

Winners announced: MTN Women in ICT - Partnership for Change Awards

The winners of the MTN Women in ICT - Partnership for Change Awards were announced yesterday, 31 August 2017.



The event seeks to accelerate women's participation in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector by celebrating and rewarding women professionals who have made a significant contribution towards the growth and development of the sector.

Winners

- **Leadership Recognition Award:** recognised a senior female executive in the ICT sector whose proven depth of experience in leading change, influencing business outcomes and leading teams positively impacted on the organisation she leads. The winner in this category was Carol Thomas, Chief Information Officer of the South African Civil Aviation Authority. She is a person of integrity and honesty and has led at a CIO level for around 10 years.
- **Innovator Recognition Award:** recognised a woman who has introduced new methods, ideas, or products that are contributing in one way or the other to the delivery of a bold, new, digital world. The winner in this category was Rene Pearson. Pearson is the Technical Director at Aurecon. She won this award due to the instrumental role she played in designing various software applications, and support systems for their project management team.
- **SME Recognition Award:** recognised a woman entrepreneur responsible for a wholly-owned, women-run enterprise that is a viable business making inroads in the ICT sector. Nominations in this category were also extended to MTN employees who run businesses on the side, using ICT to enable her business.

The winner in this category was Matau Ramapuputla. She is the CEO of Moepi Publishing, which publishes children's picture e-books. These books are available in South Africa and in libraries across the United States.

- **Community Builder Recognition Award:** recognised a woman who has made a considerable difference in her community through ICT, or use of an ICT tool to make a difference in the community.

The winner in this category was Martine Schaffer. She is the founder of The Click Foundation, a non-profit organisation that utilises technology to facilitate basic education for learners. The Click Foundation has managed to

create 125 job opportunities.

- **Lifetime Achiever Recognition Award (Women Pioneer):** recognised a woman who has longstanding success in the ICT industry, has demonstrated a remarkable entrepreneurial spirit, and has continually stayed ahead of the curve.

The winner in this category was Dr HF Swanepoel, chief technologist at Eskom Group's technology engineering division. A consummate professional with a career spanning over 27 years, Swanepoel has received numerous international and national awards recognising her expertise, most notably the International Bentley BE Award for Innovation in Power Generation (2013), Best Female Engineer at Engineering Sector level in 2012, the Eskom Women Advancement Program Award in the category: Technology and Engineering, and the Eskom Generation Woman of the Year Manager's Award in 2016.

- **Excellence in ICT Journalism Award:** this category recognised a journalist who has contributed immensely to creating a better understanding of the ICT industry through her reporting.

This category had joint-winners - Paula Gilbert and Simnikiwe Mzekandaba.

Gilbert is the telecoms editor at *ITWeb*. She covers breaking news stories on telecoms and business, as well as covering interesting topics ranging from tech innovations in finance to new mobile technologies and start-ups. She previously worked as a producer and reporter for business television channels Bloomberg TV Africa and CNBC Africa before moving into the online world.

Mzekandaba is the IT in government editor at *ITWeb*, where she reports on day-to-day tech initiatives, as well as policies and digital transformation strategies within the public sector. She also covers an array of ICT news stories focused on education and banking for the website.

- **CEO's Award:** this award recognised an MTN employee who has made a difference within the organisation with the use of ICT and technology.

Fatima Mayet was named the winner in recognition of the role she has played in using the power of technology to address some of the challenges facing MTN. She is credited with automating the employee on-boarding and termination process. She was also involved in multiple initiatives aimed at reducing fraud and revenue leakage within MTN. This included digitising access forms for Business Risk Management. Due to her efforts in curbing fraud, Mayet was handpicked to be part of MTN's Ethics Committee.

- **Ministerial Recognition Award:** This category gave the Minister of Communications, Ayanda Dlodlo, the opportunity to use her discretion to nominate a female ICT professional whose contribution has helped to bridge the digital divide and facilitate access to telecommunication services.

Charmaine Houvet was named the winner in this category. She has more than 24 years' telecommunications experience working in the private and public sector across the continent. Since 2016, Charmaine has worked at Cisco as a Senior Executive in diverse and transformative roles. She is responsible for supporting Cisco with country digitisation programmes and enabling public sector policy reform across Africa.

Says Graham de Vries, executive corporate services at MTN SA: "On behalf of MTN, we wish to congratulate the winners for consistently distinguishing themselves with outstanding performance throughout their careers. We are pleased with the positive response we have received from the industry, and the support from government.

"We believe that this initiative will give impetus to the ongoing interventions by the industry to drive gender transformation in the sector."

Mark Harris, Group CEO of Kagiso Media concurred: "We believe that the MTN Women in ICT – Partnership for Change Awards will be a catalyst that puts the ICT sector on the map, and reminds female professionals about significant contributions they have made, and continue to make towards the growth of the sector."

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