

# Power Move: A Technical Trailblazer Turned Red Lip Revolution Winner



In a moment that seamlessly blended brilliance, beauty, and boldness, Nomcebo Gina, Technical Manager at Air Products, stood center stage as the 2025 winner of the Absa Red Lip Activation, at the milestone 10th FORBES WOMAN AFRICA Leading Women Summit.

Nomcebo Gina's win marked far more than a personal accolade; it was a powerful affirmation of the stories, strength, and right of women everywhere to occupy space in every industry.

"The Absa Red Lip Activation was created to honor these stories and to create a platform where women can own their power, their voice, and their presence unapologetically," says Candice Thurston, Absa Group Managing Executive for Brand and Marketing.

"As we partner with FORBES WOMAN AFRICA at this milestone summit, we are proud to stand behind women like Nomcebo, whose truth, resilience, and ambition embody our commitment to helping Africa's women rise, lead, and define success on their own terms."

The activation, conceptualized as a storytelling platform celebrating Africa's most compelling women, culminated in Gina's narrative being selected from a pool of remarkable entries.

Her journey is one rooted in purpose and perseverance. As a Technical Manager at Air Products, she operates within a highly specialized, industrial environment where precision, confidence, and expertise are non-negotiable.

Navigating technical complexity and leading within a male-dominated field, she has carved out a career defined by credibility and calm authority. Her leadership style is not performative; it is grounded, deliberate, and deeply human.

Beyond her professional achievements, Gina is also a devoted wife and mother of two. Motherhood, she says, has reshaped how she sees leadership, responsibility, and legacy. Between managing demanding technical operations and raising her children, she has learned to balance ambition with empathy, discipline with joy.

Weekends are often spent chasing new adventures with her children, nurturing their curiosity and reminding them that possibilities are limitless. For Gina, these moments are not separate from her success, they are central to it.

Through her submission, she issued a call to women across the continent: own your voice, embrace your truth, and let your story lead.

What resonated deeply with judges and audiences alike was not only her professional journey, but her vulnerability. Gina reflected candidly on the challenges of leadership, the weight of expectations, and the internal negotiations women often make as they strive to be both excellent professionals and present parents.

She spoke about the responsibility she feels to raise her children, especially her daughters, to believe in their worth and to see no boundaries around their dreams.

The FORBES WOMAN AFRICA Leading Women Summit, held on March 5, 2025, at Time Square in Pretoria, marked its 10th anniversary under the theme "To The Power Of 10: The Rule-Breakers In Africa's Next Chapter".



Over the past decade, the summit has become a beacon of empowerment, convening presidents, entrepreneurs, creatives, activists, and innovators who are actively shaping Africa's future.

The summit was further energized by its partnership with Absa, whose Red Lip Activation created a space for women to articulate their personal power, passion, and purpose. The red lip, long a symbol of confidence and self-expression, was reimagined as a statement of presence and leadership.

Gina's story emerged as a perfect embodiment of what the activation sought to celebrate: courage, conviction, and the unapologetic beauty of female ambition.

Reflecting on her journey, Gina shared: "I entered the activation thinking I was just telling my truth. I didn't expect the impact my words would have, but that's the power of a platform like FORBES WOMAN AFRICA—it allows ordinary women to be seen as the extraordinary forces they are".

In sharing her truth, Gina reminded women that their experiences, no matter how quiet or behind-the-scenes they are, hold power.

"At Absa, we believe that progress happens when women are seen, heard, and supported to lead authentically in every space they choose to occupy. Nomcebo Gina's story is a powerful reminder that leadership takes many forms, from technical excellence and quiet confidence to courage, care, and conviction," says Thurston.

"Her journey reflects the everyday brilliance of women who are shaping Africa's future, often without fanfare, but with undeniable impact."

As the FORBES WOMAN AFRICA Leading Women Summit looks ahead to its next decade, stories like these signal a future shaped by diverse voices and authentic leadership.

They remind us that revolutions do not always arrive loudly; sometimes, they begin with one woman, one story, and one powerful shade of red.