

71^{of} 100

Chantel Struwig



Here to be Representative

Taking up space: Chantel Struwig on strength, confidence and being seen.

Chantel Struwig is a South African fitness creator, coach and speaker who has built a platform around fitness, confidence and embracing the things that make us different. Born with a prominent facial birthmark, she is using her own visibility to give young people something she rarely had growing up: the chance to see someone who looks like them represented.

Growing up, Chantel rarely saw people with birthmarks represented in the media or in the spaces she looked to for inspiration. Today, that experience has become an important part of the purpose behind her work.

She wants the next little girl or boy born with a birthmark to see her, come across her platform or hear her story and know that they are not alone.

For Chantel, looking different should never make someone feel less worthy of being seen, loved or celebrated. That belief in taking up space also shapes her approach to fitness, particularly when it comes to young women and teenage girls.

While Chantel holds a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) with a Fashion major from STADIO, her career and purpose have evolved through the platform she has built around movement and confidence. She is passionate about challenging the messages young women receive about what fitness and their bodies should look like.

Too often, girls grow up being encouraged to chase the smallest version of themselves. Chantel wants to offer them a different perspective, where exercise is less about becoming smaller and more about becoming stronger, more capable and confident.

Her own relationship with training has reinforced that belief. Movement has given Chantel a healthy way to work through the difficult and heavy moments in life, while building resilience and confidence along the

way. It is something she wants young people to experience for themselves, not simply because of what exercise can change physically, but because of what it can strengthen internally.

Whether she is coaching, speaking to young people or sharing her story through her platform, the message behind Chantel's work remains consistent. Young people should not feel that they need to change or diminish themselves in order to belong.

For Chantel, strength is as much about confidence and self-acceptance as it is about physical ability. By choosing to be visible and embracing what makes her different, she is helping create the representation she once searched for herself, while reminding the next generation that they are allowed to be seen, be strong and take up space.

72 *of* 100

**Dr. Lethukwenama
Letsoalo**



Here to be Illuminating

**Making health information
accessible:** Taking public
health beyond the
consulting room.

From the small town of Bergville in KZN to an audience of more than 800 000, Dr. Lethukwenama Letsoalo is using medicine, language and digital communication to help South Africans make better-informed decisions about their health.

For Dr. Letsoalo, improving health outcomes is about more than treating a patient once they walk through the consulting-room door; it's also about making sure people have access to credible information long before they reach that point.

A medical doctor, public health professional, Chevening Scholar and health communicator,

Dr. Letsoalo has built a community of more than 800 000 people across her digital platforms. By communicating in both isiZulu and English, she makes evidence-based health information easier to understand, more relatable and, importantly, more useful in people's everyday lives.

That approach is closely connected to where she comes from. Born and raised in Bergville, KwaZulu-Natal, Dr. Letsoalo saw first-hand how geography, inequality and access to information can influence health outcomes.

Those experiences continue to shape her work and her belief that credible health information needs to reach communities in ways that respect language, culture and lived experience.

Her work spans sexual and reproductive health, HIV prevention, women's health, non-communicable diseases and broader health promotion. Across these areas, she has collaborated with government, civil society, philanthropy, healthcare and the private sector, translating complex health evidence into campaigns and conversations that engage young people and wider communities.

In 2026, that contribution earned national recognition when Dr. Letsoalo received two honours at the Youth Owned Brands Awards. She won the Health & Wellness Brand category as well as the Overall Top Brand award in South Africa.

Behind her public-facing work is a strong academic foundation. Dr. Letsoalo holds an MBChB from Stellenbosch University and a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health from the University of Pretoria. She later completed an MSc in Public Health at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine as a Chevening Scholar, where her research examined the evaluation of social media campaigns in sexual and reproductive health.

She is also the founder of Thrive Health Services, a telehealth practice providing accessible medical care to patients across South Africa. With a focus on prevention, early detection and health education, the practice extends the same philosophy that has shaped her broader career: giving people access to credible healthcare and information wherever they are.

By bringing together clinical medicine, public health and digital communication, Dr. Letsoalo is helping to close the distance between health information and the communities that need it. Her work shows how healthcare can extend beyond traditional settings, using language, technology and trust to give more South Africans the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their health.

73^{of} 100 Junior Letsoalo



Here to be Mobilising

Hunadi the host: Sharing her message beyond the microphone.

