

HEAR HER VOICE

— AFRICA —

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AFRICA

UNDERSTANDING, DEVELOPING AND MENTORING GROWTH AND SUCCESS

Table of Contents

03

Summary

05

Executive Introductions

13

The Research

15

Defining Her

17

South Africa and Kenya Gateway

18

Unpacking Key Findings

23

Moving Forward

Summary

“Her” is someone who, despite social and cultural norms, is determined to go the extra mile to contribute to her family and the economy, aiming to contribute not only as a care giver but also financially. She is a hard worker and wants to have her say in matters that impact her family's life as well as her own. She wants to learn more and upskill herself in order to grow and prosper as an entrepreneur. Despite the numerous cultural, financial and infrastructural challenges imposed on female entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), she is resilient but needs support and guidance.

Hear Her Voice project SSA is the newest venture of the global Female Foundry programme was first launched by iProspect in 2015 in the Asia Pacific Region. With the support of Dentsu Aegis Network, the Female Foundry has since expanded to Latin America and, with the publication of this paper, now includes Sub-Saharan Africa. In each region, the programme provides access to tools, training, connections, and resources, empowering female entrepreneurs to thrive in today's complex digital economy.

Dentsu Aegis Network is committed to driving this Female Foundry initiative as part of our social impact commitment to promote female empowerment and leadership everywhere. Globally, we have a target to support 100 female-founded businesses by 2020.

Hear Her Voice is iProspect's research initiative within the Female Foundry that takes a deep look at how women in emerging markets are leveraging technological advancements to advance their businesses.

Our ambition for Hear Her Voice SSA was to conduct research in 4 countries - Kenya, Ghana, Namibia and South Africa - to further understand female entrepreneurship across the region. Although we do not go into depth for the Namibia and Nigeria markets, it is essential to note that they were indeed part of the study and helped us gain a more robust understanding of female entrepreneurs in the region.

In this paper we address the key findings from our research including lack of mentorship, shortage of personal and business skills, and deficit of networking and business expansion opportunities amongst female entrepreneurs across SSA.

Women in Sub-Saharan Africa are actively involved in business making decisions. From this we see the emergence and increasing numbers of female entrepreneurs across the Southern African region, e.g.,



“For every one female-owned business in SSA, there are two female start-ups.”

Botswana 34.6% and Uganda 34.8%. (MIWE 2017). Clearly there is huge demand and opportunity for growth.

Sub-Saharan Africa maintains the highest regional average Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate (25.9%) with strong average growth expectations, which translates into increased employment by women entrepreneurs in this region. On another note, however, it also boasts the highest discontinuance rate (8.4%). Around 56% of women entrepreneurs in the region cite either unprofitability or lack of financial support as a reason for closing their businesses (GEM report 2016/2017).

We seek to spotlight, support, and advance female entrepreneurship. We want to help our female shareholders, clients, talents, and society understand how to achieve relevance and long-term success in this environment, with the fair and necessary participation of an increasingly larger, fiercely determined group of women.

We invite you to hear “Her” voice throughout this whitepaper.

Executive Introductions





Dawn Rowlands

CEO Dentsu Aegis Network SSA

“

I FEEL SO BLESSED TO BE THE FATHER OF DAUGHTERS. I HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE YOU A START IN LIFE THAT MANY WOMEN DON'T RECEIVE. YOU ARE SMART, BEAUTIFUL AND POWERFUL. DON'T STAND BACK. STRIVE FOR DREAMS. WORK HARD. IF YOU GET PUSHED OVER ON THE PLAYGROUND BY BULLIES, STAND UP, DUST YOURSELF OFF AND FACE THEM HEAD ON.

”

— STANLEY ROWLANDS

I am so fortunate to have had the support of my father growing up. He left an incredible mark on my attitude to life as a woman. The majority of women do not, and will not, receive this support from their families and friends. I believe that I am here to take what my father taught me and pay it forward. My parents, whilst supportive, made me finance my studies. They just could not afford it and I had a job at spur, calling on and off burgers. My studies completed, I started my career like most young rebellious women, in a field of my own choice. I believe having the opportunity to choose is critical for career success.

