

# Breaking Barriers: Women in leadership and the empowerment of employability in South Africa

By [Pranisha Salikram](#), issued by [Regent Business School](#)

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*As we celebrate Women's Month in South Africa, it is essential to reflect on the incredible women who have been trailblazers in breaking barriers and attaining leadership positions across various industries. Women have defied societal norms, shattered glass ceilings, and proven time and again that they are a force to be reckoned with. However, despite these achievements, there is still much work to be done, especially in furthering women's employability and leadership opportunities. This is where business education plays a pivotal role.*



## The transformational power of tertiary study

Education has always been a powerful catalyst for change, and tertiary education, in particular, has the potential to transform not only individual lives but entire communities and societies which are for the most part traditionally patriarchal. For women in South Africa, pursuing a business education at a reputable institution can open doors to countless possibilities and pave the way for a more inclusive and prosperous future.

A business school environment offers much more than just academic learning. It is a melting pot of diverse perspectives, ideas, and experiences. By immersing themselves in such an environment, students can develop their skills, expand their networks, and grow as leaders. This exposure to a multitude of viewpoints helps cultivate empathy, emotional intelligence, and adaptability - crucial qualities for successful leaders in the modern world.

## Fostering leadership potential

Women have consistently demonstrated their ability to lead with empathy, resilience, and a collaborative spirit. Tertiary education institutions must recognise this potential and actively work to foster an environment where these qualities are nurtured in all students.

One of the primary benefits of tertiary study is the development of leadership skills. Business schools must offer a range of programs, workshops, and extracurricular activities that focus on leadership development. These opportunities provide

students with the tools they need to navigate complex business landscapes and tackle challenges head-on.

A responsibility lies with all education platforms to encourage women to take on leadership roles within the campus community, providing practical experience and building confidence. By having women at the helm of student organisations, case competitions, and other initiatives, business schools set a strong example for gender equality and inspire future leaders to rise and excel.

### **Breaking societal norms and encouraging diversity**

Women pursuing careers in traditionally male-dominated fields or climbing the corporate ladder have often faced unique challenges due to entrenched gender biases. Business schools play a critical role in dismantling these stereotypes and fostering an inclusive atmosphere.

Through a commitment to diversity and gender equality, business schools demonstrate their belief in the potential of all students, regardless of their gender. By actively promoting female representation within their faculty and leadership, these institutions not only set an example but also create a supportive environment where women can thrive.

Collaborations with corporations and organisations that prioritise gender diversity empower women to access internships, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities that can significantly boost their employability prospects.

### **Unleashing the power of employability**

The value of tertiary study becomes evident when considering the immense impact it has on employability. The business world seeks leaders with advanced skills, critical thinking abilities, and a global perspective. Business schools equip students with precisely these attributes.

Tertiary study at a reputable business school enhances employability in several ways:

- *Skill Development:* Business programs provide a comprehensive foundation in essential skills such as problem-solving, communication, and strategic thinking.
- *Networking Opportunities:* Business schools offer a vast network of alumni, industry connections, and corporate partnerships that can lead to internships, job opportunities, and mentorship.
- *Experiential Learning:* Through internships, consulting projects, and real-world simulations, students gain practical experience that sets them apart in the job market.
- *Confidence and Leadership:* Business schools empower students to step into leadership roles, making them more attractive to potential employers seeking dynamic leaders.
- *Global Outlook:* In an interconnected world, businesses seek leaders with a global mindset. Business schools often offer international exchange programs and global immersion experiences.

As we celebrate the accomplishments of women in leadership during Women's Month, we must also acknowledge the work ahead. Empowering women in the business world requires a collective effort from educational institutions, corporations, and society as a whole.

A business education at a reputable school can be a transformative experience for women seeking to break barriers and unleash their leadership potential. By embracing diversity, fostering inclusive environments, and equipping students with the skills needed to excel, business schools play a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and creating a brighter future for all.

For aspiring leaders and change-makers, the value of tertiary study in shaping career trajectories cannot be overstated. So, let us celebrate Women's Month by recognising the indomitable spirit of women in leadership and reaffirming our commitment to empowering women in the world of business and beyond. Together, we can build a more equitable and prosperous future for South Africa and the world.

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