Junior Letsoalo believes that when a child succeeds, the whole village wins. It is a message this 36-year-old dynamic broadcaster, known for her unmistakable “happy voice”, doesn’t only deliver to millions of listeners on Limpopo’s largest radio station; she takes it directly to learners across the province, using her platform and powerful motivational talks to encourage young people to believe in their own potential.

Hailing from Limpopo, Junior has risen to national prominence as a presenter on Thobela FM, where she is better known as Hunadi The Host. Over six years with the SABC, she has hosted flagship programmes including Tšabo Rena Ditšo and the vibrant youth slot Moswa le Bokamoso. Her flamboyant presenting style,

infectious energy and deep connection with her audience have earned her numerous accolades and established her as one of the most recognisable voices in SABC radio.

It is through Moswa le Bokamoso, however, that her commitment to young people is particularly evident. The programme creates a safe space for honest conversations around the challenges facing today’s youth, tackling issues such as teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, peer pressure and career choices, while encouraging young people to develop strong values and a sense of responsibility for their futures.

That connection extends well beyond the studio. Junior regularly visits schools across Limpopo as a motivational speaker, with initiatives such as her Matric Motivation programme aimed at encouraging Grade 12 learners as they navigate one of the most important stages of their education. Her Meet and Greet programme takes a similar message to primary school learners, addressing issues such as bullying and self-esteem. And, with the support of sponsors, she also provides school shoes to learners in need, turning encouragement into tangible support. For Junior, giving back is not optional; it is a responsibility.

Community is at the heart of her work, most visibly through Hunadi’s Family Fun Day. Taking place in communities including

Polokwane, Sekhukhune and Mokopane, this much-anticipated annual event brings families together for a day of entertainment and connection, with activities ranging from massive jumping castles and mascots for children to performances by leading artists such as King Monada.

Junior’s influence extends even further through her company, Hunadi Communications, which is a vehicle for her to share the knowledge and experience gained throughout her media career, providing professional development and mentorship to aspiring radio presenters, MCs and voice-over artists.

Across each of these ventures, the thread remains the same: creating opportunities for people to see what is possible and helping them take the next step. For Junior, success isn’t simply about how far one person can go – it’s about recognising the responsibility to help your community rise up alongside you.

Your
story
matters



74^{of} 100Janice
Snyman

Here to be Integrating

Where marketing meets technology: Janice Snyman is helping shape the future of business growth.

With more than two decades of experience spanning marketing, data and digital transformation, Janice Snyman has built a career around understanding how technology can help businesses connect, evolve and grow.

Marketing has changed considerably over the past two decades. Data, automation, artificial intelligence and digital platforms have transformed how organisations understand their customers and build their brands. Janice has spent much of her career working at the centre of that change.

Now Managing Executive of Absa's CIB Marketing and Corporate Affairs, Janice brings more than

20 years of experience across marketing, technology, data and digital transformation. Her career has been shaped by an ability to connect these disciplines, using technology and customer insight, not simply as marketing tools, but as drivers of broader business growth.

That experience has taken her across some of the world's largest organisations. At the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG), Janice held senior roles including Director of Marketing, Corporate Affairs & Programme Management and Global Director of Content Management.

One of her most significant undertakings was leading an ExCo-sponsored global brand transformation programme. Over two years, the programme worked to modernise and reposition a 300-year-old institution across 15 international markets and six languages.

The transformation streamlined LSEG's brand portfolio while strengthening customer experience, employer and investor branding, and creating a more unified approach to supporting future growth.

Earlier, as Regional Head of Marketing for Africa at Thomson Reuters, Janice helped transform the regional marketing function by embedding data-led decision-making, customer-centricity and modern marketing practices. Leadership roles at SAP SE and SAP Africa further developed her expertise across marketing technology, customer engagement platforms, digital ecosystems and integrated marketing.

Her interest in emerging technology has also taken her beyond the corporate environment. During a recent sabbatical, Janice co-founded Enbodie, an AI HealthTech start-up, giving her first-hand exposure to entrepreneurship and the rapidly developing possibilities of artificial intelligence.

Across each chapter of her career, the common thread has been transformation. Janice has championed technology, automation, analytics, content and customer experience as tools that can create measurable business value rather than innovation for innovation's sake.

Her journey reflects a broader shift taking place in business. Marketing is no longer a function operating on the sidelines of technology and strategy. Increasingly, the three are intertwined. By building a career across those intersections, Janice represents a generation of leaders helping organisations understand not only how to adapt to technological change, but how to turn it into meaningful growth.

