

Kgaugelo Maphai, The MediaShop's new MD

 By Jessica Tennant

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Kgaugelo Maphai joined The MediaShop as MD a couple of months ago when the agency moved to its new Johannesburg office.



The Media Shop moves offices

22 Mar 2017



He brings 17 years of experience as a marketer on both the media owner and client side, specifically with an interest in consumer insights. Throughout his career, he's constantly sought to develop his understanding of the South African consumer. "I find South Africa's diversity amazing and fascinating. It's crucial that we understand the nuances of people in terms of culture and language. If marketers don't understand what makes different people tick, the message is wasted," he believes. "Creativity without insights is a missed opportunity... We need to understand the nuances of our different markets and our communications efforts must resonate with those insights – find the nuance and then the commonality, not the other way around."

We see this a lot with creative work in the industry, he explains. "One person has spoken to their domestic helper or gardener, or their Afrikaans/gay/Indian/Black friend and has made assumptions on how to communicate to that entire sector of people. It's wrong, that's not an insight. We are not a homogenous country and that's what makes our country so beautiful and special."

Here, he shares what he's getting up to in his first 100 days and the challenges that lie ahead.

■ What does your new role entail?

My new role entails leading The MediaShop's Johannesburg office in various issues that include anything from human resources and finances to working with our business unit managers on client-related matters and of course offering strategic input on client business strategies. As part of the exco team I also work closely with the group MD and our senior leadership team to oversee the strategic direction of our Johannesburg office, to closely mentor staff and keep the motivation high. Another big priority for me is making sure that we grow The MediaShop business and continually look for new opportunities and value-added options for our clients, and revenue streams for the business.



Kgaugelo Maphai

■ What are some of the challenges currently facing the agency?

As an industry we're working in a very tight economy that isn't growing. That's the big challenge for all of us. There's big pressure on clients to find ways to grow when growth isn't forthcoming. We've now gone through two junk status downgrades by two different ratings agencies, which is going to put even more pressure on the agency and industry at large. The poor seem to be getting poorer as cost of living increases – so from a consumer point of view we're going to see that average consumers will generally buy the basic necessities, white label or no-name brands where they can, no longer opting for luxury purchases.

As an agency that means we need to be smarter in buying media, and marketers need to become more innovative. For example, they may look at packaging changes to certain products – offer smaller pack sizes that are more affordable. As

an agency, another of our challenges is further growth, particularly because we have clients in almost every key category, but the positives far outweigh the challenges. The MediaShop has a solid reputation in the industry and is filled with great people. We also have a great mentorship programme, and are extremely well resourced as a team. We're also very stable from a revenue point of view and with offices in all three key economic hubs in the country we are able to service clients all over South Africa.

■ ***Comment on your previous experience and how it has led you to your new position.***

I've been very fortunate to have been in the industry for about 17 years now, and even more so because I've come full circle. I've had the advantage of working for a few media owners and also working on the client side so I've gained valuable insights into those aspects of the business. And throughout those 17 years I've dealt with several media agencies – so I also know what is expected, both as a client and now as an agency. I've built great relationships over the years that are still strong today which is an advantage and I'm very excited about building these and creating new relationships as well.

■ ***How do you plan to grow the agency?***

We need to constantly adapt to the needs of our clients, build in further efficiencies in our current business model and look at increasing our service offering to our clients.

■ ***What industry trends do you predict for the next year?***

Technology and digital are obvious, but another massive trend that I believe will become the norm more and more is **integration**. For instance, integrating digital with radio and not using one or the other in isolation is going to become a huge requirement. We cannot see media in standalone silos anymore. Integrated marketing communications will become a crucial part of our daily approach to any communications strategy.

■ ***What's at the top of your to-do list?***

Getting to know my staff, our clients and getting to understand how The MediaShop operates have been my top three things to do in my first 100 days. After that I'll start looking at areas where we need to start evolving and thinking differently. Right now it is all about listening more, to staff and clients and getting to understand more.

■ ***What motivates you?***

Evolution, change, engagement and debating issues – these are things that motivate me!

■ ***What are you currently reading/listening to for work?***

I do enjoy reading online journals but I've found that I learn more from engaging with people who are experts on certain subject matters. I generally tend to gather the opinion of four or five people who are specialists in the same area and then formulate my own opinions from there. I prefer constant engagement and love debating issues, it keeps me motivated.

■ ***Tell us something about yourself not generally known.***

I love to travel because I learn so much about people and culture, both in SA and the continent and like to do it as often as I can. I also spend as much time as possible with my family. They are special to me in every respect.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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