How did I choose advertising and media? I scanned the Sunday Times and career sites religiously. I read the job descriptions, the skills required and the remuneration packages on offer. I liked the commercial and creative combination that this industry could offer me - it was forward thinking, innovative and brave. I fell in love. I was teased a great deal by my family in the beginning, "Hmm, sounds like fun but when are you going to get a real career?" After I sold my shares in my first company at 28, they stopped teasing me.

To be perfectly honest, I have never seen my gender as a disadvantage. I always looked past the fact that men overlooked me at first. All the bosses were men, that was just how it was. As soon as I thoroughly proved myself, it was difficult to ignore my achievements. Good men and women supported me because I would deliver. I did, however, get a great deal of negative feedback from other young women. "You are too ambitious." "Oh, it is easy for you, you are pretty."

Did they believe I was sleeping my way to the top? Or that my achievements were based on limited effort? I removed myself from the lives of these negative people and surrounded myself with people who inspired, motivated and supported me. I sought them out, invested in the relationships and over delivered at every opportunity. So what if it was easier for men?

So damn what! It just made my victories all the more satisfying. Over time I forgot about the limitations and saw the potential. "It is all about power," a very wise woman once told me.

Many women hand their power over to their fathers, husbands, boyfriends, bosses and their so-called friends. They hand the responsibility of their own happiness over to others so easily, needlessly. Along with this responsibility goes their ability to create a balanced life filled with self-respect. Sometimes it is just easier to complain.

"I liked the commercial and creative combination that this industry could offer me - it was forward thinking, innovative and brave. I fell in love."

In Africa there are so many women who have not had access to people who can nurture and mentor them. My heart goes out to them. My son asked me a few years ago, "Mom, the world is so messed up. Why do people suffer?"

How can you stand to watch it happen?" Besides congratulating myself for bringing up an amazing young man, it stopped me in my tracks. I realized encouraging other women, being honest about the hard work and dedication required for success and setting a good example were not enough. More needs to be done.



Koo Govender

CEO Dentsu Aegis Network, South Africa

”

DO NOT JUDGE ME BY MY SUCCESSES, JUDGE ME BY HOW MANY TIMES I FELL DOWN AND GOT BACK UP AGAIN.

”

— NELSON MANDELA

Growing up in an extremely conservative Indian family shaped the path of the type of woman I aspired to be in my career, as well as for my family. I grew up watching my mother submit to my father, devoting her entire life to her children without any intention of growing and excelling in a career.

My father's aspiration for me was to assist him in his financial and real estate business. Being the strong-willed, authentic and courageous person that I believe myself to be, I wanted to break through the moulds within my family business and become a business woman in an industry that was completely independent of my family. I wanted to grow within an industry that I loved and was passionate about, but how would I get there?

Although Africa has the highest growth rate in female-run businesses in the world, according to the World Bank, there are enormous challenges such as gender bias, lack of funding, lack of networking, lack of mentorship and coaching, as well as persistent social norms and stereotypes that women entrepreneurs need to continuously overcome.

In the early stages of my career, I did not have women who influenced me, empowered me or had faith in my capabilities as a business woman. I promised myself that when I became successful enough to influence others, I would always mentor, coach and encourage women to be the best version of themselves irrespective of their backgrounds and the conformities within their lives. That determination to empower other women and leave a legacy drives my daily success.

Over the years, learning from my failures and having a goal with a plan have given my career direction. Above all, though, there is and will always be a core value that I encourage and hold on to, which is to be consistent, to be authentic and, most importantly, stay true to who I am.

Mindful of the promise I made to myself early in my career, I helped launch Phakama Women's Academy in 2014. The academy was designed to empower young women in the marketing, advertising and communications industries, and equip final-year students with the necessary life skills and opportunities to enter the corporate and entrepreneurship world. Our ambition is to inspire the students to dream big knowing nothing is impossible when you are equipped with the correct learnings and embody the right attitude.

“In the early stages of my career, I did not have women who influenced me, empowered me or had faith in my capabilities as a business woman.”

