

CRF's SOUTH AFR LEADING MANAGERS

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The democratic autocrat

ing is a quality organisation and one they could make a credible career working for, while Ravenall also says participation in the survey generates a number of contracts once potential clients see it is the sort of company they would want to be associated with.

"It's a symbol of quality, almost like an ISO accreditation.

"It's a challenge to be ranked alongside some of the major corporates of South Africa, and gauge how we measure up. This is the first data of this type in the country, and it's been a valuable process," says Ravenall.

CRF continues: "Ravenall herself places great emphasis on transforming vision into reality. She believes that, as a leader, one of her greatest strengths is the fact that she has the ability to envisage a strategy and the operational skills to see that it is implemented.

"Another strength is her insistence on leading by example.

a credo that ensures that values like transparency and honesty are visibly practised at the upper levels of the organisation. 'We ensure that the organisation's vision, mission and values are alive in people's heads. New employees undergo a thorough induction process, which helps them align their values – including responsibility, accountability and transparency – to those of the organisation,' Ravenall explains.

"These values are also 'lived' in the organisation through mechanisms like company workplace forums, which are attended by Ravenall herself, and that provide employees with a platform to raise issues that concern them.

"Further evidence of the company's insistence on transparency is found in its 'open-book' policy. As Ravenall says, 'For us, honesty is a way of life, not merely a set of activities slotted into our general opera-

tions.'

"Much time has been spent ensuring that employees engage with the company culture, and that 'if you don't get your company culture right, your employees won't be able to serve the clients properly'. Employees, therefore, receive intensive training, with regard to how they are expected to contribute to the organisation and how the company, in turn, supplies tools to make their job easier. However, Ravenall's focus is not solely inward. 'We've managed to remain market leaders because we continuously forecast marketplace trends for the next three years, and adapt our products and strategies accordingly,' she says.

"Ravenall's tenacity, vigour and passion for her job have remained unchanged in the nine years since the establishment of Beyond Outsourcing. 'But I've mellowed over time. I've learnt from my mistakes and gained a better understanding of what works and what doesn't,'" says Ravenall.

ond Outsourcing group CEO Anne Ravenall believes that successful leadership is about involving people, not telling them what to do. "It's important to engage them and encourage them to find their own solutions," she states. On the other hand, she's ready to take a hard line when it's necessary.

CRF describes Ravenall's management style as "a blend of democracy and autocracy; a balance she maintains by ensuring that all staff members understand the company's vision and their role in achieving it".

CRF quotes her: "When people expect you to make a decision, democracy doesn't work." Ravenall says the company attracts considerable mileage from participating in objective surveys of this kind: "It's fantastic to be recognised as an organisation, but I realise I wouldn't be if it wasn't for the people in the company."

The recognition by CRF comes on a number of levels she says, enabling potential employees to see that Beyond Outsourc-