

## Someone who sees right through the glass ceiling

DURBAN-BORN **Anne Pratt** runs one of the country's top high-profile placement agencies, Anne Pratt & Associates, which has a strong commitment to black business empowerment. Her commitment to this cause recently won her the **Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2003**, in the regional business achiever awards for Gauteng, which runs concurrently with the Businesswoman of the Year Award.

Coincidentally, the guest speaker at this year's BWOYA, **Hixonia Nyasulu**, was a co-founding member of Anne's company.

Some of the company's success stories include some of our top CEOs, including Mintek's **Dr Paul Jordan**, MTN Africa's **Lazarus Zim** and **Sifiso Dabengwa** of MTN South Africa, the MD of Levi Strauss **Mike Joubert** (formerly with Distell), **Berry van Biljon** of Alexkor Limited and the deputy vice-chancellor of UCT **Professor Benito Khotseng**. It's an impressive record, and comes from a position of strength.

A woman's power in the workplace – and in every aspect of her life – depends on how she sees herself, says Anne. A glass ceiling is only a deterrent if it is perceived as such. Anne firm-



ly believes in debunking the myth of women as victims. It makes perfect business sense to employ the right women in top positions (what Anne in business-speak calls "value-fit"), and her mission and purpose is to look at the gaps and gender diversities on boards, with a public end-of-year presentation.

This is not someone who is afraid to reinvent herself and start from the bottom again. After many years of experience, she took two years out of her career for an MBA in the early 1990s, when the economy was taking a dive. This would stand her in good stead, she believed, and she used the principles she learnt from the course for a real-life case study, which was part-ownership in Elaine's Curry Bistro, which she turned around.

An admired former mentor **Ethne Whitley** – now the PR manager for Lever Pond's – then recommended Anne for a post at KIC, which led on to the founding of Woodburn Management Selection. It was a natural progression from there to start her own placement company.

This is a woman who could show all women out there just how to take ownership of our careers. Let's get started.