Now, as the CEO of Dentsu Aegis Network in South Africa, I can continue to help shape the future of female entrepreneurs and empower women to rise. My vision is to focus on mentoring and coaching women, opening our networks for further opportunities, and assisting with funding for further education, programmes and courses that will encompass a holistic approach to the digital economy.

There are many barriers to success for the majority of women is their lack of confidence. I have always felt strongly that women must craft their own goals and believe in themselves to achieve their dreams, make an impact in society and leave a legacy. I have never understood the stereotype that women should be barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen. You can have a husband, children and a successful career at the same time, it is not easy, but it is very possible.

What is the secret? You will consistently feel as though you are performing a juggling act, one priority or the other will take a back seat at different points along your journey, and your priorities may change in certain situations. However, my philosophy throughout has been that my family was and continues to be my crystal ball, and my career is a rubber ball that I trust will always bounce back.



Samantha Kipury

Managing Director, Carat Kenya

“ IF YOU DO NOT LIKE HOW THINGS ARE, THEN IT’S UP TO YOU TO MAKE THEM BETTER. ”

This was a statement my parents often repeated throughout my formative years. It was their response to everything, from not liking a new school, to a poorly chosen haircut. Though it's pretty annoying when you are trying to get more pocket money, it's really been one of the fundamental motivators in my life.

Prior to joining Carat, I was a lowly, highly overworked media manager with incredibly demanding clients. The work environment was toxic; the very definition of massive egos and little moral code. Even so, over three years, I fell in love with advertising and media, the surge of adrenaline from a job well done, the teamwork and just knowing every time you wake up; that your work is going to challenge you creatively. I also learned that I really did not belong in that agency's environment, and as it was part of a massive organisation, there was very little chance of that changing in the near future.

So I handed in my resignation, both excited and terrified.

Eight years later the Dentsu Aegis Network is just shy of 100 people, and the third largest media agency in Kenya. I work with an amazing executive team and employees who are bursting with talent. It has been a long road, a lot of sleepless nights, early mornings sprinkled with a healthy dose of prayer. Is it a better agency? Absolutely. In every way.

After turning 30, I made the commitment to myself that my next 30 years would be focused on growing the Dentsu Aegis Network while continuing to make things better for others. Enter my school project.

My community is the Maasai, with my hometown being a few kilometres from the Tanzanian border. Like most African traditional societies, school is not considered a priority for young girls. With very limited

“Like most african traditional societies, school is not considered a priority for young girls.”

I decided to keep my head down, get the experience I needed and then leave for a smaller agency where I could really make an impact. Little did I know that a global pitch would dramatically change my life.

Right in the middle of my third year I received a call from then CEO for Carat Africa, Andreas Weiss. He said he was from the Dentsu Aegis Network and they had just won the Nokia account globally. He went on to say the local client had unequivocally stated that she would only move agencies if I moved with her. He explained that meant me being “installed” in another agency, and me doing absolutely everything, from media buying, planning and strategy, as well as business development. I said yes immediately, then I worried for weeks afterwards and wondered if it was because I had skipped lunch that day.

Whenever I look back to that moment, I'd like to think I knew what Carat could be, but in that moment what I really believed is that I was actually getting the chance to create a better agency. An agency for people who loved media and hated politics and ego. A place where people were free to do amazing work knowing that they would be rewarded for that, not according to who was the flavour of the month.

resources, the boys are considered the future bread winners, and as such, are sent off to school while the girls remain at home until their late teens, whereafter they are then expected to marry.

In situations where the girls do go to school, they seldom make it to secondary school again due to limited resources, family obligations to marry (in order to provide dowry), or just lack of interest as the importance of education is not ingrained in our society, which rather emphasises the importance of upholding our traditions.

The only difference between myself and these young girls is that my parents both went to school until university level. I have brilliant cousins I grew up with who now have upwards of five children each and are living a much harder life than they would have had to, had they simply had the chance to remain in school as I did.

This is why I am using my savings to start a school in my hometown, to make things better for young girls who deserve a chance to live up to their full potential.



