

The Absa Red Lip: A story of strength, confidence and progress.

Red lipstick is more than just a colour, it's a statement – a bold stroke of audacity, a mark of individuality and a symbol of authority that has been carried from one generation to the next.

It stands for power, for independence and for unapologetically owning one's story. Throughout history, women were often excluded from professional spaces, expected to stay in the background while men led industries and economies. In many cultures, women's roles were confined to household matters, with little access to education, financial independence or leadership positions (Scott, 2005). Yet, time and again, they defied these limitations. From the women of ancient Mesopotamia who crushed gemstones to make rich lip stains (Bryant, 2016) to Egyptian queens who painted their lips deep red as a mark of power (Felder, 2019), red lipstick has always carried meaning.

By the early 20th century, suffragettes wore bold crimson as a sign of defiance and solidarity (Teal, 2013). Later, when women entered workplaces once closed to them, red lipstick became a symbol of resilience and determination – an unspoken declaration that they belonged. Some societies even sought to suppress this movement, viewing it as a challenge to tradition (Phelps, 2020), but women continued, reclaiming the colour as a mark of ambition, perseverance and the right to own their space.

At Absa, we see this same boldness in every woman we support, invest in and celebrate. We remain committed to building a future where women lead in every field, business, sport, entrepreneurship, technology and beyond. Like red lipstick, empowerment is a choice – the choice to lead, to break down barriers, to stand tall and to own your story.

At Absa, your story matters.

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Models are proud Absa colleagues.

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References

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