Your
story
matters



75^{of} 100

Keesha Sempe



Here to be Leading

Redefining fashion from concept to legacy: The evolution of Keesha Sempe.

Keesha's journey is rooted in curiosity, creativity and the courage to turn a childhood passion into a purposeful career. For many, fashion is defined by the ephemeral magic of the catwalk – the brief, luminous seconds where garments capture the spotlight. For Keesha, fashion is a lifelong discipline built on curiosity, strategic vision, and the courage to transform childhood passion into an enduring professional legacy.

Keesha's relationship with design began long before she entered a studio. As a young girl, her world was shaped by tangible creativity: hand-stitching garments for her dolls, exploring her model cousin's wardrobe, and absorbing the rich visual storytelling of

fashion broadcasts. What started as intuitive play soon evolved into a calling. Driven to understand the mechanics behind the beauty, Keesha anchored her artistic talent in academic rigor, earning credentials in Fashion Commerce and Business Administration.

"This foundation instilled a critical perspective: fashion is not merely about aesthetics, but an intricate intersection of business strategy, cultural expression, and personal identity," says Keesha.

Her entrepreneurship journey went to the next level at the prestigious David Tlale Academy. Through this innovative partnership with Absa, Keesha developed into a credible and skilled fashion entrepreneur. She is hands-on throughout every stage of the fashion design process, from conceptualisation and intricate print design to precision pattern making, fabric cutting and final garment construction.

Keesha crafts far more than clothing, this is a reflection of her voice on another level. "By engaging with fashion as a structured language – leveraging style composition, proportion, and colour theory – this business translates technical skill into a medium that empowers others to articulate their own identity."

Her journey underscores a vital truth for the creative economy: when young women are provided dedicated mentorship and room to

innovate, talent matures into skill, skill opens doors to opportunity, and opportunity creates a lasting legacy.

Her impact lies in her steadfast commitment to creating fashion that is innovative, generational, and unapologetically grounded in her authentic voice. She represents a rising generation of creative leaders who prove that impact is not merely measured by current headlines, but by the structural pathways built for those who follow.

She concludes: "As South Africa's creative industries continue to evolve, we are building a future where South African women do not simply participate in the fashion value chain – they build, and lead it."

Your
story
matters



76^{of} 100**Leanne
Emery-Hunter**

Here to be Progressive

**From youth
unemployment to social
impact:** Redefining what
capital can do.

Leanne Emery-Hunter has spent her career turning big, hard problems into workable solutions and she isn't finished yet. As Chief Commercial Officer at the Youth Employment Service (YES), she helped rally corporate South Africa around one of the country's most urgent crises: youth unemployment. Working at the intersection of business and social need, she built the partnerships that gave YES the scale to place hundreds of thousands of young people into their first year of work experience, proof, she says, of "what is possible when business rallies around a shared social challenge."

Today, as Chief Executive Officer of Tshikululu Social Investments, Leanne leads one of South Africa's most influential social investment firms, managing impact funding on behalf of major corporates and mining groups including Anglo American and De Beers. She has taken on the role at a pivotal moment for the sector, pushing Tshikululu to rethink how capital, technology, evidence and partnership can be combined to tackle complex social challenges at scale.

"Social investment cannot simply be about spending money well," she says. "It has to be about solving problems better."

For Leanne, that means bringing together funders, business, government and communities and, critically, listening to the people closest to the problems being solved. Collaboration isn't a nice-to-have, she concedes, the scale of South Africa's challenges makes it a necessity. That conviction extended to the TEDx stage, where Leanne delivered a talk at TEDxJohannesburg arguing that resilience must become a core measure of value in a financial system still built for predictability.

Leanne is also a committed advocate for women's leadership. A GIBS MBA graduate (with distinction) now completing an MPhil in Leading in New Economies, and a 2022 TransUnion Rising Star Awards finalist, she

continues to build a career defined by translating ambition into measurable change for young people, for women, and for the communities Tshikululu's partners serve.

As she puts it: "When women have a genuine voice in shaping the decisions that affect their lives, we don't just improve outcomes for women, we strengthen families, communities and economies. But giving women a voice has to mean more than inviting them into the room. It means listening, sharing power and ensuring that women are able to shape solutions

Your
story
matters



77^{of} 100**Livonia
Mosipha**

Here to be Mentoring

From technology leadership to transforming lives.

