

Kolosa Madikizela, Pragma's First Female Managing Director, Will Be Sharing Valuable Insights Into "Diversity As A Competitive Advantage In The Workplace" At This Year's Saama Conference

Kolosa Madikizela is the recently-appointed Managing Director for Pragma's African region. She first joined Pragma in 2014 as Cape Regional Manager and has since added considerable value to the company through her extensive knowledge and skill on facilities management and maintenance strategies, as well as her ability of inclusive, effective strategic decision-making. One of her responsibilities as MD is to ensure that Pragma's culture of diversity and inclusiveness remains intact.

Kolosa will be one of the keynote speakers at this year's SAAMA conference. Each year, this event provides a unique convergence of networking, learning and interaction. This year, the Southern African Asset Management Association (SAAMA) is hosting the 4th annual physical asset management conference from 5 to 7 June 2017 at the Lord Charles Hotel, Somerset West, Cape Town.

Although the conference will, once again, mainly focus on asset management as a holistic, systematic, dynamic and integrated process that allows the optimised return on investment, this year's speaker line-up promises to offer new ideas and approaches to ensure more effective, efficient and productive workplaces. The carefully-selected topics will stimulate innovative thinking and even if certain topics will not cover specific technical topics, these will provide useful and practical advice and the opportunity for delegates to cut through the clutter in order to apply best practices in the workplace.

Kolosa Madikizela's topic for this year's presentation at the SAAMA conference is: "Diversity as a competitive advantage: Exploring how diverse teams can increase an engineering company's competitiveness."

"I specifically chose this topic because diversity through robust transformation is a serious agenda not only globally, but also for any company wanting to succeed and grow during these challenging economic times, and more particularly in South Africa," Says Madikizela.

Delegates can look forward to some interesting take-away points to be applied in the workplace. This include practical advice on how to focus on diversity and inclusion and how to bridge the gap in finding highly talented people that will allow transformation through establishing diverse and inclusive working environments in which all employees can thrive.

"Our country's demographics have changed, and will continue to change. Evolving social, cultural, and political norms, as well as changing demographic patterns, have had an impact on the composition of the population in our cities, with urbanisation on a consistent rise. In line with social and political dynamics, businesses also have to adapt and rethink the way in which they conduct their daily

activities. They too, have to learn to connect across cultures or else they are sure to be left behind. In the South African business fraternity, there is no more time left to only think about or plan for transformation. Years of planning now has to result in action. It is now the time to act, and act fast,” adds Madikizela.

“Most organisations have the objective of sustainable growth. Without diversity, this objective is just not feasible. Organisations, including those in the physical asset management industry, are facing many challenges such as increased competition, lack of innovation, fast-paced technological developments, lack of competencies and skills as well as speed of expansion and growth. These are real challenges that we have to overcome in order to achieve sustainable growth. Various studies have shown that through diverse teams, organisations increase their ability to come up with well-developed and scrutinized tangible solutions to most challenges,” says Madikizela.

People do business with people they trust and can relate to - it is a common fact in the business world. Clients want to deal with people who are a reflection of our democratic society. They want to feel comfortable in working with diverse teams and organisations that make them feel that their needs are understood, well researched, respected and addressed appropriately.

This is not just a “South African” challenge. Global demographic patterns and trends as well as social and cultural shifts are putting increased pressure on, especially South African organisations, to focus on building diverse workforces that can address and solve problems across all spectrums of our societies. Engineering companies are even under more pressure to come up with better engineered and innovative solutions, and these can only be achieved through highly skilled, diverse and competent teams.

“I hope to leave the SAAMA delegates with “food-for-thought” on how their businesses can be enhanced by ensuring that diverse thinking and decision making are effectively entrenched within the culture and fibre of their organisations, and that they recognise the importance of diverse teams in strengthening the competitiveness of all engineering organisations,” Madikizela concluded.

More about Kolosa Madikizela

Kolosa holds a Master of Technology Degree in Construction Management from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. As an activist for women's' rights, her research topic for her Master of Technology Degree in Construction Management was centred on the career progression of females in historically male dominant industries such as Property and Construction. The research paper, Influences on Women's Choices of Careers in Construction: A South African study, was published in the Australasian Journal of Construction Economics and Building 2010. The Australasian Journal of Construction Economics & Building is recognised internationally as a leading source on the business of building. To connect with Kolosa, visit her profile on [LinkedIn](#).