

Marion Zeller, brand manager at Raizcorp



By Evan-Lee Courie

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"Marketing and communication is my passion," says Marion Zeller, brand manager at Raizcorp, who has 10 years experience in these fields across corporate South Africa, having specialised in B2B marketing and internal communication.



She believes that the value of a brand is a crucial aspect for companies to focus on, and she wants to play a role in helping businesses engage their customers through their brand and brand values.

“ I want to inspire, motivate and grow brands, helping them remain relevant while building a successful brand with loyal clients and staff. ”

■ What does your job entail and what does your average workday look like these days?

Well, we're back in the office, so work still looks the same. The week starts with a production meeting in which my team and I clarify and prioritise all the jobs due for the week. After this, it's about just getting everything done.

All our work is done in-house, from booking media to design and execution. My job is to oversee the team and ensure we get the messaging, the platform or channel, the targeting and most of all the tracking right. My team thrives under our frenetic yet organised pace.

■ Can you tell us a bit about your career journey prior to your current role?

I started my career on a graduate recruitment programme at a large financial institution. My background is internal communications, and for many years this was my passion. After a number of years working closely with the marketing team, I was approached to join their team. I spent seven years in the financial-services sector and then decided to branch out and try my hand at the consulting arena.

“ I had my ups and downs as everyone does, but my move to Raizcorp was driven by my need to work on a brand that

was actually making a difference by impacting the lives of others. ”

And two years later, I can say that Raizcorp does actually impact the lives of the entrepreneurs we work with.

■ ***How would you define your brand?***

Raizcorp is focused on Ayanda, our archetypical entrepreneur.

“ She or he is who we are here to serve. Our focus is always on how we can serve and support Ayanda on her or his journey of growth and development. ”

While some may view Raizcorp as a social enterprise, we stand by our position that whatever we do must both make an impact but also make profit. We are a for-profit organisation, but we will not pursue any potential new business that does not provide the opportunity for creating a genuine impact and long-term sustainability.

At Raizcorp we are also proudly out of the ordinary. We like to do things a little differently and like to embrace the quirkiness of each individual who helps make Raizcorp a little crazy. And our mascot is a rooster called Passepartout.

■ ***Which consumer sector does your brand predominantly play in?***

Raizcorp is a business incubator, although we prefer our own term, "prosperator". We have created prosperation, our own unique, world-renowned model for the support and development of entrepreneurs.

■ ***What other sectors impact on your industry?***

Raizcorp works with small businesses and entrepreneurs from all sectors.

■ ***Can you share with our readers about your recent brand campaigns and the rationales behind them?***

Raizcorp owns and powers a national business pitching and workshop competition called Pitch & Polish which is sponsored by Engen Petroleum and Nedbank, and which has been running since 2009.

We recently launched the 2021 edition of the Engen Pitch & Polish competition which we were unable to hold last year because of Covid-19. This led us to shifting the strategic thinking behind the competition, and in 2021 adjusting it to a new fully digital format.

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This means that in 2021, anyone who has a registered business, regardless of where they are located in SA has the opportunity to apply for the Engen Pitch & Polish competition. (previously, we took the physical event to eight towns and cities across SA every year.)

This has also meant that we quickly had to readjust our marketing campaign. Out went all traditional forms of media and in came digital. Our 2021 strategy is fully digital and revolves around leveraging our own digital platforms, as well as our sponsors' and partners' digital presence.

“ *ENGIN Pitch and Polish 2021 is live. It takes on a new digital format and is proudly powered by Raizcorp.*

[#ENGINPitchandPolish https://t.co/TMjRzi7tYT](https://t.co/TMjRzi7tYT)— Raizcorp (@_Raizcorp) [May 15, 2021](#) ”

■ **Tell us about your most successful marketing campaign**

As mentioned, we've readjusted our marketing strategy and have focused solely on the use of digital platforms. The benefit of this has been our ability to target the people we are looking for, but also our ability to remarket to them at different touch points.

We've also learned how we can target people with one message and then offer them something different after the initial sale or engagement taking place. Going digital has given us the opportunity to expose the Raizcorp brand and offering while sharing content that adds value to our target audience.

■ **What do you think are the most successful channels for getting your brand message out there?**

A recent survey by eMarketer showed that the average adult spends three hours and 43 minutes a day on a mobile device and that, on average, we pick up our smartphones 58 times per day! So, what does this mean? Well, I believe this means that the first thing we should be thinking about is how do we get our brand message into those hands via their smartphones.

Given the age we live in, digital has to be at the forefront of whatever initiative one is looking at doing. The added benefit to digital is that it has advanced tracking abilities that allow marketers to target, funnel and re-market to people over and over.

But make no mistake, word of mouth is a gift a marketer cannot look down upon. Nothing will do more for a brand than a good referral from one trusted source to another.

■ ***What career advice would you give to aspirant young marketing and branding professionals?***

Go for it! It's a field that is constantly changing and pushing you to think differently. It's about finding the things that are unique to your brand and then finding ways to make those things stand out. But it's not a walk in the park... Be prepared to put up pull-up banners, take registrations and work long hours to meet deadlines.

■ ***What do you love most about working in the marketing and communication space?***

I love the work that comes out – the ads that push boundaries, the ads that cause discussion, the ads that win awards but, most of all I love that marketing has the ability to change someone's mind.

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