Sadiqah Levy

Client Service Director, iProspect

“ THERE CAN BE NO GREATER GIFT THAN THAT OF GIVING ONE’S TIME AND ENERGY TO HELP OTHERS WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING IN RETURN. ”

— NELSON MANDELA

Growing up in a Cape Malay cultural setting means that giving back to my community was entrenched in me from an early age. I have known no other way of life. From an early age we were taught that when we give, we do so wholeheartedly - without any expectation of receiving anything in return. My father was key in driving his daughters to defend themselves all the time, no matter what the situation. As children our voices were heard and as a woman today I am grateful for that.

I started my career at a young age, ambitious to succeed in life and especially to be successful as a Muslim woman. There have been speedbumps along the way. One of my biggest challenges was to change the perceptions of everyone around me. Those mind-sets I encountered - that Muslim woman are oppressed and have not voice - were echoed in the media.

Working in an industry where I was constantly a minority made it hard work to show that I have a voice and that I deserve/need to be heard. My hunger to learn and be successful pushed me to educate those around me and build lasting relationships. And I did this as a devout Muslim, wife and mother - and in doing so I showed all I came into contact with that I will not be oppressed or shut down. Today I am confident in respectfully expressing my opinions, likes and dislikes, because I have spent time educating individuals around me on how women should be treated inside and outside the workplace.

I started my career in this industry as a young wife and a new mom and I was amazed with my own accomplishments as I successfully executed projects and implemented strategies. Those experiences taught me to be strong and to be aware that “life is all about choices.” If women are being bullied, we are allowing it to happen. WE need to be strong enough to fight back because even though some would say this is a man’s world, it would be NOTHING without a woman or a girl.

Some days you have tears and some days you have smiles, but the key thing for me was to start every day with a smile on my face. Beginning with my first position as a receptionist at the age of 20, I am grateful for meeting amazing people throughout my career journey who showed so much passion for digital. I have an inquisitive nature, and they inspired me to want to know what it’s all about.

Over the years, my CEO’s were always males and I learned not to complain about a tone of voice, or body language, or anything that was negative. If I complained, my young life would be miserable and that’s not what I wanted for myself or

the people around me. I chose to identify each human being as an individual, whether male or female, and work with them.

I chose to have the same vocal behaviour and opinion at home with my husband and children. My mom, who is extremely vocal, instilled in her daughters that, “Communication is key and is a big part of your success.” These are words that will live with me forever.

“Be true.
Be you.
Be different.”

The most pivotal strategy to my success in this amazing industry I work in is - listen, respect, build a culture within and make sure you understand the WHY.

I am blessed to be surrounded at Dentsu Aegis Network by many females with different cultures and backgrounds, yet we all have the same value system. It’s a business with strong females and endless opportunities for growth.

As females, we need to understand each other and help one another. We need to stay true to ourselves. If you are true to yourself, you ooze confidence and allow for empowerment. As female entrepreneurs we need to be the woman who fixes the other woman’s crown without telling the world.



The Research

The Research

This paper consists of a varied research approach to unpack the Sub-Saharan African female entrepreneur.

The primary approach consisted of a qualitative convenience sampling method over a one-month period (Dec 2017 to January 2018), where 2,903 respondent females from multiple sectors, i.e., Finance, Banking, Media, FMCG, etc., were interviewed from an online business radio station called ebizradio.com. These respondents were sourced from a total base of 8,425 female subscribers from key Sub-Saharan African emerging markets: Kenya (1,023), Ghana (789) and South Africa (1,091). For Namibia the reason for not including the number of respondents is due to the fact that their feedback was taken from social platforms as mentioned below. Respondents from each market were asked to further answer questions via Facebook, Skype, E-mail, WhatsApp and ebizradio.com to ascertain the core challenges female entrepreneurs face when entering the entrepreneurship world.

The process of selection for the interview included the below variables:

- *The business must be female founded and must be operational in South Africa, Kenya or Ghana.*
- *The business must be tech enabled at its core (i.e., TechEd, fintech, etc.).*
- *There must be a long-term business plan in place with path or potential path to monetisation.*

The quotes throughout this paper are representative of the feedback of all respondents from the radio survey and online surveys from the above-mentioned platforms.



