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**ABB showcases exceptional achievers on International Women’s Day**

A global celebration that recognises the achievements, contributions, and challenges faced by women worldwide, this year’s theme for [International Women’s Day](https://www.internationalwomensday.com/) on 8 March is #InspireInclusion. It is based on the idea that when we inspire others to understand and value women’s inclusion, we forge a better world.

ABB is committed to solving some of the biggest global challenges of our time. This is only possible through our exceptional people who work every day towards this endeavour. A culture of diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity is critical to our business success and makes us stronger. At ABB, we strive for a culture where individual differences are not only welcomed but celebrated. Below we highlight two exceptional women making inroads at ABB Electrification in Longmeadow, Johannesburg:

**Shernel Naidoo, Service Sales Engineer, ABB Electrification**

Shernel has always had a passion for electrical engineering. “It was a career choice I made in high school, and I do not regret it. The fact I made the correct decision and enjoy what I do motivates me to excel daily.”

Being a woman in this industry can be a bit daunting at times. However, Shernel takes pride in the fact that while it has not been an easy journey, she overcame all the challenges along the way and continues to persevere. “I love that my profession gives me the skillset to solve problems on the job as well as in my personal life.”

Starting out as a graduate engineer, Shernel says the most fulfilling part of her role is to see the solutions she assisted in designing being deployed or delivered to a client. “That tangible outcome of what I do drives me to grow and excel.” Shernel has also garnered work experience in Sub-Saharan African that has stood her in good stead on her career path.

ABB has strived to inculcate an environment where every employee feels welcome, respected and included, irrespective of their gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, culture, religion, ability. “Together we all continue to build an inclusive and respectful working culture.”

For example, ABB acknowledges various holidays and celebrations of different cultures and religions. Making everyone aware of this diversity promotes multicultural respect. In addition, ABB offers mentorship programmes and invests in employee resource groups to encourage engagement at all levels.

Shernel says that the 2024 #nspireInclusion theme means to celebrate diversity and empowerment not only on International Women's Day, but beyond. “I see it as a global celebration of the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. It is also a powerful reminder of the progress made towards gender equality.

“It encourages everyone to recognise the unique perspectives and contributions of women from all walks of life, including those from marginalised communities. As women, we need to be respected and be able to embrace ourselves and our identities and abilities,” highlights Shernel.

Her advice to young women just starting out on their careers is to always be confident, as people who carry themselves with confidence get noticed and stand out. Stay positive and trust your skills. Never be afraid to ask questions and never stop learning. “Giving up is not an option,” points out Shernel. “Always find a way to go through or around any obstacles or challengers you may face, and you will reach your destination.”

**Gaopalelwe Jabane, Service Specialist, ABB Electrification**

Holding a National Diploma in Electrical Engineering (Heavy Current), Gaopalelwe is responsible for sales in the service business area in the Electrification Division in Southern Africa and selected Sub-Saharan countries. She assists clients with safe, smart and sustainable tailor-made solutions. She also ensures that quality information flows from sales to tendering teams and clients.

A career highlight to date was being a speaker at the ABB Johannesburg Summit in 2023. “I was really honoured to be part of such an important event. I am happy to be at a stage where I am trusted to represent my company at such a high level. I also had the opportunity to be a presenter in our client events, where I got to interact with important clients and showcase our solutions and offering.”

Gaopalelwe says that what keeps her passionate and excited about her job is that the challenges she faces is a motivator for growth and achieving new milestones in her career path. “I always work harder to be better than I was yesterday. Knowing that other women have walked this journey and conquered their obstacles also encourages me. I am fortunate enough to have access to women who encourage and guide me to develop myself in my career.”

For Gaopalelwe, the International Women’s Day 2024 theme of #InspireInclusion means being accepted and appreciated for what sets me apart from the rest, and for being recognised and acknowledged. Her advice to young women just starting out is to be an agile learner and to have confidence in yourself and your abilities.

“Set goals for yourself and always be accountable for your work. It is also important to have a mentor to guide you and equip you with the skills and knowledge you need to achieve your full potential. It is your responsibility to learn as much as possible and to have emotional intelligence,” concludes Gaopalelwe.

ABB has policies in place to promote diversity and inclusion and educate employees to achieve an inclusive culture. More women are being appointed in management positions, which is an encouraging sign of the significant strides made to date.

**ENDS**

**ABB Electrification is a global technology leader making efficient and reliable use of electricity from source to socket possible. With more than 50,000 employees across 100 countries, we collaborate with our customers and partners to solve the world’s greatest challenges in electrical distribution and energy management. We help businesses, industry, and consumers run their facilities and homes efficiently and reliably. As the energy transition accelerates, we are electrifying the world in a safe, smart and sustainable way. go.abb/electrification**

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| **Media Relations**  Phone: +27 (0)10 202 5523  Email: [busisiwe.molefe@za.abb.com](mailto:busisiwe.molefe@za.abb.com) | **Investor Relations**  Phone: +41 43 317 71 11  Email: [investor.relations@ch.abb.com](mailto:investor.relations@ch.abb.com) |  |