



“Through co-creation and collaboration, you can take people’s strengths and create something much more powerful than you would on your own. What drives me today is the magic of working with teams to achieve important and audacious pursuits constructed to be a force for good in this world.”

Mapule Mzimba

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Chief Operations Officer, Discovery Bank

Mapule Mzimba is an influential figure who serves as the Chief Operations Officer at Discovery Bank since 2017 and the Chairperson of the Advisory Board of the UNISA School of Business Leadership since 2020. Her journey from humble beginnings in the rural areas of Mpumalanga to an executive position at one of the first digital banks in Africa and the first behavioral Bank in the world, is inspiring.

Growing up, Mapule was influenced by her mother, a nurse, who planted a seed in her the belief that anyone could achieve anything. Her academic prowess, especially in Mathematics and Science, led her to receive multiple bursaries. At a tender age of 15 she embarked on a journey to study Biochemistry at the University of Cape Town. With CSIR as her bursars and later her employer, her career took a turn towards Water Resources Management for which she attained a Masters degree, while working as a scientist and researcher for CSIR.

Mapule’s career path included a significant stint in Management Consulting, for Accenture, a global Professional Services and Technology Consulting company, where she was responsible for business development and account management as well as delivery of large scale complex programmes. While at Accenture, Mapule conceptualized and implemented a Future Leaders Programme, which today is a flagship programme at the heart of their attraction and retention strategy. She was also selected from 48 countries to serve on the Accenture Global Executive Development of Women Leaders Faculty.

Prior to joining Discovery, Mapule held various strategic roles at Absa/Barclays Bank, including Director in Corporate & Investment Banking for Transactional Products, a business serving Corporate and Business Banking clients. She was a COO of Transactional Banking prior to running the business. She joined Absa in 2010 as the General Manager: focused on developing sustainable ways to reduce costs and enhance business efficiency. In less than a year she was promoted to lead a Business Unit of about 120 professionals that drove the "change the Bank" agenda (Group Projects).

At Discovery Bank, she is driven by innovation and the desire to inspire others to be fearless in pursuit of their dreams. Mapule's leadership philosophy centers on authenticity and service, believing that future leaders should build their personal brands while remaining true to themselves.

Beyond her professional achievements, Mapule is deeply committed to women's empowerment. She initiated "40 for Impact" when she turned 40, a program aimed at helping women manifest their dreams through deliberate actions and authentic connections. She is recognized for her leadership and innovative thinking, having received numerous accolades, including the Archbishop Desmond Tutu African Leadership Award in 2009, and underwent leadership training at the Saïd Business School of the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom. She was also recognized as the top student of the year in 2016 by the Payments Association of South Africa (PASA).

Mapule's educational background is impressive, with a Master's and Honors degree in Science and a postgraduate qualification in Business Management, all attained in *cum laude*. Her dedication to mentoring women in the workplace and her involvement in various initiatives reflect her commitment to making a positive impact on society and in the lives of individuals, especially women.