

No more space at the table? Make a new table - LexisNexis CEO Videsha Proothveerajh

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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Videsha Proothveerajh is many things - an inspiration for women in tech being one of them. She has received numerous accolades over the years - such as being named one of the 50 Most Inspiring Women in South Africa as part of the global Inspiring Fifty initiative in 2017; was among the 'Africa 50' of Leaders in Data Centres and Cloud in 2019; and was named Africa Tech Week's Woman in Tech for 2022 - to mention but a few.



LexisNexis CEO, Videsha Proothveerajh

However, as the CEO of LexisNexis, she does not believe that one should be defined by titles, “but rather one should work to embrace opportunities to learn new skill sets and be enriched by new experiences.”

As the first woman to be appointed to the top position at LexisNexis back in 2019, Proothveerajh describes her management style as one of servant leadership: “I believe that my role in the lives of the people around me is to help them achieve their full potential.”

Here we chat further to Proothveerajh about her recent win, the secret to her success and the company's future.

Tell us a bit about yourself...

I am, like all human beings, a masterpiece in progress, with many titles – Mum, businesswoman, CEO, daughter, chairperson of a board, sister, friend, changemaker, a student of lifelong learning... but these don't define me – what defines me is the impact I create and if I can leave this planet better than I found it, or have a positive impact on a few lives, then it will have been a life well lived.

I have always capitalised on opportunities to be an instrumental changemaker, not only in the corporate world but also on issues close to my heart. I am passionate about conscious capitalism and how I use the platforms I have to enable women's

empowerment, the empowerment of communities and the upliftment of society as a whole. I am a strong champion of LexisNexis's work in the communities and countries we serve to enhance the potential of the African continent by advancing the rule of law.

■ ***Congratulations on winning the Woman in Tech award at Africa Tech Week, along with LexisNexis taking 2nd place in Tech Company of the Year category. What does this recognition mean for you and the work you do?***

As a woman in the technology industry and business, I endeavour to always give back and to pull others up, as together we shatter the ceilings and paradigms that have held women back for decades. I received this award on behalf of all the women and men who work tirelessly to change the status quo moving forward and who dare to dream big – it is an indicator that I am on the right track. We stand on the shoulders of giants who came before us, women and men who sacrificed and made the effort to ensure we had a better tomorrow – this award is a testament to their legacy and it is proof that we are building an even better tomorrow, for the next generation of diverse leaders.



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The award also translates to taking up space and owning your contribution in the industry. It is a validation that we as women and other minority groups, have an opportunity to step forward and take our seat at the table. If there is no seat available at existing tables, then we must create a new table if needs be, and invite others to join at our table.

For LexisNexis SA, being a runner-up for the Tech Company of the Year Award speaks volumes about the amazing team we have at LNSA and the spectacular work they have done in our evolution to becoming a fully digital company. It is a huge honour as we found ourselves in the company of industry giants.

■ ***You are a business and tech mind who has spent years working for 'pure tech' giants such as Microsoft and Intel. How did you end up with LexisNexis and what interests you about the legal industry?***

I feel like I was born into technology; I have made the rounds, working in services, software, hardware and everything in-between. I know as I have seen first-hand the profound impact that technology can have on lives, communities and even countries, and it is a love affair that I never mean to stop engaging in.

I have worked in multinationals, ran my own company for a while and worked with small, medium and large companies. I have seen how technology enables and created a better tomorrow – it enables a vision that a company has. That is my other love affair – the intersection between business, technology and the impact this brings to the world.

I always endeavour to create impact wherever I go and what attracted me to LexisNexis is the opportunity to be part of the journey of advancing the rule of law in Africa, using technology as an enabler.

It has been proven that as the rule of law index in countries improves, it creates an environment for providing sustainable livelihoods and eradicating poverty; it improves FDI, encourages entrepreneurship, improves societal indicators and, all in all, leads to a better life for all. The rule of law is the foundation for the development of peaceful, equitable and prosperous societies. This is a legacy I want to be part of for the African continent and I am very grateful that LexisNexis provides me with the opportunity to be part of this amazing journey.

▣ **What would you say is the 'secret' to your success?**

My leadership philosophy is to serve, promoting an environment where people are able to bring their whole selves to the table and thrive and, in doing so, fulfil their potential. Needless to say, when people thrive, they unearth the potential of the businesses they work within and those businesses thrive as a result.

I am a firm believer in staying authentic and being true to yourself. Knowing your 'why' is key to your happiness. Being grateful for the opportunities - the good, the bad and the ugly - as they are all collectively the person you are today, and are essential to allowing new experiences into your life. Work is part of my life and I make it a point to enjoy what I do, as I spend a lot of time at work as such.



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Being able to be a situational leader is key, as not all environments are the same, not all people are the same and not all business are the same. Being humble, being changeable, admitting when I make mistakes, taking risks, rolling up my sleeves and getting into the trenches and working to unearth the recipe for success in different situations, whilst always learning, has held me in good stead, in life and in work.

▣ **The legal profession has been a bit slow to embrace digital trends and adopt technology into their working processes. Why do you think this is and how do you see this changing as we edge further into the fourth industrial revolution?**

The legal industry is entering a brave and courageous new space, and the old legal world is not viable any more. Like all other industries, a new norm is upon us. Business models are being turned upside down and it is the innovative that survive and thrive. The fourth industrial revolution has brought with it the fusion of physical, digital and biological systems and no industry is exempt. This is an opportunity for us in Africa to leapfrog some of the traditional barriers to global excellence.

It is time for the legal professional to take their rightful place as the trusted advisor, solution provider and the future builder in a world where there is huge ambiguity, where regulation is struggling to keep up with the new world, where cybercrime is on the increase and the social impact of technology is unwritten. Technology is not a panacea, but it is a potent collaborative tool enabling lawyers and professionals to expand legal access and solutions to previously untapped markets and individuals whilst using technology to better serve existing customers.

The most successful firms and practitioners will be those who are much more agile in responding to market trends, and who use the right technology to position themselves in this new world where clients are looking for increased value and mutually beneficial outcomes, versus what they were interested in historically.

▣ **What is your vision for the future of LexisNexis?**

At the very core of everything we do is our vision for the legal profession and other professionals in the legal arena. We enable them. We are at the heart of the journey to drive this industry's transition from lawyer-centric and labour-intensive to an interdisciplinary, tech and process-enabled competitive marketplace. We want to see more legal professionals be more human-enabled and empowered by technology, not intimidated by it. We want to enable legal professionals to be front and

centre in the journey to advance the potential of the African continent by advancing the rule of law – this is our north star that informs all we do.

ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

Shan Radcliffe is the editor of Bizcommunity HR, Education and Legal.

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