

'We need to lead with intent, authenticity and purpose'

By  Juanita Pienaar

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Katie Mohamed is a dynamic, charismatic television broadcaster and businesswoman. As a marketing and communication executive, she is the CEO and shareholder at BrandFusion, an integrated business hub founded on the core principles of "collaborative intelligence".

From her roots in the fashion industry and her broadcasting finesse to her formidable expertise in the cut-and-thrust of an exacting sales and marketing portfolio, Katie has an enviable track record of excellence in the media and marketing industry.

We caught up with Mohamed, who recently hosted a successful W-Suit Summit, to tell us more about the event and where it's headed, her career in marketing so far and some of the challenges women in the industry face on a daily basis.

■ ***Please tell us more about yourself and what it is you do.***

From my roots in the fashion industry to my broadcasting experience to a business owner in the marketing and communication industry, where we work on the core principle of "collaborative intelligence". As a successful entrepreneur, I have learnt about how many gifts we have, such as resilience, logic and magic.

■ ***Congrats on hosting a successful W-Suite Summit recently. Tell us more about the event and what needs it fulfils in the industry.***

The inaugural W-Suite Summit was a platform aimed at sparking conversation, dialogue and action towards shifting the balance of power in leadership and bringing more women to the table.

The summit brought together 300 women and men, from captains of industry and politicians to business owners on discussions of a way forward on advancing a practical dialogue on the role of creating a strong female economy. How do we co-create this culture that is inclusive and progressive?

■ ***What excites you most about the event and where it's going?***

Wow! This initiative has become a collaborative conversation that also has men as allies in this global agenda. This platform will help elevate and foster equal economic participation.

“ *"Women economic empowerment is not only woman to woman" says W-Suite founder Katie Mohamed during her Founders address [#WSuite#WSuiteSummit2019#LeadLikeWomen pic.twitter.com/x1HsFTH5te](https://twitter.com/x1HsFTH5te)— W-Suite ZA (@WSuiteZA) [August 7, 2019](#)* ”

■ ***What do you love most about your career in marketing and communications?***

That evolves and you can be creative and innovative. It allows me to be a rainmaker.

■ ***List a few of the challenges for women in the marketing and advertising and some that you might have personally faced in your career.***



CEO and shareholder at BrandFusion, Katie Mohamed. Image supplied.

Women are constrained from achieving board and leadership roles within this industry. Although most companies acknowledge that a different approach is required to account for women and express satisfaction with efforts to date, just one in five actually tailors the way it sells; the most popular strategies are to add more women to the leading sales team, change internal processes and adapt the negotiation approach.

Harassment in the workplace has often come up as a huge challenge women face in this sector and we often try to apologise because of the constant social activities we engage in.

As a brown girl, I often have felt that we have had an even tougher time, as I have noticed that some girls of colour might have positions but no decision-making powers.

“ We constantly are short-changed and I feel we have to try harder for leaders in this industry. We still live in a “Mad Men world”. Most women are hopping from brands to brands and agencies to agencies because we find a minimal or maybe no succession plan. ”

My journey at the broadcaster that allowed me to follow a passion of doing an air talk show.
■ **Any career highlights you're particularly proud of?**

■ **What are you most looking forward to/enjoying so far?**

Following my passion into a purpose. Seeing how creating a movement can shift the narrative and vocabulary of gender equality.



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■ **What's at the top of your to-do list (at work)?**

To create legacy projects and watch them flourish.

■ **What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?**

Find Your Why: A Practical Guide for Discovering Purpose for You and Your Team by Simon Sinek.

■ **Tell us something about yourself not generally known?**

Love cooking and hosting people, watching them enjoy the culinary experience.

■ **As it is Women's Month, what is your advice or encouragement to other women in business?**

We need to take the lead and making the shift starts with re-imagining the vocabulary of power and leadership. We often talk about empowerment, but what does this look like in our lives and careers? We need to achieve our full potential; we need to be more deliberate and have strategic interventions.

We need to lead with intent, authenticity and purpose. How can we build a resilience value chain to connect and collaborate with each other, so we can build this strong female economy?

You can follow Mohamed on [Twitter](#) or connect with her on [LinkedIn](#) and for more on BrandFusion you can visit the [website](#) or follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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