

Michelle Vahl



By [Louise Marsland](#)

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Michelle Vahl has been appointed NAB Sales Manager (Johannesburg). She oversees a team of 13 sales people across both NAB and Habari Media, offering clients a combination of local newspaper and digital communication platforms. Her core responsibilities are to call on clients, secure new business, upskill her team, client service and grow sales. She has been with Caxton since 1996 and was most recently the Branch Manager at The Highway Mail.

Q: What is at the top of your to do list?

A: Being new to Johannesburg, I'm still getting to grips with how things are done the Joburg way! Although I've been with Caxton for many years, I've always focused on the local print offering, so learning about the intricacies of our digital products and getting to meet our agency contacts is at the top of the list for me. Being new to the team I'm also getting to know the team, how they work, what their strengths are and which agencies handle which accounts, etc.

Q: What is your main business challenge?

A: I think it's important that whatever we do, we must provide a workable solution to our client's needs. Local press on its own is very powerful and is the only print category growing year on year, but packaged together with digital, it's a winning formula. Our challenge is to separate the weakness of weekly and regional print from the strength of local print and to keep up with the ever changing world of digital media.

Q: Most important attribute needed to do your job?

A: There are many: knowledge, energy, enthusiasm and a positive attitude are a few definite must-haves. Keeping up with media trends and what's happening in the industry is also key, digital grows and changes so quickly and it's important to be at the forefront of what's happening.

Q: The biggest trend to note in your industry?

A: Digital is becoming more and more prolific on the media schedules, and using it in a local context is equally important. It obviously depends on the client and what their need is but because digital is so prolific, the trend we're seeing is a need to refine the myriad of options out there to meet very specific client needs.

Q: How will you make an impact?

A: My strengths are definitely working as part of a team and I've had years of experience managing teams of people. I also pride myself on meeting sales targets, finding the strengths of my team mates and growing their abilities and creating a

well-oiled unit.

Q: What is the one thing every great salesperson needs to do?

A: I think that it's crucial that sales people live their brand and believe in what they're selling. They need to be passionate about their careers, and be sales people 24/7 - it's really not an 8am to 5pm type of job.

Q: What would you like to be known for?

A: Someone who took on the challenges of the job and always succeeded, and also someone that takes a person and develops them. I love watching people grow and develop into successful sales people.

Q: What inspires you?

A: Quite a lot. Change! I love learning new things and growing. I believe that it's never too late for an old dog to learn new tricks. Creating challenges, working towards them and meeting them is what I love.

Q: What are you currently reading for work?

A: I'm upskilling on quite a few digital platforms and also reading through EBI (Ehrenburg Bass Institute) - the Australian based market research company that NAB has a very strong association with. It's fascinating to see how people think in a buying situation, how they plan their shopping trips, etc. But from a work point of view and coming from a print background, my focus is definitely getting to know the digital products we're selling.

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

A: Travel, travel, travel. If there's an ocean I'm there! I'd like to try and go away at least once a year to places I haven't seen before. Croatia and Jamaica are definitely on the list.

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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