We then overlaid secondary research into studies based on female entrepreneurship to unpack the core challenges females face as a whole in SSA and to derive the insights around those challenges that need to be addressed.

In conjunction with the above approaches, we used Dentsu Aegis Network's propriety research tool Consumer Connection System (CCS), a consumer, lifestyle and product survey, to understand the opportunity and scale of female entrepreneurship in SSA.

Opportunities of Scale for Female Entrepreneurship within SSA

SOUTH AFRICA	KENYA	GHANA
South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa (RSA), is the southernmost country in Africa. It is bordered by neighbouring countries Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe.	Situated on the equator on Africa's east coast and bordered by Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and Somalia	Officially the Republic of Ghana, is a unitary presidential constitutional democracy, located along the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean, in the sub region of West Africa.

KEY INDUSTRIES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS		
HR Communications Fashion Business Support Consulting Tourism Manufacturing Construction Finance Technology	Communications Fashion Business Support Consulting Tourism Manufacturing Transport Finance Technology	Technology Marketing Communications Design Fashion Transport Manufacturing
PERCENT OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS*		
23%	36%	47%
NUMBER OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS		
404K	169K	101K
POPULATION		
60M	47M	28M
PERCENT FEMALE		
51%	50%	50%
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE		
27%	39%	6%
LITERACY RATE		
86%	85%	77%

*Estimated as percent of the total female economy

Source: CCS data Dentsu Aegis Network propriety research





Defining Her

Defining Her

Her business is born out of necessity, not opportunity.

Female entrepreneurship in SSA is based on the psychographic set up of the cultural attitudes and beliefs structured around the role of women. Most times, this means that females stay at home caring for their families or running small informal businesses that don't grow. The traditional mindset is a woman needs to know her place and that is not in a boardroom having negotiations and conversations about monetary matters. In many cultures across SSA, you can either be a successful businesswoman or a successful mother, but you cannot be both.

In addition, females wanting to start their own businesses have been turned away by financial institutions on the basis of their gender (business.com) and were asked to give their ideas to male family members who could run with the idea. Females are seen as incapable and less likely to take business risk (GEM2016/7 Report).

“My family all said I was mad, and it would not work. I felt deflated”

- DINEO (SURVEY RESPONDENT)

We find it fascinating that, in the face of tradition, females will operate side businesses or have a side hustle but will not tell their spouses. This confirms the trend that a growing number of females are responding to a weak economy by engaging in informal businesses to sustain their households. They often end up hiding it from their families, which suggests their businesses are born out of necessity.



They support their husbands' dreams and business aspirations, but they are also starting to realise their own dreams in secret.

In her introduction, Samantha Kipury tells us there is a large difference in investment of male's education opposed to females'. Females are seen as "wives-to-be" and domestic homemakers, so families within tribes such as the Maasai don't feel it necessary to invest in their daughter's education. Families would rather take their money and use it on the male child, as they are seen to be more deserving and are the bread winners. If a family does invest in a girl's education, it is mostly driven by the increased "bride price" or "lobola" that can be negotiated when the daughter is to be married into another family. Furthermore, females have very little or no role models in the entrepreneurial space as a result of these social norms.

The Key Challenges Female Entrepreneurs Face in SSA

LACK OF MENTORSHIP

Without mentors, most female entrepreneurs are ill prepared, lack the understanding of the intricacies of business operation and management, and possess fewer skills and/or business competencies, further contributing to the 8.4% discontinuance of businesses in SSA.

SHORTAGE OF PERSONAL AND BUSINESS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Even when females have their business ideas mapped out, many are unable to package them into a presentation format because they have limited to none IT/Microsoft training, and therefore they struggle to get buy-in from investors.

DEFICIT OF NETWORKING AND BUSINESS EXPANSION

Female-led businesses in SSA are finding there is a lack of personal and business growth as a result of a shortage of business networks to support them.

