

Water from thin air: Keamogetswe Matsho is championing new environmental realities

By [Chamdré Emma Kippie](#), issued by [Topco Media](#)

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She's a 2020 Standard Bank Top Woman Young Achiever finalist and is extremely passionate about the development of Africa, building brands and uplifting startups, Keamogetswe Matsho is a woman on top of her game right now and she won't be slowing down anytime soon.

Aqua Air Africa (Pty) Ltd is an atmospheric water technology solutions company, based in Pretoria, which utilises atmospheric water generating technology to produce water from air; aiming to tackle the critical scarcity of potable water in South Africa. The organisation offers commercial and industrial solutions, geared towards construction, installation and commissioning of atmospheric water generating plants to alleviate potable water scarcity. They also specialise in domestic and office dispenser solutions, providing portable dispensers for mid-level potable water capacity needs.

What is your vision for Aqua Air Africa (Pty) Ltd. going forward? What good would you like to come from it?

My vision for Aqua Air is for its bottled water range to be available at every retail outlet in South Africa and its neighboring countries. I cannot wait to see it become a household brand, even beyond my tenure as its CEO. Through its growth, Aqua Air will create more jobs, prioritising the recruitment and procurement from the previously marginalised. The growth of Aqua Air represents the growth of many in the communities that Aqua Air sets up atmospheric water generation plants.

Please could you tell us a bit about your background. What led you down this career path?

My career path has been non-linear. I have worked in various industries including heavy duty vehicle manufacturing. My background is in strategy, brand and marketing. I was headhunted from my previous employment and was awarded the opportunity to build this amazing company and brand from the ground up. As a person who appreciates challenges, I knew that this was the perfect opportunity for me, and I will forever be grateful to Moipone Group Investments (Pty) Ltd.

Do you have any tips for working as a female industrialist in SA?

- Believe in yourself; there are many people in the room who doubt your capabilities - do not be one of them.
- In the words of Bonang Mohale's book title, lift as you rise. It is important to have a clear vision and agenda for your career. Mine was to take every young woman, who was seeking opportunities in the water technology sector, with me.
- Know your industry inside out - do the research.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions.
- Hire people who are brilliant at what they do.

What is your 'why'? Why are you passionate about the work you do?



Keamogetswe Matsho

My why: representation matters. Through my continuously and ever-evolving journey, I want young Black women to know that they belong in every boardroom and industry.



LEGAL

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Have you read any books or listened to any podcasts that have inspired you and your career thus far?

My top three books would have to be *Shoe Dog: A Memoir by the Creator of Nike* by Phil Knight, *Women, Work & the Art of Savoir Faire: Business Sense & Sensibility* by Mireille Guiliano and *Lift As You Rise* by Bonang Mohale.

In terms of podcasts, I enjoy *The Tim Ferris Show*, the *Tony Robbins Podcast* and listening to *Freakonomics Radio*.

How did you reach your level of success, given the continent's gender gap, especially among leadership?

My career trajectory is a result of women and men in corporate who believed that given the opportunity, I would excel. Success is a result of preparation, competence and being confident in what you bring to the table.

Are there any career highlights you're proud of thus far? And what projects are you currently working on at Aqua Air Africa?

The biggest highlight for me to date is building Africa's first atmospheric water generation technology plant in Pretoria. The plant has the capacity to produce 10,000 litres of water per day from air. I am currently working on a few exciting new projects beyond Aqua Air, which will be revealed later in the year.

Outside of work, are you involved in any extracurricular activities and/or community outreach projects?

I mentor young women and belong to a dynamic squash team (we play every Saturday morning!).

Who or what inspires you on a daily basis?

My mother and my grandmother are my biggest inspiration. Their resilience and ability to rise above their circumstances fuels me daily. I have a huge sense of responsibility to do and be better for women before me and the generation that will come after me.



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What advice do you have for young women in South Africa who aspire to work in your industry? How can they differentiate themselves?

My advice for women would be to be invested in continuously developing themselves and upskilling themselves and sharpening their soft skills, which are essential in rising to the top. I would say to them to be agile and open minded. Opportunities do not always present themselves on a silver platter and can be dressed up in projects that one can deem as 'it's not part of my job description'. Mentors are also important, so shoot your shot and contact them.

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