

Petunia Ludick, "You are powerful and deserving of every opportunity"



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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This [Women's Month](#), Bizcommunity showcased the incredible work of women in their respective fields of expertise.



Petunia Ludick, a Solutions Architect at Telkom

Petunia Ludick, a Solutions Architect at Telkom, shares her story this Women's Month.

■ *Can you tell us a bit about yourself?*

I was born and bred in the Northwest province in Rustenburg. I hold a B.Tech in Information Technology and I have received a top achiever award in my academic year. I am very energetic, flexible, reliable and possess excellent analytical and problem-solving skills. I enjoy hiking, travelling and meeting new people. I am always looking to expand my skill-set and qualifications to broaden my career opportunities.

■ *Tell us about your role as a Solutions Architect*

My responsibilities as a Solutions Architect include, but not limited to, architecting and designing comprehensive solutions that fulfils business requirements, and to compile associated documents to support business and IT requirements. I enjoy working with different people and the challenge of showing up every day to figure out IT solutions to enable business.

■ *Do you have any role models? If so, who?*

I generally do not have one specific person I look up to. I take different qualities that I like from different people to create my own unique role model.

■ *Tell us about your journey*

After graduating at the Vaal University in 2015 I joined Telkom as an intern, after my internship period I got hired as a permanent employee in the Enterprise Architecture department. At the time a working environment was new for me, however, it was exciting to learn new things and I used every opportunity that I got to ask relevant questions to the people who have been in the industry for a while. That is how I grew in the industry, moreover I also invested in my personal development, although I was a graduate from university I never stopped learning, every opportunity I got to learn anything new I made use of it to remain relevant.

■ *Are South African women getting enough of a chance to shine in the technology industry? If not, what needs to be done?*

I think women are many women doing great in the technology industry and making their marks with great leadership and amazing initiatives. I think these women are getting enough chance to shine.

■ *Could you list a few, if any, specific challenges females face in this industry? How do women overcome these challenges?*

Most of the women feel unheard in their current roles. Technology is male dominated field and gender bias can result in lesser attention to the contributions of women at the workplace. To overcome this, a mindset shift is critical. This can be done through coaching. It is also very critical for women to keep on having the courage to speak up in meetings so that our views can be heard regardless of the gender bias that is inherited.

The technology industry is changing. Taking a career break can make a woman lose touch with the trends and end up lacking skills to remain relevant. When they return to work they end up refusing to take on challenging tasks because they fear that will lack work and life balance. To overcome this challenges as a woman, you need to accept help when it is offered such as asking a family member to babysit or finding a full-time nanny, you need to understand that you cannot do everything by yourself. That way you will have enough time to keep up on the trends and upskilling while someone is assisting with house duties.

■ *How do you keep a work-life balance?*

The reality is that it is not easy to achieve a work-life balance, but it very critical. I allocate time to my family, and that I perform at my optimal level at work, I have taken time to practice balance in my life both professionally and personally to ensure that each critical element of my life is well-fed, from spirituality, emotional, physical, intellectual, social and professional. When it is work time I bring my whole self to work to deliver at my best, and when it is my family time I give them my very best to ensure they are not feeling left out.

■ *How is Telkom empowering women entrepreneurs in building successful businesses?*

Telkom has invested a lot in keeping women relevant in the telecommunications' industry. Every year the talent group in the company recruits a group of women in a program called Female Leadership Development Programme to equip them with the skills they need in the leadership positions and to ensure that they put that to practice when they return to their day-to-day activities to remain relevant.

■ *How do you think South Africa can help in the fight against GBV?*

I strongly believe that charity begins at home. Children should be raised with love and respect, and they should be taught that there is no need for violence to resolve issues, even in schools it should be reiterated that violence is not the solution. From a relationship perspective, they should be groomed to understand that in life; relationships come to an end and that doesn't necessarily mean anyone must die, and no one has a right to kill the other one.

■ *What advice do you have to share with the future generation of businesswomen?*

The advice I would share with the future generation in the telecommunications industry is that firstly, it is possible - if I can do it and others can do it, you can also do it. Secondly, the telecommunication industry is ever-changing therefore you need to keep up by upskilling yourself and feeding your brain with the latest trends in technology to remain relevant.

■ *As we celebrate Women's Month in South Africa. Do you have any words of encouragement for all the women out there?*

The words of encouragement I have is that, never ever for a second think that you are not valuable and powerful and deserving of every opportunity to pursue your dreams.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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