

**Building  
Bridges** for  
Women's Economic  
Empowerment



*Kikufarm*  
FLOWERS

From Procurement to Petals

## The Story of Sheila Mwai - Sales Executive

In the bustling world of floral commerce, Sheila Mwai stands as a testament to the power of taking chances. A sales executive at Kikwetu Flowers, she embarked on her journey with the company on a fateful day - 28th September 2021. As we sit down with Sheila, she reflects on her experiences, challenges, and aspirations in the flower business.

Sheila's entry into the flower business was no ordinary sales job. It all began when she received an interview call that would change the course of her career. Initially unfamiliar with the floral trade, she decided to give it a shot. "Let me give it a try," she said, diving headfirst into the world of flowers. Prior to this opportunity, Sheila's expertise lay in procurement, but she embraced the chance to learn and grow in her new role. As a sales representative, Sheila encountered her fair share of obstacles. One of the major hurdles was language barriers when dealing with Arabic-speaking clients. The inability to communicate effectively posed challenges in securing business deals, leading some clients to seek out other flower farms. Despite this, Sheila's determination and adaptability shone through, as she continued to find ways to provide excellent service to all customers. One aspect that keeps Sheila thriving in her role is the support of her team. With confidence in her colleagues, she faces challenges head-on, knowing that she has a reliable group to back her up. Her team has been a true blessing, and together, they navigate the ever-changing landscape of the flower business.

Sheila's journey in the flower business has not only been about overcoming obstacles but also about envisioning a future for herself and the company. For her personal growth, she aspires to pursue a career in sales and marketing, and given the opportunity, she dreams of taking charge of a regional department. For Sheila, interacting with a wide array of customers has been a fascinating experience. "The flower business caters to a diverse clientele, each with unique tastes and preferences, and I enjoy the thrill of understanding and meeting their needs" she said. As a woman excelling in her field, Sheila is an inspiration to other women in the flower business. She acknowledges the increasing number of women who have ventured into flower farming and urges them to take the leap and give it a try. Her success story serves as a beacon of hope for aspiring female entrepreneurs in the industry.

## The Story of Ruth Onyango - Production Supervisor

In the lush landscapes of Kikwetu Flowers, a blooming success story is underway. The story revolves around Ruth Onyango, the supervisor of production, whose journey in the flower business has been a remarkable tale of growth, learning, and determination. In this interview, she sheds light on her experiences, challenges, and hopes for the future. Ruth Onyango joined Kikwetu Flowers on March 3rd, 2022, with a little knowledge of roses, limited to the popular red variety. But destiny had grander plans for her, and she was introduced to a world where roses flourished abundantly. Her passion for learning bloomed as she embraced the opportunity to immerse herself in the intricacies of flower cultivation. However, the road to success was not without its challenges. Ruth candidly shared one of her major hurdles - understanding the capacity of the workers. Communication and expectations didn't always align, leading to discrepancies between what she envisioned and what was executed. Nonetheless, she remains undeterred and sought to bridge the gap with clearer communication and better understanding of her team's needs.

Another obstacle she faced was absenteeism among the workers. Planning meticulously, only to find a shortage of labor the next day, was a recurring frustration. Often, the reasons were genuine, such as sickness or family emergencies, but it posed significant challenges in reorganizing the workflow. Nevertheless, Ruth found immense joy in her role as a supervisor. She reveled in coordinating with other departments and problem-solving. Within the cooperative work environment, there were no blame games - just collective efforts to find solutions. Speaking about their customers, Ruth proudly expressed the appreciation they received for their flowers. Satisfied clients were a testament to the farm's commitment to delivering top-notch quality blooms. Customer feedback played a vital role in refining their practices and furthering their success. As a woman excelling in a male-dominated industry, Ruth had a powerful message for her peers. She emphasized the importance of focus, determination, and hard work. Encountering discouragement along the way was inevitable, but she urged others not to let it overshadow their dreams. With her inspiring words, she encouraged women in the industry to rise above challenges and embrace their potential. When asked about her vision for Kikwetu Flower Farm, Ruth's eyes sparkled with ambition. The farm was steadily growing and expanding over the years. She envisioned it becoming one of the biggest flower farms in Kenya and East Africa, renowned for its impeccable quality and dedicated workforce. Ruth Onyango's journey in the flower business represents a bouquet of determination, growth, and resilience. From a limited knowledge of roses to supervising a thriving flower farm, her passion for learning and commitment to excellence has set her on a path to success. As Kikwetu Flowers continues to bloom under her guidance, it is clear that her vision of greatness is just a petal away from becoming reality.



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