

# A woman at the helm



**Phumi Drummond**

GM: MultiChoice Swaziland

**If ever there was a go-getter who let nothing stand in her way, who had vision and drive and seamlessly combined the two into a solid work ethic to make things happen no matter what life threw at her, it is Phumi Drummond.**

GM of MultiChoice Swaziland and major shareholder of the business, Phumi has worked tirelessly to grow the local MultiChoice and DStv brands in what is a challenging operational environment. More than just a job, this is her life.

“Honestly, I love my job. I love what I do. Despite the hurdles that pop up, there’s nothing else I would rather be doing,” says Phumi, who oversees every single business function, from operations, communications and financial management, to HR, stakeholder engagement and marketing.

## PUTTING CUSTOMERS FIRST

Of all the aspects of the business she deals with, it is engaging the company’s customers that she finds most rewarding.

“I get messages from people saying that DStv is the first thing they watch in the morning,



and what they enjoy most about their day. We are part of their lives every day, and that really motivates me,” she says.

It was with the customers in mind that Phumi recently spearheaded a number of exciting developments, including negotiating agreements with two major banks and a mobile service provider to accept subscriber payments. This, combined with DStv’s self-service channels, has made it that much easier for customers to pay their subscription fees and resolve certain issues, even outside of business hours.

“We want to provide a quality customer experience that meets all our subscribers’ expectations,” adds Phumi, who was also responsible for opening MultiChoice Swaziland’s two offices at Manzini in 2010, and at Ezulwini last year. She designed and project managed the construction of the new branches herself to ensure that that all-important customer experience she is hoping to achieve would be effortlessly facilitated in the two new spaces.

## ENRICHING LIVES

Phumi is also deeply committed to maintaining relationships with all the company’s stakeholders. These include relevant government departments, the company’s growing workforce of Swazi employees, the regulator, the media and the stakeholders involved in its CSI initiative, the MultiChoice Resource Centres (MRCs).

She says the latter is a critical aspect of the business, and involves installing among others, a TV set, DStv Explora decoder, satellite dish and uninterrupted power system (UPS) for free at beneficiary schools in rural areas across the country. The centres broadcast educational TV channels, providing school children with access to education and information while bridging the digital divide among these communities.

“The MRC initiative is close to my heart. We have 20 resource centres in Swaziland, and constantly receive feedback from the community as to just how much they appreciate them. People stop me and say, ‘thank you for what you are doing for our children’. These are children who have never had the opportunity to watch a TV before. These centres make a real difference, and I’m immensely proud to be a part of that,” adds Phumi.

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE

This demonstrates the extent of her personal investment in the business, which is augmented by her constant professional input. To further enhance these skills, Phumi is currently completing a B.Com degree. While she enjoys the challenge of simultaneously running a business and studying, she says she sometimes has to scramble to meet her assignments’ deadlines!

However, Phumi is used to juggling so many balls. Her first foray into employment was as the catering manager at the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital in Manzini – a post she landed right after completing her Diploma in Home Economics at the University of Swaziland after high school. At the hospital she managed all catering activities for the hospital staff, 300 patients and the associated nursing college of 150 students. All meal preparation was done in house, and Phumi managed every aspect of this process, from the budget and procurement to preparing the menus.

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Aside from cultivating a life-long interest in food science, dietetics and healthy eating, this period also saw the emergence of Phumi’s business acumen, which she fine-tuned over the years that followed as PA to her civil engineer husband, Peter. This took her all over the world, nurturing a love for travel.

Today it’s this combination of pursuing a healthy lifestyle and passion for travel that helps Phumi destress from work. That, and gardening and home improvement. “I love my garden, especially my roses. Nobody is allowed to touch them but me!” she laughs. “And home improvement and décor – they are my absolute favourites. People always ask where I get inspiration from, and I happily tell them, ‘from DStv’s Home Channel, of course!’”