

The Effectiveness Company

Making things happen for clients

The Effectiveness Company, a specialist in business transformation outsourcing, that delivers sustainable, operational performance improvement and optimisation to its customers through an outsourcing and insourcing execution model, has celebrated 14 years of success since its launch in 1997.

"Simply put, we make it happen for our clients," says Suzanne Ravenall, the company's founder and group chief executive officer.

This is not surprising, as Ravenall is an exceptional leader. While her business has excelled since its inception, she has also proven her worth time and again by being nominated and featuring in Top Women (2009-2010); nominated and featuring in Leading Managers of South Africa (2003-2008); obtaining an Honouree award for Top Women Entrepreneurs in World (2007); nominated for the National Business Leader Award (2006); nominated for Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year (2005), and becoming an African Investor Award finalist in the same year. In 2004, she was a finalist in Nedbank's Business Woman of the Year and an African Investor runner-up.

"This recognition has been achieved because of what our people at The Effectiveness Company deliver. It is what they choose to deliver to our customers, and to each other, that makes us who we are as a company. It starts with what we all agree on as our vision, mission and values – all of which were created by our people," she says.

The company was born when business leaders began to look outward at the global business community and at new opportunities when the South African marketplace opened up to everyone for the first time in 30 years. Already, within our country, outsourcing IT, non-core services and general business process

outsourcing/insourcing had established roots. "We identified a significant operational gap emerging globally. There were too few skilled people capable of implementing operations at the speed at which companies and industries were growing," Ravenall explains.

This gap forced leaders to review different and innovative ways of operating, particularly in terms of forming strategic alliances and partnerships with companies capable of assisting in business expansion and operations management. "Innovative communication and trading platforms, such as the Internet, emerged which further exposed a company's ability to execute operations successfully."

In response, The Effectiveness Company set about providing performance improvement services within the business transformation outsourcing space, through various outsourcing and insourcing models. It has been consistently rewarded by both current and new customers, and recognised locally and internationally.

In 2011, it was nominated and featured in Best Companies to Work For category (an award also bestowed on it from 2003 to 2008), and was recognised as one of South Africa's Top Companies in 2010. In 2009, the company was recognised as the Top Business Support Services Company in the Best Companies to Work For category and placed in the Top 300 Performing Companies list. It was also voted One of the Most Promising Companies from 2003 to 2007.

"We aim to become a global leader in the delivery of world-class, operational implementation using total quality management processes to deliver predictable outcomes," says Ravenall. Its mission is to provide dynamic and innovative outsourcing and insourcing services, which enable its customers to excel in their operational effectiveness. At the same time, it aims to enrich lives and have fun.

"The company's outsourcing and insourcing services include labour management and training, and coaching," says Ravenall, who

recently completed a degree in Metaphysics and is a healing practitioner. The company operates in numerous arenas including customer relationship management, human resource management, back office management, supply chain management, enterprise asset management, and contract management. It also provides licences for its services internationally, and multimedia products for outsourcing and insourcing operations. It also provides consulting and business process engineering, as well as management consulting, business analysis and business process re-engineering.

The rapid acquisition of lasting personal skills and learning acquisition is a key challenge facing all organisations.

"Training alone cannot ensure competence. It simply comes down to changing a person's behavioural patterns as what people do and don't do to make the acquisition of each new skill a reality," says Ravenall. She explains that one way to think about the role of behaviour in an organisation is to consider three interlocked factors for an enterprise's success – strategy, process and behaviour. Strategy sets the direction of where the enterprise is going and why; work processes organise the work toward strategic objectives; and behaviour is the enabler of both strategy and process. "It is people's behaviour, what they say and do, that is either aligned or misaligned with strategy and process," she says.

According to Ravenall, unleashing the full power of an organisation starts with the individual. With behavioural-based coaching, the individual can be shown how to self-manage and significantly upgrade his or her personal and professional skill sets, feel balanced, alert, in control and powerful and be able to make the greatest contribution to the organisation.

The empowered individual acts not reacts, thinks creatively, works well under pressure, makes good decisions and communicates clearly.

"Leadership qualities also emerge, and when an organisation's people move into a zone of optimum sustainable best performance, so too does the organisation," she says.

Servicing SMMEs

Small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) are making a gigantic impact on our economy, accounting for over 60% of businesses within the greater Gauteng region, the hub of South Africa's economy.

"SMMEs are vital for sustainable development in our country. The government's focus on SMME empowerment and the resulting stimulation of small and medium enterprise has realised substantial focus on this market sector to lead South Africa into a new era of growth and the sustainability of an upward trend," says Ravenall.

The Effectiveness Company has made a strategic decision to provide some of its service offerings and predictable outcomes to the SMME market, to assist these entrepreneurs to grow their ventures within the critical non-core business areas such as performance management, recruitment, industrial relations, human resources (HR) administration and payroll management.

"We provide cost-effective and specialised HR services, ensuring a harmonious working environment where employees are highly motivated and productive," says Ravenall. "By using our company as the single operational implementation specialist focused on delivery of compliance, people and processes, the SMME derives benefit from the value associated with having all services available under one roof, and access to the generic and scalable best practice toolkit."

The company has actively involved itself in the positive transformation of South Africa's realities, particularly through various social, community and health programmes. Its involvement in corporate social investment (CSI) stems from an understanding that many South Africans fall outside of the normal prosperity of the corporate world. "We are fully aware that the success in communities today will be the success of business tomorrow, and that prosperity of business and society as a whole is intricately interlinked. We are also aware that wealth is not merely an issue of material possessions, but comes through a combination of the environment, opportunities and choice," she says.

CSI in its most fundamental form is about being a responsible corporate citizen that contributes to the reconstruction and development of the country and to the building of relationships between communities, government and business.

The Effectiveness Company has launched numerous CSI initiatives to assist in the upliftment and empowerment of people throughout South Africa. This strategy is specifically focussed on historically disadvantaged communities to ensure continued concrete results and success with its outcomes. Its strategy is to invest a specific budget, every year, in quality projects that focus on infrastructure development, education and training, personal development and HIV/Aids.

There are many organisations and individuals who positively contribute to assisting and developing South Africa's community.

"We encourage all of our staff members to make the time to go out and make a positive difference in their community. We support such endeavours and have committed to giving each and every employee a full working day to do this," says Ravenall.

The boardroom is often a place where brilliant ideas are discussed, thrashed out and finalised. Everyone leaves the room feeling like they



Suzanne Ravenall, the company's founder and group CEO

are about to bring about a revolution in the organisation. Unfortunately, somewhere between planning and the implementation, it all goes wrong. The Effectiveness Company has thus conceptualised The Execution Box, a valuable mine of information, toolkits and technology provided through a single interface in the form of a social website – The eBox Community.

"The eBox Community is destined to be the one and only stop a person needs to explore and find the answers, all detailed in step-by-step, 'how to' processes which, if followed to the letter, will not only answer questions, but will also provide the knowledge required to implement success," Ravenall explains.

Ravenall has certainly come a long way since her first job as a personal assistant in a travel agency in the United Kingdom at age 16. "I don't see obstacles as challenges, they are just something that are there and have to be dealt with. Whether you go straight up through the glass ceiling or find another way around to meet your objective, you will get there in the end. Running a business takes perseverance and diligence – don't ever give up," she says.