

## **FlairSA: South Africa's newest Union**

"Women currently constitute 52% of the South African population. Women are here to stay." This was how Advocate Ronel de Jager introduced South Africa's newest Union on Friday 8 March 2019 at its launch in Killarney, Johannesburg.

Focusing specifically on Gender Equality issues in the workplace, Flair SA founders Adv de Jager and businesswoman Paballo Sambo understand the challenges faced by South Africans due to gender-based discrimination.

"Did you know that unmarried men earn less than their married counterparts for the same job?" Adv De Jager said in an earlier eNCA Morning News Today interview on launch day. "This is the type of discrimination we will address, along with the issues faced by women and the LGBTQI community."

Founding partner Sambo noted that professionals dealing with all labour related matters, including employment contract review, grievances, unfair labour practices and unfair dismissal could now take advantage of FlairSA membership to have a collective voice on their side, as well as legal and business advice.

Sambo served on Boards in the textile industry, manufacturing industry and IT industry, and currently heads up Pabala Consulting, focusing on business strategy and business development in South Africa and across Africa.

Sambo and De Jager also have a private equity company, BizAlliance, focused on inclusivity of females in the workplace.

## **Taking the bold route**

Flair SA's launch was opened by Johnny Eliades, empowerment coach and motivational speaker. Keynote speaker was Audrey Mothupi, Chief Executive Officer of global financial innovation and technology disruptor Systemic Logic Group, and master of ceremonies was Neville de Lucia, Development Director of Dale Carnegie Training.

"Be bold enough to belong in whatever situation you find yourself in," Mothupi urged. "Be bold enough to believe you can be, because you can. But more importantly, while you can and while you belong, remember to nurture yourself."

Mothupi added: "I challenge Flair not only to be a robust union with Paballo and Ronel working on labour law and training initiatives, but to encourage members – especially women – to look after their emotional, physical and mental well-being in the workplace too."

Mothupi serves on the boards of Pick 'n Pay and Brainworks Capital; and is a non-executive director at Life Healthcare Group. She is also the Chairperson of Orange Babies of South Africa - a non-profit organisation focused on the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV/Aids and the care of Aids orphans and the Numeric Board of South Africa - an organisation focused on helping young South African's excel in Maths, while training world-class Maths teachers.

With this kind of backing, Flair SA is set to take on gender discrimination across all sectors of the gender spectrum, while empowering members to be professional and command the respect professional staff members and bosses deserve. "When we walk into the work place we are professional. We leave everything else behind and we only want professional respect in the workplace," Sambo said.

"We must be able to be who we are at home, at work too - and we deserve professional respect regardless of who we are and what our identity may be."

### **What sets Flair SA apart?**

Adv De Jager is currently CEO of BizArmour, which specialises in the issues of compliance, risk mitigation, unions, BBBEE and transformation. She notes that five of the basic values of Flair SA are fairness, equality, responsibility, fairness and accountability.

De Jager says being proactive and having influence in the workplace will give members a massive resource that ensures that they can rely on when they are at their most vulnerable.

"Most often, labour and discrimination issues are brought out after the fact. Membership of FlairSA means that we can guide people through the disciplinary or legal processes in real time, when they most need support."

Sambo adds that Flair SA, as a union, is there to assist its member during a situation and not merely help to "mop up and educate" afterwards. "Whether it's sexual harassment, discriminatory behaviour based on pregnancy, gender or any other injustice in the workplace, Flair SA is determined to create change in South African workplaces."

The founders explain that as a Union, Flair SA has rights that private individuals simply do not have. Says Adv De Jager: "42% of the Labour Relations Act focuses only on the rights of unions. Why should we not using these rights to advance our rights as individuals in the workplace? This is the strength of Flair as a union."

De Jager also highlights the facts that all employees have the right to join a union, through Freedom of Association, entrenched in Section 18 of the Constitution. Section 4 of the Labour Relations Act confirms this. "So even if a letter of appointment states that a staff member may not join a Union, the Constitution prevails."

To wrap up what is being dubbed a "highly successful launch of a much-needed organisation", a short address was given by lawyer and Youth President Sharise Smith. This was followed by the official cutting of the cake and an interactive audience blessing by Dr John Tibane, a medical and development consultant.

To join Flair SA at just R100.00 per month, visit the website at [www.flairsa.co.za](http://www.flairsa.co.za) and discover the benefit of having a Union and a call centre in your corner of the workplace.

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