

MMA SA Youth Development Board chair and vice-chair announced

The newly formed MMA SA Youth Development Board has elected the leadership team headed by chairperson Takalani Masikhwa, digital lead and strategist at Mindshare and vice-chair Anesu Malisa, head of Gen Z marketing (Africa Office) at Samsung Electronics.



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) The newly formed MMA SA Youth Development Board has elected its leadership team

The youth leadership team are brought on board to propel the MMA SA forward into the future

Together with 11 members of the Youth Development Board, they will drive the growth and empowerment of younger leaders in the digital marketing space while also acting as a conduit through which trends and insights into the youth and how they receive and engage with marketing are shared with members of the MMA SA Board.

The team will drive this for a period of six months.

Leading the charge

As strategist for Mindshare, Masikhwa is at the coalface of progress in the marketing world, charged with making the brand more youth relevant.

He says the world of advertising and especially digital marketing is undergoing sweeping and rapid changes.

"There is a lot of new tech out there, and a whole new audience. Gen MZ - the 15- to 34-year-olds – are the target market that most marketers want to reach right now, and this generation doesn't respond to traditional advertising. They are the mobile generation and they engage with new technology and edgy platforms, like TikTok," he says.

"Digital is the new frontier and early adopter brands like Standard Bank and Samsung are ahead of the curve. I want to lead the charge for this shift in marketing and I believe the MMA SA Youth Development Board is the platform through which to accomplish this," he says.

"It's somewhat like the 2004 social media revolution when new publishing channels that engaged with consumers directly came to market. This is happening again, only now exciting elements like AI are into the mix."



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Do things not done before

Malisa believes it's not about replacing the current way of doing things, but rather intentionally integrating new methods and tools that will give a brand a competitive edge among a younger audience.

"Let's do things that have not been done before. Experimenting with brand partnerships and influencers by means of working collaboratively on a brief, and driving the brand towards cultural relevance, is the way to go," he says.

Malisa further believes that the new breed of marketers are champions of sustainability, a passion point for most Gen-Z.

"Passion point-led sustainability campaigns - such as working with a conceptual fashion designer, to create a solar powered back-pack, made from upcycled materials – is how we will take this element of marketing forward, in a way that the target audience will genuinely engage with" he advises.

"The best way to connect with Gen-Z, in a deep and impactful way, is through tapping into the communities filled with individuals with shared values, and if your brand shows up in a way that reflects and supports the same values, such as sustainability, brand loyalty and advocacy is formed.

"It's this perspective I want to bring to my role as vice-chair of the Youth Development Board, and with the MMA SA mentors guiding us, we can drive real change in the industry by bringing what is happening among the youth now to the marketing table, he enthuses. "

Taking the industry into the future

Sarah Utermark, regional director of MMA SA believes the input and initiatives from the Youth Development Board will contribute not only to the MMA SA's continued success and relevance in the future, but also to the growth and progress of the South African marketing space as a whole.

"We are delighted to have the exuberant energy of our new chair and vice-chair on board," she says.

"Takalani and Anesu are both pioneering marketers with vision and a passion for the industry, and they embody the kind of attitudes and interests that we want to encourage so as to take the industry forward into the future.

"They, along with the rest of the Youth Development Board are our investment into the next generation of marketing professionals, and they bring a wealth of insight and new ideas to the table, along with deeply personal experiences of current trends," she says.

"This is exactly why we created the Youth Development Board - to build a close connection with young people in marketing in the country.

"We – as an industry body - believe we can architect the future of marketing by unlocking these young board members' fresh perspectives.

"We also believe that matching each of our Youth Development Board members with a more experienced MMA SA Board member, will guide and support them through our mentorship programme, which is pivotal to this initiative," she adds.

Since inception, the MMA SA has differentiated itself by focusing on outcomes and aims to lead a total transformation by architecting the future of marketing, significantly improving marketing's contribution to business and customers, thus raising the stature and gravitas of CMOs.

"By investing in the next generation of marketing professionals, we can ensure a vibrant and prosperous future for this important sector in South Africa. We believe the Youth Development Board is a step in the right direction," she concludes.

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