

Rising above challenges as women in hospitality



By Robin Fredericks 20 Aug 2018

In celebration of #WomensMonth, we chat with Anneke Potgieter, director of operations and complex general manager at Silverstar Casino. Potgieter started at Tsogo Sun as an accountant for Champions Casino and has held several positions during her almost 20 years at Tsogo Sun, including a financial manager at Hemingways and Suncoast as well as director of operations and complex GM at Hemingways Casino in East London.

Here, Potgieter shares more on her challenges, career and words of wisdom...



Anneke Potgieter

■ ***What made you choose a career in hospitality management?***

I ended up in the hospitality industry quite by chance; pursuing my career as an accountant two decades ago and never looked back or at pursuing a career in any other industry. It is such an exciting and challenging industry with so many opportunities that it never feels like real work. What inspires me about this industry, is the entrepreneurial spirit of the company and people I work with.

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

My morning usually starts with exercise, then updating myself with the previous day's results before I arrive at the office. The rest of my day is spent focusing on driving the objectives of Silverstar by guiding my team towards a common goal, as well as impromptu meetings with my staff providing mentorship, guidance and support as and when needed.

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

Having a month dedicated to women raises the awareness of the challenges women face in progressing in their careers, which is quite a different and unique journey to the one taken by our male counterparts.

■ ***What are the challenges you've faced as a woman, becoming successful in your field?***

A big challenge for me as a woman in the hospitality industry was not being part of the 'boys club' and staying true to my values as a woman. To overcome this, I had to believe in myself, constantly striving to be the best at what I am doing. I also had to accept that as women, we have our own unique style of achieving results. I absolutely love any challenge and I am ashamed to say this is because of my competitive nature.

▣ ***Based on your experience, what advice would you give to women pursuing a career in the hospitality industry?***

You have to enjoy people and be focused on the guests' experience. Always be pro-active and be a leader, not a follower.

▣ ***Who is your biggest influence?***

I have had the privilege of working with several people who made invaluable contributions in shaping who I am, in one way another.

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

As a woman, it is so important to build credibility and influence, always apply good judgment, common sense and integrity. Remember family comes first, a close second is your health and then the rest.

▣ ***Any words of wisdom you would like to share with women in the business of hospitality – and beyond?***

I find the following words of Peter Drucker very relevant:

"It's not about rank, privilege or title, it's about responsibility."

"The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said."

ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

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