

# Dentsu Aegis Network South Africa launches programme to support female-founded start-ups

Issued by [Dentsu](#)

26 Sep 2019

Dentsu Aegis Network South Africa has today announced the launch of Female Foundry, an initiative to support local female entrepreneurs.



Developed by iProspect (a Dentsu Aegis Network agency) in Singapore, South Africa has become the fifth market to launch the business growth programme, which is being rolled out through Dentsu Aegis Network globally.

iProspect's proprietary research, Hear Her Voice, which was the catalyst for the programme's inception, sheds light on the challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in emerging markets - particularly gender inequality. Female Foundry aims at bridging this gap by offering experienced mentorship to empower and develop female-led businesses that embody innovation, diversity, social sustainability and tech leadership.

Delivered in partnership with the Global Entrepreneurship Network, 20 entrepreneurs will be selected to participate a three-day bootcamp, where the entrepreneurs' businesses will be strengthened and future-proofed for growth and success, and culminates with a mentoring phase during which female entrepreneurs are paired with a mentor from South Africa to take part in regular mentoring sessions.

During the programme, the cohort will have access to tools, training, connections and resources, empowering them to thrive in today's complex digital economy.

Koo Govender, CEO for Dentsu Aegis Network said:

*"Fortunately, at DAN, 69% of our employees are female. However, we still have a responsibility to our community to take an active stand in bridging the gap in gender parity across South Africa. At DAN, we plan to assist with the gender parity gap through the launch of our Female Foundry programme. In today's competitive environment, mentorship is even more vital to ensure we empower female run businesses and assist female entrepreneurs with acquiring skill sets without having to overextend themselves financially. Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook once said, "Knowing that things could be worse should not stop us from trying to make them better."*

Taj Heer, Managing Director of the Global Entrepreneurship Network UK said:

*"We are proud to partner with Dentsu Aegis Network on this programme. It provides female entrepreneurs with invaluable support and the training they need to thrive in today's complex digital economy. Our expertise in*

*entrepreneurship, mentoring and venture management combined with Dentsu Aegis Network's expertise in digital technology is a strong proposition that has the potential to make a true difference for female leaders and their businesses."*

The launch of Female Foundry in South Africa is a key milestone in Dentsu Aegis Network's journey towards achieving its global target of mentoring 100 female entrepreneurs by 2020.

If you are a female entrepreneur and interested in participating in this year's programme, visit <https://www.thefemalefoundry.com/> for more information and to apply.

Applications close on 18 October 2019.

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