

**PERSONALITY TRAITS, CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIOURS OF
SUCCESSFUL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

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1. ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is based on the author's interest in what it takes to become a successful women entrepreneur. Studies have been done on factors that contribute to the large number of women-started businesses failing (Rogoff, Lee & Suh, 2004) and why women enter into entrepreneurship (Orhan & Scott, 2001). For the most part, these reasons converge on women lacking business knowledge or education, discriminatory practices and environmental factors compared to their male counterparts. Entrepreneurship is but one of the occupations available in the labour market. "Traditionally, more men than women venture into businesses. At the moment, however, an increasing number of women are becoming self-employed. However, much that is known about the characteristics, backgrounds, problems and performance of business individuals is based on studies of male entrepreneurs" (Mahadea, 2001, P190). Additionally, much of the available research has been done on women entrepreneurs in the Western countries. This topic is discussed in Section 2.1 below.

Entrepreneurship offers a viable solution to women who do not find opportunities to fulfil their aspirations. Many young women have aspirations and desires to become businesswomen without properly considering what characteristics or traits are critical to be successful. Enormous business opportunities are available to designated people, especially women to become entrepreneurs through many government- initiated interventions such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), preferential procurement and women empowerment programmes. All these interventions require that any

aspiring women have to have certain key personality traits, characteristics and behaviours to be able to manage all the challenges and problems present in the business world and to be successful in the business.

1.1.1 CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Culture could also be a barrier for women entrepreneurs in South Africa. Botes and Valla (2003) wrote an article looking at barriers faced by women entrepreneurs, and through interviewing 225 South African women entrepreneurs, identified the following cultural barriers:

- Constraints placed on women by society
- Socialisation issues pertaining to lifestyle choices due to schooling
- Experiences of women entrepreneurs and behavioural expectations of women roles
- Personal support offered by spouse or other confidante

Mahadea (2001), in a comparative assessment of selected entrepreneurial attributes of male and female individuals involved in informal manufacturing activities in Transkei, using the Caird's scale of General Enterprising Tendency (GET), added that women are still locked into traditional women functions, such as hawking, petty street trade, or activities that are compatible with their domestic and reproductive roles. However, research conducted by Meuller and Goic' (2002) on entrepreneurial potential in transition economies (Romania, Slovenia, Poland, Croatia, Czech Republic and Russia) could not find support (using the two measures of culture: individualism and religious

heritage) for the proposition that culture enhances the entrepreneurial potential of a country.

It should be noted that the work of Meuller and Goic' (2002) did not include South Africa. However, based on the studies of Botes and Valla (2003) and Mahadea (2001), it would be fair to conclude that in South Africa, culture can play a negative role in motivating women to become entrepreneurs, particularly amongst the previously disadvantaged (i.e. African, coloured and Indians).

1.1.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Botes and Valla (2003, P40) outlined the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs as follows:

- a) Social and cultural barriers –constraints placed on women by society, stereotypes created by society towards career women and personal support offered by spouse or other confidante.
- b) Infrastructural barriers – access to start-up capital, attitudes at financial institutions towards women entrepreneurs, and lack of networks and mentors as built by men from generations of business ownership.
- c) Educational and occupational barriers - lack of educational background in business, and women's perceptions about their own abilities.

Morris and Zahra (2000, P95) in the study of the adaptation of the business concept by the historically disadvantaged South African owner/managers highlighted the following as challenges to black business owners in South Africa – this is in support of Botes and Valla (2003) above:

- "a) Black owners/managers in South Africa have historically confronted very high levels of ambiguity.
- b) Lack of control is also characteristic of South African context. Lack of infrastructure, high fragmented competition, the influence of township authorities and the committees as well as escalating crime and violence.
- c) The risk-taking propensity of historically disadvantaged owner/manager is not well understood. Typically, owner/managers have everything they own tied up in the venture and do not have extended formal or informal networks to rely upon for assistance should the venture run into trouble".

Although these authors do not specify that these challenges are faced by both men and women, the challenges are however supported by Botes and Valla's (2003) conclusions, as highlighted above. A conclusion can be drawn that women also do experience these challenges.

It appears that much of the work on women entrepreneurs in South Africa has focused on barriers and less on personal attributes and characteristics of women entrepreneurs, whilst the trend in international research on gender and entrepreneurship has increasingly examined the values and personality traits of entrepreneurs.

1.2 PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The main purpose of the research is to identify common personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South

Africa. The research further aims to establish if these personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs are different from that of South African employees.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

What are the common personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa?

1.4 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Personality traits are constructs to explain regularities in people's behaviour and help to explain why different people react differently to the same situation (Cooper, 1998, as cited in Llewellyn & Wilson, 2003). Hunt and Adams (1998), as cited in Ciavarella, Buchholtz, Riordan, Gatewood and Stokes (2004), added that the personality traits of entrepreneurs might have important implications for the long-term success of ventures in as much as the entrepreneurs' behaviour is likely to influence venture success.

Success. Ciavarella *et al.* (2004) defined success as the new venture survival, and this is measured in two ways: whether the new venture survived beyond the adolescence stage (i.e. minimum of 8 years) and the overall length of time the new venture survived. For the purpose of the present study, success will be defined as a business initiated or started by the women entrepreneur that has been operating for three years or more with an annual turnover of R500 000 or more. The definition is different to the one of Ciavarella *et al.* above due to the

difficulty with the availability of women entrepreneurs beyond this adolescence stage, especially amongst black South Africans.

Entrepreneurship as defined by Timmons (1989, P1) is “the ability to create and build something from practically nothing. It is initiating, doing, achieving and building an enterprise or organization, rather than just watching, analyzing or describing one. It is the knack for seeing an opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion. It is the willingness to take calculated risks, both personal and financial and then do everything possible to get the odds in your favour”.

Entrepreneurs can be defined as individuals who found an independent new venture. Ciavarella *et al.* (2004) defined true entrepreneurs as those that have decided to launch a small business by foregoing all other career alternatives and without the safety net of a professional license in case of failure. An entrepreneur needs to evolve into a manager to shepherd a new venture to long-term survival. In particular, a conscientious attitude and not being open to various avenues of divergence appear to be the key to long-term new venture survival.

1.5 DELIMITATION

The research is about identifying common personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa. As per the definition of entrepreneur in Section 1.4, the study would only be limited to women entrepreneurs who initiated or started their own businesses.

1.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Women have been hard hit by unfair discrimination in South Africa. The so-called "glass ceiling" has been one of the discriminatory practices levelled against women. Many of the women started businesses have failed as a result. Much research has been done on corporate managers as well as similarities and differences between men and women entrepreneurs. The present study will endeavour to establish whether there are certain personality traits, characteristics and behaviours common to successful women entrepreneurs that any aspiring woman should possess. It is the purpose of this research to identify personality traits, characteristics and behaviours found to be common amongst successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa in terms of the big five personality factors.

Two previous studies have been conducted that focused on the personality traits, values and beliefs of successful women corporate managers in South African Organisations. Van Wyk, Boshoff and Bester (2003) conducted a study to determine whether entrepreneurial attitudes correlated with biographic variables and personality characteristics. The study was done on 375 (221 men and 154 women) professionals using the entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale; Schepers' (1995) Locus of Control questionnaire; career orientation questionnaire as well as the six-factor self-concept scale. The results showed that a strong relationship existed between entrepreneurial attitudes and personality and work variables.

The other research done by Kasselmann, de Beer and Vermeulen (2002) focussed on personality traits, emotive responses and attitudinal orientation of franchisees in the fast food franchise. This study looked at 80 restaurants in

the fast food industry, using the 16PF questionnaire (Cattell, Eber, & Tatsuoka, 1970). The results of this study showed that the personality attributes of successful franchisees differed significantly from those of unsuccessful franchisees with regard to emotional stability, caution, shrewdness, compliance and self-esteem. Due to the nature of the sample in this study, the results of this study cannot be generalised across all industries and to all women entrepreneurs.

While Boshoff and Bester (2003) did look at entrepreneurial attitudes, they did this among corporate managers. The explicit interest in the present study is to identify common personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women who started their own businesses, have been operating for three years or more with an annual turnover of R500 000 or more. There has been little or no research done in South Africa on personality traits, characteristics and behaviours found common among successful women entrepreneurs. Using the Revised NEO-Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R, Costa & McCrae, 1992), based on the five- factor model, the present study will therefore be exploratory.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

Chapter 1.

Chapter 1 presents the cultural influences on women entrepreneurs in South Africa. Followed by the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in South Africa as well. This chapter also presents the purpose and problem of the

present study. The definition of key terminologies used in the present study are also defined in this chapter

Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on entrepreneurship and gender and the theory on the big Five-Factor model of personality. The facets of each of the five factors in the model are explained as well as the criticisms levelled against the Five-Factor model. Finally, the use of the NEO-PI-R (The Revised NEO Personality Inventory) questionnaire, based on the big Five-Factor Model, in South Africa is discussed. This questionnaire is used in the present study for data collection.

Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology used in the present study. The research hypotheses to be tested in the present study are also discussed. The sample selected and the rationale thereof; the data collection methods used and the benefits of using these methods are presented and discussed, followed by the measurement instrument (NEO-PI-R) and the semi-structured interviews conducted in the study. Finally the chapter presents the present study limitations.

Chapter 4.

In chapter 4 the results of the present study are presented. The demographic profiles of the participants are reported first, followed by the descriptive analysis and then analysis of results of the semi structured interviews.

Chapter 5

In chapter 5 the results presented in chapter 4 are discussed. Also discussed in this chapter is the interrelationship between the descriptive results and the

semi-structured results. The conclusions are presented and recommendations for future research are made.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on entrepreneurship and gender as well as the big Five-Factor model of personality theory. Entrepreneurship has become a major area of study in the last twenty years. Most of the research focuses on understanding why and how people become entrepreneurs. The preferred methodology has been on four areas: (1) The reasons or factors that motivated women to go into entrepreneurship; (2) the type of businesses women enter into; (3) the attributes and skills considered key for successful entrepreneurship; and (4), studies done on women entrepreneurship in other countries.

2.1 Why women enter into entrepreneurship.

A six-country investigation (Canada, Singapore, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland) on the pathway of women entrepreneurs conducted by McClelland, Swail, Bell and Ibbotson (2005, P93) listed the following three reasons for South African women to start up their businesses:

- “* The woman had interest in other women's issues and used her business as a promotional tool to fund and address the issue of abusive relationships.
- * The woman felt compelled to use her business venture to create a strong community spirit.

- * The woman had a strong desire to address the gross inequalities, poverty/underdevelopment and the information drought experienced by women in business”.

These reasons indicate that as women are expected by society to be care-givers and traditionally women's place being at home, when embarking on a business venture they should look at ventures that would be described as 'socially oriented', designed to help the overall community/environment or disadvantaged groups in society.

While no research could be located that examined women entrepreneurship and personality traits in South Africa, studies have been done in other non-Western contexts. For example, Gerrad, Schooch and Cunningham (2003) studied values and skills of women entrepreneurs in Vietnam. The authors found that Vietnamese women entrepreneurs appear to have a high regard for human virtues, and that their families rank much higher than their business values, irrespective of their entrepreneurial desire. Women entrepreneurs in Vietnam also have an awareness of key work-related values, the most important being dynamism. Gerrard *et al* (2003) summarized that a combination of these qualities is likely to have made a positive contribution to the ongoing success of their businesses at the macro level and to CIDP growth at the macro level.

Weiler and Bernasek (2001), in their study on motivations for the influx of US women into entrepreneurship found that self-fulfilment rather than profits is the most important measure of success for women entrepreneurs.

It seems that, in terms of South Africa research, researchers focused mainly on: a) Challenges and cultural barriers faced by women entrepreneurs and b) the nature or type of businesses women in South Africa enter into.

2.2 The nature of entrepreneurship women engage in South Africa.

Nzida-Whitehead (1993) stated that women entrepreneurs in South Africa are largely characterised by low levels of income and productivity, and a concentration on traditionally female enterprises such as petty trading services and brewing. These business activities have lower risks and multiple role activities, combining both domestic and business related tasks. This view is supported by Schindehutte, Morris and Benman (2003, P95), who state that women maintain equilibrium between economic goals, such as profit and growth, and non-economic goals, such as personal fulfilment and helping others.

The present study targeted South African women entrepreneurs who initiated or started their own businesses, which had been running for three years or more with annual turnover of R500 000.00 or more. It is also hoped that during the data collection (interviews), with the selected women, the data would show that since the new political dispensation; women are entering business areas that were traditionally dominated by men.

2.3 Attributes and skills identified as key for success in business.

Mahadea (2001, P192) stated that individuals with high internal locus of control tend to be action-oriented, self-reliant and successful in business.

They are usually motivated by the belief that success is the product of their efforts or actions and not fate or powerful individuals.

Botes & Valla (2003) found that certain skills are required to be a successful entrepreneur. These are industry knowledge, management skills in dealing with people such as leadership, negotiation and communication.

According to the Danish Agency for Trade and Industries (2001) as cited by Botes and Valla (2003), women-owned businesses are mostly managed on the principles of social and relation-oriented purposes and goals, with decision-making based to a large extent on intuition and participation of other role players in the business. In the traditional male organisations, goals and values are competition-oriented, and in women-owned businesses they are undifferentiated and integrative as regards family, job and society. This study found that South African women entrepreneurs were found to be highly self-confident, with excellent skills in communication, creativity and innovation.

Keeton (2003), in her interview with the highly successful South African businesswoman, Wendy Luhabe, wrote that being proactive and having a positive attitude are central to Ms Luhabe's life, which provides a sterling role model both for women's and black economic empowerment.

2.4 Studies done in other countries on women entrepreneurship.

In his article on entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in Africa, Kiggundu (2002) wrote that the strongest empirical evidence in support of the efficacy of individual traits as predictors of entrepreneurial success comes from Giessen-Amsterdam studies by Frese and his associates (2000), as cited in Kiggundu, (2002). In a carefully designed series of studies of five African Countries

(Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa), Frese et al (2000) found that psychological variables such as personal initiative, innovativeness, entrepreneurial orientation and autonomy differentiated successful from less successful entrepreneurs. Meuller & Goic' (2002) added that the two frequently cited attributes that synthesize many of the personal characteristics associated with entrepreneurial orientation are internal locus of control and innovativeness. Entrepreneurs are initiators, taking responsibility for their own welfare and are not dependent on others. Brockhaus's 1982 study of the psychology of the entrepreneur (cited in Brodsky, 1993) found that business owners whose ventures had survived three years had a greater internal locus of control than did those that had not survived. Brodsky (1993) in a comparison study between 41 middle-upper level corporate managers and 47 self-employed entrepreneurs in the East Coast, postulated that entrepreneurs see themselves as in need of control and intolerant of limits imposed by others and seek to define their own environments and parameters.

Entrepreneurs rely on individualistic drive and energy and are not as concerned about opinions of others. They seek support in strong external networks. In a comparison study between women managers and women entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs are portrayed as more likely to take risks Brodsky (1993, P367). They also exhibit the demographic characteristics of more frequently being married, having children, being educated (although at lower levels than women managers) and being somewhat older than their women managerial counterparts. However, women managers and entrepreneurs are seen to be quite similar to the male entrepreneurs in their motivation for working. Buttner (1993), studying the US female entrepreneurs'

interactive styles in their organisations, using the Relational Theory, reported the need to achieve and desire for job satisfaction and professionalism as the motivators for both male and female entrepreneurs.

Earlier studies found that successful African entrepreneurs tended to be male, middle-aged, married with a number of children and more educated than the general population. Benedict (1979), cited in Kiggundu (2002), found that the growth and success of family entrepreneurs was dependent upon a strong authoritarian father and a closely-knit family structure with wives and children willing to submit to the father's rule. Brodsky (1993) found that the personalities of women entrepreneurs tended to be less harmful, very dominant, expedient, bold, suspicious, shrewd, self assured, somewhat conservative and self-sufficient. They report some tendency toward an abstract thinking style, imagination, enthusiasm and tough mindedness. Like their managerial counterparts, entrepreneurs present as bright, determined, verbally skilled and analytic and strong. By self-report, their pace appears to be faster. They work longer hours, and they are seen as more aggressive and less bound by convention.

In contrary to the Brodsky's findings, Smith (1990) stated that women entrepreneurs in the US are better educated and seek more special training. The study also added that women take longer to research and prepare for their initial business venture and they rely heavily on professional advisers.

Buttner (1993) postulated that women entrepreneurs compared to men are more adaptive, more socially aware, have wider experience in different business areas, delegate more and engage in longer-term planning.

In their article, Kasselmann, *et al* (2002) studied the personality attributes of successful franchisees in the fast foods sector in South Africa, and cited Schutte and Boschhoff's (1993) study of entrepreneurial ventures in a third world setting whose findings showed that demographic variables by themselves are moderate predictors of entrepreneurial success.

In sum, the body of knowledge and theory on entrepreneurship strongly suggests that personality plays a role in becoming a successful entrepreneur. However, this linkage has not been systematically examined in South Africa. The present research seeks to close this gap by exploring the correlation between the big five-personality theory and successful women entrepreneurship.

2.5 The Five- Factor model of personality

Psychologists have worked for a number of years towards developing valid and reliable models of personality. In recent years, the big five-factor model of personality traits has gained currency.

2.5.1 The Facets or factors of the Five-Factor model of personality

2.5.1.1 Extraversion

The facets of the Extraversion factor used in the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992b) are as follows: Warmth (E1), Gregariousness (E2), Assertiveness (E3), Activity (E4), Excitement Seeking (E5) and Positive Emotions (E6).

Extraversion can be summarized as an individual's level of sociability, personal and general perception of his/her life

Taylor (2000), in her study on construct comparability of the NEO-PI-R questionnaire using 300 South African Breweries employees, made the following summation: "The researches suggested that extraverted individuals who are rated good in their jobs are also willing to engage in social manipulations to attain their goals. In a study of entrepreneurs from India, Malawi and Ecuador assertiveness was found to be a differentiator between "successful" and "average" entrepreneurs (the categorization was determined by judges' perceptions of whether the entrepreneurs were successful or average). "

2.5.1.2 Neuroticism

This domain assesses affective adjustment versus emotional instability. The facets of the Neuroticism factor used in the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992b) are as follows: Anxiety (N1), Angry Hostility (N2), Depression (N3), Self-Consciousness (N4), Impulsiveness (N5) and Vulnerability (N6).

Taylor (2004) stated that Neuroticism provides an assessment of an individual's affective tendencies. The author went further to state that at the extremes of this dimension, one would have those individuals who exercise tremendous control over their emotions and cognitive irrationalities, and those individuals who allow themselves to be controlled by their emotions. Entrepreneurs high in emotional stability should be able to tolerate these stressful situations. Similarly entrepreneurs take personal risks to create and sustain the operations of the business and are not guaranteed future

employment. Those who are self-confident and self-secure in undertaking these risks and can cope with uncertainty are expected to prevail through such conditions, resulting in a greater likelihood of survival for the business.

2.5.1.3 Agreeableness

The facets of the Agreeableness factor used in the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992b) are as follows: Trust (A1), Straightforwardness (A2), Altruism (A3), Compliance (A4), Modesty (A5) and Tender mindedness (A6). Baron and Markman (2000), cited in Taylor(2000), infer that entrepreneurs who are trusting and cooperative in their business relationships are more likely to develop alliances with larger companies, resulting in new product development, shareholder wealth and venture survival (cited in Taylor, 2000). Individuals high in Agreeableness tend to be sympathetic towards others, sincere, selfless, are eager to help, and believe that others will be as helpful in return. Individuals low in Agreeableness tend to be sceptical, manipulative, competitive and self-centred, and look after their own interests (Costa and McCrae, 1992b).

