

Women in Tech virtual forum to launch

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Two technology giants have joined forces to introduce an all-women virtual forum that will bring women in the South African tech space together to learn from each other, share their challenges and empower a new breed of leaders in the industry.

The Women in Tech virtual sessions are a collaboration between legal technology firm, LexisNexis South Africa, and Dell Technologies, the leader in digital transformation and technology solutions.

Hosted monthly, the sessions will see some of South Africa's foremost women in technology sharing their thoughts and experiences around being a woman in the workplace and a leadership success story.

The importance of embedding gender parity into the future has only heightened with the rapid labour market changes and digital acceleration of Covid-19. This presents a renewed opportunity to balance efforts between the demand side of growing jobs and the supply side of future-ready skills.

The first session on Thursday, 18 February, will feature LexisNexis CEO and chairperson of the board, Videsha Proothveerajh, as she shares her insights under the theme, **Love Lessons in Leadership**.



Proothveerajh has 20 years' plus experience working in high-profile ICT companies such as EDS, Microsoft and Intel and running her own business focusing on business strategy and value creation. Her accolades include being recognised as: the most influential Woman in Business and Government for ICT in Africa; a *Forbes* changemaker in Africa; one of the 50 most inspiring women in South Africa as part of the global Inspiring Fifty initiative and among the 'Africa 50' of Leaders in Data Centres and Cloud, driving change in Africa. She regularly credits mentorship and sponsorship as being among the biggest building blocks to her success and has a strong belief in teaching other people.

"This partnership is about driving conversations by women of all levels in the technology space - whether it is a student studying towards a technology-infused qualification, an individual entering the workplace in an entry-level internship

position, a seasoned professional, or a senior or executive level women in tech who has walked the journey,” says Proothveerajh.

Regional sales director of Dell Technologies, Sabine Dederig, said: “There is great value in encouraging mentorship among women in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) field. For example, women would be eight times more likely to complete their studies if afforded appropriate mentorship opportunities. This support also needs to continue into the professional environment, where women continue to be under-represented among workers with disruptive technical skills.”

The [World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report for 2020](#) includes an analysis of gender dynamics of professional segregation at the frontiers of the new economy. It shows that women represent only 14% of professionals in cloud computing and engineering, 28% in data and AI and 36% in product development.

Proothveerajh says: “When I dream big, which is quite often, it is not just about helping women advance but also about assisting individuals from all marginalised groups who don't always have a voice or who are not always recognised for the leadership attributes they possess, to claim their rightful place in the work environment. While many people may see this as a tick-box diversity metric based on gender and inclusion, it is about much more than that. If we enable our people to bring their whole selves to the workplace, it ultimately strengthens our organisations, increases our competitiveness and enhances our business performance.”

Register for the first session on Thursday, 18 February featuring Videsha Proothveerajh, as she shares her insights under the theme, **Love Lessons in Leadership**. Two time slots are available: [Register here for](#) 1.30pm – 2pm or [Register here](#) for 5.30pm – 6pm.

Future sessions will interrogate topics including Importance of Self Love; Recruitment of Women in Tech; University Mentorship; Creating your own Board; and Reintegrating Women into the Workplace.

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