

Deidre Fryer's on top of her game



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Deirdre Fryer, product manager for Africa at SYSPRO Africa has been at the company for a long time and is one of the high ranking executives in the business. This [Women's Month](#), we chat to her to find out what it takes to be a woman in the tech industry



■ *Could you describe a typical day in your job?*

A typical day consists of customer, partner and business meetings; presentations and calls; writing articles and responding to journalists; industry and product research; solution designs and input; software engagement and learning, data analysis and coffee...lots and lots of coffee!

■ *What did you want to be when you grew up?*

I wanted to be an archaeologist

■ *How did you get into the ICT arena?*

By accident, while finishing my studies I took a temp receptionist job at SYSPRO an ERP software company and the rest, as they say, is history

■ *What was the best advice anyone ever gave you?*

If people aren't adopting something new that you are introducing, you haven't sold it to them properly. Show them the value it will add to their lives, then you will get buy-in and support.

■ ***What advice do you have for the future generation of women wanting to get into the tech space?***

Just do it, technology does not understand gender!

■ ***Who or what is your biggest motivation?***

The 'who' is my family. I want my daughters to be proud of who their mom is and does.

The 'what' is the word impossible, I believe anything is possible just somethings just take longer to solve or do.

■ ***Are South African women getting enough of a chance to shine in the tech industry?***

I think woman are getting more of an opportunity each day than we ever had in the past. Like all things, there is always room for improvement.

■ ***As a female business leader, what's the least and most exciting aspect of your workday?***

Least exciting is waking up, I have never been a morning person. The most exciting is brainstorming new ideas, approaches, strategies and solutions.

■ ***Women are considered to be natural problem solvers. Why do you think this is perfect in the tech industry?***

Technology is all about solving problems and therefore natural problem solvers are key to the industry.

■ ***What challenges have you had since starting out?***

Not everyone has your back and there are people who will throw you under a bus to get ahead.

■ ***How did you overcome these challenges?***

By remembering to stay true to myself, being fair and kind to others, it all pays off in the end. Loyalty and trust is earned, not bought.

■ ***What has been the biggest highlight in your career?***

Knowing I made a difference. One example is by starting and managing our internship program for four years and then seeing those individuals grow and achieve in their careers.

■ ***Could you list a few, if any, specific challenges females face in this industry?***

I think, as females, we believe feelings and emotions are not allowed in the workplace, so we hide them and bottle them up, this can have a very negative impact on our well being.

■ ***What is your advice in overcoming these challenges?***

Learn to channel your emotions constructively. Our feelings and emotions give business and solutions to problems a different perspective, embrace it.

■ ***What trends do you predict in tech in the coming years?***

Virtualisation is going to be bigger than we can imagine. I believe from schooling, to work, to be creative most of our time in the future will be spent in virtual worlds.

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