

Jessica Mahlekisi, marketing & digital coordinator in L'Oreal SA's Luxe division

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Jessica Mahlekisi is the marketing and digital coordinator in the Luxe division at L'Oréal South Africa. Born in Daveyton, a township located in Ekurhuleni, east of Johannesburg she began her career as a model at the age of 16.

The young professional was recently selected as L'Oréal SA's One Young World delegate for 2023, which will see her travel to Belfast, UK to attend the beauty giants One Young World convention.



Jessica Mahlekisi is the marketing and digital coordinator in the Luxe division at L'Oréal South Africa. Source: Supplied.

▣ How did you end up at L'Oréal?

After I decided to step away from the modelling industry to pursue a formal education (PR Unisa), I secured an internship with Zando, which gave me further exposure to the industry. After completing my stint with the e-fashion retailer, I responded to a CSR campaign on Twitter which subsequently led to the opportunity to attend a digital upskilling course powered by the UK-SA Tech Hub.

Upon completion of this course, I obtained further work experience with an NGO. Followed by a project manager role at a marketing, PR and digital agency called Triple Eight where I worked as a project lead for a CSR campaign for Nestlé. In retrospect, my journey to L'Oréal started sooner than I even realised, my current role at L'Oréal is a culmination of the constant pursuit of self-improvement.

▣ What does your job entail?

The marketing and digital co-ordinator within the L'Oréal Luxury division is a hybrid role. One aspect of my job involves supporting the commercial team and our strategic key account manager in driving the e-commerce business agenda.

The other aspect of my role consists of rolling out all the brand causes within our department. Namely, YSL Beauty - *Abuse Is Not Love*, Armani - *Acqua for Life* and Lancôme - *Write Your Future in South Africa*. This is work that I am honoured to do, as I strongly believe in living a purpose-driven life and using my abilities for the benefit of people, the planet, and business.



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▣ What interested you in the beauty industry?

During my four years in the modelling industry, I was afforded opportunities to walk for both AFI and SA fashion week and feature in multiple fashion/beauty spreads. Working in front of the camera piqued my interest to understand the business of fashion in its entirety and explore the possibility of making an impact on such an influential industry, being allowed to work on brands such as Yves Saint Laurent Beauty, Armani Beauty and Lancôme feels like a full circle moment.

▣ What are the highlights of your career so far?

I have a few key career highlights, namely, executing the Nestlé Math Moments initiative which was created to address South Africa's ranking in math-ability and improve cognitive development in children. The campaign was the winner at The Shorty Digital Awards in New York City for Best Use of WhatsApp and Best in Education.

“ Another key highlight was launching the Yves Saint Laurent Beauty, *Abuse Is Not Love* initiative in South Africa and with the help of our NGO partner, training hundreds of students about the early signs of abuse, allyship and reporting structures. Lastly, being selected to be L'Oréal SA's One Young World delegate for 2023, which will allow me to travel to Belfast, UK to attend the brand's One Young World convention. ”

▣ What are the biggest challenges in your role?

I am of the strong belief that no one is coming to save us, we are the heroes we have been waiting for. Working within the brand cause/ corporate social responsibility space often means pushing against the grain and taking the road less travelled. I think the most important thing is to remember why you started. Remember your North Star.

▣ **Who are the women you look up to professionally?**

I have had an array of mentors and have had the honour to experience feminine leadership throughout my career, which I do not take for granted. However, my greatest influence and inspiration for my career and ambition is my mother, Sophie Mapula

Mahlekisi, who continuously affirmed that, given the right effort and dedication, everything I desire is within reach.

▣ **What are your dreams for the future?**

One of my biggest dreams for the future is to be part of L'Oréal's global corporate social responsibility (CSR) and brand cause team, this will enable me to champion the organisation's commitments to driving sustainability and social innovation at a global level.

I have always had the ambition to pursue an international career to further myself and receive exposure to key skills that I can implement to create strategic and sustainable solutions locally. I believe that accelerating this agenda will have a major impact on people's lives and drive the development of the continent.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

Karabo Ledwaba is a Marketing and Media Editor at Bizcommunity and award-winning journalist. Before joining the publication she worked at Sowetan as a content producer and reporter. She was also responsible for the leadership page at SiMags, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at karabo@bizcommunity.com

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