They concur that opportunities for women in mining have improved significantly. Rose points to increasing recognition of women's capabilities and growing opportunities for career development. Similarly, Marcia and Rose believe continued investment in training, mentorship, career development, and safe working environments will help more women realise their full potential.

Inspiring the next generation

Asked what advice they would offer young women considering careers in mining, Marcia encourages young women to "work hard, believe in yourself, keep learning and never let challenges stop you from reaching your goals", while Rose believes confidence and perseverance will continue opening doors for future generations.

Together, these three women demonstrate that mining succeeds because of the collective efforts of people with diverse skills, backgrounds, and experiences. Whether supporting underground blasting operations, operating specialised mining equipment, maintaining critical engineering systems, managing operational resources, or ensuring employees have clean, safe, and welcoming facilities, every role contributes to operational excellence.

Their stories reflect Redpath Africa Limited's commitment to creating an inclusive workplace where talent, professionalism, determination, and continuous learning continue to shape the future of underground mining.

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Why supporting expecting mothers is mining's next inclusion frontier

Yvonne Rudolph: Branch Manager, PRISMA Training Solutions, Kathu

The South African mining sector has made great progress in opening doors for women in operational roles. However, keeping female talent in the industry for the long term means looking past basic recruitment to focus on how the industry can better support women through major life changes, such as pregnancy.

When an operational worker announces her pregnancy, health and safety rules correctly require her to step away from high-risk work, such as underground mining or driving heavy machinery. While these rules are essential to protect both mother and baby, the sudden shift can leave expecting mothers feeling sidelined. To build a truly inclusive industry, mining companies must see pregnancy support as a powerful tool for retaining skilled talent, rather than as a temporary administrative headache.

Keeping purpose on light duty

The label 'light duty' often carries an unfair stigma, reducing a capable employee to filing paperwork or doing busywork. When a pregnant employee moves off the floor, her contribution should remain meaningful.

Reassignment is actually a golden opportunity for structured upskilling. While an operator cannot physically run machinery or go underground, she can spend those months broadening her skill set. This is the ideal time to invest in her development, from foundational software and administrative skills to core interpersonal strengths like peer mentorship, team communication, and hazard awareness. By the time she goes on maternity leave, she has not just filled time; she has expanded her professional toolbelt.

Helping women leave and return with confidence

The impact of pregnancy on a woman's career goes beyond her months on the job; it includes the time she steps away and her eventual return from maternity leave. Leaving an operational shift for several months naturally creates worry about falling behind or losing one's standing.

Mining companies can ease these fears with simple, structured guidance.

Teams benefit from short training or catch-up sessions right before a woman goes on leave and again just before she returns, making sure everyone is aligned. Additionally, workforce planning must cover her role without making her feel like her job is under threat. When a temporary replacement is presented as a learning opportunity for another team member, it protects the mother's job security while helping the wider team grow.

Moving from compliance to real humanity

At its foundation, supporting expecting mothers is about basic humanity in the workplace. Operating heavy machinery or working shifts is physically demanding on its own; doing that while growing a new life adds an incredible amount of stress and fatigue. When companies respond with empathy, clear guidance, and flexible planning, they show that an employee's worth is not only about her daily shift output. Women who feel valued during pregnancy return with greater loyalty and commitment, which directly improves long-term female retention in technical mining roles.

Mining operations that get this right will always have the advantage when it comes to hiring and retaining top talent. The industry can make sure motherhood is never a roadblock to a lasting mining career, merely by moving past simple compliance and treating people with genuine support.

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