INSUFFICIENT GOAL SETTING AND ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAMMES

Due to the lack of support structures (family, friends, financial institutions, etc.), women face a massive gap in knowledge of how to set short-term and long-term business goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

It was evident from the research that lack of support from family and the greater business community is a major stumbling block for setting short- and long-term goals.



A photograph of two young women standing in a lush, green field. The woman on the right is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, and is holding a smartphone, looking at the screen with a smile. The woman on the left is wearing a blue denim shirt over a dark top and has long, dark dreadlocks. She is also smiling and looking towards the phone. The background is filled with dense green foliage and small yellow flowers. The text 'The South Africa and Kenya Gateway' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, serif font.

The South Africa and Kenya Gateway

The South Africa and Kenya Gateway

South Africa and Kenya are a gateway for female tech-led businesses in SSA. However, start-ups are not growing as fast as they should as a result of not being as technologically advanced due to lack of resources, infrastructure and knowledge.

There are 314 tech hubs in Africa according to research conducted by GSMA in 2016. 50% of the tech hubs in Africa are centred in 5 countries (South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt and Morocco).

In South Africa, The Cape Innovation & Technology Initiative (CiTi) has incubated more than 2,000 businesses and supported more than 3,000 entrepreneurs according to James Milne, head of Wesgro's investment promotion team (Fin24). Milne continues; from across the world, start-ups choose the Cape Town region as a tech destination for numerous reasons including lifestyle, community, access to funding, a culture of creativity, and available talent. Investors are attracted to the city due to the range of quality start-ups, tax incentives and access to the rest of Africa. All these elements attribute to Cape Town being the key location on the African continent for EdTech and FinTech start-ups.

Kenya has been put in the spotlight as one of the oldest and more established tech hubs in Africa. According to Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics, its tech hub is valued at \$1 billion with more than 200 start-ups, and this is on the increase.

The goal of tech hubs is to provide space and services to start-ups and, secondly, to create a community of stakeholders in the form of partners and investors (GSMA:2016). Taking into account the above, the Kenya and South Africa hubs are best positioned to support and grow female-led businesses through tech.

“Female entrepreneurship - a powerful untapped economic force”





Unpacking Key Findings

Unpacking Key Findings

MENTORSHIP

More than 90% of the female entrepreneurs involved in our research said starting a business as a female is extremely difficult, and they would have benefitted by having a support structure throughout their journey, both from a personal and professional perspective, in order to equip them in building a successful and sustainable business.

WHAT THE FEMALE RESPONDENTS SEEK FROM MENTORSHIP

- Constant feedback sessions with the chosen female entrepreneurs
- Advice on how to deal with failures and successes
- Business consultations with assigned people from respective industries
- Bootcamps providing information sharing, skills and knowledge development

“I want to connect with other business-women just like me and not have to pay for it.”

- PINKIE MOMBASA (SURVEY RESPONDENT)

Access to Free Information and Education

Amongst the female entrepreneurs interviewed, most responded that they were not in the financial position at the start of their businesses to further educate themselves or take business, finance or marketing courses.

Literacy rates in SSA are increasing year on year but there is still a gender gap in terms of females being more illiterate than males. In SSA, the female literacy rate is 57% with male literacy being 72% (UIS 2017). This puts females at a disadvantage when it comes to access, understanding and application of business information.

Female entrepreneurs in SSA are therefore looking for ways that they can develop their respective skill sets without having to overextend themselves financially.

“If there was a place that I could go to get help from people who have opened businesses and care to share how they managed and what they learnt - and i don't have to pay for it. That would be awesome.”

-ADELAIDE (SURVEY RESPONDENT)

Access to Finance and Financial Literacy

//

IT WAS DIFFICULT DIFFERENTIATING WHETHER I SHOULD OPEN UP A BUSINESS AS A SOLE PROPRIETOR OR PTY LTD

//

— LAURETTE (SURVEY RESPONDENT)

Of the female entrepreneurs surveyed, the common denominator was that they struggled to gain access to start-up capital. The females either had to save for a long period of time, borrow money from family and friends, or a combination of both to get the initial investment. Financial information that is easy to understand and meaningful is hard to come by, and when there is access, it comes at an added cost. Many of the female respondents who had tried to access bank financing found the banks either wanted a successful business in place or would offer them a loan at higher interest rates as entrepreneurs are placed in the “high risk” category.

