

IN RECOGNITION AND CELEBRATION OF COURAGEOUS, ETHICAL, RESPONSIBLE AND VISIONARY LEADERS WHO UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP AS A WAY OF BEING IN BUSINESS AND IN THE WORLD.

CONSCIOUS, RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS LEADERS CELEBRATED AT A GLITTERING CEREMONY AT THE AWARDS 2023



Programme Director: Marc Lubner - Group CEO: Afrika Tikkun and winner of the Conscious Companies Awards 2017

The winners of the Conscious Companies Awards 2023, in partnership with Joe Public and Primeserv, were announced recently at a gala dinner in Johannesburg and streamed live for local and international audiences.

Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA) – and its CEO Lubin Ozoux – was the winner in the business category while inspiring cardiothoracic surgeon Dr Wilhelm Lichtenberg, aka the Singing Surgeon and founder of Young Hearts Africa, took top spot in the NGO category.

For the first time in the seven-year history of the awards, there was a tie for second recipients in the business category with chairman Mteto Nyati and founder Greg Reis of business and technology consulting company BSG taking the honours along with Jaco Maritz, Group CEO of ERP software provider SYSPRO. Danny Diliberto of Ladles of Love was the second recipient in the NGO category.

Since its inception in 2016, the Conscious Companies Awards has honoured and celebrated visionary leaders whose actions manifest greater good for all. The current need for conscious, responsible leaders at a crucial time when true leadership around the globe is floundering and is in a state of flux is why the Awards was born. It is the culmination of an intense three-month journey to unearth leaders who have a deep understanding of humanity and a natural sense of ethics, honour and nobility.

All nominees are selected by their peers with winners chosen by a panel of judges, chaired by Professor Mervyn King, Chairperson Emeritus of the King Committee on Corporate Governance. He congratulated all the recipients and finalists and said: “The organisation itself is inanimate and the directors are the heart, mind and conscience of a company. And conscience means the morality of knowing and doing right from wrong. This year’s winners have steered the companies they head up into being responsible corporate citizens who are doing the right thing for society and putting people before profit.”

Says Brenda Kali, founder and chairperson of Conscious Companies: “The winners this year are exceptional in that they are willing to prioritise and live with the values of responsibility, integrity, courage and right action and to walk a path of noble ethics while at the same time aligning people, planet, productivity, profit and purpose.”

“During a time and place of ethical and moral agitation, leaders must make a choice to lead with consciousness - Brenda Kali

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Lubin Ozoux CEO: Sumitomo Rubber (SRSA)

TOP HONOUR FOR LUBIN OZOUX AND SRSA

Lubin Ozoux, CEO of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA), has been announced as the winner of the prestigious 2023 Conscious Companies Award in the business category.

Ozoux joined SRSA in 2017 as export director for Africa, leading the company’s expansion into key African markets, and later taking on the responsibility of advancing the company’s sales effort throughout Africa, including South Africa.

He admits that although he was proud to be named this year’s Conscious Companies business award winner, it was also an intimidating moment: “It comes with such responsibility. Consciousness is really a journey, which I believe that I am at the beginning of, so you do hope that you prove to be a worthy recipient. However, it does give me encouragement to continue on this path that I have chosen.

“If I look back I’ve been blessed to have had great leaders from early on in my life that have helped to shape me in many ways. I am grateful to them as well as to my supportive family. There are so many good people, and those who want to do the right thing and help create the society that we all dream about, and these awards give us hope and encourage us to make a contribution. We cannot just sit back, be the victim and wait for someone else to play their part. Every person has a role to play: That’s the Conscious Companies ethos. We need to stand up and make a real difference,” he said.

For the first time in the seven-year history of the awards, there was a tie for second recipients in the business category with ERP software provider SYSPRO (group CEO Jaco Maritz) and business and technology consulting company BSG (chairman Mteto Nyati and founder Greg Reis) taking the honours.

ACCOLADE FOR FINALISTS IN THE BUSINESS CATEGORY



Business Awards certificate ceremony: **Dudu Msomi** (Busara Leadership Partners), **John Coetzee** (Greenworx Cleaning Solutions), **Mteto Nyati** and **Greg Reis** (BSG), **Jaco Maritz** (SYSPRO) and **Lubin Ozoux** (SRSA) receive their awards from **Hoosain Karjiekker** (Chairman Mail & Guardian), **Brenda Kali** (founder and chairperson of Conscious Companies) and **Marc Lubner** who was the ceremony's programme director

THE SINGING SURGEON WHO IS SAVING LIVES



Dr Wilhelm Lichtenberg Founder: Young Hearts Africa

Inspiring cardiothoracic surgeon Dr Wilhelm Lichtenberg, aka the Singing Surgeon and founder of Young Hearts Africa, won the award in the NGO/NPO category.

