

Heineken South Africa Women's Month entrepreneur - Divya Vasant, CEO of Amazi

Divya Vasant is a purpose-driven entrepreneur, co-founder and CEO of The Amazi Group of companies that create access to knowledge, tools and opportunities for women to unlock their potential and progress to position of ownership within the wellness industry. A researcher at heart, Vasant began her career as a financial analyst before she moved from the corporate world onto the entrepreneurial stage, driven by her purpose to innovate inclusive solutions that rethink how we create commercial value in a way that re-installs humanity at the centre of the value chain.

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This #WomensMonth, Heineken South Africa has partnered with Bizcommunity to showcase the phenomenal work and impact of women entrepreneurs like Divya.

1. Please tell us more about Amazi?

[Amazi](#) is a group of companies with the purpose to innovate opportunities, platforms and models that champion the economic inclusion of women. The group began that journey by launching a holistic skills development and employment creation programme that trained young, unemployed women to become beauty professionals and introduced them to the world of work through a 12-month learnership at our [Amazi stores](#). As Covid-19 reshapes the format of how earning opportunities can be created, Amazi is evolving its model to become an incubator supporting women to become self-sufficient.

2. What inspired you to start the Amazi brand?

Primarily it is to champion the voice of women. From a very young age, I realised that women have infinite potential and the only thing limiting their potential was the patriarchal society that they are born into. [Amazi](#) is a way of living out my purpose (woman empowerment) by providing a space for women to have a voice, and for me to create a space where I am free to be myself, establish a community where I felt a true sense of belonging and where I can be truly authentic.

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#PullHerUp GIVEAWAY - Unlock HER potential to Unlock OUR Power. We want to encourage men, women, organisations to join us in Pulling Up 500 women by investing in their access to our Self & Entrepreneurial learning content. Being deliberate about not just creating space for women but actively investing in them is core to who we are. We are kick-starting this campaign by investing in pulling 50 women up to our platform to receive learning content worth R22 500 over the month of August. How to enter: - Follow @amazibeauty - Comment below with a motivation on why you or someone else would like to be pulled up as a woman of colour. - Share this post in your stories tagging @amazibeauty and the women of colour you want to pull up. - Entries close 21st August 2020. Winners will be announced 26th August 2020 in the AMAZI Mag. #BeautyOnAMission #RedefiningBeauty #ADifferentKindOfBeauty #TheAMAZIExperience #PaintPurposeAndHeart

A post shared by AMAZI Beauty (@amazibeauty) on Aug 10, 2020 at 2:52am PDT

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3. What would you like to achieve through the Amazi brand?

We want to show the rest of South Africa how to build a feminist business because we believe that the only viable and sustainable business model going forward will be one of inclusivity. We also want to be able to incubate women entrepreneurship and talent, by championing as many women as possible to back themselves and use what they already have to become more self-sufficient and ultimately, realise their true potential.

4. Who has inspired you and why?

As an alumnae member of the Zanele Mbeki Fellowship, I would have to say that Mama Zanele Mbeki is definitely one of the many women who have inspired me. Through this fellowship, her goal is to cultivate a new generation of feminist African leaders. I remember from my experience of the fellowship that she attended every workshop and session, sat and listened to us, contributed and engaged to every discussion. She exemplifies having your actions do the talking for you. As a person with so much experience and who has done so many noteworthy things, it was also remarkable that she was still able to have debates and have her views challenged by young women and while doing so, take those critical discussions seriously. I do not see many elder leaders in South Africa being able to do that. She really is a champion of women and pushes so many of us forward.

5. How has Covid-19 affected your business?

The wellness industry in general also took a big knock, with many businesses closing down and many jobs lost. Luckily, we had already started locking down our physical spaces before the lockdown officially started back in March, following the presidential announcement. We did a lot of introspection, asking difficult questions like: Were the challenges we were addressing still applicable or has Covid-19 introduced a new set of problems to address? Consequently, we went back to basics, hosting lots of focus groups and surveys on topics like how women wanted to consume information and what their priorities were.

As a result, we innovated and established a new digital learning space. We decided to keep our physical spaces closed until the material risk of Covid-19 subsided and consumers would once more, have the money to spend on their own wellness. This led to difficult conversations with our funders and investors, amongst others. It has not been easy. The best advice he is to not do anything in isolation but in collaboration with your stakeholders and consumers.

Instagram: [amazibeauty](#)

Facebook: [@AmaziBeauty](#)

Website: <https://amazibeauty.co.za/>

About Heineken South Africa:

Heineken South Africa is a key player in the beer and cider industry in the country, with an impressive portfolio of brands including Heineken®, Sol, Desperados, Windhoek, Miller Genuine Draft, Amstel, Strongbow, Fox, Soweto Gold, and Tafel. Heineken South Africa is a joint venture between Heineken N.V. and Namibia Breweries. Visit www.heinekensouthafrica.co.za

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