Furthermore, the respondents felt that starting their own business, including making sense of the legalities involved, was quite a daunting task.

Apart from preliminary financial assistance/knowledge, start-up businesses need to understand how to manage their money and what investments or risks they should take in the day-to-day operation of their businesses.

Female entrepreneurs in SSA seek skills in business interaction, how to stand their ground as a female in a male-dominated world, as well as how to be successful in business without selling themselves short. They want access to resources and information they can use to grow their businesses and achieve their business goals.



“Sometimes just being a woman in a man’s world is the hardest thing. You have to really hustle to get the contract and often you have to drop your price just to compete.”

— VIOLA (SURVEY RESPONDENT)

Data-Connectivity and Technology Skills

According to the respondents in our survey, their key challenges from a data and technology point of view boil down to access, cost and advances in technology.

ACCESS

Female entrepreneurs in SSA struggle with maintaining reliable and always-on connections. This impedes the quality of their work and puts them at a disadvantage if they are not available to their clients or internal staff at any given time.

COST

Data costs in South Africa are the highest on the African continent. Whilst data costs in Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya are considerably lower, the entrepreneurs we surveyed still found the costs prohibitive and a heavy burden on their monthly cash flow when starting or trying to grow their businesses.

ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

There is a massive gap in the understanding of technology and which tools are best to use to drive better business solutions. It is evident that there needs to be more training and education addressing the various tools and tech options that can improve efficiencies and drive optimisation within the business for the long run.

“Eish, the cost of data for my cell phone is hectic. It’s not professional when you run out of airtime, but I can only buy data when I get income in. Please can the cell networks help entrepreneurs?”

— BONGIWE (SURVEY RESPONDENT)



SOUTH AFRICA

1GB = R 110.46



KENYA

1GB = R 41.94



NAMIBIA

1GB = R 161.05



GHANA

1GB = R 23.97

Business Networks and Industry Know How

Our survey results highlight the general lack of support from external or relevant business networks on industry-related information. We hope to begin to close the gap by distributing this Hear Her Voice whitepaper to our partners within the Dentsu Aegis Network as we roll out the Female Foundry programme in Sub-Saharan Africa.

DENTSU AEGIS NETWORK PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDE

- Media partners
- Clients
- Female Foundry Business networks to be leveraged
- Global partners (GEN)
- Dentsu Aegis Network brands



Moving Forward



Moving Forward

Dentsu Aegis Network is committed to empowering women and promoting their leadership within the global business community. By publishing this Hear Her Voice whitepaper, Dentsu Aegis Network SSA is raising awareness of the unique challenges facing female entrepreneurs in the SSA region and introducing the Female Foundry programme of real-world support with innovation, diversity, social sustainability and technology leadership at its core.

The Female Foundry programme provides a platform for assisting and empowering women in emerging markets where 80% of the global middle class will live in 10 years. Through our collaboration with key partners in Kenya, Ghana, Namibia and South Africa markets, we aim to tap into 120 (30 per market) female start-ups through our programme of:

- Mentorship
- Access to free information and education
- Access to financial literacy
- Data, connectivity and technology skills
- Business networks and industry know how
- Demystifying cultural norms to empower females

PROCESS OF SELECTION PER REGION

- The business must be operational in the designated market.
- The business venture must be female-founded.
- The organisation must be female-led and women must own the majority of shares in the business.
- The business must be trading and should have aspiration for growth.
- This programme is for current businesses that are trading, but not necessarily profitable.
- The business should be leveraging technology in some capacity or be willing to adopt new technologies to scale and grow.



TIMELINE PER REGION: APPROXIMATELY 2 MONTHS

- Application opens
- Application close a month later
- Notification of selection
- Mentorship commences
- Three-day boot camp to develop pitch

THE CURRICULUM OFFERS:

- The curriculum focuses on the depth of the community (mentors, internal and external advisors, partners, investors) and active, consistent engagement
- Implementation - articulating value
- Management and planning, branding, PR and legal frameworks
- Value proposition - connecting product and service value
- Market analysis - customer segmentation and competitive marketing positioning
- Finance - robust financial modelling, practical financial management
- Learning & Development - strategic hiring and continued learning

Who Are The Mentors?