2.5.1.4 Conscientiousness

The basis of Conscientiousness is self-control as manifested planning, organizing and carrying out tasks. The conscientious person is purposeful, strong-willed and determined. High scorers are associated with academic and occupational achievement. In extreme cases, very high scoring individuals can be overly particular, compulsively tidy or exhibit workaholic behaviour (Costa & McCrae, 1992a). The facets of the Conscientiousness

factor used in the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992b) are as follows: Competence (C1), Order (C2), Dutifulness (C3), Achievement Striving (C4), Self-discipline (C5) and Deliberation (C6). "Conscientiousness involves those characteristics that would typically be used to evaluate the manner in which an individual approaches a task. For example: the amount of effort invested and whether they are able to complete the task on time" (Taylor, 2004, P27).

2.5.1.5 Openness to Experience

Widiger and Trull (1997), cited by Taylor (2000), pointed out that Openness to Experience is the most problematic factor in personality disorder research. The facets of the Openness to Experience factor used in the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992b) are as follows: Fantasy (O1), Aesthetics (O2), Feelings (O3), Actions (O4) and Ideas (O5) and Values (O6). "Open people actively seek out new experiences and tend to reflect on ideas. They enjoy and are able to grasp new ideas and have a wide range of interests" (Taylor, 2004, P21).

Ciavarella *et al.* (2004), in their study on the link between the five factors of personality and venture survival, explained that dependability, industriousness and efficiency are the basic components of conscientiousness. According to Timmons (1989, P32), "more than any other single factor, total dedication and perseverance to succeed as an entrepreneur, can overcome incredible obstacles and setbacks". Being persevering should result in higher sales productivity, while being well organised signifies increased efficiency and

effectiveness. The attributes of intelligence, broad-mindedness and originality are salient for starting a new venture, and should remain so for the survivability of the venture. Ciavarella *et al.* (2004) found that entrepreneurs who possess higher levels of Conscientiousness and lower levels of Openness might have a greater ability to evolve into a managerial mindset and maintain the operations of either an entrepreneurial or life style venture. Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his or her behaviour (Funder, 1994, cited in Ciavarella et al, 2004). It follows then that the personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of the entrepreneurs may have important implications for the long-term success of the business in as much as the entrepreneur's behaviour is likely to influence the business success.

2.6 Heritability of the Five-Factor model

Research on the dimensions of the Five-Factor model has shown that they possess significant levels of heritability (Bergeman *et al.*, 1993; Heath *et al.*, 1992, as cited in Piedmont, 1998). "Research has shown that genetics contribute to the stability of personality in adulthood (Jong, Livesley & Vernon (1996a; Viken *et al* (1994), cited in Piedmont, (1998). Given the biological basis of the five-factor model; it is difficult to interpret these factors as mere statistical artefacts; these are qualities that will certainly emerge from any comprehensive description of individuals."

2.7 Reliability of the NEO-PI-R

Piedmont (1998), wrote that the alpha reliabilities for the facets range from .56 for Tender-mindedness to .81 for Depression, and for the factors from .86 for Agreeableness to .92 for Neuroticism. Considering that there are only eight items for each facet, these alpha values are all acceptable. Further, these values tell us that the facets and the domains are quite unidimensional. Piedmont (1998) further stated that several studies have been done evaluating the test-retest reliability of NEO PI and NEO-PI-R among clinical samples. According to Piedmont (1998), all studies found high test-retest correlations, pre and post treatment; however, there were significant changes in mean levels noted for the dimensions (Bagby, Joffe, Parker, Kalembo & Harkness, 1995; Piedmont & Ciarrochi, in Press; Trull, Uesda, Costa & McCrae, 1995). With these caveats noted, Piedmont (1998) argues that the reliability coefficients offer some important advantages to test users. "Because the NEO-PI-R scales are relatively unidimensional, obtained scores represent clear, unambiguous qualities of the individual. The 35 scales of the NEO-PI-R provide rich interpretive portrait of a person. The temporal stability of these scales shows that this picture, in adulthood will not change much over time. Thus, the test interpreter can anticipate the kinds of life directions a respondent will move toward and the types of outcomes likely to be experienced."

2.8 Criticisms of the Five-Factor model

Block (1995) criticized the five-factor model and NEO PI-R for their non-theoretical basis, because the model and the instrument were founded in factor analysis. Block believed that the model, as a tool based on statistical analysis, is unable to capture the subtleties of personality. McAdams (1992), cited in Piedmont, (1998), saw a number of limitations to the five-factor model. He believed that the five-factor model is essentially a "psychology of the stranger", in other words, it provides a broad description of people that is useful when you don't know anything else about them. Critics of the five-factor model also argued that, at best, this paradigm captures superficial, relatively descriptive aspects of the individual that, taken at face value, can provide some useful information. However, the five-factor personality model has become an accepted measure of personality and has been used in a number of studies.

2.9 Studies done in South Africa using NEO-PI-R

Taylor (2000) conducted a construct comparability study on 300 employees (150 black and 150 white), at the South African Breweries to investigate bias in the NEO-PI-R. The study revealed that Extraversion and Agreeableness factors were somewhat confused in the white group, whilst for the black group, the NEO-PI-R structure did not emerge and several facets had congruence indices below 0.9 in the black sample.

Investigations done by Heuchert (1998, cited in Taylor, 2004), on the applicability of the Five Factor Model in a South African context using the NEO-PI-R, revealed that NEO-PI-R could serve as a useful measure of

personality in South Africa, though it would require norms to be developed and standardised. A sample of 226 students was compared with the US normative sample, using principal components analysis.

Another study cited in Taylor (2004) was conducted by Heaven, Connors and Stones (1994) using 112 English language descriptors with a sample of 230 black South African undergraduate university students. The results indicated that the five factors did not emerge clearly in the analysis. Amongst many explanations provided included the fact that the language used in conducting the test (English), was not the first language for many students, therefore the meaning of the adjectives may not have been clear to most of the sample.

Rothmann and Coetser, (2002), conducted a study using 159 employees (87% females) from a pharmaceutical organisation, studying the relationship between personality dimensions and job satisfaction. The results of this study showed that job satisfaction has a negative relationship with Anger-Hostility (a component of Neuroticism), while it has a positive relationship with Positive Emotions (a facet of Extraversion) and as well as a positive relationship with the facets of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. When testing hypothesis three, as mentioned under 3.1 below, the results of Rothmann and Coetser's study above, would be used to do a comparison with the results of the present study.

In conclusion, the big five personality constructs have become acknowledged as relevant and valid dimension of personality in various fields of research.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the present study is to answer the question of "What are the common personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa?" The study further aims to establish if these traits, characteristics and behaviours are different from those of South African employees as reported in Rothman and Coetser (2002). It is hoped these questions would be answered through testing of the hypotheses listed below.

3.1 Research Hypotheses

The present study raised the following hypotheses, which the researcher tested:

Hypothesis 1 (HYP1):

"Successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa have a common set of personality traits, characteristics and behaviours that correlate with success"

Hypothesis 2 (HYP2):

"Successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa do not have a common set of personality traits, characteristics and behaviours that correlate with success"

Hypothesis 3 (HYP3):

"Successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa have a common set of personality traits, characteristics and behaviours that are different from those of employees in South Africa"

3.2 Sample selected

The purpose of the present research study is to identify common personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of women entrepreneurs in South Africa. Women entrepreneurs who meet the following definition of success were invited to participate in the research:

- The business should be initiated or started by the woman herself.
- The business must have started and running for three years or more.
- The business should be making an annual turnover of R500 000.00 or more.

The details of a number of women entrepreneurs were obtained from the database of Business Women Association of South Africa (BWASA) and also from The Department of Trade and Industry (The DTI). BWASA retrieved a list of 30 women entrepreneurs in the start-up categories from its various regional branches from its database and this was sent to the researcher but due to the limitations listed in Section 3.5 below, only the women entrepreneurs in the Gauteng branch were considered to form a convenience sample.

3.2.1 Rationale for a convenience sample

Cooper and Schindler, (2003, P200) stated the following as reasons for choosing convenience sampling:

- In an exploratory research, convenience sampling may be used where one may wish to contact only certain persons or cases that are clearly atypical
- Cost and time

- In the event where the total population may not be available for study in certain cases.

The purpose of the research is to identify common personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa. The research therefore excludes any other women entrepreneur who is not successful as per the definition listed in Section 1.4 above. Due to time and logistical reasons, it was not possible for the researcher to include all successful women entrepreneurs in the category of "women who initiated or started the business" because they are geographically dispersed and also that the use of the NEO-PI-R is restricted to qualified psychologists or psychometrists under the supervision of a psychologist.

It would have been costly and time consuming to move around the country and conduct these tests/interviews with all the nominees. As a result, a convenience sample of 10 women successful entrepreneurs in Gauteng- Johannesburg was selected.

3.3 Data collection methods

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods in collecting data. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allowed the researcher to go beyond a superficial examination of the problem statement. Given the nascent state of knowledge in South Africa of women entrepreneurship, qualitative research is important in addition to empirically measuring personality traits, characteristics and behaviours to understand at a deeper level why women chose entrepreneurship. A brief

discussion on both quantitative and qualitative methods is discussed here below:

3.3.1 Quantitative methodology

Quantitative method involves a process of classifying features, counting them and constructing statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed. (Miles and Huberman, 1994, P40). Corner (1991) in her overview of research methods used in nursing defined quantitative methods as most commonly represented by experimental research designs, where casual relationships between variables are examined, controlled or removed from the natural setting, and observations are quantified and analyzed to determine statistical probabilities and the certainty of a particular outcome. The types of quantitative methods used in the present study are descriptive statistical methods (inferential: t-test).

3.3.2 Qualitative methodology

Qualitative research is an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode and translate phenomena. According to Yin (1984), cited by Tucker et al (1998), qualitative methods are appropriate when seeking knowledge about the fundamental characteristics of a phenomenon being studied before theorising about it. This knowledge often surfaces through close contact with subjects of a study, allowing the researcher to understand their points of view about and experiences with the phenomenon.

Mangen (1999, P110), in his study on the selection and execution of cross-national qualitative research, stated that, "Qualitative research is not simply non-numerical. Its defence lies in its ability to penetrate the experiential social worlds of intentional, self-directing actors, whether through the spoken or written word". Like all studies, qualitative approaches comprise knowledge acquisition and data analysis phases. Naturalistic and familiar data are valued and sought, in order to gain understanding of people. Cook and Reichardt (1979), cited by Corner (1991), wrote that qualitative approaches are felt to be concerned with understanding human behaviour from the actor's own frame of reference. However Larcity and Janson (1994), in their study of understanding qualitative data by providing a framework that categorises various text analysis approaches, believed that practitioners would find text analysis approaches useful for systems analysis and design in that it improves communication between users and Information Systems personnel.

Many have in the past advocated that the results of research conducted using the quantitative approach is the most valid and reliable. Corner (1991) recently showed the benefits of conducting research using qualitative approach. Corner (1991) went further to state that quantitative research methods make an epistemological assumption that the social world lends itself to objective forms of measurement, however such stripping of data from their natural context poses questions about the reliability of findings since random or accidental events are assumed not to happen. In criticising the

quantitative approach, supporters of the qualitative approach claim that a deductive methodology constrains researchers within current theory, whereas an inductive method encourages theory development or theory extension. On the one hand, Larcity and Janson (1994), argued that researchers proficient in statistical methods to understand qualitative data maybe less familiar with text analysis methods to understand data. Larcity and Janson (1994) further argued that researchers might hesitate to apply qualitative approaches because they equate qualitative research with non-positivist, anti-positivist or interpretivist research. Many qualitative methods, however, are steeped in the positivist tradition.

Jarrat (1996) wrote that supporters of qualitative research stress its potential for theory development through rigorous coding and interpretive procedures. In the same study, Jarrat (1996) quoted Strauss and Corbin (1990, P19) claiming "qualitative methods can give the intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods", indicating the usefulness of qualitative data in interpreting quantitative findings.

The use of in-depth interviews in this research enabled the researcher to gain insight into and understanding of complex, sensitive issues or very personal topics from the sample selected. The interviews were conducted on a one on one basis with the participants using semi-structured questions and done before the participant answered the NEO-PI-R questionnaire. Some of the areas covered in the interview

questions are: 1) motivation to become entrepreneurs, 2) challenges faced by female entrepreneurs, 3) cultural and social barriers women entrepreneurs encounter, and 4) reasons or factors leading to women initiated businesses failing and other areas. A written consent to have the interviews tape-recorded was obtained prior to the interview commencing. The consent form and the structured questions are appended as Appendices 8.1 and 8.2 respectively.

3.3.3 Benefits of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in a study.

Mangen (1999), in his study of reviewing qualitative methods mentioned that many primarily qualitative case studies also rely on quantitative data to round off the attempt to obtain a sensitive and multidimensional perspective of the situation or event under study. This view is supported by Miles and Huberman (1984, P20), cited by Jarrat (1996), who claim that quantitative methodologists with a strong positivist vision are embracing the "naturalist and phenomenological" approaches to complement tests, surveys and structured interviews. Corner (1991, P722) suggested the following as some of the benefits of combining the two approaches:

- Quantitative research can be used to facilitate qualitative research to generalise findings to a large sample, or to identify groups who warrant in-depth qualitative study.
- The approaches can be combined so that methods from one paradigm fill the gaps left by the others.

- Qualitative research may facilitate interpretation of relationships between variables.
- The approaches can be combined to allow the examination of both structure and process, the researcher's and the subject's perspective, allow cross-sectional and longitudinal data to be collected and both to generate and test theory.

In conclusion, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches will combine discovery and verification, understanding and prediction, validity and reliability within the research design. "Triangulation", as a research strategy which uses several sources of information about a phenomenon, to try to get a clearer picture of it through convergence, has been proposed as a way forward. The four types of triangulation that may be used are: a) Data triangulation (different data sources); b) Investigator (multiple observations of the same object); c) Theory (multiple perspectives/hypotheses); d) Methodological (within and between scales to measure the same unit).

3.4 Measurement instrument: NEO-PI- R

3.4.1 Introduction

The NEO-PI-R (Costa and McCrae, 1992b) was the first published questionnaire designed specifically to assess the five-factor model (FFM) of personality. The factors assessed by NEO-PI-R are Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. The NEO-PI-R consists of 240 items that clients answers on a (1) strongly disagree to (5)

strongly agree Likert type scale and they are balanced to control for the effects of acquiescence. The instrument measures the five major domains of personality and within each domain there are six facet scales that are designed to assess more specific aspects of each domain. Each facet of the scale is composed of eight items and domain scores are calculated by summing scores over the six facet scales. In addition to the European versions, the NEO-PI-R has been translated into many languages amongst others; Shona, Xhosa and Southern Sotho. Analyses of translations have provided evidence of generalisability.

The NEO- PI-R (Costa and McCrae, 1992b) will be used in the present study for collecting data. The instrument will be administered by a registered psychometrist. In addition, an in-depth face-to-face interview with the ten nominated women entrepreneurs in the category of “women who started their own businesses” will be conducted. The purpose of this would be to gain a deeper understanding of the women’s characteristics and factors contributing to their success as entrepreneurs.

For the purposes of this research, the author used the English version of the questionnaire due to the fact that the sample will be across all ethnic groups in South Africa.

3.5 Study limitations

3.5.1 The researcher qualification

In terms of the provisions of the Health Professions Act no 56 of 1974, only qualified and registered psychologists and psychometrists are permitted to administer tests such as the NEO-PI-R. The NEO-PI-R was administered by under the supervision of a psychologist as required by the Act. However, the researcher was briefed and became fully conversant about the NEO-PI-R. The semi-structured interview sessions were conducted only by the researcher.

3.5.2 Time

The data collection included both the interview as well as answering the NEO-PI-R questionnaire. The time required was estimated at two and half to three hours with each participant. This was difficult with most of the participants because they felt the research would be taking too much of their business time. A compromise of two hours on average was reached with the participants.

3.5.3 The sample and its size

The small number of women who participated in the study ($N = 10$), across the Gauteng province may not be representative of a "typical woman entrepreneur" in South Africa, therefore the results may not be generalised across the country. The sample may be open to a degree of bias because over half of the women chosen for the present study had gained experience in the areas of their business whilst still employed in the

corporate business. However, the purpose of this research was to identify and highlight a pattern or commonality of personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa, and to explore this subject that has not received much academic attention in South Africa in the past and it is hoped that the results from the study will merit further investigation at a later date, using a larger sample within the country.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

Ten businesswomen who matched the criteria set out in Section 3.2 above were elected to participate. Table 4.1 below shows the demographic profiles of the women who participated in the study.

4.1 Demographic profiles of the participants

Demographic profiles of business women	
Age	38-60 years: Average= 45.4
Home language	6 English 2 Tswana 1 Sotho 1 German
Ethnicity	7 White 3 Black
Education	7 Postgraduate 2 Graduate

	1 Matric
Number of years in business	4 3-5 years 2 6-10 years 4 10 years and over
Business annual turnover	2 500 000-1million 5 1,1million - 2million 3 2,1million and over

Table 4.1: Demographic profiles of business women

The demographic profiles above shows that most of the participants are in the mid-life stage (average of 45 years) and well educated. Fifty percent of the participants' businesses have annual turnover of between R1m - R2m. The demographic profiles also shows that in terms of number of years in business, all participants have gone past the adolescence stage (three years or more) as defined under success in Section 1.4 above. The results also show that the white women entrepreneurs are in the majority of the sample and therefore the results may be skewed in their direction. It must be borne in mind that the purpose of this study was not to draw a comparison between black and white women entrepreneurs (although such a study may be suggested for future research), but rather to identify common personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful female entrepreneurs in South Africa.

4.2 The summary of the descriptive statistics.

Below are the results of the sample using the one sample inferential t-test. The test was scored using the standard scoring protocol as set out in the

NEO-PI-R manuals (Costa McCrae, 1992b). Table 4.2 shows the mean percentiles of the women entrepreneurs as compared to the US normative sample of women (N=500), as cited in the NEO-PI-R manual. A percentile indicates the percentage of people in the standardisation sample that scored below the women entrepreneurs in the present sample.

The results in Table 4.2 show that the women entrepreneur sample scored high on the Extraversion factor (mean = 81.40), indicating that the sample is sociable, assertive and show a positive personal and general perception of their lives. This score is closely followed by the high score of Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness (mean of 80.50 and 62.10 respectively).

These results show that the sample has the ability to seek out new experiences, grasp new ideas and with determination pursue those ideas.

Facets with mean percentiles higher than the 70th percentile are Warmth (E1), Gregariousness (E2), Assertiveness (E3), Activity (E4), Positive emotions (E6), Aesthetics (O2), Feelings (O3), Ideas (O5), Values (O6), Competence (C1), and Achievement striving (C4). Facets with mean percentiles lower than the 30th percentile are Self-consciousness (N4) and Vulnerability (N6).

Table 4.2 Mean Percentiles compared to US normative sample of women (N = 500)

Factor/Facet	N	Mean Percentile	Std Deviation
Neuroticism	10	42.20	28.99
Extraversion	10	81.40	25.07
Openness	10	80.50	15.33
Agreeableness	10	48.10	29.37
Conscientiousness	10	62.10	31.80
Anxiety (N1)	10	59.40	32.40
Angry Hostility (N2)	10	52.70	32.00
Depression (N3)	10	53.20	34.63
Self-Consciousness (N4)	10	29.60	34.06
Impulsiveness (N5)	10	40.10	20.94
Vulnerability (N6)	10	26.20	19.92
Warmth (E1)	10	74.20	28.12

Gregariousness (E2)	10	75.40	27.41
Assertiveness (E3)	10	90.40	9.45
Activity (E4)	10	83.90	23.62
Excitement-Seeking (E5)	10	62.50	31.11
Positive Emotions (E6)	10	74.30	27.16
Fantasy (O1)	10	69.50	29.01
Aesthetics (O2)	10	77.60	23.34
Feelings (O3)	10	80.90	22.27
Actions (O4)	10	68.50	28.86
Ideas (O5)	10	76.20	21.37
Values (O6)	10	72.60	21.37
Trust (A1)	10	50.00	37.00
Straightforwardness (A2)	10	57.90	35.46
Altruism (A3)	10	57.20	38.41
Compliance (A4)	10	56.10	27.81
Modesty (A5)	10	35.20	26.70
Tender-mindedness (A6)	10	65.40	32.55
Competence (C1)	10	81.00	17.25
Order (C2)	10	50.30	30.25
Dutifulness (C3)	10	63.60	33.77
Achievement Striving (C4)	10	82.80	20.29
Self-Discipline (C5)	10	54.20	34.35
Deliberation (C6)	10	45.60	37.14

Table 4.3 below shows the comparison mean scores of the women entrepreneur sample with the pharmaceutical company employees used in the Rothmann and Coetser (2002) study. A one-sample t-test was used to test for significant differences in the mean scores of the two groups, assigning the pharmaceutical sample's means as the test value.

