

4 women in engineering contributing to ABB's success

Engineering has traditionally been very male dominated, and ABB has been working to diversify the industry by creating opportunities for women. In celebration of International Women in Engineering Day (INWED) on 23 June, ABB has highlighted four individuals who are making a significant contribution to the success of the company.

Samantha Zitha



ABB tender and quotations specialist Samantha Zitha

“Women in engineering should never be apologetic about their gender, nor should they be contrite about their abilities and talents. It is incumbent on contemporary women to transcend the glass ceiling imposed by society. Women should not be fearful of being the initiator of change, be it in society or in the business world,” says tender and quotations specialist Samantha Zitha.

“Young women entering male-dominated industries should never do themselves the disservice of negating their abilities and talents to appease their male counterparts. It is important that they make their presence felt and put their best foot forward. Women need to stand out and step out of their comfort zones to be able to achieve beyond their wildest dreams.”

Zitha has both a BA and National Diploma in Electrical Engineering. Her role in medium voltage secondary switchgear involves offering feasible, market friendly, competitive solutions to customers, together with customer relations and project management. She has also commenced training as a sales specialist to expand her role at ABB even further.

In the space of five years, Zitha has been nominated to take part in the ABB Life-Leadership Programme in Dubai in 2019, with the aim to understand and implement the ABB culture, strategy, and business model into one's daily work, deepen the linkage between oneself and the company, and create mutual value. This afforded her the opportunity to interact with young minds from all over the Africa and Middle East region, imparting knowledge and practical experience.

Mmataseleng Precious Lefoka

Engineer-in-training Mmataseleng Precious Lefoka has a BTech in Industrial Engineering and is currently a master's candidate. She has almost two years' working experience in industrial engineering, having worked in paint manufacturing and now at ABB. Lefoka says a career-changing highlight has been heading up the Quality Wins project to make production processes leaner and improve ergonomics.

As an engineer-in training, her first responsibility when joining ABB was simply to learn. “I had never heard of a switchgear before,” she admits. Now she has assumed the role of an improvement officer. “Every day I make small improvements around the production floor. I work with the logistics, supply chain, engineering, and production departments to streamline our processes.” All the improvements implemented by Lefoka to date, whether a change in layout or work process, have impacted on ABB's bottom line time in terms of cost- and time-savings.



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Lefoka cites the challenges she faces in her role as stemming from the difficulty that people can have in sustaining any new work processes put in place. As a woman in a traditionally male-dominated environment, she adds that men can be hesitant in taking instructions from her, especially given her youth. Her advice to women contemplating a similar career path is simple: “Love what you do and you will never work a day in your life. I know this seems like a cliché, but I love my job. Every day I wake up knowing I will improve someone’s work profile, and it makes me happy. Industrial engineering has many possibilities, and you should always be open to learn. Never stop learning and asking questions.”

Mannana Johanna Nape

Project engineer Mannana Johanna Nape studied at the Vaal University of Technology and obtained a National Diploma and BTech in Electrical Engineering. She joined ABB as a graduate trainee in 2012, gaining experience in control and instrumentation (C&I) at different sites, including coal power stations and solar plants. She has progressed to project engineer at Kusile in Mpumalanga, the world’s fourth-largest coal-fired power station. As a project engineer based in commissioning, she is responsible for commissioning field instrumentation and carrying out fault-finding on control systems and field instruments. She also has the added flexibility of being able to support the engineering manager.

Apart from being in a male-dominated industry, another challenge is having to work twice as hard as her male colleagues to prove and demonstrate her capabilities in the industry, as well as being underestimated in a role traditionally seen as requiring physical strength. Nape’s advice is clear: “Do not back down. Follow your dreams and be confident in what you do.” She lauds ABB for having mentorship programmes in place that not only encourage young women but assists them to engage with related networks. Here Nape has played a key role in creating a mentoring project entitled ‘Promoting and improving gender diversity’.



ABB project engineer Mannana Johanna Nape

Ramathabatha Joyce Moganedi

Ramathabatha Joyce Moganedi has a BTech Electrical Engineering (process control and instrumentation), a management advancement program (MAP), and a Master of Business Administration (MBA). In her nearly three years at ABB to date, she has been recognised and nominated as the PAEN Segment Lead for Water, nominated as ABB Energies Industries Ambassador, and nominated as MEA HUB Team-Adaptive Execution Champion.



Ramathabatha Joyce Moganedi, ABB Power and Water Market, sub-Saharan Africa

Moganedi's role encompasses overall growth and responsibility for the ABB Power and Water Market in the sub-Saharan region. This includes strategy development from a solutions sales point of view. Her challenges are twofold, firstly with the power sector being male-dominated, and secondly being a woman in a technical sales environment. Her advice to her fellow women is to be self-confident, persevere and to make a lasting positive impact on other people's lives.

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