

Josephine Buys

 By [Louise Marsland](#)

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An involved and committed digital industry is a strong industry, according to Josephine Buys, the first country manager of the IAB South Africa...

Buys, who was appointed in June, is responsible for planning and managing the South African operations of the Interactive Advertising Bureau, member and industry relations, as well as identifying new areas of opportunity and development for the IAB.

The Digital Media and Marketing Association (DMMA) changed its name to the IAB earlier this year on joining the international network. This also marks the first time the digital industry has had a fulltime manager of its industry body, having relied on volunteer and part-time staff in the past. Given that it represents over 200 members including online publishers, creative, media and digital agencies, brands and educators between them accounting for more than 45 million local unique browsers and over 1 billion page impressions, it was time.

Buys perceives her role as one of planning, as well as managing IAB South Africa's operations, members and industry relations to protect the interests of publishers, advertisers and brands in the online space, while also identifying new areas of opportunity for the IAB. She truly believes in the IAB's philosophy that online can, and should be used in conjunction with other media to amplify the reach and effectiveness of advertising campaigns, and wants to communicate and illustrate that to the industry.

"Essentially my role is to build awareness, instil confidence, and ultimately increase revenue for the South African digital industry as a whole," said Buys at the time of her appointment in June.

She told Bizcommunity.com this week, that having the first IAB in Africa presents a remarkable opportunity for the local digital media and advertising industry.

"Becoming a member of the IAB's global network gives the industry access to learning, best practice and thought leadership from territories that have faced similar challenges and opportunities. It allows us to plug into a global community to advance our common interests and pave the path for future growth in digital."

ABOUT JOSEPHINE BUYS

Josephine Buys is the new Country Manager of the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) South Africa. She has a strong background in the media industry, launching new titles for publishers such as Condé Nast, Uppercase Media and Media Nova, including having a hand in the digital editions of some of the magazines. She was also an account manager at Purple Cow Digital Communications and was involved in conceptualising early rich media



local industry.

Q: What is your business focus right now?

A: In short: driving digital forward. Growing awareness and visibility of the IAB brand and its core purpose: growing a sustainable and vibrant digital industry in South Africa.

Q: What is your main business challenge?

A: Securing and keeping strong industry contributors to head up or participate in our various councils is a key factor in our sustainable success.

Q: What is your core strategy and goals?

A: To promote standards and accelerate the growth of digital media. To research and digest the work IAB has done globally for standards and revenue growth for adoption in our territory. To foster effective industry collaborations.

Q: How do you view the South African online industry?

A: Digital is the fastest growing medium globally and South Africa is no exception. We have an extraordinary opportunity through the industry to catapult media into an entirely new age. The most exciting stuff happening in content, publishing and advertising is in digital. That said, we face two key threats: firstly that our local businesses may not be competitive enough against substantial global players who are capturing a lot of the local spend; and secondly, that digital budgets, spent by clients who haven't yet understood or seen the potential in digital, are too small to make an impact. For digital to win we need to see real spend moving in our direction - which is definitely starting to happen.

Q: Most important attribute needed to do your job?

A: Accessibility. I am a conduit to other members, industry bodies and international IABs, so I think accessibility is the most important, but dexterity to manage the various portfolios and their pressing needs daily, if not hourly, and transparency - as we are representative of a wide number of disciplines - are also essential attributes.

Q: How do you intend to make an impact?

A: The most exciting portfolio for me is our Education & Transformation Council, headed up by Astrid Ascar. The digital industry is desperate for skills and through this council we aim to create certification to provide a much-needed solution to the talent gap that exists. We have started by developing an accredited digital curriculum with AAA in Johannesburg and we are looking towards an accreditation program that will certify digital professionals in various parts of the industry in a standard way. By collaborating with various other bodies, schools and ultimately universities, we aim to create a new generation of qualified and passionate professionals ready for the challenge of today's (and tomorrow's) digital ecosystem.

Q: What inspires you?

A: South Africa and its potential. The possibility of a huge percentage of the next connected users coming from the African continent.

Q: What do you do for fun?

A: Non-competitive cycling, SUPping (novice), travelling and sipping wine at sunset.

Q: At the top of my 'bucket list' is...

A: A party cruise in Croatia and culinary trip to Italy.

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing

magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: www.sourceagency.co.za.

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