Table 4.3 Comparison of women entrepreneurs with South African employees

Facet / Factor	Female entrepreneurs		South African employees		df	T	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Neuroticism	77.20	20.29	88.73	24.34	9	-1.797	0.106
Extraversion	135.40	19.20	115.53	22.53	9	3.273	0.010**
Openness	133.10	17.84	111.82	16.65	9	3.773	0.004**

Agreeableness	127.70	16.50	127.20	18.45	9	0.096	0.926
Conscientiousness	131.80	18.65	132.68	17.48	9	-0.149	0.885
Anxiety (N1)	17.90	5.39	17.31	5.72	9	0.352	0.733
Angry Hostility (N2)	12.40	4.81	13.90	5.16	9	-0.986	0.350
Depression (N3)	13.00	6.36	15.38	5.75	9	-1.183	0.267
Self-Consciousness (N4)	11.00	6.45	16.27	5.77	9	-2.585	0.029*
Impulsiveness (N5)	15.50	3.27	15.69	4.41	9	-0.183	0.858
Vulnerability (N6)	7.40	2.72	10.18	4.93	9	-3.237	0.010**
Warmth (E1)	26.60	3.98	23.19	4.36	9	2.711	0.024*
Gregariousness (E2)	21.10	4.63	17.77	5.85	9	2.275	0.049*
Assertiveness (E3)	22.60	3.98	16.18	5.77	9	5.104	0.001**
Activity (E4)	24.20	5.22	19.23	4.27	9	3.009	0.015*
Excitement-Seeking (E5)	16.80	4.98	18.23	5.18	9	-0.907	0.388
Positive Emotions (E6)	24.10	4.48	20.92	4.96	9	2.430	0.052
Fantasy (O1)	20.00	5.81	16.53	5.48	9	1.888	0.092
Aesthetics (O2)	22.90	4.20	19.84	5.20	9	2.303	0.047*
Feelings (O3)	25.40	4.03	21.72	3.89	9	2.885	0.018*
Actions (O4)	19.30	4.32	15.87	4.02	9	2.510	0.033*
Ideas (O5)	22.20	4.37	19.25	5.31	9	2.136	0.061
Values (O6)	23.30	3.65	18.22	4.04	9	4.398	0.002**
Trust (A1)	21.50	5.02	18.34	5.31	9	1.992	0.078
Straightforwardness (A2)	22.50	5.50	23.78	4.68	9	-0.736	0.481
Altruism (A3)	25.20	4.85	24.01	4.07	9	0.776	0.458
Compliance (A4)	18.90	5.72	19.03	5.05	9	-0.072	0.944
Modesty (A5)	17.30	3.74	19.94	4.63	9	-2.230	0.053
Tender-mindedness (A6)	22.30	3.34	22.10	3.37	9	0.190	0.854
Competence (C1)	25.20	2.86	22.39	3.72	9	3.107	0.013*
Order (C2)	18.70	4.22	20.49	4.28	9	-1.342	0.212
Dutifulness (C3)	24.70	4.91	26.25	3.63	9	-1.000	0.343
Achievement Striving (C4)	24.90	4.38	21.83	4.19	9	2.215	0.054
Self-Discipline (C5)	22.20	4.87	23.25	4.50	9	-0.682	0.513
Deliberation (C6)	16.10	5.69	18.47	4.93	9	-1.318	0.220

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 4.3 shows significant mean differences between the women entrepreneurs and the employee sample on Extraversion [$t(9) = 3.273$, $p = 0.010$] and Openness to Experience [$t(9) = 3.773$, $p = 0.004$]. The women entrepreneurs and employee samples also differed significantly on the

following facets of the NEO-PI-R: Self-consciousness (N4) [$t(9) = -2.585, p = 0.029$], Vulnerability (N6) [$t(9) = -3.237, p = 0.010$], Warmth (E1) [$t(9) = 2.711, p = 0.024$], Gregariousness (E2) [$t(9) = 2.275, p = 0.049$], Assertiveness (E3) [$t(9) = 5.104, p = 0.001$], Activity (E4) [$t(9) = 3.009, p = 0.015$], Aesthetics (O2) [$t(9) = 2.303, p = 0.047$], Feelings (O3) [$t(9) = 2.885, p = 0.018$], Actions (O4) [$t(9) = 2.510, p = 0.033$], Values (O6) [$t(9) = 4.398, p = 0.002$], and Competence (C1) [$t(9) = 3.107, p = 0.013$].

4.3 The summary of the face-to-face interviews conducted.

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with the 10 nominated participants were conducted prior to the administration of the NEO-PI-R. The interviews which took about thirty minutes were conducted first and a ten minutes break for composure was given to each participant prior to commencing with answering the NEO-PI-R questionnaire. The interviews were tape recorded with the formal consent of the participants (copy of the consent form signed by each participant is attached as Appendix 7.3). The researcher was impressed with the frankness, commitment and extensive knowledge and experience most of the participants had in running their businesses. The participant was also highly impressed by the high level of interest and willingness to participate in the research as well as the good reception given by each participant towards the researcher and the psychometrist/psychologist during the invitations to participate in the research and when conducting the actual interviews and testing.

The use of in-depth interviews in this research enabled the researcher to gain insight into and understanding of complex, sensitive issues or very personal

topics from the sample selected. Copies of the structured questions as well as the transcript of the recorded interviews are appearing at Appendices 7.1 and 7.4 respectively. The researcher reached saturation at the third interview when the researcher began to hear similar or common responses from the participants.

4.3.1 Reasons or motivation for going into entrepreneurship

The participants raised various reasons or motivation but flexibility was the most cited reason or motivation. Almost half of the participants indicated that being a woman entrepreneur gives them the flexibility to:

- have and raise children and families
- pursue other careers or venture into other interests, such as studying, that they wouldn't have been able to if there were still employed by others
- organise their times in the way that suits them at that moment

Other reasons/motivators mentioned included the desire and dream to be one's own boss; that entrepreneurship is one's natural inclination when a person comes from a family of business owners; and the interest and love of the field that the participant studied for or is experienced in. One participant however raised the fact that the culture of the corporate world that is political, paternalistic, chauvinistic and inhibiting left her with no choice but to become a woman entrepreneur.

4.3.2 Fields or areas experienced in prior to becoming women entrepreneurs

Seventy percent of the of the sample had been experienced in the people interaction fields or those fields traditionally regarded as soft skills like Human Resources, teaching, social welfare and advertising/public relations. The rest were either in sales, marketing and research consulting. It should however be indicated that most of these experiences were gained at senior management levels like director levels.

4.3.3 The challenges faced by the participants

Almost all participants believed self-management is the key challenge (i.e. the ability to manage or deal with 'fears of the unknown' and /or fears of failing; and the ability to manage one's emotions, self-sufficiency and self-worth). Coupled with this was the lack of psychological confidence, the realisation that suddenly one is alone and getting people to believe that one as a woman can go out there and do it.

The challenges relating to starting, running and sustaining the business mentioned were: having enough information for the business such as finance, sales, marketing, and contracts and having systems in place; and having enough business to cover overheads.

Other challenges relate to unrealistic expectations by women entrepreneurs themselves that with the new political dispensation, things are just going to happen for them; that as a woman, particularly black woman, one is being categorised and already being given limits even

before you started; and that women are expected to be assertive and give excellent service at reduced rate compared to their male counterparts.

4.3.4 Cultural and social barriers the participants encountered

None of the participants indicated that they had encountered family and community barriers. The few social barriers mentioned were regarded as "self-imposed". These were:

- reliant on friends for business where the friendship then develops into jealousy with the result that no more business is forthcoming
- not being sociable as a business entrepreneur, for example, not playing golf
- failure to understand the ethics of business, for example not arriving for appointments and do what you promised or said you'd do (being authentic).

Other barriers relate to language where some of the Afrikaans companies do not give business to non-Afrikaans speaking business people. This was, however, mentioned with the acknowledgement that it is experienced by both businessmen and women irrespective of colour. One participant stated that there seemed to be a trend of black men being oppressive; and classism and jealousy amongst women entrepreneurs.

4.3.5 How participants define success in a business.

Various definitions were given which differed from participant to participant. However, the following points were found to be common in their definition of success; that success is:

- When one is able to achieve a steady growing and profitable business with happy people in it; a business that is able to empower other people and seeing them grow.
- The ability to take risks, seeing a gap in the market for the business and going after it.
- Achieving the goals set in areas set to achieve without selling one's integrity. Being true to one's words (i.e. walk the walk and talk the talk).
- When the businesswoman is able to overcome failure; that the business is not dependent on the owner.

4.3.6 What does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

All participants strongly emphasized that an entrepreneur has to be a relative risk taker; closely following was that an entrepreneur must work with high levels of perseverance, determination, faith, guts and tenacity. The participants also indicated that a business person has to know himself/herself (whether introvert or extrovert), what his/her passion is, what differentiates him/her from others and also knowing exactly what is going on in one's business.

4.3.7 Reasons or factors participants view as key for some of the women initiated businesses failing.

Seventy percent of the sample believed that businesses, irrespective of whether the owner is male or female, fail because the owner does not know about the systems (financial, structures, people) required to run the

business. The participants argued that woman-initiated businesses fail because:

- Of failure to manage oneself, emotions (attaching a lot of emotions to things that go wrong), cannot be braver, bolder as well as be more determined as compared to their male counterparts.
- Of failure to network, sell and market oneself but more importantly to surround oneself with people who can be trusted to offer the required support.
- Of failure to understand reasons for going into entrepreneurship; that a woman play at being an entrepreneur as long as her partner/husband is a breadwinner.
- Of lack of customer relations and not understanding reputation and service

4.3.8 Positive influences (role models) in the participants' lives.

Eighty percent of the participants strongly indicated that their parents, partners (husbands), who at the time of growing up and starting business, were hard workers and positively encouraging them to go out and achieve what they wanted. The other 20% mentioned either their teachers or bosses at work.

4.3.9 Responses on whether or not personality predicts an individual's behaviour.

None of the participants provided a clear answer on this question, however 60% of the participants indicated that the statement would hold the truth

only to a certain extent, that certain traits come out and determine your being, and that the way you react to a situation will depend on what your particular traits are. Other participants argued that the type of product or service you are producing in your business is likely to display the type of personality you are.

4.3.10 Balancing work and personal life

All participants in the age categories of 40-49 and 50 and over, responded that when they started with the businesses, it was not possible to strike a balance between work and personal life, but as the businesses grow and children get older, it becomes possible to balance work and personal lives because one is able to delegate responsibilities to staff. Other participants indicated that with supportive husbands who are able to look after children and do other household chores such as cooking, it becomes possible for the businesswoman to be flexible. Other ways of balancing work and personal lives mentioned are:

- Good planning and time management: know when to say no!
- Employing women who are mothers as well so they would understand when one has to take time off from work to attend to family matters.
- Self-discipline in that you spend weekends with family and completely no work.
- Not working from home (i.e. business offices are away from home)

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Results discussion

The small number of women who participated in the study, 10, across the Gauteng province may not be representative of a “typical woman entrepreneur” in South Africa, therefore the results may not be generalised across the country. The sample may be open to a degree of bias because over half of the women chosen for the present study had gained experience in the areas of their businesses whilst still employed in the corporate businesses. However, the purpose of this research was to identify and highlight a pattern or commonality of personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa; to also explore this subject that has not received much academic attention in South Africa in the past and it is hoped that the results from the study will merit further investigation at a later date, using a larger sample within the country.

5.1.1 Neuroticism

From the results shown in Table 4.2 above, it appears that women entrepreneurs in the present study scored in the average range on Neuroticism (42,2%) when compared to the US normative group. The women entrepreneurs scored relatively low on the facet N4 (Self-consciousness) at the 29th percentile, and N6 (Vulnerability) at the 26th percentile, which indicates that the women entrepreneurs in the present study seem to be fairly self-confident, and are able to cope under difficult situations. The researcher can draw the conclusion that with all the injustices South African women in general have been exposed to, it is expected that women (particularly women

entrepreneurs) should be able to cope under difficult situations in business. These results therefore support the theory as listed in Section 2.1.2 above, that entrepreneurs who rate high in emotional stability should be able to tolerate the difficult situations presented by the business environment.

In comparison of the women entrepreneurs with South African employees, the women entrepreneurs scored significantly lower on Self-consciousness (N4) [$t(9) = -2.585, p = 0.029$], and Vulnerability (N6) [$t(9) = -3.237, p = 0.010$] compared to the South African employees. A low score on Self-consciousness (N4) implies that the scorers rarely experience shame and embarrassment. Women entrepreneurs are expected to be self-confident and self-secure in undertaking the business activities as well as the risks brought about. This is further supported by the participants' beliefs that a successful entrepreneur should work with high levels of faith, guts and tenacity (discussed in Section 4.3.6 above) and also that the woman entrepreneur should be able to manage her emotions, be braver, bolder and more determined than the male entrepreneurs (see Section 4.3.7). A lower score on Vulnerability (N6) indicates that the women entrepreneurs in this sample reported themselves to be less vulnerable to stress than South African employees.

5.1.2 Extraversion

The results in Table 4.2 indicate that women entrepreneurs scored higher on Extraversion than 81.4% of the women in the US standardisation sample. Extraversion is described as a form of an individual's level of sociability, and one's good personal and general perception of life. The results therefore indicate that the participants are highly sociable and have a favourable

perception of themselves and of life in general. In comparison with the US normative group in Table 4.2, the results show that for all the facets of Extraversion, the women entrepreneurs scored higher than 60% of the women in the US normative sample. This suggests that the sample of women entrepreneurs report themselves to be more extraverted than the US normative sample.

The results in Table 4.3 shows that women entrepreneurs scored significantly higher on Extraversion overall [$t(9) = 3.273, p = 0.010$], as well as the facets Warmth (E1) [$t(9) = 2.711, p = 0.024$], Gregariousness (E2) [$t(9) = 2.275, p = 0.049$], Assertiveness (E3) [$t(9) = 5.104, p = 0.001$], and Activity (E4) [$t(9) = 3.009, p = 0.015$] when compared to the South African employees. Being gregarious, assertive and highly active and busy are key requirements for any successful entrepreneur. This point is supported by the participants' strong belief that women entrepreneurs should be able to network, sell and market themselves but more importantly, to surround themselves with people who can be trusted to offer the required support.

5.1.3 Openness to Experience

The results in Table 4.2 indicate that women entrepreneurs scored higher on Openness to Experience than 80.5% of the women in the US standardisation sample. These results indicate that the participants have the ability to take initiative, be innovative and are open to trying new things and experimenting with new ideas. In comparison with the US normative group in Table 4.2, the results show that for all the facets of Openness to Experience, the women entrepreneurs scored higher than 60% of the women in the US normative sample.

The results in Table 4.3 shows that women entrepreneurs scored significantly higher on Openness to Experience overall [$t(9) = 3.773, p = 0.004$], as well as

on the facets Aesthetics (O2) [$t(9) = 2.303, p = 0.047$], Feelings (O3) [$t(9) = 2.885, p = 0.018$], Actions (O4) [$t(9) = 2.510, p = 0.033$], and Values (O6) [$t(9) = 4.398, p = 0.002$], when compared to the South African employees.

This implies that women entrepreneurs in the present study are able to experience deeper and more differentiated emotional states and feel both happiness and unhappiness more intensely than others. The women also appear to be more open to trying new and different ways of doing things, and tend to do things in a less traditional way than South African employees. The willingness to try new ventures is essential for entrepreneurs, and these results appear to support that theory.

5.1.4 Agreeableness

Higher scorers in this factor are sympathetic to others and eager to help and believe others will be equally helpful in return. Table 4.2 showed the mean percentile of 48.10 for the participants in the present study when compared to the US normative group, and no difference in the scores between women entrepreneurs and South African employees on the Agreeableness factor as a whole, and on each of the facets. At a glance, it appears that Agreeableness and its facets would not differentiate entrepreneurs from other women, or South African employees.

5.1.5 Conscientiousness

This factor looks at how the individual organise, plan and carry out his/her tasks. It also looks at the amount of effort and time invested in those tasks or duties. The results in Table 4.2 indicate that women entrepreneurs scored higher on Conscientiousness than 62.1% of the women in the US

standardisation sample. However, as shown in Table 4.3, the women entrepreneurs scored lower than South African employees at a pharmaceutical company, although this was not a significant difference. . The only mean difference found for the Conscientiousness facets was for Competence (C1) [$t(9) = 3.107, p = 0.013$], indicating that women entrepreneurs are more capable, effective and well prepared to deal with the pressures in their lives than those employees in the other South African sample. The responses given during the interviews, that good planning, time management and self-discipline are regarded as key to balancing work and personal lives, support these results.

5.2 Conclusion

From the results above, it is clear that women entrepreneurs in South Africa have common set of personality traits, characteristics and behaviours that are key for success in a business. **The first hypothesis (HYP1) therefore cannot be rejected.**

The results further showed that women entrepreneurs in South Africa have a common set of personality traits, characteristics and behaviours that are different from those of employees in South Africa. **The third hypothesis (HYP3) therefore cannot be rejected.**

5.3 Recommendations

Due to the limited size of the sample, the results in the present study cannot be generalised to all women entrepreneurs in the country. A bigger sample

which would include all the provinces with equal representation of all ethnic groups as well as all business sectors is recommended for future research.

Future studies may also consider the correlation between the personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of women entrepreneurs versus the difference in business annual turnover.

It is also recommended that future work look at the correlation between age of the business, age of the woman entrepreneur and the annual turnover of the business.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix 7.1: QUESTIONS FOR BUSINESS WOMEN TO BE INTERVIEWED

1. What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?
2. What industry is your business in and what motivated you to go into that industry?
3. Prior to becoming a businesswoman, what were you doing?
4. In your opinion, what are the challenges, in general, that businesswomen encounter in establishing themselves? What challenges did you encounter?
5. In your opinion what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?
6. What cultural and social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them? Can you tell me a story that is particularly indicative of the barriers you faced?
7. How do you strike a balance between the demands of your business and that of your personal life?

8. What would you regard as factors/reasons that lead to failure of some women initiated businesses?
9. How would you define success in business?
10. Tell me about the people in your early life who had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today?
- 11.0 Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his or her behaviour. How does this statement apply to you?

12.0 **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Age	20 – 29	Mark the appropriate block with an X ☐
	30 – 39	☐
	40 – 49	☐
	50 and over	☐
Education	Matric	☐
	Degree/Diploma	☐
	Post Graduate	☐
	None	☐
Highest Educational Qualifications	Matric	☐

	Degree/Diploma	
	Post Graduate	
Years in business	3 - 5	
	6 - 10	
	10 yrs and over	
Annual Turnover of business	Less than 500 000	
	501 000 – 1 million	
	1,1 million – 2 million	
	Over 2 million	

Appendix 7.2: Invitation letter to participate in the research study



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Date:.....

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

1. I, Maphuti Lovedelia Maupye, an MBL (Masters Degree in Business Leadership) final year student at UNISA School of Graduate Business Leadership, hereby formally request you to participate in the research assessment/interview to be undertaken on2005. This assessment/interview would be conducted with the assistance of a qualified psychologist to be nominated by Jopie van Rooyen & Partners SA (Pty) Ltd. This assessment/interview would take about two and half hours of your time at no cost. In return for your participation, you would be given individual feedback by the psychologist on the questionnaires

completed, as well as the executive summary once the research is completed and accepted by the University. The feedback you receive would contribute to your personal development and growth as a successful South African businesswoman.

