

Managing the fast-paced nature of breaking news with wit, warmth, and wisdom

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Committed to diversifying South African's perspectives through quality journalism, Newzroom Afrika anchor Naledi Moleo finds her job both professionally fulfilling and personally rewarding.



Naledi Moleo, anchor of Newzroom Afrika's AMReport

Five years after the launch of Newzroom Afrika, this go-to source for trusted news is still keeping things fresh with youthful energy and continuous innovation. The AM Report has a new line-up, co- anchored by Moleo and Aldrin Sampear, with the addition of sports anchor Andee Mahamba.

Moleo's TV career began 20 years ago as a child star presenting children's shows like Kids News, X Marks the Spot and Just Chill, and she hasn't stopped. From working as an award-winning radio show host, and TV producer to a reality TV show host, to producing inserts for a Brazilian news network for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, there is little this experienced broadcaster has not got under her belt.

What led you to a career in news?

It all kicked off back in 2004 when I started hosting news shows aimed at the youth. I quickly realised I had a knack for storytelling and a passion for keeping people informed. That gig got me hooked on the power of media to shape minds and spark change. So, I figured, why not make a career out of it?

What excites you most about Newzroom Afrika and where the channel is going?

I'm energised by Newzroom Afrika and its trajectory. As a relatively young channel, it's already made a significant impact on the news landscape in South Africa. The channel's dedication to quality journalism and its commitment to diversifying perspectives are incredibly important, especially in a country like ours where inclusivity is crucial for understanding our complex society. Being part of this journey is both professionally fulfilling and personally rewarding, and I'm excited to see how Newzroom Afrika continues to shape the future of news in our country.

What have been your personal career highlights so far?

One of the most rewarding aspects of my career has been the privilege of interviewing influential figures who have played significant roles in shaping South Africa. I've had the honour of speaking with luminaries such as Thabo Mbeki, Gerrie Nel, Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, and Helen Zille, among others. Every time I have the opportunity to engage with individuals who deeply impact our nation, I'm filled with excitement and a sense of responsibility to bring their insights to our audience.

What was your most memorable news story growing up?

One of the most profound memories from my childhood is of the 1994 elections in South Africa. Aged seven, I stood in long queues with my grandmother as she patiently waited to cast her vote. This historic moment, filled with hope and anticipation, left a lasting impression on me, highlighting the significance of our nation's journey towards democracy. The

following year, I found myself as one of only two black students in a primary school previously predominantly white, underscoring the complexities of our society's transition.

Are there any iconic journalists/broadcasters that inspire you and why?

I find inspiration in journalists such as Christiane Amanpour and Amy Goodman for their remarkable bravery and unwavering commitment to truth. Their fearlessness in holding power to account and their relentless pursuit of justice are qualities that deeply resonate with me. I can't leave out Stephanie Ruhle. I enjoy her for her high-energy style and reliability. When she speaks, her dynamic delivery commands attention, making it impossible to look away.

If you could have dinner with five famous people from any period in history, who would they be?

Donald Trump - Former president of the United States, known for his controversial tenure in office and his impact on American politics and global affairs. That would be a fiery discussion.

Julius Nyerere - Tanzanian anti-colonial activist and the first president of Tanzania, known for his leadership in the struggle for independence and his commitment to Pan-Africanism and socialism.

Aaliyah - I just loved her music and feel heartbroken by how that has so often been overshadowed by talk of the abuse she endured as a teenage girl all while making the world sing along.

Jacinda Ardern - Former prime minister of New Zealand, known for her compassionate leadership style and progressive policies, particularly her response to the Christchurch mosque shootings and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Malala Yousafzai - A Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate, known for her courageous advocacy for girls' rights to education despite facing threats and violence.

Which has been your best-performing story at Newzroom Afrika?

At Newzroom Afrika, the pace of news is incredibly fast, and the focus is on delivering the most current and relevant stories to our audience. We don't measure the size of stories but rather their timeliness and impact. One memorable moment was on my maiden show where I interviewed the controversial figure Duduzane Zuma. The responses from South Africans were rather colourful.

How do you feel about the introduction of AI and the regulation of social media and their impact on journalism?

Social media has its perks, like easy information sharing, but it also has downsides. Fake news spreads too easily, and people often get stuck in their own bubbles. We need rules to keep things fair. Similarly, I really believe we need to understand AI and its benefits, like helping us sort through loads of data and personalise the news, making things more efficient. But we've got to be careful. AI isn't perfect, and we need to make sure it's used ethically. Real people need to keep an eye on it to avoid spreading bias or false info.

How do you manage the dynamics of breaking news day after day?

Managing the fast-paced nature of breaking news is all about staying agile and curious. It's like being on a rollercoaster ride; you never quite know what's coming next, but that's what keeps it exciting. I thrive on the adrenaline rush of staying on top of unfolding events, collaborating closely with my team, and diving deep into stories to bring our audience the most accurate and timely coverage possible. It's a balancing act of staying informed and staying focused.

If you were a superhero for a day, what superpowers would you choose to make a lasting change in the world?

If I had to pick superpowers, I'd go for something offbeat yet impactful - the ability to speak and understand every language on Earth? I could bridge cultural gaps, foster understanding, and maybe even prevent a few misunderstandings along the

way. Plus, I'd never need subtitles for foreign films again.

How would you like to be remembered?

I'd like to be remembered as the journalist who brought a bit of wit, warmth, and wisdom to the newsroom. Someone who wasn't afraid to tackle tough topics with a dash of humour, and who always strived to connect with viewers on a human level. Sure, journalism is serious business, but that doesn't mean we can't inject a little personality into it, right? So, here's to being remembered as the journalist who made you think, smile, and maybe even do a double take once in a while.

Which car model/ song/ movie or TV show would give away your age?

If you caught me bobbing my head to TLC's "Waterfalls" or singing along to Destiny's Child's "Say My Name," you've definitely got a clue about my era. As for TV, throwback to "Living Single" or "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," where I soaked up some serious '90s vibes. And when it comes to cars, spotting me cruising in a classic VW Golf or vibing to some Lauryn Hill in a Honda Civic would be a dead giveaway.

Tell us a little about yourself off screen?

I have a deep conviction that I'm a singing superstar waiting to be discovered. Sadly, my friends seem to think otherwise. But that doesn't stop me belting out tunes in the shower or serenading my houseplants. Who knows, maybe one day they'll come around to my undeniable talent.

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