The Young Hearts Africa Foundation operates solely for the purposes of raising desperately needed funds to pay for life-saving surgery and care required by children of indigent families. Without the surgeries these children would not survive.

Dr Lichtenberg explained what the term "conscious leadership" means to him: "I believe it is a question of being totally present in every moment of your existence so that you are aware of those around you more than of yourself. It's to try and make a difference because that is what we were put here to do."

He was delighted to receive the recognition of winning the Conscious Companies Awards.

"It's the credibility that an award of this stature will give Young Hearts Africa and we will benefit from it when we go in search of the much needed funds we need to do the work we do. It's not about me but about the organisation," he said.

"It's very easy to become despondent, depressed and disillusioned about what is happening in South Africa at the moment but there's no point in doing that. If we want to change this country and take it to where we know it can be, it is up to all of us and is everyone's responsibility. As Gandhi said, 'You must be the change you want to see in the world.' Just go and do it."

He can still recall the moment that changed his life more than 30 years ago when a young girl died after a long operation because she had come to the hospital too late for help.

RECOGNITION FOR VISIONARY, RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP WHO DO THE RIGHT THING



Greg Reis Founder and **Mteto Nyati** Chairman BSG and **Jaco Maritz** Group CEO: SYSPRO

Founder Greg Reis and Executive Chairman Mteto Nyati received the distinct honour of being recognised as a recipient of the Conscious Companies Awards in a tie with the Group CEO Jaco Maritz of SYSPRO. Their resolute commitment to a purpose-driven, innovative approach is responsible for their business success.



Daniele Diliberto Founder: Ladles Of Love (NGO)

Daniele Diliberto, from Cape Town, founded Ladles of Love. He was inspired by 'seva' (service) to humanity, based on the principle that no one should go hungry. It began as a seed serving 70 homeless growing to feeding more than 38 million meals to people from all walks of life.

ACCOLADE FOR FINALISTS IN THE NGO CATEGORY



Certificate Ceremony: Hoosain Kerjiekker - Chairman Mail & Guardian, Founder and Chairperson Conscious Companies and Programme Director Marc Lubner handed out certificates to the NGO finalists

INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGES ON CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP

A JOURNEY TO THE CITY OF GENEROSITY



Pepe Marais CCO: Joe Public United (SA)

"On January 12 2007, I found my life's purpose. And it was truly a moment of magic when an immense amount of knowledge was almost downloaded into my awareness. And it was so incomprehensible that it's taken me the best part of 16 years to begin to make sense of it. Before the event, I was living in a city called scarcity. A city where all I was concerned with was being in service to my own ego, working tirelessly towards a vision of self-enrichment, through financial wealth. I was obsessed with how people perceived me, what car I

was driving and the clothes I was wearing. My greatest unconscious driver was money. The irony of this approach in the city called scarcity was that it left me poorer, quite literally, as my business would come to the brink of bankruptcy at the intersection of me discovering my life's purpose.

"It was a breakthrough to consciousness. Overnight I found myself moving to an entirely new city, the city called generosity. A city where I would step into the service of others, a city where I was armed with one word that I stand for in my life, 'greatness', which doesn't mean I'm such a great guy. It simply means that I exist to bring out the best in those around me. And the only way I can bring that out in other people is to be the best version of myself. It turned out to be a master strategy for my life. I have shifted a quantum leap from the self-serving, ego driven leader that I used to be. I am still a quantum leap from the leader I want to be.

"The Conscious Companies Awards pays tribute to those few leaders who are brave enough to step into the journey of inner discovery. Those who are willing to embrace personal growth, with the knowledge that we can only serve the growth of others, if we have the bravery to face our own inner turmoil by taking care of our own growth first.

HOW CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE



Pepe Marais CCO: Joe Public United (SA)

"I am a product of conscious leadership. I'm here to testify to the impact conscious leadership has had in my life. I hold an MBA from the University of Cape Town Graduate Business School. This was my first university qualification without ever having done an undergrad or having stepped foot in a university until a little over five years ago in 2017. A constellation of conscious leaders made this happen.

