

Africa's • Most • Influential

# WOMEN

in • and • Gove



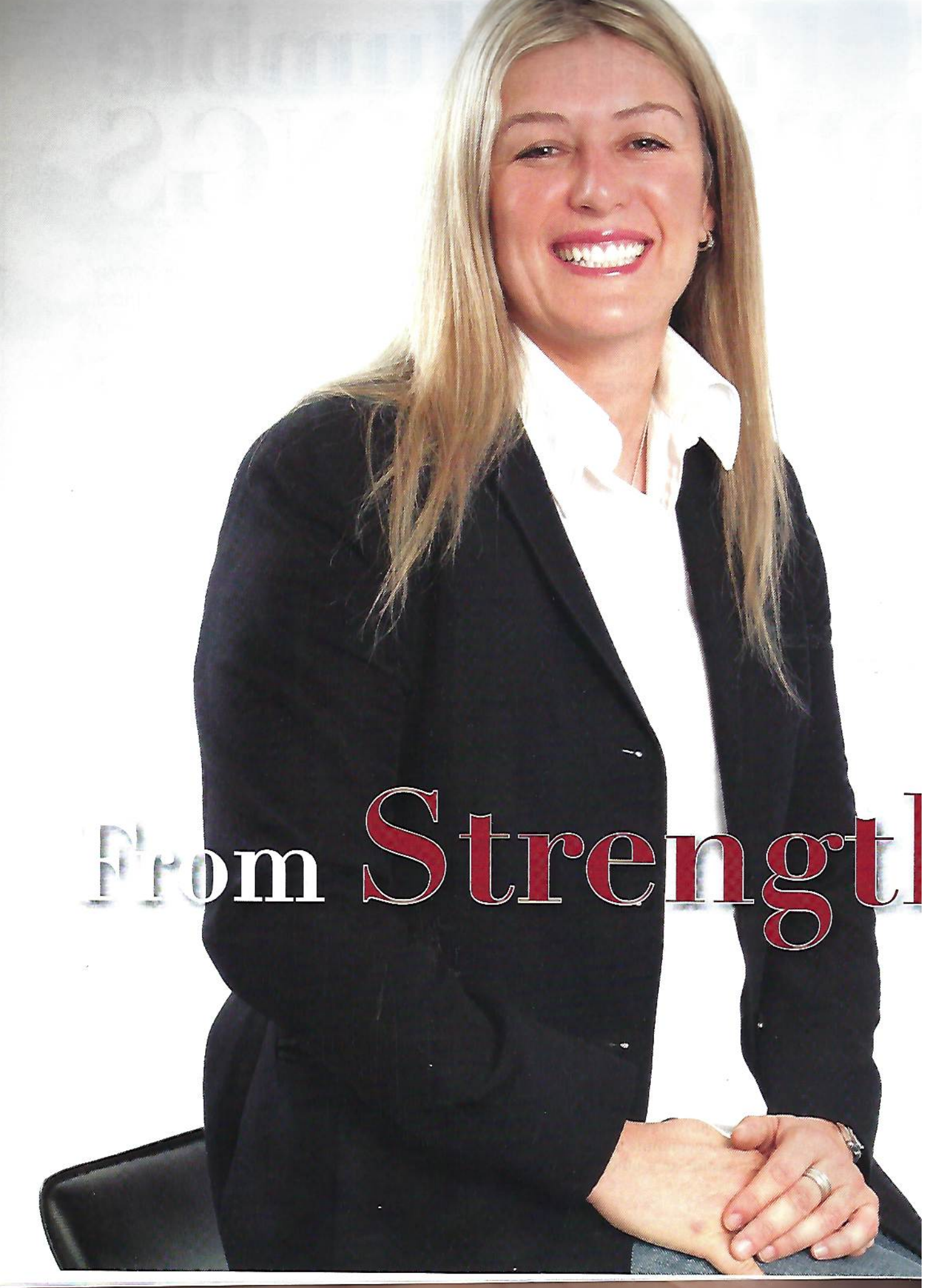
## THE POWER of Positivity

Determination  
Defines Results

Global  
expand your business horizons







From Strength



# Being the BEST

By Lydia Bundred

Suzanne Ravenall, CEO of the Effectiveness Company, began working as a personal assistant at the age of 16. She attended Bedford College of Higher Education and the University of Metaphysics where she received her doctorate in metaphysics. In 1994 she decided to leave the UK, her birthplace, and move to South Africa. In her blossoming career she has been honoured with several awards and is the leading authority in her field. She is a member of the Young Presidents Organisation, Institute of Directors and the Businesswomen's Association.

**What prompted your move to South Africa in 1994?**

A short contract in the cellular industry and the excitement of the beginning of a new era in telecommunications and then during my stay I just fell in love with South Africa; people's desire to make change; their openness, friendliness and, their willingness to try new ways. The last twenty years have flown by, it seems impossible that it could have passed so quickly.

