



Press Release
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Jolène Leeuwner-Maritz wins coveted SACCI 2014 “Woman in Business Award”

“Men at work, women in the kitchen” Say WHAT? Fast forwarding to the 21st century.... Driven and completely committed to impacting the world in a positive manner, 32year old Jolène Leeuwner-Maritz, a passionate and vibrant individual, was recently the recipient of the notably prestigious “Woman in Business Award” (SACCI 2014), presented by the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry. With a firm belief in gender equality, this award is proof of Jolène’s hard work and ability to weather not only the inevitable storms faced with being an Entrepreneur, but also the psychological price that accompanies it.

Jolène developed an interest in the protection of Human Rights and subsequently chose law as her main field of study, successfully contributing to her industry in addition to creating a one-of-a-kind sophisticated and effectively integrated legal communication system, not to mention the several accolades acquired over the past 5 years.

Content with making the Rule of Law accessible to her community, Jolène has subsequently moved forward in establishing several additional businesses including: Leeuwmarm Consult (Pty) Ltd; Bon-Jolé (Pty) Ltd and Jolé Designs (Pty)

Ltd, which has successfully branched out into Jolé Printed, Jolé Corporate, Jolé Luxury, Jolé Exclusive and Jogi Designs.

Jolé Designs (Pty) Ltd – creates, produces and markets handbags, fashion accessories, beauty products, décor items and artwork linked to a range of female characters. Each character comes from a specific demographic – Southern African, West African, Zulu, Indian, Turkish, Greek, German, French, Brazilian, Spanish, Russian and Afrikaans.

She points out: “To succeed as a nation we need to export more. This means we have to exploit our resources, and not just minerals. We have to optimise every special advantage we’ve got. Our diversity is a wonderful asset. On a business level, we shouldn’t just talk about diversity, we should commercialise it. That means creating a face, a story and a product. In the process, the Entrepreneur can support the local creative community and provide an international showcase for their work.”

Asked about her view on Entrepreneurship in Africa, she replied: “As Africans we don’t believe we can compete internationally...but I believe we do and can.”

Joléne is already exploring export potential for products from the Jolé Designs range.

She notes: “Because government has failed to protect so many local manufacturers, small value-adding producers have to import fabrics, crockery and other items. As the rand drops, import costs rise. Instead of creating a ministry to help small business, government should do a better job of encouraging local manufacture through subsidies, tax breaks and tariff protection.”

In regards to her view on the Creative Economy, Jolène's response was: "South Africans are creative, energetic and resourceful. Even the smallest South African entrepreneur could have big impact if we only had the government support that is the norm in other developing countries."

A Proudly South African woman pursuing her dreams and rightful place in this world; Jolène Leeuwner-Maritz is definitely an individual to watch out for.

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