

Paying attention to the individual

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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Women's Month is the time in which we remember and honour the achievements of women throughout the ages - their strength, resolve, and extremely important place in this world.



Koo Govender, CEO of Dentsu

How are they seen through the eyes of media platforms, though? And how are their work experiences affected?

In these feature pieces, we speak to women who have significant experience over a wide range of media platforms to find out how representation of women looks in 2021. Today, we spoke with Koo Govender, the CEO of Dentsu South Africa.

Who is Koo Govender?

As CEO, Govender is responsible for 8 brands across the Johannesburg and Cape Town offices. "I would like to call myself a chief empowerment officer, as one of my core outputs, is to unleash potential and see my staff grow from strength to strength," she said.

Her career began at MultiChoice as a creative services marketing director. 9 years later, she was appointed as the marketing director for M-Net and became responsible for corporate marketing and communications. In 2013, she was group executive officer for VWV before becoming CEO of Dentsu South Africa in 2016.

“I always had a passion for marketing and understanding consumer behaviours and purchase decisions,” she said. “However, a strong love and passion for women empowerment, the social investment space, and seeing more communities being uplifted and thrive increased throughout my career.”

A woman in marketing

According to Govender, one of the biggest challenges through her career is her own lack of self-confidence, being a perfectionist, and the guilt of being a career woman, wife, and mother. “I have missed out on so many opportunities throughout my career searching for perfection and procrastination, which led to analysis paralysis,” she said.

In the early stages of her career, she felt the need to work twice as hard and constantly improve herself and her capabilities because she is a woman. Through many obstacles, she learned to always be prepared, well-researched, and present at every opportunity.

Representation in media

Govender believes that accurate representation of women is critical, especially because of the diversity that exists in South Africa. This representation is not only important in media - but also requires a diverse workforce.

“I have been in many situations where I have been one of the few female leaders around a boardroom table,” said Govender. “The diversity of thought amongst different genders is crucial to create a balanced, collaborative, creative, successful and thriving workplace.”

The media industry sees a radical imbalance in senior female leaders, and Govender strongly believes that we need to take accountability and rectify this issue.

Moving forward

Women’s place in work and representation in media is key to the way we see them in our communities. This discussion has been ongoing for a while - has it changed over time?

Look out for the next part in this series, where we speak with more women to find out more about these issues - and find recurring themes in what they say.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

Freelancer specialising in games and entertainment | My first loves are writing, music and video games

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