



**MENTOR:** Renee Keeble is one of seven International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge global ambassadors to inspire other women in business.

## City businesswoman's success gets global nod

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**Nicolette Dirk**

CITY businesswoman Renee Keeble has been selected as an International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWECE) ambassador to empower others across the globe.

The SA Commercial chairperson was a recipient of an IWECE award two years ago after being nominated by the Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This year, she was chosen to mentor other businesswomen to network and grow their businesses.

Keeble will not only mentor other women, but also sit on the judging panel for this year's IWECE award.

Back in 2013, the IWECE Foundation, based in New York, gave recognition to Keeble based on her success as a business leader, her extensive contacts and her proven leadership and management skills.

This year, she was chosen as one of seven Global Ambassadors located in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America. She will help expand

IWEC's empowerment programmes through outreach, mentorship and sharing her experiences with other female entrepreneurs.

"To start a business is a huge challenge for anyone. But to be successful in business, you need to have the confidence and the mindset to succeed. Entrepreneurship also needs more investment in start-ups," said Keeble yesterday.

Her work ethic and ability to understand roles in various departments came from working in a hair salon in Kensington when she was young, she said.

"I worked since Grade 7. I swept and made tea, and these roles made me understand how a business space must function."

Months of research also went into SA Commercial before Keeble went into business on her own.

She said that when she started it in 2005, she did not make any money in the first year. But her husband, who is the company's co-owner, had business experience and encouraged her to keep going.

"Starting a business, people need to be aware they will not make a profit immediately. But as long as you have that desire to start your own business and passion for your product, you will succeed."

Since 2010, the chamber has nominated 17 successful women businesses owners from South Africa for the IWEC awards.

Chamber president Janine Myburgh said this was a clear indication that women were playing an increasingly creative role in our economy.

"They are performing exceptionally well in industries which are historically male-dominated. We need to help and inspire women who have successfully grown their own businesses and recognise their outstanding achievement," said Myburgh.

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