We often think people are wired one way or the other; drawn to the logic, systems and structure of the left brain, or to the creativity, intuition and human connection associated with the right. Livonia Mosipha challenges that simple divide.

For more than 16 years, this technology leader has navigated complex environments across banking, insurance, mining and entertainment, leading projects and bringing together multiple teams to solve problems, create structure and turn ideas into execution. It is a world that demands analytical thinking, precision and an ability to see how the pieces of a complex system fit together.

However, Livonia's greatest impact may lie in what happens beyond the systems she builds. A mentor, coach and community builder, she is equally passionate about understanding people, recognising their potential and helping them find the confidence to step into it. For her, leadership is not simply a position or title; it is a responsibility to open doors, create opportunities and help others rise.

It is a belief at the very heart of Empower To Evolve, a platform she founded to create safe spaces where people can share their challenges, rediscover their strengths and find the courage to pursue possibilities they may once have considered out of reach. As a certified coach, mentor and #IAMRemarkable Facilitator, Livonia helps people recognise their own value, articulate their achievements with confidence and embrace opportunities with greater conviction.

Her commitment to developing others extends well beyond her own platform. Through volunteer coaching programmes at Absa, her support of the Emerging Leaders in Public Service (ELIPS) initiative and various community-focused development platforms, she continues to invest her time, knowledge and experience in others. The results are visible in the journeys of the people she has mentored: professionals who have progressed into leadership roles, achieved significant career milestones and received recognition in their own right, including award nominations.

It is a true measure of meaningful leadership. Personal achievement matters, but its greatest value lies in what it makes possible for others. When someone she has mentored finds their voice, takes a courageous next step or achieves something they once thought was beyond them, her own influence multiplies.

It is a philosophy that has earned her recognition as a Wired4Women Mentor of the Year Finalist in 2025 and a People's Choice Finalist in 2025, as well as a place as a role model in the PPB Women in Tech She Belongs campaign. Yet, perhaps the most telling measure of her influence is not found in the accolades, but in the growing number of people who are themselves becoming leaders, advocates and examples for others.

Livonia's story is ultimately one of possibility. She demonstrates that it is possible to be deeply analytical and deeply human; to build sophisticated systems while building people; to lead teams while creating space for others to lead themselves.

Your
story
matters



78^{of} 100

**Professor
Thifhelimbilu
Irene
Munzhelele**



Here to be Altering

**Being the first, but making
sure she is not the last.**

Professor Thifhelimbilu Irene Munzhelele made history as South Africa's first black female Maxillofacial and Oral Surgeon. Now, as a Head of Department, she is helping more women find their place in a specialty where they have historically been underrepresented.

Growing up in a village in Venda, Prof. Munzhelele became the first generation in her family to attend university. It was the beginning of a journey that would eventually see her break barriers in one of South Africa's most specialised areas of healthcare.

Prof. Munzhelele went on to become South Africa's first African female maxillofacial and oral surgeon, a specialty combining complex dental and surgical expertise. She is also the

first and only African person to qualify in the field with both dental and medical degrees.

After completing her dental degree at Medunsa, she continued her studies across oral surgery and medicine before qualifying as a specialist in Maxillofacial and Oral Surgery.

She later worked as a specialist for the South African Defence Force before moving further into academia and leadership. Today, Prof. Munzhelele is Head of the Department of Maxillofacial and Oral Surgery at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, where she has become the first African female HOD in her specialty. The significance of that position extends beyond her own career.

Maxillofacial and oral surgery has traditionally been a male-dominated discipline in South Africa. The first woman in the country only qualified in the specialty in 1998, making the progress of women in the field relatively recent. Prof. Munzhelele is now using her position to help change this.

"I am very passionate about intentionally empowering other women," she says. Since taking over as HOD, she has helped develop female maxillofacial and oral surgeons, resulting in more women continuing through the programme.

Her contribution goes beyond being the woman who reached the milestone first. By teaching, mentoring and creating.

Her contribution goes beyond being the woman who reached the milestone first. By teaching, mentoring and creating opportunities for others, she is helping ensure that women entering the profession today encounter a different environment from the one she experienced.

For a woman who began her journey as the first person in her family to access university education, that progress carries particular meaning. Prof. Munzhelele's career has been filled with firsts, but the more important measure of her contribution will be her impact. She believes that every woman who qualifies as a maxillofacial and oral surgeon from hereon makes the specialty more achievable for the next generation.