"I am increasingly conscious of the inequality that plagues South Africa In

1991, I lived in two worlds, staying as I did in Gugulethu while attending school in Pinelands. I was eight years old and the country was clouded with fear and a distinct aroma of tear gas. Yet, in anticipation of democracy, the apartheid government restructured the white education system. That year, Model C schools became the dream ticket black parents could buy for their children's future. Not many parents had the courage nor could they afford the fees at Model C schools.

"My father's steady government job helped my parents with the loan they needed to take me to a better school. They had never seen a classroom beyond Standard 8 themselves, but they understood the value of participating in an exclusive education system. Out of 147 children that lived in my street in Gugulethu in 1991, three went to a Model C school. I was one of them. The other two were my older brother and sister.

"By 2018, none of the other 144 children, now adults, had a tertiary qualification. It is normal that my childhood friends do not have a matric and, those that marginally escaped the HIV pandemic, live at the back of their parent's houses. My street is a cemetery of youthful aspirations. Conscious leaders, our country needs you more now than ever."

CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP AND ETHICS SUMMIT MAY 2024

Against the backdrop of the 2024 elections and uncertainty – the Conscious Leadership and Ethics Summit in May 2024 will focus on ethical behavior and accountability. An annual must attend feature on the corporate calendar, the Summit hosted by Conscious Companies and the Mail and Guardian, is a catalyst for social and leadership transformational change. It is a clarion call to every sector of government, civil society, public service and business to seek a compelling and significant metamorphosis to emerge as an exemplary nation.

Business and governments' leadership role is crucial to enact sound measures to isolate and reject harmful, unsustainable and unethical practices that seek to reverse the decline of our values and ethics. To this end the annual Conscious Leadership and Ethics Summit

2024 is critical to advocate responsible, ethical and conscious leadership to transform the cultural ethos of a nation.

The presence of international speakers will join an impressive list of local leaders with in-depth discussions and soul searing conversations on the creation of a more conscious society to create a less violent, less cruel and more harmonious planet.. There is an urgent need for leadership to act more responsibly in infusing a caring, compassionate and conscious culture of values, ethics, social co-operation and social integration that would dramatically change and impact the environment of a nation is the core driver of the Summit.

FOR MORE ENQUIRIES EMAIL: ADMIN@CONSCIOUSCOMPANIES.CO.ZA

THE AGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IS NOW!



Brenda Kali Chairperson / Founder: Conscious Companies
CEO: Conscious Leaders and Ethics Institute

American poet Max Ehrmann who wrote the famous Disiderata also wrote these words in 1927. ***"Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery – but let this not blind you to what virtue there is. Many persons strive for high ideals and everywhere life is full of heroism. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams – it is still a beautiful world."***

These words could easily have been the motivation for the Conscious companies awards. Regardless of the sham and drudgery in this vast muddled pool of humanity, regardless of the corruption, an inept government, paralytic inaction – where rapidly changing conditions see us lurch from one crisis to another - like loadshedding, the looters, the grafters, and the inexplicable lack of accountability while fighting our way back from the captured swamps of dishonourable leaders, we soldier on regardless!

And even though a deeply rooted indifference permeates most of our leaders globally, both in business and the political space - It is all the more critical to still find cause to celebrate decent, conscious and ethical human beings and to explore the nature of leaders and why they do what they do.

Leaders who operate with a sense of personal ownership and collective accountability, understanding the heartbeat of the organisation and those who place humanity at the core of everything they do – is why the conscious companies awards exist – providing an opportunity for leadership to deepen the understanding of consciousness - as it is my belief that only a conscious leader shapes and defines a conscious company. The quest to uncover conscious leaders and conscious companies, has over the years become quite an adventure - as we discover a new wave of men and women who quietly go about making a meaningful difference with integrity, ethics and courage. They may not be perfect – non of us are – but they have given of themselves in ways that require an understanding of who they truly are.

So How do we find these conscious leaders?... These heroes!? Because that is the need of our time; That is the need of our society- Conscious, ethical responsible leadership and that is the need of business ...to serve both its stakeholders and humanity.

The evaluation process is what makes the Awards unique. It means something to become the Finalist of the Conscious Companies Awards and even more so if you are a recipient of it - because this recognition is not transactional.

Michael Judin, one of the judges said: there are three faces to a human being: one that he shows to the public, the other to his family and loved ones and the secret one that is full of secrets. - and I think from a lawyer's point of view - he may be right.

