

'Don't let your fears be bigger than your dreams' - Mpho Sebelebele of Uber SA

 By [Robin Fredericks](#)

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Mpho Sebelebele, Communications Lead for Uber South Africa

Coming from an agency background, Sebelebele believes it was a great training ground for establishing herself as the professional that she is today. Her current role allows her to push beyond boundaries and as a result, she continues to challenge herself with each milestone.

We catch up with Sebelebele as she shares her journey, some of her career highlights and her message for Women's Month.

Tell us about yourself - your background?

My name is Mpho Sebelebele and I head up communications for Uber South Africa. I am married with three highly independent girls. I am a public relations expert by profession and I have been privileged to work in an agency environment when I started, which has laid a strong foundation for the professional that I am today.

I am a young professional that looks at the world as one big opportunity to be pursued. I believe that hard work and dedication can get you far in life. What distinguishes me as a person is the ability to drive productivity at the highest level of stress with humility.

What do you love most about your work?

I like the fact that every day is different. No matter how much planning I do for the following day, I am almost guaranteed

that it will pan out differently. I am a planner by nature, so you can imagine that it can sometimes be challenging. However, I have learnt to adapt to the changing needs of my everyday requirements, and have even come to love the unpredictability of it.

▣ ***Who are the women who have had a particularly positive influence on your life?***

My mom has played a tremendous role in who I am today. The one lesson from her I carry with me today is to believe in the impossible and to always invest in myself. Additionally, I grew up watching The Oprah Winfrey Show, and while there were many lessons I drew from her talk show, the one thing I learnt from her is that my dreams are bigger than my fears.

▣ ***What are your tips for climbing the career ladder in your field, particularly as a woman?***

I have three principles that I live by when it comes to my career, which I hope can help many women in the corporate space:

- Superwoman is a cartoon character, and I am only human. Knowing when to ask for help, knowing when you need to escape the craziness to restore yourself, and saying NO can be a powerful tool in balancing the many roles that we women play.
- Know your self-worth - less the rands and cents and more of purpose-driven leadership. Being a woman of purpose can be the most liberating space that one can occupy, and I wish more women would claim this space.
- Don't sweat the small stuff because your blood pressure cannot afford it. Be intentional about focusing your energy on the things that matter - remember that your mental health matters.

▣ ***In your view, where does the value lie in a diverse, inclusive work environment?***

The business case for inclusive work has been made so many times across the globe, but yet, we still sit with a massive gender parity gap in the corporate space. I worry when I hear people asking if South Africa is ready for a female president. How are we asking such questions when we say we are an inclusive country? The time to recognise the true value that women bring to the economy is now. In my view, women give corporations a competitive edge, and if that's not valuable enough, then I don't know what is.

▣ ***Do you think your industry could benefit from more female leadership?***

Absolutely. The tech industry is a historically male-dominated industry, as with many sectors in the country. The rise of female leaders in the industry has given tech companies such as Uber and Facebook an edge because women help diversify the corporate environment to make it lucrative for future female leaders to enter the market. Women bring a different perspective which leads to more inclusive and stronger business decisions.

▣ ***How do you maintain a work-life balance?***

I don't plan it. I just do it. Every day you have to make trade-offs where you have to prioritise family during working hours and work during family time, but you have to define for yourself what that balance looks like so that you make the right calls. The last thing you want is to feel like you are cheating on your family with your work, or vice versa.

▣ ***What have been some of your career highlights?***

My best career highlight, which my experience has prepared me for, is leading an in-country comms function for one of the most recognisable brands in the world - Uber. So far it has been an exhilarating experience filled with enriching lessons.

▣ ***What advice would you give your younger self?***

Leadership is not defined by a title. Lead from wherever you are and be intentional about making your mark with each career step. Your reputation is your most valuable asset in the corporate world.

▣ ***What is your message to women this Women's Month?***

The world is full of possibilities so don't let your fears be bigger than your dreams.

ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

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