

Lizette Crause urges men to support women



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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As we celebrate [Women's Month](#), we should be aware of the need to continuously invest in women's empowerment on personal and professional levels as there is an incredible amount of evidence to support the positive ramifications.



Lizette Crause, general manager of Customer Quality and Dealer Network Development at Nissan South Africa

Lizette Crause is the general manager of Customer Quality and Dealer Network Development at Nissan South Africa. She is responsible for the dealer network, including ensuring profitability, returns, customer quality and people development at the dealerships.

To ensure that Nissan fulfils its mandate to enhancing their presence in the SSA markets, Crause oversees the partner and network strategy to deliver exciting and diverse customer experience to secure Nissan's sustainable growth in Africa.

Lizette Crause shares with us what it takes to be a woman in the automotive industry.

■ **How is Nissan encouraging diversity in the automotive industry?**

At Nissan, we believe that the participation of women, particularly in management positions, is essential to providing diverse value to customers. One of the company's mottos is to increase female representation in all levels of management by providing training ensuring diversity in the workplace.

■ **Are South African women getting enough of a chance to shine in the automotive industry?**

I believe the reality has changed now in our country compared to what it used to be in the past.

“ We see more and more women shining in the automotive sector. I am myself a living example of that. ”

Nissan South Africa has given me the opportunity to shine in the automotive industry as a woman.

■ **Does Nissan have any women empowerment programmes? If so, what are they?**

Yes we do. We have a global Female Talent Development Programme available in all regions where Nissan operates.

We have developed talent development trainings and networking events targeting women, besides mentoring programs and round table sessions.

In the manufacturing environment, we've put together a very good supervisory program, with learning happening here, locally and in our top plants in the world, where we send our employees for continuous learning. We also run automotive learnership programs, apprenticeship programs working together with the SETAs. Every year we take quite a number of young people into a 12 months to two-year program, ensuring that we have a 50/50 gender intake.

■ **How can women break into the automotive industry?**

I believe passion is the key to success.

“ When combined with hard work, passion can help one overcome adversity and rise to the top. To achieve this, we need our male counterparts to walk the journey with us, to make sure we have more women coming into the automotive industry. ”

This collaboration is important, we can't do it alone.

■ **Who or what is your biggest motivation?**

It's about self-motivation.

“ To motivate yourself, you need to know yourself as an individual, you need to know what drives you, and you need to focus on that ”

. So that's very, very important.

■ **Could you list a few, if any, specific challenges females face in this industry? How do women overcome these challenges?**

To name a few... the stigma that women can't do jobs predominantly done by men still exists in the industry.

You sometimes find men who still believe that the automotive sector should be restricted to them. Working with such male counterparts could be one of the biggest challenges, especially at apprenticeship level. To overcome these challenges, I believe that employers as well society in general, have to educate the masses and push for more diversity in the workplace.

■ **What advice do you have for the future generation of women wanting to get into the automotive space?**

Don't restrict yourself in terms of what you can or can't do. More importantly is, once you are inside, don't make yourself any more different than your male colleagues.

“ At the end of the day it's about the competence that you have, the capability that you have, the skills that you have, and you should not restrict yourself and think that, I'm a woman and I need to have some special treatment of some sort. ”

I think if you create that mind-set, you will find you will be successful in any environment, at the end of the day. All women need to succeed is within us, and the environment is increasingly open to us, so let's claim it and enjoy it.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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