

Jeánné Esterhuizen - a woman of steel in the motor industry

Born in Barkley-East, in the Eastern Cape, Jeánné Esterhuizen has always had a passion and love for beautiful cars and bikes. Technicolour opened in 1994 as a small micro-enterprise and in under fifteen years has grown into a large enterprise. Today it is rated as the best overall Motor Body Repairer in the Free State.



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Born in Barkley-East, in the Eastern Cape, Jeánné Esterhuizen has always had a passion and love for beautiful cars and bikes.

In 1994, she opened the doors of Technicolor, a small micro-enterprise in the motor body repair industry. Fast forward to today, Technicolor is rated as the best overall motor body repairer in the Free State.

Frustrated with onerous legislation, Esterhuizen realised she needed to expand her influence from a small business space into the larger industry where she could influence and impact policy.

Who is Jeánné Esterhuizen?

As national president of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation, Free State and national chairperson of the RMI, chairperson of the RMI National Training Committee, national and regional chairperson of South African Motor Body Repairers Association (SAMBRA) as well as her membership and representation on a number of other boards, Esterhuizen is integrally involved in policy, transformation, sustainability, wage negotiations and a number of other key human resource issues impacting the motor industry and its employees in South Africa.

Jeáanne Esterhuizen - a woman of steel - is therefore seen as a powerhouse to be reckoned with, bringing in a refreshing and dynamic perspective to an industry still largely dominated by men.

This Women's Month, she shares some of her most important insights.

▣ ***What advice can you give other women wanting to enter the industry?***

If you love technology and commerce and are interested to know how beautiful and powerful vehicles and motorcycles are designed, built, maintained and repaired, then this is the industry for you. It is also an industry in which you can do well. We actually have four women on our RMI board which is good for any industry.

A large majority of our member associations also employ women to engage with customers, handle the administration and human resource functions as well as the ordering of supplies and so on. Many of these businesses start as family-owned businesses so mothers, wives and daughters all get involved.

▣ ***What are your most important life lessons?***

- You need a social conscience. You need to be part of the bigger picture and must share your knowledge and successes.
- No person is ever an island. Mentors, friends and colleagues play a significant part in one's own personal development and growth.
- Never compromise your values.
- Always learn more than you need to – superficial knowledge is dangerous.
- Be dynamic, willing to buy into life-long learning and work and enjoy finding solutions to complex problems.

▣ ***What's your biggest disappointment?***

None. Life is precious and every disappointment has a lesson hidden in it. Best to search until you find what it is to prevent it from reoccurring.

▣ ***What two attributes do you think are the most important for success?***

Innovative thinking and a fundamental belief that you are unique and have a specific purpose in this life.

▣ ***What advice can you give to other business owners?***

- Always grow your business in relation to what it can handle. Don't be overwhelmed by other people's success. Learn to differentiate yourself from others.
- Live at the doorstep of experts and learn.
- Share life experiences so others can learn and benefit from them.
- Never look at your success in isolation. Understand the place and value of acquired knowledge.
- Only surround yourself with good people and worthy causes.
- Add value wherever you go and you will have the ability to give back to society.
- Be motivated by watching your own efforts translating into success for other businesses.

▣ ***How important do you think mentors are?***

They are everything. Surround yourself with good people who are prepared to share their knowledge and expertise and then pay it forward.

▣ ***How important is passion in this industry?***

It is the key to success. I have always loved beautiful cars and bikes.

▣ ***What advice do you have for other women in a male-dominated environment?***

Leave your pride at home. I was brought up to believe only in the ability entrusted to me, so I have no pride when I walk into a boardroom and that has helped me a great deal to function optimally.

▣ ***What qualities make women good in the workplace?***

I believe women tend to work harder than men, are more precise in the execution of tasks, easily adapt to change and are more socially conscious. These qualities are needed in business, specifically due to the types of challenges any modern day business faces.

▣ ***What two attributes do you think are the most important for success?***

Innovative thinking and a fundamental belief that you are unique and have a specific purpose in this life.

▣ ***Lastly, what's your favourite saying?***

Live every day as if it is your last.

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