

Cherishing the IT challenge

By Manda Banda

Candice Gouws, internal sales and call centre manager at Comztek, is aware that to be successful in the cut-throat solutions selling game, one has to always stay a step ahead of the competition. It is precisely this that has kept Gouws going since 1988, when she started out as sales assistant to eight account managers for an IT solution provider company.

Today, as the internal sales and call centre manager at specialist networking solutions distributor Comztek, Gouws is in charge of a team of 15 people in three different areas. The areas include the call centre/inbound telesales, Gauteng telesales and telesales into the rest of Africa.

Gouws explains that the competitive nature of this industry is what excites her the most and keeps her going. "The challenge of selling products that are similar to those of your competitors and still being able to make a profit is what I cherish most about IT," she says. "The adage 'you snooze you lose' is certainly the

norm in the IT industry." Gouws says although, historically, men have dominated the technical position in IT and other related industries, while women have tended to lead on the sales side of the business, she enjoys the challenge of being in an industry that has more men than women. "I love the challenge and I am not intimidated by the men," she says. "Women are feistier than men and go for every opportunity to be at the top of their game.

Having started out in 1988 after completing her studies, Gouws' first job saw her working as a sales assistant at an IT reseller in Pretoria, something which was totally different to her childhood dream.

As a young girl, Gouws' ambition was to set-up her own secretarial school to train women to be successful contributors in the workplace because back in those days, women were perceived as homemakers who stayed at home and looked after the children. "Ambition was something most women could not even



Candice Gouws, Comztek

discuss," she recalls.

From the time she started out at a reseller company in Pretoria, Gouws has had an opportunity to work in the IT distribution sector, first with LAN Design in 1994, which was acquired by Comztek at the start of the new millennium. During that time, Gouws held several positions from telesales, account manager, telesales supervisor and call centre manager.

Take a Girl Child to Work programme has been very successful in shedding light on all the other possibilities available to young girls in the job market," she concludes. □