

Charlie Wannell strives on the evolution of media into digital

By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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From breaking the silo mentality to creating teams that are integrated and collaborative. Charlie Wannell is the marketing manager at Mediamark, a specialist media sales and solutions company. This [Women's Month](#), we find out more about her journey.



Charlie Wannell, marketing manager at Mediamark

■ **Can you tell us a bit about yourself?**

I'm first and foremost a wife and mom of two teenagers (the most challenging role yet!) and one dog who rules our roost. I love media and the ad game and always have – even from an armchair. Eyes roll in my family when I say, “how clever was that or they could’ve done so much better, or that’s my station!”. I also love yoga and the practice of breathwork and believe it could heal the world J.

I have had my own business which failed spectacularly when the market crashed, so have a huge respect for the “school fees” we are charged as we progress on our life paths. Failure can be hard at the time, but the lessons are priceless.

“ Challenges, which the industry throws at us in buckets every day, keep me motivated and seeing people grow and develop inspires me to keep doing what I do. ”

I know it's a cliché but when I stop learning it's time to hang it up. So far, the lessons are still coming thick and fast.

■ **You're the head of marketing at Mediamark. Tell us more about your role here**

It's a role of perpetual motion and collaboration – as we innovate or turn out one idea or campaign, we're onto the next. I'm lucky to work with the most talented trade marketing team in the country, and a company that allows us to shine.

“ Simply put, my objective at Mediamark is to positively position the company, its employees, and the brands we

represent for success and future sustainability. ”

The role also allows a space for our evolving CSI initiatives which really inspire me. Mediamark is currently working with the SA Depression and Anxiety Group as well as other counselling organisations to bring a small bit of awareness around the massive issue of mental wellness.

■ **Can you briefly share your journey of how you entered the marketing industry?**

I started my career working every conceivable job known to advertising. From tea girl to TV producer. I found a groove in media strategy at Hunt Lascaris and later moved to the “other side” in media sales with Radmark. Having dreamt of working in radio since high school, Mediamark has fed this passion and I have never had a boring day since. I’m privileged to have seen the evolution of media into a digital space all round.

■ **Have you faced any challenges in the industry? If so, how did you overcome them?**

Breaking the silo mentality to create teams that are integrated and collaborative. Mediamark are currently undergoing a massive digital transformation – not only to streamline processes and remove the repetitive activities to make space for thinking, but to engender a culture of collaboration and creativity.



Mediamark embarks on a digital transformation journey

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Challenging the status quo and moving into a digital space is uncomfortable for a lot of people who are set in their ways and can come with resistance. We are still in the process but are spending a lot of effort on “change management” strategies- a powerful tool for business.

■ **Can you comment on the transformation (or lack of) of how women are represented in the marketing industry?**

Frankly, there are still too few female executives in our industry and at board level; the playing fields are still not equal.

■ **What more would you like to see happen in this industry?**

It’s still difficult for young professionals to break through the old guard. Fresh thinkers can bring positive winds of change – so I would like to see us all be a little less fearful and welcoming. I would love to see more diverse representation at senior management levels across the industry.

“ Mentoring your staff is more important now than ever as it provides career opportunities beyond the day job. ”

Be influential in the journey that people take under your leadership and give them the wings to grow.

■ **What advice do you have to share with the future generation of females entering the marketing industry?**

Three words - **Have. More. Fun.** It helps to balance out our stress and feel-good hormones, preventing diseases long-term. It helps to boost our creativity, energy, productivity, and overall cognition. You have a long career ahead of you, so nurture relationships with friends and colleagues that you can have fun with, and fill your career with good memories that keep you going in the bad times.

■ **As we celebrate Women’s Month in South Africa. Do you have any words of encouragement for all the women out there?**

Women are the anchor for families and communities. It can feel like a burden at times but it's the greatest privilege. Find ways to show yourself some love every day – you are priceless and beautiful.

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