

Leading lights in our

Five of South Africa's emerging stars have been nominated for the 2004

One woman holds the purse strings of a railroad company, the other runs a world-renowned resort and another is the founder of an internationally renowned outsourcing company.

These are just some of the job descriptions of five of the country's top emerging businesswomen.

Yesterday, the Business Woman's Association (BWA) announced its five finalists for the 2004 Businesswoman of the Year Award. The award is in its 25th year and is sponsored by Nedbank.

Dr Namane Magau, the president of BWA, said the finalists were an inspiration to women.

"We take great care in selecting emerging stars in the

Candidates are chosen for their ability to inspire

business environment so we can spotlight business women leadership ... to inspire other women and make it possible for them to excel. Women are a competitive edge in business and leaders in the industry are recognising this," Magau said.

She said women were now slowly being recognised across the globe for their distinctive contribution to business.

"This is a century for women and it is wonderful to have these powerful women acknowledged," Magau said.

"I think when you look at these women you get a clear picture of how women have defined themselves and created new opportunities for themselves."

The winner will be announced on August 25.



ANN NUROCK

Chief executive, Grey Worldwide SA

When Nurock took over as managing director four years ago, she said her company was like its name: grey.

"Staff were very demotivated, there wasn't a vision, there were no goals and no black empowerment. But I looked at it, and realised you have to cut the elephant into chunks, and after that it wasn't that difficult."

In two years, the agency has improved in ranking from No 16 to 11. During this time, Grey was one of three finalists in the Mid-Size Agency of the Year in 2002/3 and was identified as one of the top five agencies in the Grey worldwide network.

In January 2003, Nurock was appointed CEO of Grey Worldwide SA and head of the African region.

"The biggest mistake a leader can make is to be arrogant," she says. "Caring and empathy is needed. You don't have to be a feminist bitch, you can be feminine and empathetic."



FUTHI MTOBA

Deputy chairperson, Deloitte

Mtoba is a woman of firsts. She became the first black woman appointed as a partner by Deloitte after joining the company in 1988 and the first black woman to be appointed to the firm's board. And she recently became the first black woman deputy chairperson.

Transformation is a journey that Deloitte started in the early 1980s, she says, and there has been significant progress over the past year.

Nine black partners were appointed in June and 16% of the company's partners and 38% of the executive leadership are black. "Of particular significance is the fact that three members of the board are women and 28 of our 220 partners are women."

Mtoba was also the first woman national president of the Association for the Advancement of Accountants in Southern Africa.

She is a founder of the Businesswomen's Association.