

More than just the 'chick in charge'

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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Create a business that exists and even flourishes without you was the knockout lesson from BeingBossZA, a well-attended females-only business event explaining how to survive your first 1,000 days in business and beyond as a *womentrepreneur* this past weekend.

It's not often women are willing to give up their precious time away from the office for work events, but that's just what happened on Saturday, 6 August when the Being Boss brunch event took place at the Launchpad of the Fire & Ice hotel, just in time for Women's Day this week.

In her welcome of guests, Vuyo Dubese gave the first knock-out punch – that 'being so busy you just don't get to sleep simply shouldn't be seen as a badge of honour or business success. She added that relationships are crucial because as cliché as it sounds, your 'network really is your net worth'.

“ No sleep, tons of meetings, no free time doesn't equate to success. It just means you are busy. Look after yourself too! [#BeingBossZA](#) tip— Rox Starr (@RoxStarrDiaries) [August 6, 2016](#) ”

Nwabisa Mayema, executive director of Nfinity built on Dubese's insights by sharing the ingredients for starting successfully. It's crucial to know yourself, your strengths and weaknesses and to then surround yourself with the right people so that you can find your special business magic. Also remember that before you build that beautiful website and print those sexy business cards, you need to find your customers. Furthermore, the business you start must be more than you, so that it survives and flourishes without you. “Let the magic happen and let your business (grow) and go.”

“ ” Own your magic...plan your exit strategy...Let your magic go" - [@NwabisaMayema](#) Thank you for shining your light [@BeingBossZA](#) [#BeingBossZA](#)— Meghan Hector (@meghanhector) [August 6, 2016](#) ”

Shirley Passanah from event sponsor Liberty also spoke on the money matters we tend to shy away from. Did you know that 43% of women are actually breadwinners at the moment? She spoke of the importance of updating your will – if you don't and then pass away, your ex may end up with everything. When starting out, remember that you don't need a lot of money, you just need enough to be independent.

Innovation doesn't always look like disruption from inside

Independence was a strong point throughout the morning, with [Busi Sizani](#), partnerships manager at Uber Cape Town, who spoke on being innovative in my hard-won favourite talk of the day. She called herself a dabbler and former entrepreneur, and shared that Uber itself doesn't use the term 'disruption', it's more about constantly innovating and moving forward. The business was inspired by need, with its two founders trudging through the snow in France and wondering “Why can't I just press a button on my phone and call a cab? Why is that not a thing?” They then tweeted out an idea and got a response from their first investor:

“ Ladies [@BeingBossZA](#) [@JamMediaZA](#) [@Uber](#) that one tweet 💎💎 [#BeingBossZa](#) [pic.twitter.com/IZYWSL4XFx](#)— Claire Allen (@claireallen_sa) [August 6, 2016](#) ”

That's the essence of any successful business idea – something simple that meets an existing need. Sizani shared that South Africans are earlier adopters than we tend to think and that Uber's footprint here is growing faster than in some of the world's biggest markets like San Francisco and London, so “don't down-talk local.” Also remember when starting out that

“It's not just about you and your business, but also collaborating and growing with others.”

Being the boss lady in the boys' club

Further tips for business success were shared by Portia Masimula, founder of Karisani IT, who spoke of her own experience as a business woman in a man's world. You have to believe in your own vision to downplay the naysayers, who are often your own colleagues and male competitors. You also need to close deals with courage, which is how they signed global powerhouses like Microsoft and ESPN as clients. She says to be efficient, deliver quality and always be on time or even deliver earlier than promised. “Don't just copy-and-paste what works for others, be you.” Masimula shared that she attends as many conferences as networking events as possible as it's all part of her desire to constantly reinvent herself, upskill and align herself with people who can teach you things. She ended with the words, “Remove the competition and work together to fight for a brighter working future for the next generation”.



We also heard from Mohale Mashigo, author of *The Yearning*. As she's also a singer under the name Black Porcelain and a radio presenter it was fitting that she spoke of the power of storytelling, starting with discovering the library at school and growing her love of reading from always asking why. She read *The Colour Purple* at the age of nine or 10 and despite it being completely age-inappropriate, something clicked, as she realised she hadn't yet read a book focused on the lives of “people like me”. She used to write *Sweet Valley High* fan fiction, but stopped when she read *Nervous Conditions* and *Ways of Dying*. The stories weren't comfortable to tell, but she realised she needed to start writing her own stories. It's not just about getting started though, you have to learn to finish. Chyemenn Santos, author of *The Brightest Star in the Sky* and director at SmartEdge spoke next on overcoming adversity and fear based on her own story, with the wise words to “Never take for granted what you have”, and to also never underestimate the power of a woman when she puts her mind to something. A smile and a positive attitude will go a long way.

Jess Mouneimne, boxer and director at Jam Media, is a big believer in the power of positive attitudes. In her talk on building

a winning team, she said to leave negative energy at the door and explained that good leaders make their team feel safe through trust and fun.

Mouneimne also features in Silicon Cape's current 'Women in tech' video series, where she shares the following golden nugget: "Find your courage and your strength to weather the storm initially, because it can be scary to start, but once you carve out and own your space it gets easier." Watch her clip embedded below:

Networking nuggets: The 'lady boss struggle' is real

While each of the talks was inspiring, I found it was the conversations with other attendees in the brief networking sessions that led to the most inspiration. We spoke of the importance of learning how to package your idea to get the support you need and aligning your paycheck to your passions, as well as the problem of getting so comfortable with doing things a certain way that you need to shake things up every now and then to spark your business passion. The overall message was that of collaboration and pulling others up when they need it – fittingly, proceeds raised from the morning were donated to Code4CT, an NGO that teaches high school girls all about coding. Just the right example for future girl power to resonate.

Scroll through [#BeingBossZA](#) for more, [click here](#) for insights from Mouneimne, Mayema and Masimula on the essence of effective 'womentrepreneurship' and get hold of Mouneimne's book *Being Boss – tips for surviving the first 1000 days in business-and beyond* from <http://www.jammedia.co.za/being-boss/>.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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