**PRESS RELEASE**

BI sets the benchmark for inclusivity as the bearings industry transforms

**04 August 2021:** Creating awareness of the benefits and positive impact a woman can make in a male-dominated environment can also give more women a chance in certain roles never available to them previously, according to [Bearings International](http://www.bearings.co.za) (BI) Rosslyn and Pretoria Branch Manager **Nanette Tewitz** on the occasion of Women’s Day on 9 August.

Nanette believes that women tend to be more supportive in the workplace, creating a feeling of belonging, thus increasing staff retention and boosting productivity. Women are also far more likely to use effective leadership styles. “As I experience in our conferences, women and men think differently. Collaborating with and challenging one another sparks creativity and innovative ideas, leading us to implement much-needed change and improvement and move forward as a team,” says Nanette.

Her role is to maintain and grow the profitability of the branch under her leadership. “I love to have my team exceed customer expectations. Therefore, I ensure that all planning and coordination in terms of distributing our products and services is carried out seamlessly. I ensure that my staff maintain a superior level of customer service excellence. By constantly coaching my team, they are able to meet their sales targets.”

Nanette started at BI in 2019 as a Branch Manager and completed a team management and problem-solving skills programme this year, in addition to her experience in procurement and supply Chain management. At the beginning, she likens working for BI to “driving in a car race, going 220 km/h on a road never driven before, with unforeseen 90° bends.”

However, being at BI is “an adventure and certainly the best career choice I have made to date.” Her advice to women seeking a similar career path is: “Never be afraid to ask ‘stupid’ questions. Always push through no matter how hard the situation seems. Always believe you can make a difference, and then make the difference.”

**Pull Quote**

“Always believe you can make a difference, and then make the difference.” – Nanette Tewitz

BI Procurement Manager **Theresa Elizabeth Ross** leads a team of five buyers responsible for ensuring the correct stock is procured on time and available to the sales team to enable them to meet their sales and service objectives. “We are the start of the supply chain within the company, so it is extremely important for us to get things right at the outset.”

Theresa has gained significant hands-on experience in the bearings industry over the past 30 years. As for her career at BI, she has been privileged to have worked in many different areas, gaining an overall view of how the business operates. “I have seen the company change and grow over the past years and am very excited for the future!”

She reflects that, in her current position, she has not been confronted with any challenges as a woman. “I think the bearings industry has evolved. In general, people don’t judge your ability on gender, but rather on your actual performance in your position.” Hence for her, the industry has transformed sufficiently, thanks largely to the drive for inclusivity at BI itself.

“People are now given equal opportunities to work in any area in the bearings industry that they might choose.” Theresa explains that BI has proper succession planning in place, while individuals can also request to go on training courses to assist them in achieving their ultimate goals. “It is up to each individual to work and put in the effort needed to get to where they want to be.” She strongly believes that some women in the bearings industry can be good role models to young girls, demonstrating that it is possible to have both a successful home and work life. Companies like BI recognise and celebrate the achievements of their female employees by placing them in positions of authority.

Her message to women contemplating a similar career path is: “Go for it! Don’t be afraid to start at the bottom and work your way up. The knowledge you gain in doing so will help give you a better and more rounded understanding of how the industry or business works. Knowledge is power, so set yourself goals accordingly and don’t be afraid to put in the hard work required to get there.”

**Pull Quote**

“Knowledge is power, so set yourself goals accordingly.” – Theresa Elizabeth Ross

BI Financial Manager **Daisy Jagarnath**, who has a BA degree in Accounting Science, leads a team that ensures accurate application of accounting principles and procedures, analyses financial information, prepares accurate and timely financial reports and statements and ensures that appropriate financial accounting controls and procedures are in place.

“BI is a dynamic company to work for, with excellent leaders. The team culture is welcoming and supportive. It is definitely a company of choice! I believe my commitment and drive for high performance have made an impact on the business,” says Daisy.

While traditional male-dominated industries still require women to prove their toughness as leaders, Daisy notes that change is afoot, especially as more women are now in senior management roles in Blue Chip companies than ever before. “Diversity brings a different feel to business and improves company culture. In an environment that favours women equally, the quality and quantity of innovation is much greater,” she concludes.

**Pull Quote**

“Diversity brings a different feel to business and improves company culture.” – Daisy Jagarnath

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BI is a member of the Hudaco Group. BI is a leading distributor of bearings and power transmission products in Southern Africa. With its customer-focused approach, BI is committed to delivering value to all its stakeholders, while offering quality solutions that make a real difference to optimising plant availability and turnaround time. With over 60 years in the bearings and power transmission industry, BI puts its experience to good use by going great lengths to ensure their product range and services meet the changing needs of clients, industry and business. Backed by an elite technical team, BI covers the full spectrum of customer requirements and is able to ensure immediate availability of products through a nationwide network of branches.

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