

# Women: harness your strengths in the workplace

Women have the edge in the field of communications because they have empathy, something every piece of communication - regardless of the format - requires.



Eloise Boezak and Eloise Biggs

This is the word from two professionals from African Bank, Eloise Boezak and Eloise Biggs. Boezak is the head of customer experience and Biggs the head of communication for the financial institution.

Boezak went into communications because she has always loved the art and science of building connections between organisations and their people, internally and externally. She studied communication and spent many years working in agencies and companies to develop the techniques that encourage connection and affinity.



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"A courageous decision to step off the beaten track to see what was possible," landed Biggs where she is today. She enjoys the fact that the communication industry is female dominated.

“Communication work requires deep empathy to get the right message across and garner the right response, and women have this in abundance. I’m not saying men do not, but it comes naturally to women. Women have the ability to walk in another’s shoes and it’s an innate trait that men cannot compete with in the workplace,” said Biggs.

Customer experience excites Boezak because it has become the hub of opportunity and differentiation for any business today. “It allows us to really understand the people who keep us profitable and to develop products and services that can help them live better lives.”

Biggs loves the fact that her role gives her the ability to engage with and empower people in a creative and meaningful way. “Our objective with every piece of information shared is to leave at least one person better off – more positive, more confident, more empowered. Our team’s mantra is ‘create, grow bloom’, which I love, because it describes our vision so well.”

## There is still work to do

Both love their work, but admit self-doubt has crept in at times - and they have experienced a fair share of sexism.

“I have often needed to repeat my perspective in numerous ways in order to be heard in a room full of men. Imposter Syndrome has been real for me too – not just because of my gender but also my race. In a country where you have been marginalised your entire life for two things you cannot control, this has been my most challenging obstacle,” said Boezak.

These experiences have taught her that developing self-worth is the best gift you can give yourself. “Be worthy, to the point that you do not need the approval of anyone else to feel valued and appreciated.”



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Biggs is grateful she has had supportive male leaders in her career who believed in her. “Still, building relationships with men is definitely tougher than with women,” she adds. “Men often don’t put as much energy into building relationships as women do. If these efforts were more balanced, results could be deeply felt, with greater impact to our customers.”

The way Biggs overcomes challenges is to never give up. “I will only give way if my efforts are fruitless, which leads to an intentional decision to utilise my energy elsewhere.”

Both women say they have had to be brave and resilient in their careers but have enjoyed the journey to where they are now really impacting the industry.

“Women must know their strengths and keep building on them. You can change the world with these strengths, so harness what makes you different and unique,” Biggs says. “Know your craft. Love what you do and set out to make a difference, not just a living.”

## Tips to be successful according to Biggs and Boezak

- Continuous learning, not just education, is vital. This field is evolving rapidly so you have to keep up with the latest trends and research.
- Have an innovative approach to your work. Customer experience requires a great deal of creativity in solving problems for customers.
- Have fun! This is a tough industry that is still growing and evolving so you need to really enjoy it to be successful in it.
- Have a passion for people.

- Have a passion for learning.
- Have a passion for embracing change.
- Of their aspirations for the future, both women agree it is to look back and know you have made a difference.

“I want to focus on building a legacy for my daughters and women who will follow me in business,” Boezak said. “I also want to learn to embrace balance as an achievement and not go back to a world where exhaustion is a symbol of progress and success.”



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Biggs wants to ensure her work has been meaningful. “I always want to ensure that through my work, my life and my interactions I touch just one person to leave them feeling better about themselves. What a gift it is to be able to help someone reach their full potential.”

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