

Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneur of the Year Award – 2015 Finalists

Lilanie Blignaut

Lilaton Management cc

Gauteng

Vital statistics

Years in business	: 16
Employees	: 24
Annual growth	: ↑ 7.7%
Annual turnover	: < R10 million
Business classification	: Exempt Micro Enterprise (EME)
Nature of business	: Hospitality management services

Leadership is the most important thing that Lilanie Blignaut, owner of Lilaton Management cc is learning from Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs. Her business operates the Sun1 hotel in Hatfield, Pretoria. “I have learnt that for your business to be a success, you need productive employees, and to have productive employees you need to invest in them,” she says.

Lilanie is training her 19 permanent and five casual employees on a three-month rotation basis – giving them development on hygiene, first aid, fire drills and responsible use of energy and water. She also keeps them up to date on developments within the hospitality space to ensure that they are completely equipped to serve guests exceptionally.

She says she has gained self-confidence through the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs programme, which is making a difference to her employees’ experience in the workplace. She recognises their strengths and abilities, and trains and promotes them accordingly.

Since she was a small child, Lilanie had always wanted to be in the tourism industry and she considers herself fortunate to have been able to get a foot in the door in 1999. Constant self-improvement and studying have been part of her career and at the moment she is completing her second year in a degree in Business Management through UNISA.

Lilanie believes that her management company provides a unique experience because of the business's service ethic. "We go the extra mile for our guests. We try to exceed their expectations – and we are easy on the budget." Over the next few years, Lilanie intends to increase her client base and extend her management company's special brand of service to more customers within the industry.

Also very close to Lilanie's heart is her company's active participation in community upliftment, working with organisations such as 'Love with Wings' and in the Rhetabiseng community. She is an advocate of environmental consciousness and is championing green initiatives such as the use of water-saving shower heads in hotel bathrooms and the introduction of systems for recycling