

THE MOST EMERGING WOMEN CFOs OF THE YEAR 2025

WOMEN VICTORY

+ FAVOURABLE RESULT

4 TIPS TO INCREASE
YOUR EVENTS
SUCCESS

+ FUTURING INSIDE

What is the
environmental
impact of NFTs?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER - GAZ DU CAMEROUN

ELIZABETH BURNS

A CAREER BUILT ON STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP
AND PERSONAL GROWTH



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The corporate environment is evolving, driven by technological advancements that are transforming operations. Companies now seek more from their employees, valuing multi-taskers who can handle diverse responsibilities. Women, in particular, excel as natural multi-taskers, often relying on creativity and versatility rather than traditional methods. They strive to stay current with changing times, offering organizations a blend of performance and empathy.

This highlights Elizabeth Burns, Chief Financial Officer of Gaz du Cameroun. With 30 years of experience, she embodies these qualities, seamlessly leading change and demonstrating her lifelong commitment to effective leadership.

Redefining Leadership and Versatility

When Elizabeth Burns was younger, her aim was to compete in the Olympics as a top athlete for her nation. She spent her days swimming, cooking over a fire, and telling her younger siblings travel stories because she enjoyed the freedom that came with being outside. She was inspired to pursue her dreams of being an air hostess and seeing the world.

Elizabeth's career trajectory was greatly influenced by her academic achievements and qualifications, even though she had an early affinity for business and planning. Numerous degrees and certifications are among them: an Executive MBA from Henley Business School in England; an Honorary Doctorate in Financial Management from Commonwealth University; a Business Administration Training Scheme at Siemens Ltd in South Africa; a Strategic Leadership program from the Graduate Institute of Management Technology in South Africa; an ICSA from the Chartered Governance Institute of Southern Africa; and a Certified Financial Officer (SA) designation.

Journey towards Gaz du Cameroun

Elizabeth finds herself fortunate in terms of career growth, and also the tremendous privilege she had of living and working in multiple countries. "I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been raised in a relatively nomadic way, which has allowed me to be very welcoming of the idea of packing up and moving across the world", she shares. "What's really stood



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out is each career role has taught me the fundamental lessons mostly in finding solutions and making me a better person, focussed on my pillars of value creation, wisdom, wonder, service leadership and significance”, she adds.

Elizabeth began her career in 1994 after completing her tertiary education. Early on, she was appointed as the Regional Financial Manager based in Cape Town, South Africa for the Siemens. This role quickly expanded, leading her to head the entire Eastern Cape Region. After spending nine years in South Africa, Elizabeth moved to the UK, where she worked as the Financial Manager for Commercial Operations at Siemens Telecommunications. She expressed, “My desire was to return to Africa, and I was privileged to secure the role of Country Finance Director for the Coca-Cola bottling group in Tanzania, a dream I fulfilled from August 2007 to July 2009.”

After two years, Elizabeth returned to the United Kingdom to invest in her personal development and completed her Full-Time Executive MBA at the prestigious Henley Business School, England, as part of the 2009/2010 cohort. In February 2011, she joined the mining sector in West Africa as the Regional Financial Director for AEL Mining Services, a member of the JSE-listed AECI Group in South Africa. Initially based in Ghana and later in Burkina Faso, she oversaw 18 mining sites across four countries: Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea. In mid-2015, Elizabeth's career progressed as she took on the role of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Gaz du Cameroun, where she is currently employed.

As the CFO

As the CFO Elizabeth leads the finance function to ensure accurate and timely reporting that supports the company's strategic, commercial, and financial goals. Also ensuring that the company operates in compliance to the corporate governance requirements, Elizabeth is a go-to face for precise financial information, be it for long-term business planning or instant decision making.

The management of Gaz du Cameroun relies on Elizabeth’s expertise, as she is also in-charge of shaping and defining the company’s strategies, apart from conducting major investment appraisals, managing funding and treasury solutions. She communicates with key stakeholders while leading a diverse finance team, prioritizing value for all key stakeholders and focusing on long-term sustainability.

Elizabeth's Guiding Principles in Steering Gaz du Cameroun to Financial Stability

Despite the changing economic landscape and the regulatory environment, the task of ensuring financial stability of the organization lies on the capable shoulders of Elizabeth. All thanks to her ethos of hard work, her determination, the positive mindset she carries forward, and lastly her love for finance and the African continent, Elizabeth guides Gaz du Cameroun effortlessly through perils due to her spirit of continually upgrading herself.

She carries forward her experience as well, boosting her inner confidence, and working on her communication, while understanding the importance of gender diversity, which in turn motivates her to respect all her co-workers and treat them as equals. “It’s about seeking, establishing, and making positive connections and building relationships based on integrity and trust, it is about embracing your authentic true self”, Elizabeth exclaims.

Balancing Professional Excellence with Personal Passions

High-adrenaline sports and activities are Elizabeth Burns' passion. She has been actively interested in sports, hockey, and swimming from her early school years. She finds that doing sports helps her keep emotionally and physically fit by energizing her body and spirit.

Elizabeth is a regular golfer in Cameroon; she embraces her competitive spirit and works hard to become better at the game. In order to stay in shape, she also likes to play tennis and go for early walks in the park or along the beach before work or on vacation.

She likes to swim, do longboard surfing, go deep-sea fishing, and snorkel on her vacations. She's an adventurer at heart and loves ziplining and hot air balloon rides. Elizabeth is always discovering new locations, tasting new cuisine, and interacting with fascinating people because of her love of travel and the great outdoors. When she has downtime, she ensures that she spends time with her family, gets massages and cappuccinos and invests in upskilling and professional development.

Maintaining a work-life balance, especially in her demanding role as CFO, is crucial for Elizabeth. After experiencing a major heart attack in December 2023, she realized the importance of balanced wellness. Despite her healthy eating, regular sports, and good sleep, the stress and

demands of her career had taken a toll on her health. This experience led her to reevaluate her lifestyle and make necessary changes to prioritize her well-being.

Elizabeth now advocates for regular wellness checks and emphasizes understanding and listening to one's body. She encourages taking appropriate breaks, having support systems in place, and building healthy habits to maintain physical, mental, social, cultural, emotional, and spiritual wellness. She has adopted a pace that her health warrants, limits unnecessary social engagements, and establishes boundaries to protect her emotional well-being. Quoting Virgil, she highlights the importance of health as the greatest wealth, a principle that guides her new outlook on life.

Beyond Gaz du Cameroun

Finally when we asked Elizabeth to add an open message to all the upcoming leaders in the field of finance and beyond, she shared - “Remember that no career path is easy, and the higher up the ladder you climb, the more investment is required in yourself, the more demands are placed on you, the more you must sacrifice and the more you will need to balance competing pressures to perform against the limited resource of time”.

Also, summing up the whole conversation Elizabeth spoke about how she particularly loves to take young women under her wings in the workplace and give them the latitude to grow and learn and receive unparalleled experiences which can facilitate their launchpad towards new and bigger opportunities. And lastly, she shed light on her life beyond Gaz du Cameroun by sharing that she is also the Executive Director of Corporate Women in Leadership in Cameroon and a mentor on this group for the past two years, a platform she is proud of, which strives on sharing experiences to help inspire and grow future women leaders in the corporate world. 