Female Foundry programme mentors are business-savvy executives and entrepreneurs. Mentors are carefully selected from each market - they are accomplished entrepreneurs who have grown their businesses successfully.

They will provide inspiration and business guidance to our female founders, paired in a manner that ensures we have the most focused team of mentors and advisors possible to successfully coach and enable selected candidates.

Partners

Collaborators/Sponsors will be part of the "board" and will be part of the selection process, as well as the mentorship programme.

We at the Female Foundry view our partners as extensions of our team who play an integral role in our development and growth. As a member of the Female Foundry programme, your organization can contribute to the advancement of gender parity and empowerment of female entrepreneurs around the globe.



Letter From The Author



INGRID VON STEIN

I have been an entrepreneur since I left school in 1982. I have opened, closed, succeeded and failed in many business ventures. I have learnt over the decades that being an entrepreneur is not for the faint hearted, but if you have a dream and a belief that you can do it, no one can put you down.

It takes passion, commitment, drive, innovation and the ability to ask for help and admit when you have made a mistake and learnt from it. Entrepreneurship is both humbling and exciting.

In the early 80's there was no internet and no mobile phones. All you had was a very slow "computer," an old-fashioned land line phone and yourself. You had to get out there and physically interact with people. You needed to knock on doors to get into the person's work space and share your product or service. If you did not have money to educate yourself in business or go on courses you were stuck. You had to rely on your own savviness and try getting as much information you could from other people by connecting and networking with them.

Whilst the internet has changed our world, the basics of starting and growing a business remain the same - people make a business, people grow a business and people connect with other people to help you share an experience with your product or service. The more things have changed, the more they have stayed the same.

Yes, today we have Google and you can literally find anything you want on any topic you want. Learning has become easier. All you need is a computer or smart phone, connection to Wi-Fi or have data, and you can start learning how to do things.

In many instances, you still need money to pay for access and the really great insights you need to help develop your business.

During my weeks of research into the hurdles female entrepreneurs face and seeking a greater understanding of the world of female entrepreneurs in Africa, I discovered that not much has really changed since I started back in the 80's. Today business owners still struggle to find mentors, develop skills, obtain financing, break down social barriers, and meet the basic costs to set up a business.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who were willing to mentor me: Dawn Rowlands, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Richard Branson, Darlene Menzies and Adele Searle.

To all the hundreds of women I have met and done business with over the years, each and every one of you inspired me and kept me going. Just as you were willing to share your insights and learnings with me, I, in turn, have shared and will continue to share what I know with any woman on this planet. If in some small way what I have learnt can help another start or grow her business, then my job as an entrepreneur and teacher will have been fulfilled.

Co-Authors



DELICIA ARJUNAN
Account Manager, Vizeum South Africa



KELLY MOSES
Regional Communications Manager,
Dentsu Aegis Network Sub-Saharan
Africa

Glossary

CHAMAS:

In Kenya it is a guild/committee of people who contribute money for an overall kitty fund.

STOKVEL:

In South Africa a savings or investment society to which members regularly contribute an agreed amount and from which they receive a lump sum payment.

In South Africa a society formed to hold regular parties that are funded by the members and generate profits for the hosts.

MAASAI:

The Maasai are an indigenous ethnic group in Africa of semi-nomadic people settled in Kenya and northern Tanzania. Due to their distinct traditions, customs and dress and their residence near the many national game parks of East Africa, the Maasai are among the foremost African ethnic groups and are known internationally because of their links to the national parks and reserves.

BRIDE PRICE:

also referred to as bride wealth, or bride token, is money, property, or other form of wealth paid by a groom or his family to the family of the woman he will be married to or is just about to marry.

LOBOLA:

An African custom by which a bridegroom's family makes a payment in cattle or cash to the bride's family shortly before the marriage.

HEAR HER VOICE

AFRICA