

# INTELLIGENCE

THE MAGAZINE FOR A NEW BREED OF BUSINESS LEADER

JULY ISSUE!

# WORLD CHANGING IDEAS

Inventive people everywhere are creating technologies for a shrinking planet. Inside, 25 innovations from around the world.

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## INNOVATION

New technologies making waves

## BIG IDEAS

Turning incubator ideas into breakthrough businesses

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# Suzanne Ravenall

## CEO, Beyond Outsourcing

### 1. What was your first job?

My first job, at 17, was as a clerk typing invoices, which lasted all of two months - since it didn't really get my creative juices flowing! I was then promoted, taking on the role of PA to a UK Travel Company Director, and then went on to work for the largest ferry company in the world - Stena Sealink as Area Sales Manager.

### 2. What is the best advice you have ever received, and who gave this advice to you?

I've received so much great advice over the years, that to single out one piece, is all but impossible. If you pushed me for one piece of advice - I would have to say Marcos Adams: "Train your thoughts not to see adversity - there is only opportunity - and with this challenge."

### 3. Have you always wanted to do what you're doing now?

Yes. When I was still very young I new I wanted to run my own business - I think I was probably influenced by my father. But I had no idea what it would look like. The creation of the business that I have today, came with time.

### 4. What do you wish you had known before taking on your current position?

All the things I know now that I didn't know seven years ago! Life would have been a lot easier! But I wouldn't change any of it - the last seven years have provided tremendous learning and insight into people, business and behaviour.



From PA to powerhouse CEO of Beyond Outsourcing, Suzanne Ravenall, has certainly sped up the corporate ladder, and having travelled all over the world by the age of 23, Suzanne came to South Africa to set up a Sales Operation for Vodacom (SA's first cellular communications network). In 1997 she set up her own Performance Improvement company, implementing a super-successful Outsource execution model, and as they say in the classics, has never looked back...

### 5. What is the single biggest opportunity you have ever had?

I think opportunities cross our paths every day - as people, we often just don't see them. But for me it was definitely the opportunity to start my current business, out of already existing relationships.

### 6. What was your personal best achievement ever?

Being driven in a Formula One car around Kyalami Race Track in 1.41 seconds - what a rush!

### 7. What was your professional best achievement ever?

Being nominated for Business Women of the Year 2004 (Nedbank), winning a commendation in the African Investor Business Women of the Year 2004, and more recently being nominated for the SA leg of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the World award (2005).

### 8. Which business leaders (local and international) do you most admire, and why?

For their amazing ability to create businesses, and transform them into 'superior' companies:

- Bill Gates
- Richard Branson
- Mark Shuttleworth,

For his insight, business thought, and unswerving desire to rock the boat and speak his mind - George Soros,

For his universal spiritual compassion and ability to bring a nation together - Nelson Mandela.

### 9. What company do you use for benchmarking your own efforts against?

Because our product is particularly unique it is difficult to use other organisations to benchmark against. We therefore, use best practice benchmarks for all that we do and keep a watchful eye on emerging Business Transformation Outsourcing companies.

### 10. What, for you, is the single most important issue for business in the year ahead?

Revenue & Delivery.

### 11. What is the most important driver of sustained economic development in South Africa?

The SMME Market is definitely the growing economic base in this country. As corporate enterprise, we have to find ongoing ways to support this level of the market.

### 12. What recent developments at Beyond Outsourcing are you most excited about?

We have just opened a business in Saudi Arabia, and we are currently in negotiation with local shareholding partners in Nigeria and Botswana for entry into the African Market. In addition we have just concluded our Black Empowerment deal for our local South African and African business. ☘