So this takes us to what we look for in a conscious leader. It is the integration of all of these three aspects and also about being transparent, vulnerable and courageous enough to show up as whole human beings – unafraid to reveal who they truly are. But there is also something else that we look for that is intangible– and that is: those who are aware of an alternate reality. By that I mean - regardless of their wealth, positional power, status and asset base they are aware of something that is larger than themselves and they are willing to embrace new realms of understanding that is deeply humane. This is not the language that business buys into – as well researched views on leadership are about skill set and the bottom line. That is important too, but to take leadership into a new age of consciousness, we need leaders who are bound by a state of being – of social ownership, of honour, justice, responsibility and oneness to seek solutions for the greater good.

From a Conscious companies point view, not the size of the organisation, nor the turnover, (it's all relative) nor the metrics nor analytics or ESG modelling, tick box compliance or any external processes can give you a breakthrough of what consciousness and conscious leadership is. Only a conscious leader can bring to life all of the elements I had just shared with you.

Why is it so critical to grasp and understand consciousness at this time in the history of our planet. Let's look at our evolution as human beings: During the agricultural age – physicality was critical to success. Tilling the soil, harvesting and basically all round agricultural activity was hard work that required physical ability.

Then we had the industrial age – where mental ability shifted societies from an agrarian economy to a manufacturing one where products were no longer made solely by hand but by machines - Through Invention and creativity. Then through innovation came the age of technology and with the introduction of the personal computer - digital genius and invention thrived. The subsequent technology provided the ability to transfer information freely and quickly around the planet.

Now with the advent of AI, it has taken us on a whole new and exciting tangent but plagued with uncertainty about the future. As members of a global society in an age of amazing technology, we have never been more aware of our inter-connectedness, yet we are also more aware of the painful partitions of a divided world. But here's the rub. AI can overtake human intelligence but what we have going for us is our consciousness and

energy. The age of consciousness is the future but because of the lack of understanding, the resistance to change and the courage it takes for men and women to find the time to look into their own selves and explore an internal state of being – it is blindsided.

It is easier for business to embrace ESG as the new trend rather than conscious leadership – but consciousness is not a trend, rather it is the new frontier. And sooner or later we would realise that this is the only way to change how we do business and look at life.

Why is it then so difficult for leadership to engage with or explore conscious, responsible leadership as a solution and new way of being. Because consciousness is hard work that requires a leader to attune to a deep awareness of who he is and his internal ethos...and that is often too difficult to comprehend! It requires a deep personal awareness of oneself...as a leader...as a human being that hinges on one's credibility, trust and vulnerability and that is difficult.

We have, knowingly or unknowingly, chosen to deprive ourselves of the kernels of transformation rooted in each one of us. The leaders we unearth as finalists are willing to grow and engage with processes that are transformative and has the potential to instil true, authentic leadership power.

A power that can never be found externally to you. Once activated, this can evoke an enormous sense of responsibility and action - that in turn should influence executive wisdom, self-awareness, perception, the power dynamic, ethics, and trust to create an inspirational life. This takes courage as it's an internal process rather than the external distraction and complexity of the corporate drama in a world of jargon - of green-washing, purpose washing, profit taking and in the world of "scandal-gates" - where the responsibility we carry is reduced to a tickbox, and ethics and transparency are rendered subjective.

The finalists are worthy torch bearers of ethical behaviour as they get what conscious leadership is - be it cognitive or experiential. A cognitive understanding of consciousness is theory and research while the experiential understanding of it is that they feel it at a cellular level and within their beings. Because for them - consciousness is a lived experience. We look forward to showcasing our finalists for their contribution to their people, business, and society in this country.

For context: Conscious Companies was born to create conscious leadership capacity in a world in dire need of it. It was never meant to be commercially driven although it has tremendous potential to do so! (However – that would have lost the premise of pure intention on which it was founded). Rather its sustainability - is as a result of the a unique model for the collective collaboration of consciousness. And that was to create partnerships: leaders who are invited to walk this journey with us and experience a different way of being in the world.

The power of a new way of thinking and being in the world - is beginning to work as we have - over time- built an ecosystem of some incredible leaders and human beings who get that conscious leadership matters! For those few in this room that are willing to prioritise and live with the values of responsibility, integrity, right action and walk a path of noble ethics - remember that a candle loses nothing by lighting another as.



Fusion with Tribhangi Dance Theatre, who delighted the audience at the 2023 Awards