Education awards recognise South African women who excel in various sectors of the economy and lead with integrity and humility.

Bwasa national president, Farzanah Mall, says the winners will be announced at a gala event at the Sandton Convention Centre on 7 September 2017.

“It is important for us to celebrate leaders, who lead with integrity, truth, excellence and wisdom, and who can acknowledge their successes, as well as their development areas. We chose this theme because in South Africa and globally, we have a geo-political and economic recession, resulting from a shortage of great leaders. We require leaders who do not focus on purely personal wealth creation but rather focus on being the best they can be, utilising their knowledge, capabilities and experience to impact not only their businesses but equally their family, community and country.”

“The calibre of finalists this year is phenomenal. It is exciting to celebrate and acknowledge these leaders, especially given the tough economic climate they are operating in. They represent the qualities we hope to see in current and future leaders in our country.”

Guest speaker Ashenafi Meaza

The guest speaker at this year's event is Ashenafi Meaza, who worked as a judge and later as a researcher for the Ethiopian Constitution Commission, which was responsible for drafting its 1995 Constitution.

“In conjunction with a group of female lawyers, Meaza established the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association and served the Association as its first executive director. Later, she completed an MA in the United States and joined the United Nations. She is also one of the founders of Enat Bank (a women-focused bank) and has served as the founding chair of the bank's board since 2014,” adds Mall.

Sasol is once again the headline sponsor of the Awards. “This year’s theme could not be more relevant than it is today. We are celebrating women who are bold, brave and believe in themselves and in those they lead. Sasol is proud to be associated with the Businesswomen’s Association as a powerful catalyst for women empowerment in South Africa,” said Wrenelle Stander, senior VP, Sasol.

Corporate finalists

- Faith Khanyile, CEO and founding member of WDB Investment Holdings
- Nompumelelo (Mpumi) Madisa, executive director at Bidvest South Africa
- Michelle Williams-Swartz, operations director for Johnson & Johnson
- Taryn Woodbridge, chartered accountant and senior manager of finance and controlling at Mercedes Benz South Africa

Entrepreneurship finalists

- Barbara Farrell, owner and managing director of Udec Group
- Susan Rose Hadcroft, founder and managing director of Cubicle Manufacturing Solutions
- Johanna Mukoki, group CEO of Travel with Flair

Social entrepreneurship finalists

- Alison Smeeton, founder of EmployAbility
- Dr Shaheda Bibi Omar, clinical director of The Teddy Bear Clinic
- Sue Wildish, MD of the LunchBox Fund

Education finalists

- Prof Cheryl de la Rey, vice-chancellor and principal of the University of Pretoria
- Prof Katijah Khoza-Shangase, associate professor and former head of department in Speech Pathology & Audiology at Wits
- Associate Prof Mzikazi Nduna, lecturer and researcher at the University of Witwatersrand