**What have been your key lessons in life and in business, which any leader could live by/follow?**

I am of the view that you learn from everybody every day, that applies to the people I talk to on the street to those I talk in the office and in business. So many lessons will be learned for the rest of my days! If we are wide awake, conscious and observant enough the learning provided by what we see, hear and experience from others is immeasurable. It's coming at us in shades. It's amazing what we can gain from the observation of what our energy field draws in. The challenge that applies to us all is: 'what do we do when things don't go so well?' These become the defining moments of our life, the time we make the greatest decisions. As I have travelled through life I have learned that there is a solution to just about any problem that arises; it may not always be that obvious, it all depends on how you look at it. Giving up is just not an option.

**What is your leadership style and what makes it work for you?**

I think it all goes back to the fact that there are traits/behaviours as leaders that we should all look to develop, a balance of feminine and masculine traits that compliment. I am an entrepreneur through and through and there are similar qualities within all entrepreneurs I guess. What is important to me is upholding the values that I entrench in my life that we entrench in our business. Our culture is very important to us and we try to embody this every day. One of our values is honesty and this is something that not all people always like to hear. I am not talking about

perception or feeling. We all like to think we are honest with ourselves and the people around us. Honesty for us is about what you say you going to do..... you do and for us that's integrity. Watching a Ted Talks recently I was interested to hear that people generally lie to up to 200 times a day, even small or white lies. What stands out for me is a life with integrity. We try and promote that to our staff and our customers.

I am passionate about transformation and change and believe that if you love what you do you won't work a day in your life.

**Do you think men and women's style of leading is different and what impact do you think this has on a business?**

People often say women are from Mars and the men are from Venus! Whilst we are different, I believe that both men and women, over a period of time, must develop a certain set of leadership behaviours, a balance in both the feminine and masculine and a lot of courage in order to be good or great at what they do. It is not about your gender or your colour but it is the wisdom and the capabilities you bring to operate successfully. Winston Churchill once said the kite rises higher against the wind. People come in all different colours, shapes and sizes and have different capabilities. We should therefore focus on those areas in which leaders should excel and hone those skills and in so doing set an example for others to follow. Often leadership is about the tough decisions; the right path is rarely the easy one. If we do that then, we may have better businesses all over the world. Be daring, be first, be different, be just.

**What achievement are you most proud of?**

Receiving an acknowledgement with ten other women worldwide, as one of the Leading Women Entrepreneurs of the World was a wonderful feeling. But mostly having the courage to start a business in a different country. The learning and the life that the business has given me I will always be grateful for.





Based on your experience, do you have any words of advice you would like to share with young business owners?

1. Have a solid plan; know what you are going to do, what you want to offer the market place and how it's going to be better or different than what other people are providing.
2. Execute this plan vigorously and keep referring back to it.
3. Think through as many eventualities and devise a scenario plan.
4. Do what you love and are passionate about – in this way you will keep going if the times are tough.
5. Take some time to live...laugh...love...with every cell of your being amongst all the crazy.

What is the next step for you?

It took us two or three years to build the first system. Last year, we released it to the market and we have over 100 micro-financiers using our system, which works on a subscription model. We use SAP software, which we customise for the banking industry. Apart from the prohibitive cost, most of the traditional banking software systems do not have the special functions required by the micro-finance industry.

What's the name of your system?

I am really excited to be launching a new business called Parinama, Sanskrit for transformation. Parinama is an Elevation Consulting business, with a unique transformatory approach, that identifies individuals who operate at the Top 10% of a group/department/business/career. These people typically track their KPI's at around 90-100%. We then study and profile, their decision making processes, behavioural traits, problem solving approach, amongst many other aspects. We reduce this behaviour into a system that can be replicated straight back into the average performers. By using a neuroscience approach to training, we transfer knowledge and expertise from top performers to the rest and lift their ability to operate at top performer level within the organisation.

Fast facts

- Great for Fast changing environments,
- Provides Competitive action; particularly with global competition, squeezing margins
- Fly wheel for sales departments
- Retiring/experienced employees taking knowledge with them
- Top 10% perform at 90 -100%+ of their KPI's, average 80% perform between 55- 65% of KPI's
- A majority of all businesses have a large group of mainly average performers (80%)
- Assumes the Top 10%/Average 80%/Bottom 10% model, although the percentages vary from company to company department to department, this model can be applied to society, village, town, community,

country, business department, family etc. (Vitality Model, Pareto Principle)

- Neuroscience approach cements the change

Most departments track at an average level in their performance; Parinama goes right to the heart of the issue helping both the person and the company lift performance at both ends of the spectrum, leaving an obvious double wammy.

The benefit of the Parinama method to both company and individual is the upward swing in performance and this means productivity, profitability, improved self-esteem, replication of best techniques/processes among staff and a high-performance culture! It's a win all around.

Anything else you would like to share with our readers?

Do the absolute best that we can, learn from every event that happens in our life good and bad, whatever we term as good and bad. Work at all areas of our life in balance to become a better person.

*Parinama is a ground breaking new method and should you want to know more about accelerating your performance contact Suzanne on [sravenall@effectivenesscompany.com](mailto:sravenall@effectivenesscompany.com)*

\* Some extracts drawn from the following sources: <http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/suzanne-ravenall-2008-08-15>; <http://www.businesswomen.co.za/company/effectiveness-company/>; <http://www.entrepreneurmag.co.za/advice/success-stories/case-studies/beyond-outsourcing-suzanne-ravenall/>