2. The research is about **identifying personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa. The supervisor for my research is Professor Stella M. Nkomo.**
3. The results of the research will only be used for partial fulfilment of the MBL requirements and further validation of the assessment measures used in the study. All information about you, obtained during the research data collection, shall be treated as confidential and will not be used or divulged without prior written permission from you.

I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this research.

Regards

LOVEDELIA MAUPYE

Appendix 7.3: Interview Consent Form

Research topic: identifying personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa

Interview Consent Form

I agree to be interviewed by Lovedelia Maupye who is conducting research for her MBL studies. The research is about identifying personality traits, characteristics and behaviours of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa.

I understand the interview will take not more than 1 hour to complete and agree to have it tape-recorded. I also acknowledge that my identity, words, and opinions may become part of the research content. Lovedelia Maupye has assured me that every effort will be made to accurately capture my words. Lovedelia Maupye and her appointed research study leader and registered Psychologist have agreed to be bound by the research ethics of the Academy of Management to protect the interest of research subjects. If at any time, I feel that the interview is becoming uncomfortable or intrusive, I may end the interview.

Signature

Date

Appendix 7.4: Transcripts Of Interviews Conducted With The Participants: The names of the participants have been removed for confidentiality as agreed in the invitation letter attached as Appendix 7.2 above

FIRST INTERVIEW:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research study.

It's a pleasure

Just for sake of tape recording I suggest we introduce ourselves.

My name is Lovedelia Maupye.

My name is

I take it you're the owner of this company

Yes

Perhaps you'd like to just give me a brief on what your company does.

Okay, my company is called the and we are a small HR

consultancy and we've got 5 service lines, one being management consulting,

specializing in people and organizations and then we do labor broking for HR

outsourcing with outsource either departments of smaller companies or

outsource of big. We do recruitment, that's a small part of the business. We

do training and we do mind setting in attitude changes.

Thank you, how long have you been in the business?

For 3 years

What would you say is your average annual turnover?

Over two million a year

What is your highest qualification?

Post graduate

Is your age between 30-39, 40-49?

40-49

What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

I think it was having children and wanting flexibility in my life.

Okay, what industry is your business in and what motivated you to go into that industry?

The industries that we mainly work in is the financial sector, retail, well our different services target different industries.

Okay

Mostly, financial sector, retail, and a bit of mining. There we've place ourselves to say that we're not the cheapest people in the box so it has to be somebody who can afford us.

Okay, prior to opening your business, what were you doing?

I was working at a business school in research. Now, and before that I've been consulting.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishments themselves and what challenges have you personally encountered?

I think the challenges initially is always, I don't think it's the competence to do what you're doing, it's more getting people to believe in your competence and it's the marketing and the sales, and I think that stays the peak of your challenge.

Okay, would you say that those challenges are what you've encountered?

Encountered it then, and I think you encounter it all the time.

Okay, in your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

I think you've got to be able to sell, you got to feel passion to market what you do and you have to think that you're one of the best doing it and you have to be able to sell and if you can't do that I don't think you can keep going unless you have mellow cash coming to you.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

I think that there is definitely that gender, discrimination. I think men have initially preferred to work with men and I think that's been a barrier, I think the first initial talk of BEE most probably helped that but now as a white woman, I think that we are empowered. Other barriers is that we've sort of grown organically so finance has never really been an issue we just have to manage our cash flow very carefully and I've always supported, I wouldn't say access to funds has been a major issue in our business. What do you mean by cultural barriers?

In the community, in the family where you come from, did you not encounter any sort of resistance, people saying no she's a woman, she can't, we don't do business with women?

No I've never had that.

Okay, and social barriers?

No, not that much. I just think doing business as a woman, that we haven't got the connections; it's mostly men at the top. You don't play the golf games.

Can you tell me a story that is particularly indicative of these barriers that you've faced, a story you can remember when you started the business.

When I moved in, in the beginning, especially with our first financial results, the people would say it's not a bad salary for a part time, half-day housewife or I think the small business development which no longer exists so they were saying oh you'll never do that, you'll never make it. Those were the kind of barriers that I had to go through.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of business and your personal values?

You've just got to be organized. You have to plan ahead, plan your week ahead, and plan your children's lives, where you're actually running a diary for each one of your children and yourself. So I think you have to be a good planner. You also have to be quite resourceful, that you know you can't do everything and that you need to get work done through other people. I think at times you need to be quite tough to be able to say sorry, what was the question? I just need to check what I'm answering it.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of your business and that of your personal life?

I also think that not working from home is quite good in terms of that, although I have a little office at home and I can download my e-mails don't matter where I am. I think that what you do is maybe you'll go and watch your children play a sport then you'll work in the evenings.

How many hours do you spend on business?

I spend about 50 hours a week on business

What do you do regarding the factors or reasons that lead to failure to some of these women who have businesses?

I would say that one isn't able to sell, that you most probably haven't got the plan; you need selling proposition because it's tough out there. Especially a business like ours, a very low barriers to entry so then lots of people do the same thing, lots of HR people are following the same thing, so if you can't get out there and network, sell and market yourself then. In our business it's not a necessary skill of act. It's your self

What would you define success in your business?

Where you make a good amount of money to pay yourself a salary, you building something for the future, you are not just paying yourself a salary, you are creating something like an entity that is of value. I think with every business you've got to have an exit strategy, whether it's at retirement or it's at 50 or whatever it is, but you've got to have an exit strategy in place and that you're working towards it, that you're prepared to keep growing, and there's always challenges at every single stage of your business, you know, I mean we've had rapid growth and it's to get up towards that and it didn't maintain that worth and that was quite a challenge to turn things around.

How did you manage to turn it?

I just worked very hard and very cleverly. I think also getting the right people on board is very important and letting people grow as well.

Tell me about people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today.

Oh it would definitely be your parents. I think my dad was the business man and I think very ethical and most probably too honest to make a call because we often got hurt and I think our father was an influence in terms of that, and I think our mother always just told us we were wonderful and that we were the cleverest, which we weren't, the cleverest, and most beautiful and most outstanding kids around, which in years later we discovered that wasn't true.

Would you say that still played the biggest role in who you are today?

Yes, that was the one thing and I think there was another influence in terms of doing my own business and being self supporting is that we had a neighbour

and her husband died and she had four kids and I saw how she struggled not being a qualified teacher and I always thought I never want to be in that situation if my husband died or left me alone, I would always want to be able to have something.

What about you and your partner?

His been very supportive and I always think about it that in fact he had a very successful, very famous mother so for him to have a strong woman has never been wrong. He's never questioned it; he's always been a wonderful supporter.

Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his behaviour, how does this statement apply to you.

I'm sure it is the personality but I also think it's the environment. For example last night my children, I mean I had driven for 2 hours with them with their music and when we got home, and I was preparing work for the week, their music was blearing and I actually went and pulled the plugs out and I actually lost my temper, which is not normally me, you know, my personality profile wouldn't pick that up but the environment just got to me.

Do you think personality plays a role, maybe a bigger role in determining the success?

That would be the element of personality; there might be certain elements, like determination, and perseverance. I'm sure there's not just one personality, but there might be common elements.

What advise would you give to anybody aspiring to be a businesswoman?

I think you need to have a good quality because that also will help to distinguish you from another person and networking or getting out and going to see clients, or picking up a telephone and to be organized because you might be a great marketer but if you're not (a) delivering and (b) invoicing. So you need to actually be good at all aspects of managing a business. You need to up stand your pricing and how to make money, put in that formula on how to make money.

I guess you also have to understand financials?

You definitely do need to understand financials, well in the beginning you can get people to help but in the end you have to be able to understand it yourself. Thank you for participating in the interview and I'm sure anyone listening to you talking would really learn a lot from it because you have a lot of experience.

SECOND INTERVIEW:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research study.

It's a pleasure

Just for sake of tape recording I suggest we introduce ourselves.

My name is Lovedelia Maupye.

I'm

Could you give me a brief description on what your company does?

My company is a communications company, in the old days they would call it a, and our role is to communicate about companies and services in other ways, besides advertising. So, it has nothing to do with advertising but we do more direct mail and liaising with the media and that type of thing.

What is the name of your company?

It's

What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

I think it's been my life long ambition to be my own boss, I don't like taking orders, that was the one way of doing it and also to do my own thing.

You said your business is in the communication industry, would you say you're in the advertising industry or is it just purely communication industry?

It's more communications, we deal with advertising agencies, but advertising is not my area of expertise, I'm more editorial and direct mail and that type of thing, communicating about a service in other ways besides straight advertising.

What motivated you to go into that industry?

I had a very good guidance counsellor when I was in matric and I was going to do social work and he said no, you're far too soft, you'll spend your life crying about the people you're dealing with, have you ever considered public relations? So he explained to me what it was all about and I thought okay it sounded like a good idea and that was it, so straight from school I studied and then I started my business.

And are you enjoying it?

Yes I am, it's becoming more difficult, the actual field is becoming more difficult.

Prior to becoming a businesswoman, what were you doing?

I was one of the directors at another public relations company so I've always been in public relations, so I was just underneath the MD at another public

relations company. I was with them for six years and needed to run the company in his absence because he was away a lot.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishing themselves, and what challenges did you personally encounter?

Obviously one of the biggest challenges is making sure that you've got enough business to cover your overheads and also to prove yourself as a woman in the business world. When I think back about 15 years, women weren't seen as seriously as we are today, I think it's changed in South Africa, so to be seen seriously and also to ensure that you get the business contracts.

Okay, would you say that those challenges that you've personally encountered?

Yes, and then also ensuring that you're taken seriously from both the family point of view and from a business point of view.

Okay, in your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

To be highly involved, to make sure you always know exactly what is going on in your business, to constantly believe that you can achieve what you've set out to, perseverance, tenacity, dam hard work, literally it doesn't stop at 5 o'clock, your own business continues right afterwards. You lie in bed at night

thinking about the business, wake up thinking about business, so absolute involvement.

Somebody said risk, you have to have the ability to take risks, would you say that's true?

Yes, most definitely.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

Sometimes I think old fashioned people would think a man is better at a particular job, and a man is sometimes more confident. If I look at some of the business that I've lost, as a man's gone very sure of himself and it presses him of whatever words, I think a woman tends to maybe under sell herself and doesn't put on the likes, especially with dealing with a man, sometimes I think a woman is not as superior.

How did you overcome that?

I think it comes with experience, at the end of the day, once you've been in business for 15 years, you know the business and you're more confident in yourself and I think a woman has far more attention to detail than a man has, a man just talks, a woman does.

Can you tell me a story that is particularly indicated to barriers that you've faced, a story you can remember when you started the business.

There's one particular story, I remember going into pitch on a big bid of business and I think there were two companies owned by a female and the other one owned by a male and I think he was very friendly, he used to go out drinking with the guys and he drove a fancy car and at the end of the day, yes

he got the business because the flashiness impressed them but I don't know if he actually does a good job, I'm sure if he did a better job than a woman would have done.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of business and your personal life?

It's difficult, I think you've got to have a very supporting husband and a very supportive family and you've also got to have self discipline to say okay, I'm very sorry but I can't be at this function or I got do this because I've got family issue but at the end of the day, you've got to be able to say no, which is very difficult, because you're continuously about the business continuing and you also worry about what clients will say and that type of thing because clients tend to think that if you're not involved, you're not interested.

If I may ask, how much time do you spend in the office or on the business in week?

I would say that during the week it is absolutely full time work, I'd say 10-12 hours during the week. My weekends, as far as possible, I try and keep to being personal so that I go home at about half past six, seven, I try to keep that to be my personal time. But I would say work definitely out weighs personal time. I take holidays as well.

What do you do regarding the factors or reasons that lead to failure of some of these women who have businesses?

Possibly not having the finances to continue. I would say family life as well, I think if you don't have support can actually be the reason for a business not

working, and also a lot about hiring of people, if you've got to get a woman in a position, you've got to have good strong support, people you can trust.

What about the fact that you find that you are underestimated as a woman, you're written off before you even get started. Would you say that that is one of the reasons businesses fail?

I don't know what it's like now, I would hope that it's actually changed, that woman in South Africa are getting the finances, so it could, maybe a long time ago you wouldn't of been taken seriously but I sincerely hope that it has changed

How do you define success in a business?

Obviously making sure that you are profitable and being able to employ other women and to empower other women and also being able to enjoy what you're doing. You know it's just means to an end and just to get the money so I don't think it's a successful business and it's also to have the finances and to have people around you that are happy as well and from my point of view, to be able see people grow, when you take in students, for me it's the most personal area of success is to see a student that is not confident and to see her go onto being an accounts manager.

So that would be your contribution to the community and that you will regard as one of the success criteria?

Yes I think making people confident, I don't think it's really giving back to the community, I think it's just giving people confidence.

Tell me about people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today.

Most probably my parents. My mom and dad come from close family and I think they've always said "what do you want to do, well you can do it". They never dictated what sort of job I should do, so if I said to them I wanted to do, whatever job it was they would've said okay well let's find out about it and you go and you do it. And I think the times when you question yourself or you're down, they would be able to bring me up again. It's definitely the family.

Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his or her behaviour. Does this statement apply to you?

Yes I definitely think so. I think the way you react to a situation will depend on what your particular personality trait is. So if you're a confident person or if you're a problem solver and something happened and think okay so this is the way I do it, so I definitely think your personality predicts your behaviour.

Would you say the full personality traits or characteristics count for some elements in the personality?

Some elements in your personality and obviously from the experience point of view, once you've worked for a while there's certain ways, you think okay last time I said this is whatever okay so next time I'm not going to do this, so I think experience also makes a big difference. If you've made bad business decisions in the past because of your personality, maybe you're a little soft, like I am, the next time you think okay, I've learned the hard way and I mustn't do it again.

Which age category do you fall into?

40-49

What is your highest qualification?

Diploma

Years in business?

15 years

What is your annual turnover?

Over 2 million a year

You have emphasized the importance of being determined, the importance of knowing about the business also your personality would make you sustainable or sustain the business. What other things do you think, other than this would play a bigger role to make it in a business?

You've got to open to new ways of doing things, you've got adapt to change, and I think, if I look at my business, we're all female, public relations is just generally females and in order to keep staff I've had to change the way I look at things. You've got to be flexible, you've got to also empathise with people, you've got to look at it from their point of view. So I think having good relationships with people also make a difference, relationships with clients and staff.

What about the ability to distinguish yourself from the rest of your competitors?

I think you need to define the type of business that you want to do. You have decide okay I'm good in this area and certain types it's not my area. So define exactly. So from a consumer, I do a lot of consumer work and a lot of business to business, yes you have to have a point of difference within the company.

Thank you very much.

THIRD INTERVIEW:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research study.

Just for sake of tape recording I suggest we introduce ourselves.

My name is Lovedelia Maupye, could you please introduce yourself.

Yes, my name is

What is the name of your company and what does your company do?

I have company that manufactures candles, decorative handmade candles and the name of the company is it's

What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

I think you're born with it, you can't stop yourself, it's something that's in your blood. It's something that happens, I don't think you plan it, that's the way I feel. I think, as I said, you're driven as a person and if I take myself as an example, after I left school I didn't really know what to do. I did teaching for a year and then I left that because I felt that wasn't my mission in life. I did work at a company for many years and after I left, I decided to go into business and I started enjoying it. I find it a challenge because it was starting from almost nothing and I accidentally got into candles. I'm a very enthusiastic person, I don't take no for an answer and I went to see somebody who had a big store because I was manufacturing wooden crates and packaging soaps, bath salts and candles but before we were making candles, we were actually just buying in a couple of things from people and then packaging them but we were making the packaging, and then I went and saw and the buyer said to me you are very enthusiastic, I like what I've seen but can you make candles and I looked at her and said yes and I didn't know how to make a

candle and I went back and I phoned and said okay go and buy yourself a kettle and we'll supply you with a little bit of wax and that's how I started my candle business.

Are you very artistic?

Yes I am, I should say fortunately and unfortunately.

Why unfortunately?

Unfortunately sometimes money gets into the way of things and if you have to make money out of certain things some of the designs I come up with is not a proposition so you've got to shelf certain designs, but on the fortunately side I come up with some very nice designs and yes, I have a very unique style in the market place before identifying my products straight away.

Okay, what industry is your business in and what motivated you to go into that industry?

It's a manufacturing industry

Okay, prior to opening your business, what were you doing?

Funny enough, it's not that I couldn't stand teaching, I think one can teach in many ways and if I look at my whole career, I'm obviously a good teacher because I left the teaching career, I left studying teaching but then when I went and worked for an insurance company, I landed up in the human resources, the training environment, which is a field of teaching, which I enjoyed thoroughly and one of my strengths in my business is that I can teach my staff quite well, I can train them fairly well because we normally take unskilled people and we train them to become skilled in what they're doing and I know it sounds quite simple, you may think that manufacturing a candle is simple, but it's not. It's quite a complicated product to make, well it's quite

technical so the people I employ are, I would say highly skilled in comparison to when they first started and also looking at the product, it's a highly sophisticated product that assisting in probably the top end of the market household, the colors are in fashion, the shapes are in fashion, the packaging are in fashion so at the end of the day we can honestly say that we're proud of what we're doing and so are the people that are manufacturing it but a lot of the times it's invested. I, at the moment, only have ladies working for me. It's much easier. We did have a person that we employed to do our driving but he just changed the entire culture. He was fortunately just working on a temporary basis but we as a team actually said we must keep it in mind because working with ten ladies, you feel very comfortable, you're the same, it's quite fun.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishments themselves and what challenges did you personally encounter?

The biggest challenge is having to deal with men. In my industry, it's primarily a mixture of both male and female and also there are a lot of females manufacturing from their little garages, and by the way, that's how I started. But the challenge is when you dealing with men, when you have to order your raw materials and presently we're actually facing quite a challenge because wax is related to the oil price and at the moment, the wax price has shot up incredibly to about a thousand rand a ton overnight and there's not even room for negotiations. The men and in my experience I deal with mostly with men whether you're buying your wick, whether you're buying your wax, which are your two main raw ingredients for making a candle and that is what I find the

most unpleasant because they just see you as a little someone trying to make a noise all the time and that's when, you trying to make a noise because you try to negotiate but that is not even open to negotiation, so that is the biggest challenge. That is the biggest challenge because I like wheeling and dealing within a lawful proper state and they're just not interested. It almost is, and I shouldn't say this, but I will, the wax industry reminds me of, or the buying of the raw materials, there's almost a flavor of underhandedness but you feel you're dealing with the Mafia. That's the kind of feeling you get. I mean I phoned a company last week when I was trying to see all my suppliers not reducing the price let me see what the other guys are doing and I phoned the company and they basically said "who are you" and I said "....." and they said "how much do you buy" and I said "that's irrelevant, what are your prices per ton?" He wouldn't tell me. Now if you had to phone a company and say "hi, what are your prices?" you should be able to say these are my prices, so the open card story is not happening, it doesn't happen in our industry, which is a challenge, a problem.

Okay, in your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

You've got to take risks and sometimes your choice of risk will be good and sometimes it won't and neither of them are good or bad or right or wrong, you've just got to work it through if you've made the wrong decision. And I also think you've got to think out the box, you can't think the way other people think, you've got to think out the box to make you different, to keep you ahead of things, to have that edge above people.

What about business knowledge, don't you think that's another area?

Absolutely! I think it goes hand in hand in a way, I mean I've had to learn through trial and error, I've made it my business to learn a lot of technical things about wax, which makes the whole process very interesting. But yes, knowledge is very important. I think knowledge and also I think basically in my industry, ideas. So I'm relating the questions to obviously to what I do and I think that's what's kept me ahead, my good ideas.

So you'd have to, every now and then play around with new ideas

Yes, I actually feel that I'm blessed with my ideas.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

I was born in, so I don't have a problem with any cultural or social barriers.

