

Speech Marinka Nootboom Business Woman of the Year 2022

Your Excellency, members of the jury, businesswomen, family, and others present,

What a great honor to receive this special award. Thanks to the minister, to the members of the jury of the Business Woman of the Year election, and organizer Veuve Clicquot for this confidence.

It is also a tribute to the work of all our employees of our company Royal Nootboom Group. I consider myself fortunate to have a very good team and would like to thank them for their unbridled efforts.

We have shown something in recent years that has apparently been noticed. Together, we are working every day to make today better than yesterday.

This makes us known in the exceptional transport market for our sustainable, and innovative solutions.

Transports are still getting bigger or heavier almost every year. By thinking ahead, our customers know that we have a solution for most of their transport issues. Not only now, but also in the future.

Take the energy transition. All of us occasionally drive past a transport with wind turbine blades on the highway. Few of you will realize that it was only a few years ago that those blades were "only" forty meters long. Nowadays, seventy meters and longer is the standard. They also have to be transported by road. And not just on a straight stretch of highway, but also under overpasses, along roundabouts, through the mountains, and on country roads. Our trailers make it possible.

For the Nootboom team, it goes without saying that we want to be at the forefront of future developments in automotive and logistics. We owe it to our self. That's deeply ingrained in our DNA. And that makes me grateful and proud.

I am also proud of myself. That I may receive this award.

I won't deny that there is still a certain amount of disbelief. As a student, I always looked up to the strong business women who came before me. To be on stage here myself so many years later is a great milestone for me.

The beauty of this award is that you get to be a role model for female leadership.

Being able to contribute to that change means that you have to be bold and persistent in life.

Like Nicole Barbe Clicquot-Ponsardin in the past, who showed guts and perseverance when she took over the management of her company as a widow at the age of 27.

When I started working for our family business, Koninklijke Nootboom Group, more than 10 years ago, I wanted to change a number of things in the belief that it was more in line with myself, new leadership, and the future of our family business. You will understand, that did not happen without a struggle.

For example, I think it's important to give employees as much responsibility as possible. That's why the self-managing teams have made their appearance. In this way, talent is better utilized and employees are more engaged.

Furthermore, I wanted to transform Nootboom into a fast agile sailing ship.

With the family, we have done a lot of sailing in the past. And in sailing, you are never quite sure what the conditions will be and

so you need to be agile to adapt to changing conditions as quickly as possible.

And so it is in a company. By appreciating everyone's specialism and by acting as a team and communicating well, you go faster. And speed is essential in this day and age.

Many people ask me what it is like to work as a woman in a men's company. Well fantastic! Of course, I have experienced plenty of situations in my working life when people thought that I would just get the coffee. And I was happy to do so in order to delicately clarify my role later in the conversation.

I think diversity in our company is important. That's why I welcome the arrival of women in important positions. It has a positive effect on our organization. Just like the multicultural composition of our staff.

But it could be much better. Let's see the women's quota as an incentive to see diversity as added value. Just as, for example, our welders add value to our company, a good balance between men and women adds value.

However, with a quota alone we are not there yet. There are still many entrenched beliefs, and I'm sure many women here in the room can name an experience. Just think about child care, and the way society looks at it. I want to contribute to making these established convictions a topic for discussion.

This year the Royal Nooteboom Group celebrates its 140th anniversary. The fourth generation, including my father Henk who is present here, has built up a huge treasure chest in the form of technical know-how, name recognition, and loyal customers.

They have worked tirelessly to put our wonderful company on the international map. As a family business, we know better than

anyone that it's important to consider the next generations. It is up to me to develop this further and I enjoy doing so every day.

I thank my family and loved ones for their trust and support to continue the business as the 5th generation.

And Thijn, great to have you with us. For you, I want to be a mother who shows you how to live to the fullest and pursue your dreams.

Thanks for your attention!