

Never be afraid to stand out - Lebohang Thaele, OIM Consulting

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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An engineer by profession, Lebohang Thaele is a highly experienced consultant at OIM Consulting - an organisation that helps businesses develop effective supervisors and front-line leaders, particularly within the mining and manufacturing industries.

This Women's Month, Thaele shared with us a bit about her work in the mining industry and her favourite current trends, what she sees as the major challenges and opportunities, and advice for women pursuing a career in mining today.

■ Tell us a bit about yourself and your background.

I am passionate about leadership, people and I love travelling. I'm a mother, thus family is everything to me. I am an engineer by profession and have been in various roles in the manufacturing sector. I am innovative, open-minded and agile. I believe in people and, as a result, have served in leadership roles that are focused on driving continuous improvement. I have over 10 years' worth of experience, with a postgraduate qualification and am currently looking into studying a business management degree.

■ What does a typical workday look like for you?

My day starts early, attending meetings in the mines and then we debrief on the operational levers. I also share progress reports or coach around the levers required for optimal efficiency. It's interesting as I also learn a lot from my colleagues at OIM.



OIM Consulting's Lebohang Thaele

■ What do you love most about working in the mining sector?

As a consultant who coaches front-line supervisors in mines, I enjoy the travelling! I enjoy interacting with different people from all walks of life and changing their lives for the better.

■ What is your favourite trend in the mining sector right now?

Tech such as artificial intelligence, drones that capture some of the mine's most intricate problems, autonomous vehicles that access areas where it's not feasible for humans to enter, promoting safety and productivity.



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■ What do you see as the major challenges and opportunities ahead in mining?

Challenges - we need to employ the right people in the right roles.

Opportunities - the livelihood of mining communities is changing for the better. We just need to work hard to upskill those with talent and let them grow further into more senior roles.

■ ***As a male-dominated sector, what are some of the barriers still limiting the participation and advancement of women in mining? And how do we address them?***

The mining culture and the engrained historical mindset remains a barrier, however, I believe we are able to effect change through our Supervisory Development Programme, helping our trainees become more effective and climb the ladder.

■ ***Where, do you believe, does the value lie in a diverse, inclusive work environment, particularly in terms of female representation?***

Women have a way of bringing order. We shouldn't overlook males as the majority are experienced, thus we can seek advice from them and implement effective changes using our intuition. We have a natural attention to detail.

■ ***Based on your experience, what advice would you give to women pursuing a career in mining today?***

Be agile and never limit yourself. The culture in the mining sector is changing and more and more opportunities are being offered to females.



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■ ***How is your organisation supporting and empowering women in the mining sector?***

We have a voice and are respected as equals by our male counterparts. OIM also assists in upskilling its employees.

■ ***Do you have any pearls of wisdom to share this Women's Month or words of encouragement?***

Never be afraid to stand out, be intentional about your goals and remember to do everything with integrity and without limiting yourself. You are capable of achieving whatever you put your mind to! Affirm yourself on a daily basis and never let life's challenges throw you off; simply regroup and start all over again.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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