

Seventh provocative edition of *Top Performing Companies* appears

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Businessmen go through menopause – more correctly called andropause – and its effect can prove catastrophic to their business, their professional and their private lives. This is one of the more startling pieces of information contained in a feature article written by counsellor and executive coach Mary Ovenstone in the 2008 issue of the annual business periodical *Top Performing Companies*, publishing this week by Topco Media. Ovenstone is available for interviews along with the authors of the other features.



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In her piece entitled, “Listen to your Hormones – they’re sending you a business message” Ovenstone says: “Until a recent report by the World Health Organization, no one made much of an effort to find out what men experience in midlife. Male midlife patterns of moodiness, restlessness and irritability readily manifest in the workplace, yet there is little effort made to understand why, nor to re-examine the structure and the culture of the corporate environment accordingly. So - faced with an unsympathetic or indeed an uncomprehending corporate working world - andropausal businessmen have just two options in South Africa - either to bury their feelings, or to drop out and ‘go consulting!’” she writes.

In the section of the magazine discussing the topic: “The competitive advantage of nations” Professor Anton Roodt suggests that South Africa's strategic advantage may lie in its ability to forge national alliances based on co-operation rather than on competition. Noted libertarian thinker Neil Emerick provides an alternative view: “Peace, industry and freedom. In those three words I believe we have found the not-so-magical elixir for a healthy and growing economy. They form a pyramid, or hierarchy of core principles”, and, in a wide-ranging interview, Professor Eltie Links, the former South African ambassador to the European Union, provides yet further perspectives: “To get straight to a key point, I think we in South Africa need increasingly to generate competitive advantage through specialisation”.

In a section on environmental sustainability, Professor Adele Thomas tackles head-on some challenging questions: “Who is actually responsible for environmental damage – the businesses that make the products, or the consumers who demand the products? Do we have a moral obligation to future generations who do not yet exist? How valuable is nature, in and of itself? What is the good of a sustainable environment when thousands are dying of Aids? Do a few sponges at the tip of an island in the Mediterranean matter in the relative scheme of things when bombs are going off in Beirut some 243 kilometres away?” Separately, well-known financial writer Kevin Davie explores and dissects the mechanics of carbon trade, and economist Dawie Roodt makes a number of provocative claims on the causes of inflation “What is seriously upsetting is that so many economists actually argue that the current kind of inflation in South Africa is of such a nature that we have no choice but to accommodate it. There are even economists who argue that South Africa, as an emerging economy, *should* have inflation. In some weird way, economic growth and low inflation are perceived as incompatible.”

Finally, publication editor Colin Bower writes about the wholly new way of doing business being pioneered at diversified wine producer, Spier.

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