

The route to CEO via marketing

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Doug Place is a man on a mission. As the current chairperson of the Marketing Association of South Africa (Masa) and a leading marketer in SA, he is committed to ramping up professionalism in our marketing industry, and considering how marketing can be leveraged to build robust SA businesses.



Doug Place, chairperson of the Marketing Association of South Africa (Masa)

As well as Masa chairperson, Place is the chief marketing officer of Nando's Africa, Middle East, and South Asia. But at this year's Nedbank Integrated Marketing Council (IMC) conference on 15 September, he will be considering the marketing industry through a broad lens, using Masa as the launchpad for innovative ideas.

Masa is a key organisation in SA's marketing ecosystem and serves as a platform where marketers are able to consider their sector beyond just their own businesses. The organisation is able to act as a mouthpiece and conduit for the industry where, for example, there are changes in the legislative environment around things like advertising. It can also ensure that common datasets (like LSMs or SEM) are proliferated and shared by marketers to give a single view of the truth through verifiable research as a result of its oversight on the MRF.

Masa also furthers the marketing profession through what is known as its professional designations programme. Here marketers can apply for the process to be certified as chartered marketers, marketing

practitioners or associate marketers (subject to certain conditions such as experience, active years in the industry), which are internationally recognised through the SAQA (South African Qualification Authority) reciprocity framework.

Place says: "Designations are important because it enables companies to hire marketers with confidence, and for marketers, it is a way to further their professions and thereby also provide assurance to the public of ethical and professional conduct in application. For me, a strong Masa is a strong marketing profession, which is in everyone's best interest if we are to grow and sustain a respected marketing sector and contribute to economic growth."

The Nedbank IMC is presented in association with Masa, which Place says makes sense. "Masa is the only representative member association and SAQA approved professional body for marketing in South Africa, and the Nedbank IMC the only marketing event of its kind here."

Place believes that marketing in South Africa has significant as-yet untapped potential. "I believe that we're capable of more. This is less of a criticism and more of an encouragement." If you look at Europe and the US, he says, the path to CEO is often via the marketing department. "This would be massively unusual in South Africa. More often than not, SA CEOs come from financial and operations backgrounds to lead the business.

"Other territories understand that the role of an executive is to architect and build future value of a business, by plotting routes to markets, and enabling economic growth and prosperity. That is best done by marketers as evidenced elsewhere. I think SA marketers have an opportunity here, but they have to be equipped and prepared in order to grasp it."

Place says that even though SA marketers and creatives are operating in difficult economic circumstances, we need to recognise that most great brands and companies were born in troubled times and that the turmoil we face is an invitation for

great thinking and not a great retreat. Place is an ideas-to-implementation marketer, clearly evidenced in his contribution to the journey of one of SA's most iconic homegrown brands Nando's, and his guidance this year as chairperson at Masa which continues to grow from strength-to-strength. To hear more from Doug Place, book your ticket today to attend the Nedbank IMC 2023 on 15 September at the Urban Brew Studios in Johannesburg. An online option is also available.

In-person tickets (conference only) priced at R4,000 (excl VAT) until 31 July 2023.

In-person tickets (conference and Effie Awards South Africa) priced at R5,000 (excl VAT) until 31 July 2023.

Limited seats available.

Virtual tickets priced at R1,499.

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