

Amanda Dambuza named Veuve Clicquot Elle Boss 2017

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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The Veuve Clicquot Elle Boss Awards in association with Old Mutual Corporate celebrates entrepreneurial women and businesswomen who have made a significant contribution to business in South Africa. This year's deserving recipient of the title is Amanda Dambuza, founder and director of consulting company [Uyandiswa](#), currently in its fourth year and already employing more than 70 people.

This was announced at the awards ceremony on Thursday, 9 November at the Ferrari Showroom in Bryanston, featuring guests of honour French ambassador to South Africa Christophe Farnaud and Veuve Clicquot international marketing director Chloe Stefani.

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Creating new realities for our children!!!!Oh what a night!!!! Thank you @khanyidhlomo @ndalomeia_events @ellesouthafrica @oldmutual @veueveclicquot for an amazing evening. What a wonderful platform to showcase women's work and their commitment to our society in growing others. I am in awe of the work you continue to do. Congratulations to all the nominees and finalists; all worthy in their own right. Winning the entrepreneur category and overall Veuve Clicquot ELLE Boss 2017 is a wonderful honor and a great privilege. It also is a great responsibility that I am looking forward to. The trip to France is an amazing cherry on top. Thank you to all the judges who bestowed this accolade upon me; such a powerhouse of women to look up to...WOW! Gratitude to my family; my awesome

team and my overall support system along with everyone who nominated me. Dressed by Karen Millen for the night. Thank you! Thank you! #VeuveClicquot #Elleboss
#Oldmutual♥♥♥💎💎💎💎💎💎💎💎💎💎

A post shared by Amanda Dambuza (@amanda.dambuza) on Nov 9, 2017 at 8:41pm PST

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Two winners were announced on the night – one from the corporate category and one from the entrepreneurial category. 5FM station manager Justine Cullinan was selected as the winner of the Corporate Award, and Dambuza the latter.

Cullinan joined 5FM as marketing manager in 2008, after which they saw listenership increase from 1.65 million to 2.3 million in her four years working for the station. Since 2014, when she rejoined as station manager, they’ve seen the digital community increase beyond traditional listenership measurement numbers, having pioneered 5FM TV on YouTube and the 5FM mentorship programme.

Judge Khanyi Dhlomo, founder and CEO of Ndalo Media and *Elle* magazine publisher, said that all of this year’s finalists were natural leaders, confident, strong, committed and risk-takers who are driven to succeed. “Our overall winner Amanda Dambuza exemplifies what a true Veuve Clicquot Elle Boss stands for: the kind of businesswoman making a real difference to everyday lives and moving South Africa forward.”

As the overall winner, Dambuza will be flown to visit the prestigious Veuve Clicquot Maison and hosted by Veuve Clicquot in Reims, France, the home of Champagne, where she will have the opportunity to network with the other international overall winners.



Nomzamo Mbatha, Khanyi Dhlomo, Arranda Dambuza, Chloe Stefani and Glynis Pattison.

View the gallery [here](#).

I asked Dambuza what the win means to her, as well as being a woman in business in 2017.

■ ***Congratulations! How do you feel about the win, and what does it mean to you/for Uyandiswa?***

Thank you so much. It really is such a great honour. Having my work affirmed this way brings me great pride and joy. For Uyandiswa, it is a platform for us to network with more like-minded women and to further showcase what we do. We also get access to other worthy causes that we can support.

■ ***What do you love most about your career?***

The opportunity to positively impact another's life is priceless. I get to create employment and business opportunities thereby enabling people's dreams and those of their children. Helping our clients with the realisation of their strategies also gives me great fulfillment.

■ ***What has been your most noteworthy learning in the industry?***

Credibility goes a long way. People buy from people they trust, with a proven track record and ability to think on their feet. Over the years, I built up quite a strong track record and solid networks, and these are pivotal in any business. They really do come in handy.

■ ***What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?***

I pick up any article or thought piece on financial services, trends and technology advances. I do most of that reading online. I subscribe to Gartner and other key publications. I also enjoy a good book on leadership. I am currently reading *Superbosses* by Sydney Finkelstein. The book showcases how innovation is part of the leadership DNA, and how great leaders identify talent and inspire them to do their best work while building stronger companies.

■ ***What are you most looking forward to in 2018, specifically with regard to the trip to the Veuve Clicquot Maison and in general?***

It has been such a wonderful year for my business and me. I look forward to growing Uyandiswa more and investing in technology companies that seek to transform traditional industries. I cannot wait to put my feet up and learn more about Madame Clicquot and to just immerse myself in the whole experience. I cannot think of a person that will enjoy it more than me. It is such a treat and great privilege to meet other worthy women from around the world and drink champagne whilst exchanging ideas.

▣ **What's next?**

I am still taking this whole experience in. It is such a privilege. I look forward to shutting the year down and spend time with my family. I look forward to continuing on this amazing journey and bring along more and more women to the platform and open up opportunities and doors that would otherwise not open. Our graduate programme is one of the most key elements in our business. I look forward to growing that with some large corporates partnering with us. Skills shortage can only be addressed through building and nurturing the skill ourselves.

▣ **What does it mean to be a woman in business in 2017?**

It seems like there has been an awakening. All I see are opportunities everywhere, particularly for black women. There are doors that are opening up that were traditionally reserved for a minority few. We still have a long way to go but I have loved seeing the energy of women and their bravery in tackling industries that have not yet transformed. The growth of women-owned businesses in the technology, property and engineering sectors has really given me a great sense of hope and enthusiasm.

▣ **What advice would you give to aspiring business women?**

Firstly, not everyone is made for business. Sometimes people think it's a way to get rich quickly. Others love the social status that comes with owning your own business. They neglect the many hours of building brick by brick. People see the outcome, they do not see the work that goes into it every day. Be true to yourself. Once you decide you are made for business, then plan and execute. Stop waiting for people to validate your dreams. Just go for it.

About Amanda Dambuza: Dambuza is a respected businesswoman involved in numerous information technology businesses and management consultancies. She's also a member of various boards and sits as an independent director of an NPO called [Donate-A-Piece](#), whose aim is to take chess to disadvantaged schools and help build children's analytical and strategic capabilities. She is passionate about creating opportunities for other women in business, spending much of her time mentoring and helping women to navigate difficult corporate environments. She uses the resources at her disposal to create business opportunities and incubate women-owned companies, and it was this combination of business savvy and compassion that impressed the judging panel.

For more, go to [Elle.co.za](#), follow [#VeuveClicquotElleBoss](#) on Twitter [@ELLESouthAfrica](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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