It could be in your own community or your own family, did you have any barriers there that you encountered?

For example?

You don't have a supportive family or a husband who says no you can't do this?

No way, no chance!

The parents, have they been a barrier?

No, I think both my side and my husband's side are, I think that's also another thing that counts to a person who comes from, your environment. My parents never ever clipped my wings, they guided me, as parents, and as parents I think sometimes they were wrong in their decisions and sometimes they were right but I think they always made sure that my opinion was respected and that was very difficult so I don't think I had any.

Okay, obviously this one won't be relevant to you because you didn't encounter any social barriers.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of business and that of your personal life?

Very difficult. You know it is not difficult, I think what happens, as you get older and wiser, what happens is something inside your head starts saying "well, if you don't balance there's going to be trouble, with yourself". And I think it's important, I know that for myself, I'm quite a spiritual person and very in tune with my body and I sometimes get messages and lately I've had message where I was given a book through spiritual guide and I'm busy reading it at the moment, it's quite a thick book, but there are, the book is really about the laws of the universe, the laws of...for example, the laws of responsibility, the laws of abundance, the laws of greed, the laws of prosperity and so on and so forth and I think just by me being doing this, by me reading it very slowly, it's taught me a lot of things, it kind of reinforces things that you know but you've forgotten and also there's a calmness when I read this book and it's kind of forcing me into balance that I know that I should be in. So, I find that my message, through that book, is to start balancing my life. You need to mix, you can't just work all the time, you have to do work, okay it is a great percentage of our day, as we all know, but we also have to have a little bit of fun, socialize, go to church, have fun with your kids, etc. etc.

If I may ask you a very personal question, how much time in a week do you dedicate to work and how much do you dedicate to your personal life and family?

I would say that it's definitely not 50/50, I would say that I work, percentage wise, it's 70/30, which is not a balance yet.

70%, 70 meaning office and 30 personal?

Yes, and it's getting better because it was really almost like 90/10. You have to be aware of it. So you know, things around you, when you start hearing that there's certain people, like I know of somebody ****missing text**** going back just a step that when you 35 and you're dying of cancer, okay, there's all sorts of messages, you've got to stop to think and say "hang on a minute, okay let's look at things around us and say "okay we need to stop, it's not all about work". Yes, it's very nice to be successful and success is not just about money, success means different things to different people.

Which is going to be my next question. How do you define success in a business?

For me, I think coming from an environment, a background where, honestly I haven't studied, what ever I've learned is just through experience. That for me has been successful on it's own because if I'm still in business after 15 years, yes it's been challenging and very difficult at times. One needs to understand that if you are, you've got to be doing something right when you're employing people and you're doing the work, there's some ingredients that you're doing, that is the right ingredient. It's like making a cake, sometimes you're going to flop and sometimes you're not, success means different things to different people and for me, I think when I first started it was money, but as I'm getting older it's not, I see that it's actually getting the fundamentals of the business correct, putting systems in place, running with those systems, looking after

staff and making sure the whole thing works and everybody's happy and that you've got a good end result.

When you say looking after your staff, what do you mean? Making them happy?

Well they've got to be happy in an environment, you know you can, I've got the philosophy that you can take a horse to water but if it doesn't want to drink, it's just not going to drink. And you've got to understand that I work with people that might not even understand what I'm talking about and we've got a very informal culture but we do have a culture, okay, where my people understand what a bank balance means, they may not have understood that in the beginning, they understand what a profit is, what marketing means, what service means, all these little words that are related to business, okay, and I think it's important to be passed onto the people who are making the product so that they can understand how important it is. Even the people that clean the floor understand what service means or what profit means, or what an overdraft means.

In your opinion, what would you regard as factors or reasons that lead to failure of some these woman initiated businesses.

Their hormones

Hormones? Ha ha ha ha

Ha ha ha! Okay, if you put this in your research or not I don't mind.

No, no, I'm going to produce it as is, I'm not going to change anything you said.

Okay, let's just re-cap, read me that question again.

Okay, what would you regard as factors or reasons that lead to failure of some these woman initiated businesses.

Their hormones. Women are emotional people, so emotions are related to hormones and I do believe that being a woman, we are different to men, some are stronger, you get some very tough women, I would consider myself quite tough, even though as I'm getting older unfortunately I'm mellowing.

You're not getting older, you're just maturing.

Yes, I'm maturing but you do get, I feel that I am, I'm not as 'What's the word?' I don't want to fight with people all the time, I'm not so edgy as before.

I think, on a more serious basis, even though I do feel that hormones do play a role because we are emotional and we run with those emotions so sometimes you're feeling quite happy and sometimes you're feeling quite sad whereas men don't have that and we attach a lot of our emotions to things that go wrong and we take it personally and that's why I think, that's why I say that hormones relate. I think there are some women who are able to hide and put on a good front but in the end, if it's going to fail, it's going to fail and if you look and you dig deep down, it's got to do with that person. Most things are in our heads.

You said the personality has a lot to do with some of the business failing?

Yes, the personality and also what's in your head, because remember most things are in our head. I mean if you take a day, go back to where you had a bad day and if you really think about it, it was really related to your emotions. Maybe your husband upset you that day, okay now take the same scenario 3 weeks later, where you didn't get upset with him and the same thing happened at work, you may not have got...do you hear what I'm saying? I'm

not saying we bring our problems to work, no, I'm saying the person with it's emotions, that plays a big role in business as women, and your head, you've got to have a strong head in order to, and a positive mind in order to be successful.

Tell me about people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today.

I think my granny. There's a special bond between the two of us. She brought me up for a couple of months because my mom was hospitalized. But my granny was quite dynamic, she had a vibrant personality, she left, she came from Greece when she was 18 and married my grandfather. I mean if you think about it now she was a baby but that was happening in those years and she was very, she never ran her own business, but she was the force behind my grandfather's business without a question of a doubt. He had bakeries and she was involved in the community and she was the chairman's wife and she did plays and she made sure that she gave to the poor and all that kind of thing. She really always stuck out in my head because she did those kind of things and she did it in a very nice way, she didn't do it in a forceful way but obviously there was force, she did it very cleverly, that was in my young days and then as we went along I, the company that I worked for, I think I had some very very good bosses that taught me a lot of things, and I think it taught me what I know today, that was in the middle of my life and then I think my husband plays a big role in my life where he's quite a successful businessman who's very calm, he often says things to me I think long before they're going to happen because he sees them happening but I'm stubborn,

so I like to experience things. I'm not a wise person, I'm a stubborn person where I like to go through something, even if it's not so good, to say well there you go, I've experienced it. But somewhere along the line, the penny is going to drop, I know it. I'm now starting to understand that hold on, instead of wasting another 3 or 4 months of my life, or sometimes year, you start saying hold on a minute, I need to start being a little bit wiser here and to start seeing if that happens, then that's going to be the consequences and so on and so forth.

But generally you have the good support from him as well?

I have the best support. Yes, I have good support I must say.

Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his behaviour, how does this statement apply to you.

Yes it does because in my kind of environment, if I look at some of the competitors that I know, if you look at their personality, it comes out in their product. If you look at my product, you can see my personality. It's bright, it's fun, it's fashionable, it's trendy, it's artistic and yes, I think that answers your question.

One thing I've seen about you is that you're very positive, you've got a lot of positive energy.

I am

Okay just some general information I need from you, the age category, which one would you fall under?

45 onwards (40-49)

I know you said that you're not that qualified but what would you say is your highest qualification, highest education?

Matric

It's amazing! How you turned things around with just matric.

I must tell you though that as time goes by, I do feel the need that had I studied, I think I would've been a lot further, there's certain things that I feel are lacking in but I'm also learning that you've got to delegate and you've got to get the right people, and if you want to expand, you can hire that person, that qualified person (don't have to be the qualified person) so we're learning that.

You said 15 years in the business, am I correct?

Yes

What would you say is your annual turnover?

Between 1 and 2 million

Anything else you may want to give as advice to any aspiring a businesswoman?

The first step is put systems in place. Once you've put your systems in place....basically the fundamentals, get the fundamentals right okay, that's what I didn't do, that's why I'm saying.

But yet you are so successful.

It doesn't matter because sometimes what happens is you don't do it and then you realize you've got to do it. If you're starting off, If I had to start off....and sometimes I don't make sense to people because information.....when you get given information, if you ready for that information it's going to make sense. If it doesn't, it's invalid. So maybe somewhere along the line someone did tell me that, that it was invalid and now I'm ready for it and I'm saying put

your systems in place, get your fundamentals right okay, for a successful business and have fun.

I take it the systems you are talking about would be the people?

Your production, your admin, your finance, your marketing, all those, your sales.

So that when you start running you have all in order?

I'm thinking of opening up another business, but it won't be candles and it will be the right way, I'll do a business plan, for example, I don't have to know anything about that business, so if you don't have to know anything about the business, you can the right people in the right hole. Look it's not always going to happen, the perfect scenario is not going to happen because people come and go but we're talking about if you are a graphic designer and that's what I need, I'm going to interview you and employ you for example, I'm not going to employ an engineer if I need a graphic designer. So you're putting the right person in the right hole okay to run.

Thank you for participating in the interview and here is just a little something as a token of appreciation.

Oh thank you so much and good luck hey

FOURTH INTERVIEW

I would like to thank you for participating in this research. Just for formalities, my name is Lovedelia. I will be conducting the interview. I am going to ask that you introduce yourself and your company, briefly what you do, what's the name of your company.

I'mmy company is calledand the meaning of that title is to activate internal leadership, leadership action and then alignment is to line up, you know reaction, behaviour and results and so what we do is coaching and our aim is to bring the top and the bottom of the company closer together. So we have comprehensive coaching approach, it's not just coaching an individual, it's to essentially coach the entire organization.

What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

I think it was just a natural inclination, it's not that I am going to become, it just happened. I come from a family where my parents were in business, my brother's in his own business, my sister operates as a specialist actually but also has her own business going on the side so I think that made it really, it's kind of natural, you know I had a family preference and it's the way that we think, I think in our family that for certain is a part of it and I was contracting for 5 years to consultancy and all of those 5 years kept on looking at how I would want to do things differently and better and I left sort of unexpectedly, principle matters came to a head and I decided I've had enough and I stepped out and I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do, I hadn't decided to just start my own business, for a month I decided I'm just going to think and I started looking around at taking up jobs and then I decided I'm not going to wait around, I'm going to start stuff and so we moved into that. When I started, I had no client base, no money, I had no business model I had absolutely nothing.

So you started from basically nothing?

I started from scratch yes.

Okay, what industry is your business in and what motivated you to go into that industry?

What industry? People development, I just have a natural care for people, I really naturally and deeply care for people and it's always difficult to stand back and see, you know, the gaps or opportunities or what's missing and not to respond to it so I think also a real need to respond and do something or fix something.

Okay, I know you said that prior to starting your business you were contracted to a consultancy company, other than that, what were you doing before that?

I worked for, in the Management Development Centre, we ran assessment centres and then which became I started an

I ran that for 10 years sort of concurrently what I was busy doing, working in corporate world, I did some personnel recruitment, oh I recruited myself, I did recruitment for 3 months and I thought this is the perfect spec, this is me. So I placed myself into a job after 3 months, I really couldn't bare the industry. So that's quite an eclectic and then I would say sort of specialized, I did some counseling on the side as well so I'd say I've sort of always had a couple of things going at the same time.

Yes, but they all deal back together.

Absolutely. I never thought I'm changing direction, I always just had this sense that whatever I'm doing is equipping me.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishing themselves and what challenges did you personally encounter?

I think, there's two categories, one is I think yourself is a challenge, just managing yourself, managing your fears, your emotion, your lack of, you know, how do you do this and just yourself internally I think is a major thing, you really have to be able to do that because you have no form of reference for what you are going into, you have absolutely no idea that there are so many things that you have no clue about, you don't that, which is good in a sense but each time you encounter them there are an enormous amount of unknowns and an enormous amount of fears and you've got to each time get yourself through that and actually get pragmatic, actually get down and do stuff in spite of how you feel, so I think that's one. I think the other one is in one place having all the information you need in terms of how did your finance deals, how do you find employment contracts, I think the frustration, the irony and the pity is that every entrepreneur has to re-event the wheel every single time to some degree, and you know I think that if you can very quickly tap into a pool of people who really have been entrepreneurs and then have developed and have gone that journey it's just so invaluable, otherwise you keep on making mistakes that on the one hand you could have avoided, on the other hand if I think about all the different mistakes I've made and there's been so many, that really deeply internalize learning from there, so I've really learned from that, but it was hell of a frustrating in terms of, you know, I just, I need to know this, who knows this, where am I going to find it, all this information, that's been another one.

As you grow, you have to have systems in place, which is really important, and you have to also have things like leave policies in place you know those types of things, all of that is a learning curve. As an entrepreneur, everything

that you do or don't has an impact on whether you are going to survive or make it, financially, and that is a great strain and motivator at the same time constantly from the beginning.

Okay, in your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

A lot of faith, a bit of luck, a lot of determination, I think good support systems and then constant feedback about success. I think also relationships, having encouraging supportive relationships around you. I think also having a plan, moving towards something what it is you're trying to create. From the beginning, I had this desire to create something that is going to be bigger than me; I tried to put systems and documents in place so that it's repeatable by other people, so that all the knowledge wasn't just in my head.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

I think initially, it was more of a gender issue, it was a serious challenge. You first of all have to overcome the fact that you're a woman, secondly you have to overcome the fact that you're not in your 50's or 60's, so it was a bit of an age thing. But mainly I felt most of my clients were males and senior men and then obviously because I was new, although I had contracted before, I didn't have a base of this business has existed and we have a business reputation and a history to trade on and that provides you some credibility and legitimacy. I just had myself and in the beginning I just had to pick up the phone and phone someone and go see them, I didn't have anything else to make it easy. Now it's much easier, I've got a reputation, I've got brains, I've got referrals, I've got a whole lot of stuff in place which makes it so much easier to walk in there and just sell.

I think what I'm finding today is that I think that just politically and culturally I'm finding that that's changed. Now I'm finding that for the first time in my life I'm aware that I'm a white woman, I was never aware of being a white woman. I was just a person, I was doing work, it was men and women but what I'm finding now is that because of the political liberation and all of the things that went with, I went to a school called Damelin College where there was black and white kids and we just had a liberal perspective and I actually grew up Afrikaans and I went to an English school and for the first time I realized that there was an issue between Afrikaans and English people. I was so not aware of discrimination even at that level, it just wasn't a mind set. So it was always very comfortable for me to build great relationship and it was good to me.

Okay, just to build on what you were telling me about the social barriers etc., could you tell me a story that is particularly indicative of these barriers that you faced?

Okay one is finding a financing formula for Marie to acquire shares in my business. A financing formula that didn't activate all her fears about is this another way I'm going to being controlled or discriminated against and also one of the things was that with all the talk about recognition for prior learning, how difficult it was for her to get into university, she's doing her MAP course with Wits Business School this year, but how hard it was for universities to give her access to that and by the same token for us to, as two people who are passionate about this business and I want to involve her in terms of ownership but for us to find actually funding or a formula to work out the funding, because there's so many different versions and organizations and that was quite tough for us and that's actually put a lot of strain on our

relationship. We're still in the process but we have actually found someone who will be contacting us on Wednesday. As I say, the terms for funding are unrealistic in terms of understanding but she's got an enormous amount to offer.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of your business and that of your personal life?

I think that my absolute saving grace is my husband, who I'm totally crazy about, who's really supportive and helpful. From a pragmatic perspective, he bends that aspect that I don't have in terms of the accounting or the detail or the contracting part, you know he's so brilliant at that and he gives me absolute space, he just wants to come in and do the stuff. I have an accountant who services stuff but I think when your business develops and grows you have to actually get involved in absolute every aspect and the financial aspects I think are the biggest challenge because that's definitely not my area of competence and that's the area I want to do some work and some learning and development because I see as we grow and it really is easy that's going to become a serious barrier.

If I can ask you, how much time in a week do you dedicate to work and how much do you dedicate to your personal life and family?

Oh in terms of balance. I think that again, in the beginning you have to put in so many hours, you really do. As things grow you really have more choices about being more discerning. I think that my children are so important to me and in fact the month after I started my business, my son had a serious medical condition, in fact, he almost died and so for 6 months I did nothing, I

stopped and just took care of my son, nursed him back. So we are really in touch with how important family and children are. My children are at a small school where they are very well nurtured, we had a very democratic relationship so my husband is not a person who comes home and wants food cooked and stuff, he comes home and cooks or we phone each other to figure out who gets fetched or what's happening or, so I think flexibility helps balance and I think having a lot of support systems in place. Monday and Friday afternoons I try not to work, I try to be the one to fetch my children and spend time with them, even if they play at least I'm around and I really try and, for example, cut out stuff, you know there's this part of me that really loves learning and doing stuff and then there's this part of me that realizes I have a business, in this hour I have...my whole week is booked up and how many of that is actually bookable hours in terms of earning work. What helps a lot in terms of balancing is actually really planning well, is good time management and cutting out stuff that's not absolutely necessary. I work at night as well so I would take a break around family time, I would stop working from say about 4pm to 8pm and then I would work again and sometimes I would have no work to do and then sometimes I would have to work until 2. I absolutely need time with my family otherwise I feel so guilty, I'm deranged. Also what I've done to help the balance, I think that's the key reason why I work as a team. I have a lot of women working with me, you know there's 12 women and we do a lot of stuff, nurturing stuff where we get together, we do good stuff for each other for each other and because we're a lot of women and we really understand. If something happens to my children and I can't go, someone will step in I will step in and we've sort of created that model. And

one of the things we say upfront is you know, first and for most, we all know we're mothers and besides being in business, we need to make money to pay for school fees and stuff, we not making money to be rich, we all need to work, we basically work because we need to work.

In your opinion, what would you regard as factors or reasons that lead to failure of some these woman initiated businesses.

I think there are two categories. One is if you can't actually manage yourself, your state, your emotions, your fears, I think the other thing for me is if you can't put systems in place in your business. The issue is I've grown my business out of profit, I've not taken out a loan anywhere at all and I'm really at the point where I'm wondering if I'm mad, should I not just go and get mega financing or resource the business and build the business that way and I've recently wondered if I want to take the business to the next level if I'll actually get financing for it I guess at a lower risk level by doing work, making profit, putting it back into the business, growing it, making profit, putting it back in the business and so on. I'm wondering about that but I know for a lot of people they say well access to finance, for me it's never been that. I didn't start with squat money, I started in massive, my son was sick for 6 months so I had R100 000 debt when I started because of medical expenses and I still didn't take out financing but it may be a hell of a lot easier if you just get financing.

Okay, how would you define success in a business?

Success is overcoming failure, success is not achieving the big things but it's every time you're able to stand up, when you've fallen down. Success is also a very personal definition, for me success is going to be if my business is not

dependant on me, if it exists and there's a lot of people involved in it and they running it, you should all work as a team.

I think one of the things is I don't involve people in my business who have the right qualifications, and they have the right experience. I really give people a chance.

Tell me about people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today.

I think probably my grandmother. My grandmother is definitely one of the people, she was just so unexpected. If we had to go visit her, every time you get to her house, she would have chopped out this or bought that. Suddenly there was a birdcage or suddenly there was a bathroom and the bath right in the middle of the bathroom. She also corresponded with people internationally, she was really poor, in this tiny little house in the Free State and she would make her own prints on the wall and she, as I say, she corresponded with people from overseas and she also collected scrap books on us and kept things if we did things, and phoned us, we didn't have a lot contact but I just had such a strong impression on us. I think my father as well, certainly, he was in his own business as well and I think he invented a lot of stuff, he was very creative and he always strode very hard and he was also very critical and that kind of stimulated us to be perfect. My mother's impact was more in terms of, she was more careful and protective, and she always saw the negative things before she saw the positive. My father and I think my grandmother and myself, we don't see the limitations, we see the possibilities.