79^{of} 100
Tsakane Sono



Here to be Caring

From clinical care to community change: Turning compassion into action.

"In my experience as an occupational therapist, I have seen people at their most vulnerable and dependent. I have seen how society can disregard those that are living with disabilities and the stigma surrounding disabilities and mental health awareness. I decided to use my professional knowledge, clinical experience and my love for the community to make an impact in any way that I can."

For Tsakane Sono, occupational therapy has never been only about treating a patient; it has given her a close view of the realities faced by people living with disabilities, those navigating mental health challenges and

communities that are often overlooked. It is this experience that has shaped her commitment to creating spaces where people feel seen, supported, and empowered.

As an occupational therapist, lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand and founder of the Tsakane Sono Foundation, Tsakane has built her career around combining clinical expertise with community advocacy. She holds a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy and has worked across public-sector rehabilitation, mental health and wheelchair seating, including establishing an occupational therapy psychiatry service at a local community health centre from the ground up.

Her experience has also exposed her to the stigma surrounding disability and mental health. Through her foundation, established in 2025, Tsakane works to challenge those perceptions by donating wheelchairs and assistive devices, facilitating community conversations and supporting organisations and homes serving people with physical and developmental disabilities across Soweto and Gauteng, ensuring marginalised individuals receive equal access to resources and opportunities to lead full, dignified lives.

For Tsakane, advocacy is about taking action rather than simply raising awareness. Her work with the Baragwanath Hospital Comfort Committee, professional leadership within the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa and her work mentoring future

that meaningful change requires people to use their skills and influence to open doors for others.

That commitment extends beyond her clinical profession. As a former Miss Soweto, speaker, master of ceremonies, voice-over artist and plus-size model, Tsakane has used public platforms to promote disability awareness, health literacy, youth mentorship, mental wellbeing and representation.

Ultimately, her motivation is deeply personal – her faith and belief in God have strengthened her desire to model a life centred on compassion and service. Tsakane believes that people living with disabilities and those experiencing mental health challenges deserve to be seen. She is committed to using her knowledge, voice and her platforms to help people feel valued and included.

**Your
story
matters**



80^{of} 100**Xolile
Mabuza**

Here to be Regenerative

**From recovery to
reinvention:**
Xolile Mabuza is turning
discarded tyres into
opportunity.

What began as part of Xolile Mabuza's personal recovery from a stroke has grown into a circular economy business transforming thousands of discarded rubber tubes into handcrafted bags while creating skills and opportunities for young people. For Xolile, rebuilding her life and building a business became part of the same extraordinary journey.

Raised in a village outside Mbombela in Mpumalanga, Xolile suffered a stroke in 2018. During her recovery, as she relearned how to walk, she began collecting discarded rubber tyre tubes from around her community.

Cleaning, cutting and stitching the material became a creative part of her healing process, but over time, she began to see something more in what others had thrown away. Those discarded tubes became the foundation for Tendalo Trading.

Officially registered in 2019 and fully operational by 2023, Tendalo has developed into a circular economy brand creating premium bags from recycled rubber tyre tubes. In doing so, Xolile has transformed a personal story of recovery into one that brings together sustainability, African craftsmanship and economic opportunity.

The impact is increasingly tangible. Tendalo has produced more than 3 100 handcrafted bags and recycled over 10 000 rubber tubes that could otherwise have ended up in landfills. The business has also trained 23 young people in production skills, 19 of them are women, creating opportunities for skills development and employment within rural communities.

What started in Mpumalanga has since attracted attention far beyond it. Xolile was named the 2025 Santam Women of the Future Rising Star and a Woolworths Youth Makers winner. Participation in the Création Africa Programme took her business to Paris in 2024, while she is also a 2026 Veuve Clicquot Bold Woman Award finalist. Through The Earthshot Prize Youth Programme, Xolile met Prince William and created a custom Tendalo bag for him.

Yet Tendalo's story remains grounded in the same idea that inspired its beginnings: something discarded can be given new purpose. Through every bag, Xolile is demonstrating that sustainability can create value not only for the environment, but also for people and communities. Her journey shows how innovation can emerge from the most unexpected circumstances and how rebuilding can become an opportunity to help others build, too. From learning to walk again to taking African craftsmanship onto international platforms, Xolile has turned recovery into reinvention and waste into possibility.

**Your
story
matters**

