

Paula Sartini talks disruptive innovations post Covid-19



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Passionate about design thinking in the technology space, Paula Sartini is an analytical thinker that strives to solve business problems with innovative solutions. She is passionate about the role technology has to play in addressing business challenges and believes that women have a critical part to play in the process.



Paula Sartini, founder and CEO at BrandQuantum

For over two decades, Paula has helped leading organisations across South Africa to overcome various business challenges. Having studied commerce, branding and marketing coupled with a solid business acumen and an entrepreneurial spirit, she possesses an innate ability to logically solve problems with creative solutions.

This [Women's Month](#), Paula Sartini, founder and CEO at BrandQuantum, shares her story.

■ ***Can you tell us a bit about yourself?***

I was born in South Africa to Argentinian parents and lived in Argentina during my formative years before my family moved back to South Africa. I am a mother of four teenagers and an entrepreneur and I established my first business while I was at university. I am passionate about branding and design and have a deep love for technology and how it can change lives.

■ ***You're the founder and CEO at BrandQuantum. Tell us more about your role here***

I love solving challenges for businesses and helping companies to find new, creative ways to solve a problem. As such most of my time is spent working closely with customers to identify challenges they are facing and then working with them and the BrandQuantum software development team to create solutions that can help our clients overcome these problems. Since the start of lockdown this has translated into an online environment and I find a large part of my day is spent talking to people from all over the world, all facing similar challenges.

■ ***What is the core function of BrandQuantum?***

BrandQuantum helps local and global companies to achieve brand consistency and compliance using the technologies that they are accustomed to using daily. Our solutions, which have been securely designed to adhere to the POPI Act and GDPR requirements, help employees to access on-brand documents, presentations and spreadsheets within the MS programmes and ensure that every employee has consistent email branding and tamperproof email signatures, giving recipients peace of mind that the emails are authentic.

■ ***Do you have any female role models? If so, who?***

I have a few. While there have been strong women throughout history, I believe that women that stay true to who they are and leverage their feminine qualities and strengths, are particularly inspirational. For example, Oprah Winfrey's authenticity and tenacity are inspiring. I believe she has stood the test of time and remains true to who she is rather than adapted to fit into a man's world. This is inspiring as it shows that women can be women to succeed and don't need to be man-eaters to have a say at the boardroom table.

■ ***You're passionate about design thinking in the technology space. For those who don't know, what is design thinking?***

Design thinking is about solving problems simply and elegantly whilst really taking into account the ultimate user.

“ The key to design thinking is listening to really understand what the problem is and then developing a solution that addresses this problem. ”

For example, when one of our customers had a specific requirement to add Calendly into BrandMail we adapted our solution to do this, another customer needed our BrandMail ribbon to be translated to Chinese, so we developed a multilingual ribbon to accommodate for various languages and meet the needs of the users. As such design thinking overcomes the traditional challenge of leaving the development to the development team without having insight into the end-user environment and needs.

■ ***What advice can you share for females wanting to get into this space?***

If you care about technology and innovation, you can do it! We are very fortunate that there are more opportunities for women in the technology and innovation space today than ever before. This is the result of many years of persevering, however, discrepancies do still exist for women working in these sectors so if you want to enter these fields you need to be passionate about it and want to do it if you are to succeed.

■ ***What are some of the disruptive innovations we can see coming post-Covid?***

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we use technology and it is going to change the way various industries work. Education, for example, has been pushed to implement online learning in a big way that we have never seen before and this is just the start of what we can expect from this sector. More opportunities will be made available for online learning to bridge the education gap that we currently see today.

Health technology and telehealth will see accelerated growth following from the pandemic to meet the health needs of the broader public. We will see a growth in wearable healthcare as well as wearable training technologies.

Cybersecurity and surveillance will continue to gain focus. With more employees working from home, companies will

implement online employee productivity surveillance solutions to track and monitor employee performance and ensure that employees are meeting required KPIs.

There will continue to be a growth in online shopping and e-commerce with people having tested these solutions during the lockdown and starting to trust them. Cloud kitchens will also start to see increased traction to meet people's needs for prepared food offerings that are delivered to your home.

Chabots will continue to gain adoption as people engage with these solutions more regularly. Automation solutions are also likely to be used more extensively as employees work remotely. In addition, cloud call centres will provide opportunities for employees to work from home and create job opportunities for part-time employees that have a limited amount of hours available to work for a company but need to earn an income.

■ **As a successful businesswomen, how do you manage to keep a work-life balance?**

As a business owner, mother of four teenagers and student working towards a PhD, work-life balance can sometimes be a challenge.

“ I have learned over the years that carving out time to dedicate to each aspect doesn't work, the two are interlinked and the contribution of each aspect enhances the other. ”

For example, I have learned so much from my children and gained valuable insights from our conversations that I have infused back into my work.

At the same time, I use the insights gained from studying in my work to make a difference to our clients business. The time that I spend with my family is hugely rewarding and when you see it as the one aspect helping the other, you can gain work-life balance.

■ **What do you think governments can do to encourage businesswomen in SA?**

Beyond women in business, I believe the government needs to focus on innovation and Research and Development. Innovation in business, and in particular women-led innovation, needs to be incentivised and supported by the government to encourage more businesses to innovate as this will have a greater impact on our economy.

■ **As we celebrate Women's Month in South Africa. Do you have any words of encouragement for all the women out there?**

I grew up believing that I could achieve what I wanted to achieve. This was instilled into me from a young age and while I've experienced a few obstacles in business over the years I do believe that women have an important role to play in business.

“ So if you have a good idea, go for it! Don't wait for a better time or a better opportunity, focus on the one thing you want to do and do it because you can do it! ”

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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