There's a person in my life at moment, he's an old man, he's 91 years old. He still works (a bit of consulting) but he has had the most profound impact on my life in the past 5 years in business an what he taught me is really that what you need life is kind of a balance between...you have to have magic, to balance out the painful and difficult stuff and no matter how old you are, and what physical stuff you face, if you've got a work or a goal or something outside yourself to focus on that you will overcome it and it's helped me so much, he's been a real inspiration.

Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his behaviour, how does this statement apply to you?

Well I think that if you buy into the theory of being a victim of your personality, I think that understanding what your personality traits are, you need to use that.

Age?

Between 40-49

What would you say is your highest qualification, highest education?

Post graduate

How many years in the business?

3-5

What would you say is your annual turnover?

1 million -2 million

Thank you for participating in the interview.

FIFTH INTERVIEW:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research and for being interviewed. Just for formalities maybe you'd like to just introduce yourself and your company, what you do and the name of your company.

I made a career change about 15 years ago so for the last 15 years I have had this company established, which are two companies, one isand the other is What we do is recruitment across all levels from price industrial office support, we also specialize in a shipping import/export environment, offering recruitment service longitudinally right from clerks through to senior positions such as CEO's. Alongside with the recruitment, we also do a certain amount of Psychometric testing if the client requires it from us. Although often they would prefer that we send the individual to an external psychologist for psychiatric testing, it seems to give them a better balance. We do some limited human resources consulting, we're often asked for salary surveys in terms of market information. I have a new direction I'm looking at which would be executive coaching, using very much my business skill background, psychology background, hypnosis training background and bringing that together in terms of the executive coaching services. I actually started this business to fund my studies while I made a career change from being a sales director of a large corporate to move back to my early routes in psychology, so I started the recruitment company to fund my first years of study and I had intended, once I qualified that I would no longer run a recruitment company but by that time about 5 or 6 years when I had complete my internship, the company was highly successful and I was quite entrenched with my clients and so I had to continue to run the company as well.

And you've never looked back?

Well I don't know, you know business never goes forward smoothly, there's always ups and downs.

But you made it through all those tough times?

Well you try, it's an emotional experience. When business is roaring ahead then there's always a smile on the entrepreneur's face.

I heard you saying sales director is that what you were doing prior to becoming an entrepreneur?

Yes, that's correct.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishing themselves and what challenges have you personally encountered?

I think many entrepreneurs, and it was certainly the case with myself, it's very nerve racking when you leave a corporate environment, where you've had a lot of specialist support structures and a social support structure and when you go off on your own, you often not really aware of what lies ahead of you, so I think for many entrepreneurs and certainly this was my case, sometimes if you knew what those ups and downs could be ahead of you, you may never get out the starting blocks. So, one often has an idea or let's talk about myself so, I had an idea to start a small recruitment company, I had to use the services of many recruitment agencies and I felt that I didn't think it would be a very difficult venture. When you actually get into a new industry and you realize that professionals have been around for a very long time and that there's a lot more in terms of legalities and in terms of administration than one had anticipated than just interviewing individuals. I just left the corporate

world, looked for offices, opened up offices using my sales skills, went out, canvassed for business to a large extent from colleagues and competitors that I've had in the freight industry and then you just put one foot in front of the other and continually watch what you're doing and try to make it more professional, attend courses, I joined which is the association for recruitment consultants and built the company from one year to the next, and I'm sure we're not perfect at this stage. If I were to sit down with some of the professionals that DAV and Kelly Girl, people who have been in the recruitment for decades, I'm sure there would be a lot to learn. On the other hand, I've quite enjoyed taking my own independent path and just constructing the business as I saw fit.

Look in starting out with any business, there are obviously financial challenges because if you don't meet the financial challenges, you won't have a business. So that is one of the key points that one needs to have in mind all the time, that you are running a business and from that point of view, finances are very important so before having been in a big corporate business, you had financial directors, financial managers, a lot of support staff, a lot of administration managers but that focus was taken off my desk so I was a specialist looking at sales and looking at new business for large shipping corporate list of companies. So now suddenly you have to become much more of a generalist, particularly if it's a small business because you no longer have these support structures, so suddenly I had to become sales and marketing as a background, I was experienced in that but again, from offering a big corporate service now I was offering a completely different service. The sales focus changed, my product changed but I was a specialist in that area

so it wasn't too difficult for me. The financial side of things, I had to equip myself and learn and find out to a large extent about things like cash flows, about signing contracts of lease, and you know the shock at the costs that accumulate when you do open a new business, you know, just putting in new switchboard, just employing a few limited staff, the rental agreement and suddenly you're committing yourself for a certain period of time and you're really not sure financially, you might have looked at your cash flow for the next 6 months and said okay, within 6 months I'm giving myself this period of time to get the business up and running, if it's not running by 6 months, do I go out and take another loan, a further loan, or do I then think seriously about going back into the corporate world because I have the necessary skills. So I would say certainly some of the initial challenges are financial and administrative, where you are actually now setting up the structures of the business, also employing staff. I was limited with my finances so one needs to find, in the most efficient manner, staff members who can also cover the generalist areas that you're looking to cover.

The next challenge to a large extent would be suddenly you are alone and before you've been in this large corporation company where you had the social support, so you would have Christmas parties, you would have cocktail parties, you would have people to discuss the business problems with, you had friends, you had colleagues, you had enemies, you had corporate politics, so you had the whole social environment of the business. Now suddenly, here you are in a two or three man business, believe it or not, the little politics and interactions can start to developing but certainly it's very different from the power and politics that go on in a large organization but initially I missed, to a

large extent, the socializing with my colleagues and the corporate perks which I had enjoyed as a director, suddenly one doesn't have that anymore and I had to carefully evaluate for myself what my freedom and independence meant to me, which was obviously a great driver in starting up on my own. Although I said I enjoyed the socialization to a large extent, I still very much like making my own decisions and I like the freedom to be able to see a vision and to be able to go for it, whereas in the large corporate, you still have to fit in within the corporate structure so there was very much on the one hand the freedom and the independence against the social and structures of the corporate world.

You said those are the two reasons that motivated you to becoming an entrepreneur?

To a large extent, on the other hand I wanted to make a career change so I felt that after how many years if I think about it now about 20 years or more years in corporate life where I had seen a number of merges, acquisitions, politics of the takeovers, concern about which sales director gets the job, do I get it or does my counter part get it and the changing cultures. If the company I had initially been with, which was with shipping, if that group had not changed with a large merger with I may still be there today because I very much enjoyed the corporate culture, where they gave individuals a lot of freedom. Once the merger happened and the company became four times the size it originally was, suddenly the structures, the administration came into place and I didn't enjoy that, I very much enjoyed the freedom of the small executive team that we had, we could make our own decisions independently, the whole corporate style was to allow the

individuals to make decisions. So right from the chairman at the top, he encouraged individual decision-making and in fact, they really kind of promoted that. You were allowed to make mistakes, if you made a mistake you, don't make it again but you could go out there and try something new and follow your dreams. Then suddenly with the next company I went into, once the company was merged, I became very unhappy with the change of the corporate culture.

Okay, in your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

The first thing that comes in mind is obviously you need to be a relative risk taker. You don't need to be a high risk taker because in that way you may open one business after the other and fail. So if you're going to be an entrepreneur and actually establish a business, that is successful and that makes a profit, that remains a business over a certain period of time, you need to take very qualified risk in terms of what you're doing but you still need to go out on risk because otherwise you don't take a step forward, otherwise you would have nightmares and bad dreams and never get up in the morning to go to work.

Okay, so that is the key thing for you?

I think risk taking is important in terms of being an entrepreneur. I would say there's an element of creativity because you start with a blank page and from here you now have to put a business together, put ideas together and have a vision of where you want to go in the future with this creativity. So you need to then really think through your visions, you can't just be an industrial psychologist in a large corporate, playing with visions, this vision now has actually got to have baby steps in it, step by step, where you can see where

you would reach your goals. So you need to mix both the practical and the visionary aspects of yourself. You need to have feet in many different camps as an entrepreneur, you need to be very multi faceted to be able to work as generalist, whether it's administrative, finance, human resources, guiding staff, marketing, sales, all the aspects of a business corporation.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

Working for a shipping freight, I was the only female in a very male environment, being shipping, and I just, being the personality type I am, I just decided to ignore their negativity and do my own thing and lean on the support of the people who did support me and the senior people who wanted me in that position and once I had been able to prove myself financially, and to be successful then that turned a lot of attitudes around. So as a woman, I learned that if there are any of those barriers that my personality type just ignores them and I continue. So now in my recruitment company where there were barriers initially let's say, there wouldn't really be barriers about a female because recruitment has been traditionally seen to be very much a woman's domain, along with human resources, so it would have been more my marketing skills to which in companies I was developing my client base, if there was any negativity then I need to use those skills to overcome that. There could have been times when I wasn't fluent in Afrikaans so perhaps some of the Afrikaans companies didn't give me the jobs as readily as perhaps other companies did, but again it comes down onto an individual basis, the person that you actually make contact with, perhaps some of the Afrikaans companies where they didn't accept English as a language until

recently and because a lot of the companies are, in freight and shipping you do find, historically I have found a lot of Afrikaans companies.

What about family, the community where you came from?

I come from quite a small family. By the time I opened this business I had a mother and a sister. My sister's a teacher in the Drakensberg, my mother's always been very supportive, so I got a lot of support for the new venture. I had a son to take care of, he was at school, his father was here, his father....we've been separated for many years so his father was running his own business so I guess as long as my business was successful to take care of certain of the financial bills, it was fine but if anything, I received family support.

Okay, can you tell me of the stories that you is particularly indicative of any of these barriers that you mentioned?

In the early days when I was employed in freight and shipping, this was before I held a director position, I was senior sales executive then, the manager in this particular freight company in Durban was very against employing a woman in sales. The human resources manager from Johannesburg interviewed me and employed me in the position, I had never been in the freight industry before and that was another reason for it being anti my appointment. So the human resources manager appointed me, I started at this freight company. I was new to the whole environment of sales, I was new to shipping so it was very much a virgin territory for me. So The Managing Director In Durban, being an older man had 3 lights outside his door already, red, yellow and a green and you weren't allowed to enter or knock on the door

unless the green light was on. He was very anti my appointment, he positioned me within the company in a really dingy little office, at the back of the rest of the offices basically saying my job was to be out on the road all the time and not to be sitting in the offices. He would never deal with me on face to face basis, he would write me memos, so he would put memos on my desk which was 20 steps away from his desk and communicate by memorandum rather than speak face to face with me. But it was very difficult because he was the MD of the company and he just refused to interact with me, to even have a discussion with me. I was then head hunted to the so I happily left and I had been successful in any event with the first freight company, but when I was head hunted to join the due to this restricted culture and management style, I decided to move on.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of business and that of your personal life?

Initially it was difficult, my son has since left university so he's independent. It wasn't as if I had a large family with a number of young children and my partner had been very supportive through my years of study so I wouldn't say it created a problem. I just need to balance my own social life and not be a workaholic to actually be a little disciplined and to take time off to allow myself holidays, time away, long weekends, etc because when you work for yourself, you're inclined not to take holidays because there's an element of anxiety leaving the business on it's own.

If I may ask you a very personal question, how much time in a week do you spend in the office and how much time do you spend for yourself.

I'm normally at work by 7.30 in the morning and being a sports person, I'm a road runner which also takes up a lot of time but I would normally leave work between 6 and 7 in the evenings.

In your opinion, what would you regard as factors or reasons that lead to failure of some these woman initiated businesses.

I'm not sure if it only applies to women, it might apply to any business. I would think perhaps that as I spoke earlier about having little steps towards your goal, so you need to really plan, you can't just sit with an idea and think I'm going to translate it into a business, you have to put in a lot of practical thinking, you need to put in extensive cash flow thinking to project for that first 3-6 months, how the business is going to be funded if no sales arise in the business. So I would say that to a large extent, it's probably that there's not enough detailed thinking in terms of how they going to put this business together. Perhaps there hasn't been sufficient research around a business idea, has the individual actually looked at the competitors, has he actually looked to see how the competitors last in the business, do they open and close down, is this an industry sector that's going ahead, is this not a time to start out in IT right now, so you need to do a lot of market research before you start a new business just to make sure that the product you bring to the market is going to be something that is needed and that's going to sell. Be a driver, take risks, creativity, pragmatic and theoretical research, look out for things.

So, is that how you would define success in business?

Well until the business grows, if you really going to grow a corporate, then there's another problem because if you start out being a hands on person,

you need to employ other individuals who would fill the roles in the corporate business. If I look around at some of my clients and I'm looking at myself now, if I look at how some of my clients who have been successful entrepreneurs, they definitely are in a way their own breed of individuals. I would say the risk taking is one of the core aspects. That even if the one business fails, they will start again and they're actually driven to they'll see a gap in the market for business, they're actually driven to put something together and they actually die as a person, they get put into some kind of routine lifestyle, they don't thrive on that at all.

Who would you say are the people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today.

I would say my mother and my father played a large role in how I developed. I would say my schooling years, I was at one from the age of 4 to age 17, so the whole school environment was one that I loved very much, and that was very supportive I suppose to my academic background. I loved the school and sports facilities, so as soon as the bell rang I was out on the sporting fields, so I had a very complete and very happy life at school, I was one of those scholars who cried my eyes out when it was time to leave school. Everyone else was saying they were happy to leave school and the headmistress was saying to me "come on Lynn, you're off to university, what are you crying for?" I said this has been my home for so many years and my friends have been with me, I still see friends for lunch today who I've known since age 4. So that played a large stabilizing effect in my life and there's one individual I must mention from a philosophical point of view, he's a teacher or

guru who I visited for many years through my life and his vision of life, which is very effective and he looked at all the major philosophies, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism through all the common threads and all so he was very instrumental in showing me how to think outside boundaries and he was also the kind of individual who was a huge visionary and he saw how the world was changing. So in terms of a total view of life, which is also very much a Buddhist viewpoint, I had a lot of exposure to that kind of philosophical kind of thinking.

Okay just some general information I need from you, the age category, which one would you fall under?

50 and over

I know you said that you're not that qualified but what would you say is your highest qualification, highest education?

Post graduate

How many years have you has your business been running?

15 years

What would you say is your annual turnover?

I would say between 1 and 2 million

Thank you for the information you shared with us. I have definitely learned that business is not something that you just wake up and say, "I think I've had enough, I'm now going into business". You really have to do your homework if you want to be successful and remain there and see yourself a few years down the line still in the business, you have to be very strong.

SIXTH INTERVIEW:Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research and for being interviewed. Just for formalities, please could tell me a bit about your business and who you are.

Okay,..... Two companies, which is a training and development consultancy, which has been going since 1986 and it also involves employee which is new passion venture which has been going for just over a year.

Okay, what motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

The corporate world. The culture of the corporate world which was inherently paternalistic, shovenistic and political and very restrictive to my own innovative inability and I had a belief that money and people could co-exist. I learnt a lot in the corporate world but I pretty much got to a point where I was going to turn my talents into a negative arena or I had to leave, so I chose to leave.

What industry is your business in and what motivated you to go into that industry.

I think you'd call it the services industry, it's one or another way everything to do with people management, relationship ability, relationship intelligence, leadership change, emotional intelligence, that entire arena. And why, well I qualified as a social worker and then got into employee systems programs, and then got into life skills training. So I guess it's kind of unidirectional and specialized and everything to do with people leadership and management.

Okay, prior to becoming a businesswoman, what were you doing?

I started off as a social worker and become pretty disillusioned after 4 years in that, the people I was working with were damaged goods and I had a need to

get to the front of the queue and decided to do a mental health MA in prevention and life skills. I just had a sense that if you could get to people and teach them how to cope with life, it might stop the situation, which one sees as a social worker, and I couldn't cope with that kind of tertiary intervention rehabilitation. So I got into prevention and development, I then worked at the SAVG and learned to become a trainer and facilitator and I wrote life skill programs and I learnt how to train and facilitate and work with groups and then I went to the chamber of mines and designed their life skills program for the mining colleges and then ran an assessment centre to start the employee assistance programs and then became the director at the Johannesburg division for EAP.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishing themselves and what challenges have you personally encountered?

I think your first challenge depends on how you were brought up, whether you were aware of the influence of that how subtle it was. I think that's got everything to do with it. Were you brought to be a traditional girl, were you brought up to expect that you would marry a man who would take care of you, were you brought up to do a degree just because it was something somebody did, were you brought up to have a job just until you found yourself a husband. I think my trouble began when I found out, not that I had to marry someone, but when I was someone. I think originally in the corporate world, I didn't understand what was happening but I was an intelligent, ambitious, capable young woman, intent on pleasing those for whom I worked. So as long I was able to that and make them look good, we were both on a happy

journey. By the time I owned my own intelligence, and ability and adequacy, and started to confront the reality and need recognition and incentive and independence, that was when the trouble began and then you kind of hit your head very squarely against the politics because you're trying to create a road for yourself and then you need to start understanding power and politics. I think I was very idealistic and authentic and that should have worked for me but I think it worked very much against me, I think my integrity was not welcome because it challenged the status quo, and to survive I learnt to survive but then I didn't like who I had become so that's why I needed to exit.

Okay, would you say those are the challenges you encountered?

I think pretty much yes. Actually the whole journey to self-sufficiency and self worth.

Okay, in your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

I think there's a number of elements. I think you have to know what your passion is, I think you have to know what differentiates you from others, I think you need to know yourself well in terms whether you're an extrovert or and introvert or whether you can work on both those spectrums when and how you need to depending on your kind of work and how you need to intuate with people, customers, suppliers, associates, etc. I think you need to understand the difference between self-esteem and self-confidence with respect to picking yourself up one more time when you fall down because as an entrepreneur, it really is the school of hard knocks, I think you have re-evaluate, I think you have to have a learning orientation, I think if you make a mistake once that's quite acceptable, I think if you make the same mistake twice well then you've got a problem. I think entrepreneurship has changed

from 1995, the first time I came out and now trying to start a new company. I think then it was very much a time of reputation, credibility, professionalism and if you had a name in the market, you could establish a niche for yourself, I think now it's very different. Now I don't think the ethics and the values hold dear, I think now it's quite a dirty game in terms of who you know, how well you know them, whether you can network. I don't think there is respect for professionalism or depth any longer, I think it's a case of how you brand things, how you market things, how you present them to people. I don't think the consumer in the services scenario is particularly well educated so I think it's a very different scenario to what it was 10 years ago.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

I think there were pro and a con. I think the pro was that I was born into a family that was colour blind, we never saw colour or had any significance attached to black/white or any issues like that, so I was able to build a multi racial, multi professional team in 1985 and we worked as psychologists, physiatrists, social workers, nurses, it didn't matter what, administrators, accountants regionally throughout South Africa and I think that was an amazingly strong point in that we were able to work on a multi professional spectrum, multi racial spectrum, unite as a team and make a difference in the mining industry. The negative was the white Afrikaans male and I think it was about learning how to work with them, alongside them and at the end it became an agenda of self preservation, I think there was a lot of anger, and I think then with my having become an entrepreneur and no longer having to

play the bureaucratic games, it then become a shift of respect, credibility, visibility, delivery, service and as long as I wasn't part of the politics and they wanted what it was I had to give in terms of intellectual capital and service, then the power was no longer of relevance. I think now we have different agendas once again, I think there's a new oppressive and I think it's the black male. I think there's also classicism amongst female achievers both black and white, I think they've become an elitist class and exclusive, I think they talk the talk, I don't think they walk the walk and I think there's a lot to be learned there. I don't think that people currently in business understand the ethics of business like turning up for an appointment or honouring what they say they will do. I worry about competence and the depth of competence and I think in terms of female entrepreneurs, we have to be very careful of jealousies, competitiveness, ethos of "united we stand, divided we fall"

Okay, can you tell me of the stories that is particularly indicative these barriers that you once faced?

