

FORGING THEIR OWN WAY AHEAD

Women in male-heavy careers

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IT'S thanks to the women of 1956, who have paved the way for the younger generation of females to thrive in what would have been a man's world, that we can forge our own paths, step over stereotypes and shatter those glass ceilings.

Today's women bear many titles and not just those of homemaker, housekeeper, chef, teacher or caretaker – we are world-changers of our society.

As society gradually makes strides to accommodate women in what would have been previously deemed "too risky" or "out of reach" careers or opportunities, they are now little-by-little supporting and bridging those gaps.

Several women, and even men, may disagree and will argue that not much has changed, or there is still a long way to go. However, the world's narrative is changing.

Here are examples of women stepping into male-dominated industries and making their mark:

Engineering

One such female-achiever is Mathapelo More, who sees herself as part of the transformation in the civil engineering industry, with all of the other women hard at work in the field and those about to embark on their journey.

"I think being active in the industry automatically inspires young women to join, as it shows it is possible to operate in this male-dominated world," More says.

More is a professional engineer, whose job involves developing existing infrastructure that is otherwise a liability for the client, and transforming it to the benefit of local communities.

She is an asset transformation specialist at consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm Zutari.



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Careers

Supply chain

Supply chain, logistics and operations is no glamorous career, however it provides extensive knowledge as to how a business works. Reshmi Khan is a supply chain transformation EMEA demand track leader at Cummins, and considers her career to be a journey wrapped in every role and experience.

She believes this has added professional knowledge and confidence, while also strengthening her soft skills.

Khan believes that the industry has been transformed sufficiently, but not enough women are involved in the pipeline. "Women are not growing sufficiently in leadership roles. However, current small strides could see bigger transformation in the industry in the next generation."

Architecture

Newly-appointed Paragon Architects senior associate Antoinette Kloppers says: "Work hard and follow your own unique growth path" – and this has certainly worked out for her.

"I always wonder if I am really making a difference and reaching my goals. This great recognition and the congratulations that I'd received have brought a refreshing perspective on how I've grown in my career.

"In the past year, we've had to rethink everything. We've had to



TODAY'S women bear many titles and not just that of a homemaker. | Pexels

create opportunities and new ways of learning and mentoring. You cannot grow without trials, and as much as we have faced many difficulties, you can find at least one lesson learnt in every challenge faced."

Mining

When a drilling technology solutions provider, Rosond, designed and developed a next-generation drill rig

that automates this arduous and dangerous process, an opportunity arose for several women to be deployed at Kumba Iron Ore in the Northern Cape.

As a grade control drill assistant, Bolokang Innocentiah Mere's job is to ensure that all samples taken are labelled correctly, and she assists with set-up when relocating to the next exploration site.

"What I enjoy most about my job is that we always work as a team. This truly creates a family environment where everybody is there for each other. I feel empowered, because for many years only men were allowed to work in the mining industry. I know I still have much to learn, which is why I am so excited about this job and being part of women in mining."