

Marketing Association of SA launches



By [Louise Marsland](#)

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The new and long awaited Marketing Association of South Africa launched at a high profile event in Johannesburg yesterday, Monday, 5 March 2007, which was broadcast and streamed live via the Internet to global marketing associations in Africa, Europe, Australia, Canada and the US via 1485 Radio Today and DSTv audio channel 70.

The marketing industry has been left poorer over the past couple of years without a representative body to lobby and promote the industry amongst business, and academic stakeholders.

Tribute was paid to chartered marketer, Enrico du Plessis, a lone voice to start with who persevered in his own time to ensure a new representative body was formed out of the grimy ashes of the bankrupt Marketing Federation of SA (MFSA) two years ago, as well as to the team of media led by Chris Moerdyk who formed an oversight committee to watch over the process, and Jeremy Maggs who, with Richard Lendrum, kept the *Journal of Marketing* going in the absence of an industry association. It will now become the official mouthpiece of the new Marketing Association.

The turnout yesterday of many familiar and high profile friends of the marketing industry and unwavering supporters during the tough times, was heartening.

Interim board member, Bonang Mohale, elaborated more on the basic principles of the need for a marketing association:

- Representing organisations and individuals.
- Professional and independent organisation promoting good marketing practice and governance.
- Strategically position marketers in business, Government, corporate society and education.
- Promoter of marketing education (not provider)
- Lean and mean organisational structure through maximum input from organisations and individual volunteers.
- Act as an anchor point for all marketers, stakeholders and related specialist bodies/associations through an interdependent partnership model – not one size fits all.
- Promote organisational stability through a sustainable funding mechanism.
- Transformation of marketing industry.
- Self regulation of the industry.
- Provide and promote an industry code of conduct.

The model and structure will encompass:

1. Board of directors: for governance and strategic intent.

2. Strategic Council: comprising representatives of all relevant bodies and associations within the marketing environment - determining strategy, policy, priorities, and so on, based on the principle and model of an interdependent partnership (all pro bono).
3. Educational, training and certification advisory council: works closely with SETA academic institutions giving input and strategic guidance.
4. Legal/legislative Advisory Council

Basically the new Marketing Association will contribute to the tripartite structure of the industry - media, advertising agencies and marketers – by engaging and lobbying with those organisations for the overall best practice of the entire profession.

Warnings were sounded by Gordon Muller of the Advertising Media Forum (AMF), who said the new board elected yesterday must be able to take responsibility for the huge sums of money available in the industry through various media levies. Chris Moerdyk also entreated the industry to ensure that some kind of watchdog body, such as the oversight committee, be continued as part of checks and balances to ensure that this fledgling organisation and its new board are successful going into the future.

The new board will be announced tomorrow, Wednesday, 7 March 2007.

Professional marketing

Two illustrious guest speakers elaborated on the importance of marketing as a profession and on the bottom line of business.

First up was Sir Paul Judge, from the UK, a much-lauded management and marketing man with a CV that would fill up several web pages. He spoke on 'The Role of Marketers in a Global Business Environment' and the need to attract the best and brightest into this profession.

"You have to remember how the world has changed so much. The World Wide Web has totally transformed the informational opportunities that people have... People's trust is now vital, because when the world changes so drastically, people need something to hold on to."

Marketing itself faces challenges, he said:

1. Make marketing central to business strategy.
2. Maximise opportunities through aligning organisations with markets and customers.
3. Raise skill levels.
4. Reflect ethics, sustainability and responsibility.
5. Exploit info and communications technology.
6. Address regulatory requirements.
7. Promote the professional status of marketing – ironic for a profession that claims it is all about communications.

So what is a profession and what makes it different from other things, asked Judge? In his opinion it rests on four parameters:

- Academic framework
- Practical knowledge
- Code of ethics
- Continuous professional development

So, how can professionalism be institutionalised? One way, says Judge, is by having a professional body. "The alternative is external regulation. It's in the interests of customers, to protect brand reputation, and provide members with competitive

advantage (where there is no statutory protection).”

Marketing in the boardroom

The second guest speaker, Prof Malcolm McDonald: Cranfield University, School of Management, spoke on: ‘Getting Marketing back in the Boardroom: How to prove that your marketing strategies create shareholder value’.

In a highly entertaining presentation he recommended firing your Board of Directors if they cannot tell you who your customers are and what are your target markets, because the consequences of thinking like that in our boardrooms is a business strategy focused too much on the bottom line and profits and not growing the business in the long term through customer growth and retention.

“Marketers are in the business of value creation which is infinite and only limited by our vision and creativity.”

He highlighted that marketing is about understating your market and a process for:

- Defining markets.
- Quantifying the needs of the customer groups (segments) with these markets.
- Putting together the value propositions to meet these needs, communicate these value propositions to all those people in the organisation responsible for delivering them and getting their buy-in to their role.
- Playing an appropriate part.

Prof McDonald emphasised: “Logic dictates that you have to know what your market is and who your customers are and then you can plan your communications.”

- The inaugural general meeting of the Marketing Association IGM was streamed live by 1485 Radio Today on 1485 AM to the greater Johannesburg area; and on DStv audio channel 70 nationally throughout South Africa, and to the eight English speaking countries of southern Africa, including Zambia South, as well as to the marketing organisations in Europe, the UK, Australia and Canada, by Internet streaming on www.1485.org.za. The event will also be housed as a podcast for worldwide listening via the same website.

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