

What the hell happened to women in leadership? Facebook's Nunu Ntshingila

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Something Facebook Africa's regional director, Nunu Ntshingila finds interesting having spent much time in advertising is that despite there being no shortage of women in the industry, there don't seem to be nearly enough in leadership roles.

Speaking at the Open Chair event at TBWA Hunt Lascaris Johannesburg on Wednesday, 8 August, Ntshingila said she hopes this movement “will build lasting change, and transformative change in how women play in this industry”.



[#Loeries2017: Open Chair starts a movement amongst women in advertising](#)

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While there are so many aspects one could delve into when it comes to women in advertising, there were three things in particular on her heart to share...

As it's our job, as advertisers, to drive or influence purchasing power, why are women, with whom this purchasing power lies (70-80% globally), not leading creative teams (only 3% of creative studios are led by women)?

This is wrong, said Ntshingila. We need to move beyond how women have been and are currently portrayed to real representations of them. “We need to see women that are authentic, we need to see women that are empowered, and we need to see women that are progressive because our girls need to see not only that what is possible, they've got to see what they need to become.”

This is not restricted to the ad industry, she said. This is a workplace phenomenon and is even worse when you step outside. “Today, as we sit in South Africa, only 2.4% of women are CEOs. That is absolutely nothing. If you look at the rest of Africa, that number goes up to 5%. That is not enough.”

Contradictorily, there are more women graduating out of universities today than there are young men, she continued. “So if there are more women graduating out of universities, where are they going?”

According to a study conducted by Bain, 58% of female graduates have their sights on the highest level of the organisation. This figure is about 48% amongst young men, but the reality is that women hardly ever get there.

This leads Ntshingila to ask, “What is it that's stopping us from getting there? What is it in our attitudes, and how some of the environments out there stop us from ambition to actually making it reality?” She feels strongly that we need to change what's happening in the industry and in the workplace everywhere.



Photographer: Zuzi Seoka, [Zuno Photography](#)



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And last but not least, she raised the issue of inclusivity, at all levels. “We need to continue to make sure that there is ‘cognizant diversity’ and ‘real diversity’. Diversity of thinking and also diversity of being. And sometimes I fear that we focus so much on diversity of being that we forget about the thought process of being diverse in who we are and in what we think about.”

Going on to explain this, she acknowledged that we have a relatively young continent and that by 2025, 25% of the world’s population will be African youth. She poses the question of where they are in our midst. “How are they influencing the world that they’re going to inherit in the next 2-3 years?”

So we not only need to make sure we, as women, reach senior-level positions of decision making, but that young women are also at the forefront of what we’re doing.



Photographer: Zuzi Seoka, [Zuno Photography](#)

In conclusion, Ntshingila said she felt proud when she came across a movement by some African American women who said they were sick and tired of their stereotype. She reminded us that we’re the ones who are depicting those images and asked why we always veer towards a lighter shade rather than a darker shade, and what we’re saying by doing this.

“So at this point in time let’s stop not only whitewashing how we think, what we see, but make sure that we absolutely, truly reflect not only this country, this continent, but the world as God created it.

“Celebrate the women that we have and make sure they occupy an empty chair next to us, and let’s continue to build each other up because when women do better, the world does better.”



#Loeries2016: Ntshingila inducted into the Creative Hall of Fame

Ann Nurock 21 Aug 2016



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