I think it's kind of....I was the first woman at the chamber of mines to be allowed into the men's dining room, and a little old man looked at me and said across the table "and what is the world coming to?" It really was a case of being felt up under the table. It was a case of managing...I think so long as I could be humorous in terms of the sexual innuendos and tell a better joke and a ruder joke and maintain my distance and my self-esteem, I was fine. The moment I hooked into insult or anger, it was over and out. So I do think that while I had my sense of humor it was fine, I think once I got angry, I started to lose the game. I do think in those days it was a man's world, but it only became an issue when I started to try and establish myself and I think there

was collusion and exclusion, but I have not experienced that as an entrepreneur, I really think relationships are what count. I think you have one reputation and if you establish yourself with service and credibility that counts for a tremendous amount.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of your business and that of your personal life?

You don't. I did a talk on work/life balance yesterday and I asked the ladies in the room "whom of you believe work/life is possible and at least half put up their hands, I don't believe it is. I think work/life balance is a journey, not a destination. I really think that you strive consistently and at times you are more balanced than others, I think if you're a bread winner or if you're ambitious or if you're involved in what you're doing there will always be a strong pull. There have been times when I managed to lock the office door at 5pm, there have been times I worked 22 hours out of 24 to establish the business. I've never had balance, the only way I kept my family going was by taking long holidays and many of them, so maybe I would have 6 short holidays in a year because that's what I need and it was the quality I could give because I had 2 gears, and they are stop and go, I don't have an in between gear. In terms of work/life balance, I think it's practical stuff.

If I may ask you a very personal question, how much time in a week do you spend in the office and how much time do you spend for yourself.

I taught my children to cook, both boys, when they were 10 and 15. Reviewed household roles into the husband, wife and breadwinner and I think you have to do what is right for you as an individual rather than what is dictated by tradition and that is how you try and get by and for me as I have

got older something like yoga is what grounds me. Without my yoga I am pretty wacky. There are different things at different times.

In your opinion, what would you regard as factors or reasons that lead to failure of some these woman initiated businesses.

Financial ignorance – I think people are afraid to ask questions, people are afraid to say what they don't know – I think they assume a tremendous amount and it is just basic financial acumens things like run your business out of your bond if it is an access bond. Don't make mistakes with VAT. Don't mix your private and your business finances. Pay your bond and don't buy branded clothing. Understand that your credit card includes interest. It is all of those tiny things, which at the time seem unimportant but suddenly when you have to pay VAT three months later and it s like R40 000 and you have spent it – you are in trouble, not having money for your tax. I really think it is predominantly financial disinterest, lack of education, lack of acumen and lack of maturity in that respect. Also lack of customer relations – I have seen some amazingly clever people not honour what they say in terms of there is lots of customers and today I loose you and tomorrow I get somebody else – its not understanding that an old sale is a lot less expensive than a new sale. I think not understanding reputation and service. Also butterflies, people who jump from one thing to the next as they loose interest and also sometimes very clever people who talk a lot but never get to the action phase. People don't network; they don't get out there. People are afraid to grow when they don't go out and get coaches or mentors or go for therapy if necessary – its all about taking accountability and being responsible instead of pointing the finger out looking back at the self. I think a lot of women play at being

entrepreneurs if their husbands are breadwinners. They play at it instead of really building a business. Some people exit and take retainers from existing companies for say three out of five days. They are then not hungry enough to establish their own business. If you have one major contract and you are involved in that and you don't pre-empt that that will end and you need new business and then that contract ends you sit without business. I think being a consultant is quite seasonal. What worked for me in my previous company is that I had a mix of retainers and consultant work and therapy so it was literally a case of money all year around with specific projects with cherry money so it's a base line income and then cherry money. It is incredibly hard work – people think its easier being your own boss – the worst boss I have ever had is myself.

How you would define success in business?

You don't sell your integrity – there are three types of success – are you a survivor list, a lifestyle entrepreneur or someone who builds big companies and systems and structures – I think achieving whatever you set out to achieve and the area you have set out to achieve without selling your integrity.

Who would you say are the people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today?

Can I blow your theory – I had bad poor parenting there was really no-one significant in my life – I think somewhere deep inside of me there was a need to survive. I have always had a need to stand up for injustice, I remember at

school the nuns were quite unjust and I remember having the courage to stand up in class and comment on something that was really wrong and everyone in class thought you are blowing your head off here girl. I did the same at university, I did the same at my place of work, but deep within me there was always a need for people to be fair and respectful to each other but quite honestly, no there was no-one.

Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his or her behaviour. How does this statement apply to you?

Personality is such a complex paradigm that I would not even with a doctorate in psychology, deem to say I understand what that is. I would rather say that we have patterns and we have styles and we have means and that those are things that we repeat. I think we all are addicts of some kind or another work addicts or shop-aholics or food-aholics – I think we all have styles whether type A or B, extravert/introvert, relationship and I think we tend to be true to those repetitively and sometimes destructively. To go back to your previous question about people who had an influence on me – I think there is some theory that talks about entrepreneurs having issues with authority and I think I have always had issues with authority – my father was an autocrat German, my parents always told me what I had to do so I think deep within me there was some anger, rebellion and I see that often now if I am made angry, I become creative. That is the closest I can give you in terms of personality.

Okay just some general information I need from you, the age category, which one would you fall under?

I know you said that you're not that qualified but what would you say is your highest qualification, highest education?

Doctorate -Postgraduate

How many years have you has your business been running?

10 years

What would you say is your annual turnover?

6 million

Thank you for the information you shared with us. I have definitely learned that business is not something that you just wake up and say "I think I've had enough, I'm now going into business". You really have to do your homework if you want to be successful and remain there and see yourself a few years down the line still in the business, you have to be very strong.

SEVENTH INTERVIEW:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research and for being interviewed. Just for formalities, could I please ask you to introduce yourself, tell me a bit about your business and what you do.

Okay, my name is, I just recently got married for the first time and I have a company that is an adventure agency. I started doing skydiving and river rafting about 15 years ago and I used to always organize for all my friends and eventually when I climbed Kilimanjaro, I thought you know what am I doing? I don't like my job and I need to start my own company and the natural thing has to be adventure because that's what I love and what I'm passionate about. So in about 1999 I made that decision but it took me until July 2003 to step into it in a full time capacity. First 2 and a half years or so I had a part time position at a travel trade publishing company, so

in terms of the travel environment, I wasn't clear on what a net rate was and a gross rate was and risk, I needed to learn the terminology and I needed to learn who the key players were in the industry and over that I had to apply my passion being adventure and my experience being advertising and sales, not marketing. So that's basically the combination that got me to July 2003 where I stepped out of this part time mornings job, stepped into weekends away full time and my husband said at that point in time he could quite comfortably carry our lifestyle so I could just focus on getting a business to start generating an income. In January, 6 months later, who had just been just a filing clerk, she was a tourism student, she would come in once a week, she finished her studies at the end of 2003 and in January 2004 wanted a full time job or else she would go elsewhere to look for work so that was sort of the next growth plans, to take on the responsibility of her salary. So we had one computer that we shared and we had one phone that we shared and the two of us worked to try get business in and if you look at it, it's now 18 months later, we've got 8 people working here, we had to move from our house because when we did, one of our weaknesses was that we had no opportunity to grow, all the bedrooms were offices and we had no place to live. So we then moved to here so that we could clear up that aspect. We've now got the capacity as we sit here for 15 people here plus a further capacity of another 15 behind this room, so we've taken care of that problem. I must say, it's been quite a big transition, 18 months is short time and you're already up and about.

Well, it seems like a quick transition but each day is long in itself although time wizzes by the process is quite intense, you've got to keep focused and

try to keep the stress levels under control, which I don't always do and you've got to just keep moving forward.

Okay, what motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

Well, my original profession was a dancer, from the age of 3, when I got to the age of 26 I finished all my qualifications, I was a classical ballet teacher, I was a tap teacher, I was a modelling teacher, I could teach classical ballroom and I could teach Latin American and I'd started studying contemporary and you know I spent all my time studying ballet instead of dancing and when I got to 26 and I wanted to start dancing, because there wasn't a big outlet in this country, no career for a dancer so your option was either PAC, Sun City or teacher, so I didn't want to go to PAC because I wasn't classical only, I didn't want to be a teacher and when I tried for Sun City, they said sorry girl you know most of the girls we're taking now are 20-21, if you want to do a specific set of training for about another year, we'll take you in but your career will be there for another maybe 2 years, but 29-30 dancers are finished, your bones are more fragile, you're more prone to injury than a 20 year old, it's like a rugby player, they don't play rugby when they're 40, they play when they're 20. So, it made me sort of start taking a look at where I was going to go to and it put me into quite an emotional crisis, by 1989 I was in a complete crisis about what I was going to do for the rest of my life because dancing is not a career, it's a way of life, it's a passion, it's an existence and my very existence was being taken away from me so in 1989 I landed up in of all places, because I had also been anorexic from my dancing, it's part of the course, you know guys don't want to lift elephants so I used to weigh about 49 kilograms. When I was at they then sent me to....because I sort of

swung into a bit depression, they sent me to the HSRC to go do some testing as to what my like and dislikes or what my interests were so that they could help me find another path and another career. In the meantime I was selling advertising for a recruitment publication because they offered me a job and I was doing exceptionally well there plus I was teaching dancing in the evening at Arthur Murray because I couldn't let go of my passion so I would finish work at 4.30 and at 5pm I was at teaching my first student and then I also thought I'd better get an education if I'm not going to be a dancer anymore so I was pressured to go out and get some sort of education and I went and did an IMM (Marketing Management). So I was proud of doing that because I was top sales person in my company, I was a top teacher in terms of sales at and I was in the top 10 in my law exam for my first year of IMM, in the country. So I was over performing, I was keeping my weight down, I was leading a very unhealthy life and plus of course I wanted to go out with my friends because I just recently moved up to Jhb, so I used to party until 4-5 in the morning. So was a natural result of the process, I was there for 6 weeks and I think it was the most important growth period of my life. I came of and studied, had my own little flat and tried to live a normal life. No I'm very committed, my husband has 5 businesses, so we're both that way inclined, we both very active people. So for the next 14 years after, I worked for different companies every 2-3 years and while I was doing that, I was doing adventure and I also went through a number of relationships.

What industry is your business in and what motivated you to go into that industry.

Basically marketing, advertising and sales

Okay, so prior to becoming a businesswoman, you said you were mostly involved in teaching, dancing, there were 6 years with a company in sales.

Yes, sales were a constant throughout so that I could regulate my own income.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishing themselves and what challenges have you personally encountered?

Lack of knowledge is the biggest because you don't know what you're letting yourself in for. You know, entrepreneurs...I find a lot of the time is not necessarily an academic. An academic finds it easy to sit down and get the whole theory of the process before they do something, whereas....you know I didn't do badly at school, you know I could get 98% for math if I wanted to but I had to force myself to do it, so as a result, I went into business not knowing anything, I didn't know about PAYE, debit and credit. The biggest challenge is definitely lack of knowledge. I think also perhaps a problem that woman have is confidence issues, the psychological confidence that you can actually go out and do it.

Okay, did you encounter any of these challenges yourself?

Yes, both

Okay, in your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

Guts, persistence, a vision and I think you're following a destiny to a certain degree, I think that was part of my drive, you know I feel once I took the first step in my life everything started falling into place no matter how difficult, the answer was always there.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

None, I failed in the past with specific things and I could've used that as a social barrier but it was actually an inner social barrier not an external social barrier.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of business and that of your personal life?

Well if my husband's here (he's away for 5 weeks now) we've both got to be out of the office and in the house, so he's very good where he'll say 8pm in the evenings, Monday to Friday he's quite happy to work but his weekends are his weekends, he might put some time in on Saturdays but he won't on a Saturday afternoon and Sunday. So I find between him and my mother, she'll say "shame your husband's sitting all by himself in the house, why you working?" So between the two of them, I'm kept at home.

In your opinion, what would you regard as factors or reasons that lead to failure of some these woman initiated businesses.

Lack of support

What type of support?

Support from family, support from friends and support from the environment around. Some women might not know about the they have workshops in the mornings, for me I couldn't have done this without there's absolutely no way. Some people don't know about that, support structure. And then even though some people do know about it, some people have fallen out of the program. People sometimes don't understand the reality of running your own business and I don't think it's

necessarily a failure. This is my third attempt of the business, but the first two went wrong, one because I had the wrong boyfriend, the business was working but I had the wrong boyfriend so I walked away from it. The second one was, there were three of us in partnership, the one partner took money and left the two of us without our lives, without our cars, houses, everything and we had to go back into the work environment, but you know how much richer and I think from a long term point of view you find if there are a couple of people that have failures in their first business, they go back but there's been an expansion in their way of thinking so they going to try get back up there on their own.

How you would define success in business?

Happy stars and profitable banking

Tell me about the people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today.

My parents, my mom was always very wise, I started school at 5. Then she sent me to boarding school because we were stuck out in the middle of the Free State and she didn't want me to get bad education so I was sent Bloemfontein to school, which I hated but it made me independent. As far as I'm concerned, I left home when I was 12, my parents are still alive but that gave me what I needed. My dad had his own business but he never succeeded because he was a total introvert, he was the wrong type of person so my mom had to go out and work but she earned a good income and my dad was employed as a workshop manager. So probably looking at their life...

Personality researchers agree that an individual's personality predicts his/her behaviour. How does this statement apply to you?

One would begin with what is personality? Personality is moulding your life experiences so yes your personality definitely predicts your behaviour but I think that personality grows all the time so behaviour changes constantly.

Okay just some general information I need from you, the age category, which one would you fall under?

40-49

Your highest qualification/education?

I did matric and then I did one year at Durban Technicon studying art but then I wanted to go back to my ballet so then I did a ballet course at Pretoria Technicon and one year of IMM.

How many years have you has your business been running?

5 years

What would you say is your annual turnover?

An average of about 2 million

Thank you so much for sharing this wonderful information

EIGHTH INTERVIEW:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research and for being interviewed. Just for formalities, could I please ask you to introduce yourself, tell me a bit about your business and what you do.

My name is and my business is a recruitment company but it's more of a recruitment services and we also outsource HR services to other organizations. The name, the name came out of our Christian

beliefs and basically it's a service, we provide to our candidates that we place and we feel it will offer a majestic service.

Okay, what motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

I was in human resources before I joined, I actually qualified as a social worker but due to lack of resources from government to social workers I decided to do further studies so that I could get into human resources which was mostly motivated by the love for people. But then when I got into HR I realized it was more than that so I studied HR for about 10-12 years. When I was finished I was expecting my second baby and I was working for an airline and then I decided that I need to do something that would give me more time to myself. I had always been intrigued by the recruitment business and found it was something I could venture into because it was not far from people, which was what I loved and it is also benefiting the people at the end by finding them employment whilst you're making money. So I would say that's what motivated me.

What industry is your business in and what motivated you to go into that industry.

Human Resources and recruitment all fall under service industry, as I said before it was the love for people

Okay, so prior to becoming a businesswoman, what were you doing?

I was a Human Resources Practitioner.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishing themselves and what challenges have you personally encountered?

I would say, we came into an era that it was after the new dispensation and there were a lot of opportunities for black women so one came in with a lot of hope that things are just going to workout but I've realized that subsequently that business is business and rules apply whether you're a woman or man, it's all about what you put in, it's about the quality, it's all about your determination and your commitment because even though it was our era, people are just going to give you business because you're a black female, you still have to work hard and show the competitive edge and value of your service or product you bring to the customer. So for me those were some of the challenges I encountered.

Okay, in your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

Determination and also tenacity, because you cannot develop a name over night and people have got to know about you, it's a walk, you have to go out there and introduce yourself and you have to also have proper systems in place but that you develop over time but basically you have to have the determination to win and to make it happen and say I'm not going to give up no matter how hard, so if you knock at the first door and it doesn't open, it doesn't mean the whole world doesn't need your services but it just means that you knocked at the door that at that point in time didn't require your services. So you have to have that perseverance to go to the next one. The other thing I believe in is that you have to walk the talk, whatever promises you have made about your service, you need to keep those promises if you want a comeback from your clients, otherwise you start losing your integrity. I subscribe very much to integrity.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

I started taking things for granted, I was thinking I am in HR and I'm just going to call friends and get business but it was completely different. You can't take it for granted and think that because you know people you going to get business. You need to establish yourself as a businessperson, and say I'm out there and I'm setting up a business and I'm going to make it to the market not necessarily to the friends. You can't rely on your friends because they think you're going to be rich quick and faster than them and jealousy comes in and others want to start comparing you with leaders in the market so they not giving you the opportunity, so there's a lot of issues you faced with that you take for granted.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of business and that of your personal life?

When you start, it's difficult to strike a balance because you're trying to create a business and you may find yourself completely off balance but as time goes by, you grow and you understand the business and know what makes it work and also get to know the people that you're dealing with and your staff and the people who can help you to make it work. It wasn't easy initially but as you grow in your business, you learn to balance and to say "it ends here, I need to manage my time" and what I have committed myself to do. Also know what you can do and cannot do.

In your opinion, what would you regard as factors or reasons that lead to failure of some these woman initiated businesses.

I believe you can't start a business because somebody else has without necessarily wanting to understand why and I think those are some of the reasons for failure and you must understand the nature of the business you want to get into. Lack of passion and lack of proper research in terms of the nature of business and what you're doing. The other thing is the working capital to start a business that also leads to failure in a business; you have to have money to fall back onto if your business fails.

How you would define success in business?

Success in a business for me it's a profitable company, a good name that's developed a good brand. I think those two things.....it's got to be profitable and also employees that work with you.

Tell me about the people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today.

My father pushed me a lot. he believed that if I had the potential then I should go out there and reach out for whatever I wanted to do. But coming to my husband, he also supported me a lot when it came to starting a business, it was never an issue, I think it was because of his background, his mother also had her own business so he was never threatened with me starting my own business. There were never any negative vibes from the rest of the family either. But it was my father in my early life that influenced me to have that confidence and not to look at myself as a female, therefore there were things I couldn't do.

Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his/her behaviour. How does this statement apply to you?

Yes, I would support it to a certain degree because how you see things is definitely determined what action to take out of that. You know personality is quite a huge thing because it's not just the way you see things but it's also how you come across as a person, are you a bubbly person? Are you a quite person? And other people that are very quiet have become very successful because they are the kind of people that sit out there but others are very bubbly and yet you find that they don't really have the tenacity to win. They're happy and they think that things are going to be happy all the way and they're not. So I would say only to a certain degree I believe it would take you somewhere.

Okay just some general information I need from you, the age category, which one would you fall under?

30-39

Your highest qualification/education?

Post graduate

How many years has your business been running?

6-10

What would you say is your annual turnover?

1-2 million

Thank you so much for sharing this wonderful information

NINTH INTERVIEW:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research and for being interviewed. Just for formalities, please introduce yourself and tell me a bit about your business.

My name is with two companies – one isand the other is– I am the MD of both companies. One is marketing and communications as well as accounting services – in that one I am with a partner who is dealing with accounting side and I am dealing with the marketing and communication side. The other one is usually when we are dealing with consulting work you find extra work that comes in and we do other projects that aren't related but we can execute.

Okay, what motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

The freedom to do whatever you want to do whenever you want to do and also the satisfaction that comes with it. Financial gain comes afterwards after a lot of hard work but more than anything else being able to live your dream. That is what motivated me to become an entrepreneur. Most important if you are an entrepreneur you work hard – the gains and the risks are high because you might lose whatever you invested – also on the other hand you might gain 100% on what you have invested.

What industry is your business in and what motivated you to go into that industry?.

Somebody who started off doing sciences it is quite intriguing that I moved from that to marketing and communications. Sciences is all about the family background at home everybody motivating you or leading you in that direction of being a science student and you end up continuing in that without actually knowing other fields that are there. When one starts working, when I started teaching then I realized that it was not really me then I went and worked on the airlines and then realized my people skills and then I looked for something that could be related and found that it was in marketing and communications

and that is where I actually went in and doing that I realized that it is a passion.

Prior to becoming a businesswoman, what were you doing?

