

# 3 SA businesswomen who are making their mark in SA today

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Women make great entrepreneurs for a number of reasons. Industries like insurance view women as having relatively lower risk exposures than their male counterparts - a factor that allows them to generally make more calculated and informed decisions. A study found that women entrepreneurs are incredibly resourceful when it comes to starting their own businesses, despite the adversity they often face.

Furthermore, because of their role as primary caregivers, women are also known to have a longer-term view on life, making them more prone to sustainable business growth and less prone to making impulsive business decisions. Arguably, one of the greatest advantages that women bring to the entrepreneurial circle is their ability to be empathetic leaders.

Fortunately, although gender discrimination has mired the historical progress of women in the world of business, there is evidence that the tide is turning. The most recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report found that women entrepreneurs were close to parity with men in three of the countries making up the Middle East and Africa region: Egypt, Oman and South Africa.

At 45%, the percentage of women entrepreneurs in South Africa, who have demonstrated high levels of innovation, is currently above the global average. The report also found that women in the Middle East and Africa are more active than men across several important sectors, namely government, health, education and social services as well as manufacturing.

As one of the most promising markets on the continent, South Africa continues to lead the way in terms of women representation in the entrepreneurship sector. In celebration of the phenomenal work of these courageous businesswomen and the important strides they are making towards building a more equitable society, I'd like to put the spotlight on three exceptional local entrepreneurs:

## **Sarah Collins**

The Wonderbag was developed in 2008 as a solution to the South African energy crisis, allowing families to cook meals without the use of power. Essentially, the Wonderbag is a non-electric slow cooker that uses heat-retention technology to continue cooking food once the pan or pot has been removed from the stove, fire or gas source. It is an old, underutilised community invention that dates back many years. *Time Magazine* voted Wonderbag as one of the world's Top 50 Genius Companies – a testament to Sarah's achievements in making an impact on millions of households in our country.

## **Ntsiki Biyela**

As the country's first black, women winemaker, Ntsiki Biyela has succeeded in adding her craft to the mix of thriving brands that have put South Africa on the world stage, as a leading wine-making destination. Biyela grew up in a rural village in KwaZulu-Natal and spent a year working as a domestic worker before being awarded a scholarship to study winemaking at Stellenbosch University.

Today she is the director of Aslina Wines, a pioneering business that produces premium wines which are distributed



worldwide. She has won several acclaimed industry awards, including the Michelangelo Wine and Spirits award, Sakura Awards (Japan), and the 2021 Wine Harvest Commemorative Event Diversity and Transformation award.

## **Palesa Mokubung**

Breaking into the fashion industry is no small feat, but entrepreneur Palesa Mokubung was up to the task. She is the founder of Mantsho, a local fashion design label that has become synonymous with bold, striking colour and flamboyant silhouettes. Mokubung was the first designer on the continent to collaborate with major brand, H&M.

She was also the winner of the 2019 Best Dressed award, presented by GQ magazine, as well as the 2019 Haig Club Clubman Disruptor award. Mokubung is highly regarded within the industry as a trend setter and a leader in the design and production of local fashion. To date, her designs have been worn by prominent public figures such as Lira, Simphiwe Dana and Thandiswa Mazwai.

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