I was a teacher for a while not for long, a very short time and then I went on and worked at an airline, I started off with and then I went on to then I left to pursue my business interests. At that time I opened a small hair salon which I felt was appropriate at that time. It did not work out so, as they say in business you have to fall before you can realize your worth. I dusted myself off and realized that was not for me and went back to business and that is when I realized that marketing communication is for me.

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishing themselves and what challenges have you personally encountered?

The first one, as a black woman in particular, I encountered difficulties in dealing with prejudices because you would walk into a business meeting and people have already categorized you or given you limits and they do not allow you to work within a limitless space as a black woman. There are sort of judge that you can only do so much and only go so far without letting you actually express yourself and give you the latitude to do whatever you want to do and actually explore and show your talents. That to me has been a difficulty because I find it channels you and you are not given the same opportunities as that of a man – it is somehow still believed that men are better thinkers than women and that we women are more followers in that we execute better and if a strategy comes from a man it is a better strategy than

a strategy that comes with a woman. The man has to do the strategy then the woman will execute the strategy and make sure that it works perfectly. So basically those are some of the very challenging issues that I find out there when I do my presentations and secondly if you are a woman, they do not expect you to be assertive and say you want so much for the kind of services that you are basically offering, they are expecting you to go at a lower rate, whereas the services are the same as in the other business but there is always that challenge that you would somehow understand and reduce your prices and forgetting that you are also a business person who is out there to make money and not a charity at all. Those are the biggest challenges that I find, particularly when you deal with big companies and as a woman and a small business you come in seeking opportunities then they become very judgemental before you can even go further because I think the perception out there is that people have dealt with medium sized to large companies that have been doing very well for many years and that is about 10 – 15 years upwards and if they come in with an invoice of R500 000 it is expected but if you are a small business person coming up with an invoice of R500 000 you are extravagant and it is not expected of you to do that so those are some of the challenges that I think as women we are going to be facing for quite a long time.

In your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

Guts in the sense that perseverance, you have to persevere, you have to believe in what you are doing but you can believe but not have perseverance then it is not going to do you any good. I believe you have to persevere for anything that you want and it will come through one way or another.

Obviously we have different beliefs some people believe they can do it but they sit down. That's why I am saying guts, with guts you will stand up and do something about your belief and belief and guts take you there. One must be able to manage the risk that comes with it because it is really high risk – it helps if you know your business skills definitely we're told if you go into business you must have six months savings in case anything happens and the business is not going to take off in six months, good business people will tell you it takes about three years so that obviously tells you that you would not have any income and that's a risk and if you don't persevere and if you don't go through that then you still need to learn to be a business person. I think the one thing that most people when they think of going into business they look at the risk so I think it is a determining factor of whether one is a business person or not – if you are able to take that risk or not. I think that is the most important thing.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

Cultural – not much really. It has not been that difficult in terms of culturally unless we are talking about gender equality then what I have experienced is that a black man tends to be highly gender sensitive – rather they are insensitive – they tend to be highly gender insensitive in the sense that you as a woman –what do you know as a black woman, you should only know so much – some of them have moved from thinking you should do housework but they still won't give you the benefit of being on an equal footing with them. That has been a problem culturally but I find that the whites and Indians are more tolerant to a woman who is strong and who is coming up with ideas and

business acumen that is good so I have not had much of a problem that side in terms of cultural issues. It is just I suppose if one is aware of them one is able to anticipate them before they can actually get to a point where they become a thorn . Social barriers – you can in a way but not often – it depends on how socialized one is because if you are not very socialized you can get very marginalized in business. One has to have a greater depth of your social being as a person knowing how to interact with different people of different religions and different backgrounds – it is most important in business so yes it plays a role but I suppose that is more out of self development that one needs to really come out and learn about certain things in business – in certain boardrooms for instance you don't come in and sit before the people who have actually invited you can actually say sit down – those are some of the social backgrounds that come in being a business person and how one is socialized – I suppose those are some of the risks I talked about earlier when I said if you are able to take the risk – the risk is not only financial the risk is also being able to come out of your comfort zone and get into other zones that are outside your comfort zones. Amongst women it is very difficult – I don't know if it is the same notion that opposites attract but with women we tend to smile and chat more chit chat here and there but we don't really empower each other that has been my experience throughout. Yes that is a barrier because we don't empower to a point where we are – we always empower just a little so that you can stay wherever you are and I can still be above you as a woman – that is what I have experienced and when dealing with a lot of women in business, particularly if you are a business person going to seek opportunities in a company or in another big corporate you have certain

barriers, not all of them and I am not saying all do that, but the majority of them, particularly in higher positions.

Okay, can you tell me of the stories that you indicated any of these barriers that you mentioned?

There is that business woman's association and they usually have dinners, networking sessions where you go in and meet people and sit at the same table and chat and say hi Lovedelia I am, I am from this is what I do and I have actually been looking for people of your services – on Monday please give me a call so this is my card you exchange cards and you are happy and you say briefly what you do because obviously in business the one thing that a business woman never forgets to do is sell themselves. At all times that is the one thing that is part of perseverance you sell yourself when you are sleeping when you wake up when you are riding a bike whatever. When you are sitting and chatting to people the one thing that comes up would be your business obviously and you chat about how good it is and whatever and impress and then comes Monday and you phone. Now what happens – the gate keeper will tell you no, she is not available – leave the number and she will give you a call. You tell her that you met at breakfast on such and such a day, no problem I will give her the message. Two weeks will end, you giving a message every other day finding out if she did receive the message or what is the problem and finally she returns your call and says no I am busy right now and am unable to meet you if you can just keep following up with my secretary, my P.A but when you were talking the interest was very high you appeared as though you were the Messiah and also another thing at that time also the urgency of that is like I am going to give you

my business card we need to empower each other and that encourages you as a person and you go out there feeling very elated, whereas you know definitely that this person is not going to do much. This has happened countless times so at some point you actually wonder is it worth it but people doing it anyway. This only really happens with woman who had made it and the perception out there is to empower someone from grass roots real grass roots from the bundus, they give them secretarial courses and work up the corporate ladder whereas if you are an entrepreneur someone who actually wants to make it big out there becomes a threat.

How do you strike a balance between the demands of business and that of your personal life?

It's quite easy because business becomes your life and becomes your personal life. There is no point where you separate the two. Your home front they know, the kids know mommy is going to work and when you come back home you have time for them if you don't come back home they know and they also reap the rewards because they also enjoy the niceties that they get from you working so hard as a woman so I suppose you don't really separate the two – there is a very fine line. Obviously you won't do it excessively to a point where it becomes a compulsive behaviour but it is really balanced.

If I may ask you a very personal question, how much time in a week do you spend in the office and how much time do you spend for yourself.

Having a child of 5, in the mornings at 0700 we leave home and I drop him off at school and I usually pick him up at round about 16h30-17h00 and I am with him usually until 20h30 and then if there is anything I need to do work wise I do it afterwards so on average I would say – I won't talk about how long I

work, I will talk about how long I rest. Then I am able to actually say because I do not sleep before 23h00 and I wake up at 05h00 every day. That is my rest time. Sometimes it goes further – maybe in marketing we are doing an event for a company, sometimes I get to sleep at 02h00 waking up at 05h00 – it varies but on a normal week where we just doing the issue of things that are proposals like your booklets it is not really that taxing unless it is a deadline. In this case kids don't see you for about 2 – 3 days but you can always average it off by being home afterwards.

In your opinion, what would you regard as factors or reasons that lead to failure of some these woman initiated businesses.

Lack of support. All kinds of support, emotional, financial you need support from family you need to be around people who understand what you are doing. You need to support yourself as well. You need to have a good emotional quotient – it is emotionally taxing to be out there every day and really not sometimes not getting anything at the end of the month. I suppose support is the most important thing also business wise. That is enough to demoralize any person and make them believe it doesn't work. Personality plays a big role as well because being in business is very challenging and you deal with different characters and how socialized are you as a person so I suppose it is true your personality plays a big role in the success of your business. You have to be able to go out there and talk and be open and talk about yourself because you are selling your company and it is not every person who can do this.

How would you define success in a business?

Steady growth, achievement of goals that you set because in any business if you don't have goals then the business will be doomed. So if you achieve your goals, some of them, not all of them then that is success.

What about the other side – not financial achievement it is more seeing other people that work with you in the business being happy being empowered?

It plays a role but I suppose that can't come through if you don't have the goals that you have already set previously. Obviously that would be part of your goals that I have employedand she is now so and so, that is part of the goals when you start initially that you want to see yourself as a boss and also when people look at you that way they are able to relate and if you groom someone if is an achievement and it is also one of the goals that you put through so yes financial gain comes with the work that you do so obviously you want to see yourself financially stable. The being able to provide income to someone else is also a success – no one can actually take that away from you – you have achieved something and successfully so. Yes you fail sometimes with certain people but with other people you will succeed so if you achieve your goals that you set out initially then you are able to define your business as successful because your goals will lead through the growth of the business will look to your business being very viable financially, will lead to having your personnel being very happy and being able to retain them.

Who would you say are the people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today.

My Dad. My Dad played a big role in my life. Yes my grandma, you know when we were growing up your parents will always leave you with your grandmother and your grandmother will look after you and from Monday – Friday I was with my grandmother but for the weekend I would be with my parents and my Dad was a lecturer at Wits and my Mom was a teacher – she has retired now – my Dad has passed away. Seeing the work that my Dad put into his own work, he worked tirelessly, that encouraged me and also the fact that he encouraged us to study and be whoever we wanted to be played a huge role in me and he also exposed us to quite a lot which I would say was an advantage to all the other kids that I grew up with. Also because whenever one had difficulties, if I spoke to him, he had a way of sorting out my problems. Being in science was also part of being encouraged by my Dad – also when I went into business he was there and encouraged me fully which is also part of my support base – when you have someone who believes in you that you can do it – they support you wholeheartedly. If you have people who take a great deal of emotion out of you people don't support you then you are really not going to pull through. It really takes so much strength and courage and it's just the energy around you – you draw strength and energy from people you surround yourself with so those people play a crucial role in your life if you are a business woman.

Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his or her behaviour. How does this statement apply to you?

Personality traits, the one has in consumer behaviour when you are doing marketing you also do consumer behaviour because you want to understand

the consumer so there are certain personality traits that come out and that dictate people's beings. It is true my personality is very strong in the sense that I am not easily persuaded to leave my dream so I would say it is quite stern in what I believe in. I have a high level of perseverance, I am a self starter, I lead instead of follow although I do follow sometimes, I balance it. When I am working with other people and it is their project I am able to follow, if it's my project I am able to lead it so I am a very blessed person, when you have been alone for a long time and when you get into another person's territory and start dominating more and more. I do have a lot of guts, I am quite assertive when I have to be and if I don't have to be I am quite sensitive to a whole lot of social issues or issues pertaining to women. Somehow I tend to be gullible when it comes to certain things but personality wise, yes, I tend to be very sensitive particularly when it comes to kids for I have kids of my own so I have a soft spot there so this statement would indeed apply to you.

Okay just some general information I need from you, the age category, which one would you fall under?

30 - 39

What would you say is your highest qualification, highest education?

Post Graduate

How many years have you has your business been running?

3 – 5 years

What would you say is your annual turnover?

R500 000 – R1 million

Thank you for the information you shared with us. I have definitely learned that business is not something that you just wake up and say "I think I've had enough, I'm now going into business". You really have to do your homework if you want to be successful and remain there and see yourself a few years down the line still in the business; you have to be very strong.

TENTH INTERVIEW :

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research and for being interviewed.

Just for formalities, please introduce yourself and tell me a bit about your business.

My name is and I am currently a director with responsible for people development. I am a partner in the business. We are an executive search firm – the business was started nine years ago by two ladies who came from a recruitment background and they opened their own outfit to focus on financial markets. Having run it for seven years, three years ago they realized they could not really fly without BEE partners and I think for the right reasons – apart from compliance or the fact that you cannot get business if you don't have BEE partners so they approached me and my colleague to buy 52% equity in the business. We are an executive search firm and in the recruitment arena differentiated by the level at which we operate from middle management up to CEO and then in addition we are differentiated by our recruitment methodology. People don't know, they see recruitment, they lump us together but there are recruitment firms that deal with temp they would rely on

a data base, they can look on their data base and give you a secretary quickly and then you have your other recruitment firms who would advertise, put an ad in the paper and you will get 1000 CV's for a position – you go through them for two weeks and find 99% of them are totally irrelevant job seekers, they see a position and they don't even look at the requirements, are desperately looking for the job. Sometimes if you are lucky you can attract the right calibre of person. We head hunt. We get a proper brief from the client in terms of what qualities are required for the position, what will the person do, who does the person report to, will they travel, understand the culture, really get a detailed brief from them. Then we look at where ideally would this person be currently who would have that kind of requirement not only skills but experience and then we go out and research the market, takes us about two weeks, we come up with a list maybe of 30 pages of people and then we eliminate and ultimately we put 50 that look like they fit and then we call them and headhunt and we sell the position – these are the people who earn no less than R500 00 per annum. They are not people who are looking for jobs so it is an art how you talk to them because you are invading their space, they have not said they are looking for a job. You have to speak to them nicely and ultimately get them in to come and hear more about the position and hopefully the next stage is for them to meet with the client where the client will continue to sell the opportunity. We would have screened them in terms of suitability in terms of the client's spec. Is it in line with their motivation, there are people who only want to work in the private sector who are managerial, nothing wrong with that – there are those people who want to work in parastatal and in a government job. We are able to tell once we have

been speaking to people how they are motivated. This takes about six weeks – we cover the market extensively on behalf of the client and then approaching them – these are high level people, they travel, they are overseas and we really make sure that we move at their pace – get them in and ultimately get them to be interviewed and hopefully at the end of the process the client gets the right person and they would feel at that level that the market has been thoroughly conned and they have the best person for the position. A lot of work very labour intensive. It's amazing, it's the good people who don't respond to ads.

Okay, what motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

My father has always been in business and even my aunts – when I look back – all my peers, people my age, they are either in government, CEO's of companies, others have taken international posts and I am still in business and sometimes I think I must be stupid because with all the opportunities people get good packages but it is in my blood, its what I have always done and known and yes it has not been an easy road. My daughter always says you are so stubborn, why don't you go and work for so and so and they will give you a car but I come from a family of business people. My aunts – way back they were hawkers in those dark apartheid days – in those days that was big business. It is what I know best what I am comfortable with.

What industry is your business in and what motivated you to go into that industry?

I was approached to join and I must say it is not an industry that I would have chosen but I see the business opportunity it's not so much what you do but having been involved because I am operational – there are lots of parts of it

that I like and can relate to in terms of my own background. I lectured at Unisa many years ago – I prepared people to go into industry so now I am the one that is facilitating them to go in and I like the interaction with people but it is really a business opportunity.

Okay, prior to becoming a businesswoman, what were you doing?

Already answered above

In your opinion, what are the challenges in general that businesswomen encounter in establishing themselves and what challenges have you personally encountered?

The part of being a woman and even with the changes in South Africa now, we are our own enemies. If we can overcome our own fears and disbelief in ourselves we can really conquer – there are women who have succeeded in spite of the hindrance so I think you just have to want to succeed in the field that you are in. There would always be barriers and shortcomings but as the proverbial says others see bridges where others see barriers. Mainly you experience, I used to think I was in business but now I am in business it is ignorance about knowing what business is and even now I have a masters degree in Sociology, it has not prepared me to be an effective business person I am looking doing an MBA and finance qualification next year. It's ignorance because its not just enough to have the passion to deliver products or services, it has to be accompanied by good business sense and principles and so yes ignorance of what it is to be in business. Most important has been in myself – I must conquered myself which is something I say is my worst stumbling block. I would not blame anything out there. Ten years ago I went through a divorce, it was very trying starting up my life and a business but I

take responsibility for the fact that it was my choice to be married to not be married but it was very difficult for me at that time and I always knew if I go through it and I have moved on. It's things that will always be there but the willingness to succeed and move on is there.

Okay, in your opinion, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?

Perseverance, hard work, discipline, good ethics being open to learn, knowing that as you grow older so you learn and you don't stop learning. Learning that people are important – if you have a vision you need people to buy into that. It is a combination of a lot of things – I think it is all the things that have been tried and proven and written about in books. Perseverance – believing in your vision and believing in a super being in your destiny – spiritually I believe in a God, I believe that is the support that I am getting and guidance. It is a risk to go into business but all of life is a risk – getting into my car and driving home is a risk. It is embracing that risk even being employed and people think they are cushioned – how secure is that. Risk, but a calculated one you take a risk but then you make sure that having taken the risk and particularly being an entrepreneur that you will do all the other things that would make sure that you mitigate the risk and that's what makes it exciting that you know that you are on your own you have got to make it work, you've got no choice.

What cultural or social barriers did you encounter in your business life and how did you overcome them?

I don't think in boxes like that – that I am black and a woman and whatever. I think of how I grew up – I always lived in South Africa but I never see race or man or I think that you internalize – I do not think that there are differences

between men and women, apart from the biological things. It's perception to the extent to which you buy into those things then you interpret and say just because I am black, just because I am a woman but that person is not thinking that. People react to you in accordance with how you project yourself, not because you are a woman therefore. That's what we think, but it is not necessarily how people think of us. There are no real barriers but those that we impose on ourselves.

Okay, can you tell me of the stories that you indicated any of these barriers that you mentioned?

Not relevant

How do you strike a balance between the demands of business and that of your personal life?

I have got grown up children and when I was bringing them up they were my priority and I always worked but now things have changed my work is my priority but I think in everything that I do my work is still me so there is no distinction.

If I may ask you a very personal question, how much time in a week do you spend in the office and how much time do you spend for yourself?

I spend very little time at home, but it is by choice, but what I am saying is that when I am here this is where I choose to be so that's me. I turned 52 a month ago and I think once a week I must go out and I went to a nightclub, today I am going out I will probably get home at 02h00. I have chosen to do the work that I do, it gives me fulfilment, I don't see it as work. It's me.

In your opinion, what would you regard as factors or reasons that lead to failure of some these woman initiated businesses.

Also men's businesses and I think I would have to back that up with statistics, I think women are more vigilant in terms of money. I think women are not big dreamers but more cautious which can be an advantage and a disadvantage because some times you have to be more risky. I think people that I have spoken to in finance lending companies will say that women are more reliable in terms of paying back loans and things like that so women fail, men fail unless I had statistics I could back that up. I think we just need to be braver and bolder and believe in ourselves and just go out there and do what we know we can do.

What would you define as success in a business?

Achieving the goals that you set, sustainability and standard business principles. Talking about I am very proud to come into a business that was set up very professionally, very compliant with legal requirements, paying our tax, being compliant with the law, proper ethics no double agendas and then being profitable and treating people well and delivering – being true to our word in terms of our word is as good as we are. We have achieved every goal that we have set. Making sure that we are doing what has to be done to achieve that. In our books we are successful.

Who would you say are the people in your early life who have had the most significant influence on you and who had the most significant influence on who you are today.

Not really – growing up it was my Father – such a hard worker – he instilled those business principles from where I saw him working very hard but also he gave us a very good life. I think I always said this is how I want to live – work

hard and also live well. My daughter asked when I was young how did I want to live – I said exactly how I am living. I knew I had to work hard and smart.

My father was the one who planted the seed and growing up you see and pick up different things from people but no one who really stands out.

Sometimes when I am in dire straights I think who can I talk to whose doing what I am doing but I find there is no one who would really understand, I am the only one and as you grow up you realize that you are the role model, you are no longer the one who is learning to follow someone you are asserting a totally new track for someone else.

Personality theorists agree that an individual's personality predicts his or her behaviour. How does this statement apply to you?

I am sure that it would be especially after doing the assessment and the feedback that I got. It was quite an eye opener nothing surprising but I can see now how I am and the way that I behave both in my personal and business life it is really spot on.

Okay just some general information I need from you, the age category, which one would you fall under?

52

What would you say is your highest qualification, highest education?

Masters in Theology

How many years have you has your business been running?

20 years

What would you say is your annual turnover?

Over 2 million.

Thank you for the information you shared with us.